

Schoolmaster

Third Edition

“The Law Was Our Schoolmaster to Lead Us unto Christ”

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

Many of the things communicated in this book are truths I learned with the help of beloved teachers and fellow students from the Primitive Baptist fellowship. Some of these should be acknowledged for their contributions to this work. The first of these would be my deceased father, Elder Sonny Pyles, who was as masterful as any man I ever knew in the allegorical teachings of the Old Testament. In my youth, I first learned from him that Jesus Christ is the unquestioned Alpha and Omega of the word of God. My father passed a few years before this book was started. I feel sure it would have been a better work had it been written while he was alive. I thank also my mother, Sarah Pyles, who is a diligent student of the word, and who has been an inspiration to both me and my father. I wish to thank many fellow students and coworkers, including Elders Randy McCarthy, Samuel Odom and Robert Adam. Add to these my conscientious and diligent reviewers, including especially Sister Victoria Beyer, Sister Katherine Horner and Elder Benjamin Mott. Finally, I wish to thank my beloved wife Karen, who has for many years patiently endured a distracted mind that was oftentimes consumed with various challenges of biblical interpretation, including the topics considered in this book. She is a diligent student of the word of God and has always been an encouragement to me to dig a little deeper. It is to her that I dedicate this work.

Comments on Updates and Editions

This book has been continuously updated as errors have been found and corrected. With each update, the date on the copyright page was advanced so that published issues could be distinguished. The latest update of the first edition was dated 10/9/2023. The latest update of the second edition was dated 02/10/2024. The edition numbers were changed only when new material was added. Editions have evolved as follows:

Third Edition

The third edition adds eight chapters to the second. Titles for these chapters are:

The Heifer of the Valley
The Water of Jealousy
The Dietary Restrictions
Aaron's Rod that Budded
Eldad and Medad
Balaam
Crossing Jordan
Naaman the Syrian

Significant additions were made to three prior chapters, namely, the ones entitled "The Red Heifer" and "Jonah" and "The Tabernacle."

Second Edition

The second edition of this book added two chapters to the first. The titles for these chapters are "The Hem of the Garment" and "Samson." I also added an important discussion at the end of the introductory chapter about rules to be followed when ascertaining allegorical intent in the Bible.

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Introduction

In common modern speech, an “epiphany” is a realization or discovery that suddenly gives sensibility to what was formerly confusing or senseless. Typically, those experiencing an epiphany are overcome with a sense of joy because God has given humans a nature to delight in the discovery of design. He did this to incentivize man’s advance, both spiritually and technologically. However, the word “epiphany” originally referred to a specific historic event, namely, when Gentiles first put eyes on the Son of God. This happened when the eastern Magi beheld the infant Jesus at Bethlehem. These two meanings of the word coordinate in a fitting way. The Epiphany of the Old Testament under the first definition is the very Person who was beheld in the second.

We would not expect God to make us to delight in the discovery of design without also providing us some hidden design to discover. We can readily see that He has done this in nature. Science has revealed that God has put layer upon layer of design in His natural creation, and all sane scientists know they are far from discovering all of it. They also know, both instinctively and by experience, that this design tends to be unified around some central concept or principle, and that discovery of this key concept will produce a joyous breakthrough wherein multitudes of questions will suddenly have answers. For example, when scientists came to understand the atom, their knowledge of chemistry was launched from the cellar to the ceiling. The discovery of the key concept then becomes an epiphany to vastly more. The things God has done in the natural realm, He has also done in the spiritual. It is filled with design, and the key to finding it is the discovery of the Epiphany.

Because of failure to see the Epiphany, the Old Testament is rejected by many as senseless and superstitious, and if the truth be admitted, even those who would honor these scriptures sometimes have fearful doubts to the same effect. The Old Testament is exactly what they perceive it to be when interpreted without consideration of Jesus Christ, but perspective radically changes when it is read under His light. What formerly seemed senseless will transform into a story so profound and prescient that no human mind with a sufficient sense of science could dismiss it to human imagination or fortuitous coincidence.

This fact about the Old Testament is usually very obvious once it is detected, but it can be far from obvious on initial impression. As in nature, divine design is oftentimes cleverly hidden. Solomon said, “*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter,*” (Prov 25:2). While the story of Jesus Christ truly pervades the Bible, God has brilliantly wrapped it in a package of allegory that is designed to confound the careless reader. Many modern Christians will be surprised at this claim because they have an errant concept of God. They imagine Him as being one who yearningly beseeches them to accept Him. However, the God described in the Bible is a very different being. This God is in no need of man’s approval. He also considers knowledge to be the most precious of all possessions and is

selective to whom He reveals it. This is especially true of the highest form of knowledge, which would, of course, be an understanding of God Himself. As a consequence, the God of the Bible will commonly be seen as confounding unworthy men (Gn 11:7-8, Ex 11:9-10, 1Ki 22:20-23, 2Ki 6:18, 7:6-7, Isa 6:9-13, 63:17, Rev 17:16-17) and even as sending upon them “*strong delusion*” (2Thes 2:11). Jesus Christ did the same, and Himself declared, “*For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind,*” (Jn 9:39).

This statement was made after He had given sight to a man who had been born blind – a miracle never before witnessed in the history of the world. Jesus did this by applying mud made from His own spit to the man’s eyes. Curiously, this methodology that caused a blind man to see would have caused a seeing man to go blind. This was by intent. The lesson was that He blinds some and gives sight to others, and remarkably does this by the same means. The same Bible that causes some to see will cause others to be blinded. If the Epiphany strikes the eye while reading, then the book will not only be sensible but will be the wonder of the world. If the Epiphany does not strike the eye, then the book will be the same nonsense that is observed in all other religions of the world, and indeed, it might even seem to be worse.

If things are left to fall out according to nature, then the Epiphany definitely will not strike the eye. This fact was also communicated in the imagery of the miracle done to the blind man. It is a reprehensible thing to man’s nature for someone to spit in his eyes. He instinctively and impulsively shields or turns or withdraws his face to avert it. Yet, in the remarkable story of the blind man, it was by such odious means that he was delivered from blindness to sight (see also Mk 8:23). The intended principle was that, when God opens the eyes of men to spiritual truth, He does it in ways their natural tendencies would loathe and reject. As Paul said,

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. – 1Cor 2:14

Accordingly, the story of Jesus Christ is truly the crown gem of the Bible, but it is oftentimes packaged in ways that are objectionable to the nature of man. This is why men fail to see the gem. They reject the Old Testament as unscientific, racist, misogynistic, inhumane, etc. It is spit they do not want in their eyes. But be sure that nothing done by God is accidental, so Paul elsewhere explained:

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty,

not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. – 1Cor 1:21-29

Hence, it was in the deliberate design of God that neither He nor His Son would be discoverable by means of nature or natural reasoning alone, and indeed, He has even designed that such things will be confounding when taken by themselves. This will explain why men of all races have contrived a multitude of religions from their own imaginations but with none of those religions being a reasonable facsimile of the truth. The above scripture also indicates that the same principle is applicable to science. When God's creation is viewed from exactly the right angle, all will be sensible and accord with the logic wherewith He has designed us to think, but this is not the angle that natural men will take. When viewed from the wrong angle, the perceived image will be deliberately confounding and will elicit conclusions that might be exposed as absurd when the truth is known. Neither God nor His creation can be understood without consulting His word, and His word cannot be understood without the light of Jesus Christ.

This surely is not to say that either religion or science must utilize some esoteric and seemingly contradictory form of logic. Inspired men repeatedly argued from common logic, and none in the Bible did more to scathe illogic than Jesus Christ. But natural men are not nearly as logical as they like to pretend, and God has deliberately laid traps to confound them and to expose their foolishness. As Paul explained:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. – 1Cor 2:6-7

Accordingly, the story of Jesus Christ, as told in the Old Testament, is both wise and logical, but it is a deliberately hidden story, oftentimes embedded in allegory, and purposefully presented in ways that natural men will find objectionable.

Moreover, even Christians can err in this respect, failing to appreciate the full importance of Jesus Christ to the Bible. He is much more than the most important man in history. He is the subject of history, the object of history and the reason there is any such thing as history. The Bible cannot be properly understood without appreciation of this fact, and this is especially true of the Old Testament. Christians have much disagreement on the Old Testament because they are not truly unified on this point. Some Christians think the moral law is an ingredient in the formula for eternal salvation. Other Christians reject this as egregious heresy. Some think the Sabbath must still be observed. Most think otherwise, or think that the Sabbath has been replaced with Sunday. Some even think that parts of the old ceremonial law are still applicable

to church practice. Others resolutely deny. Add to all this chaos the fact that nearly all parties are inconsistent in that they make selective application of the Old Testament, choosing to heed certain parts while dismissing others as obsolete. This is done notwithstanding the fact that the New Testament said in several places that such is an inadmissible way to handle the book (Rom 11:6, Gal 3:10, 5:3-4, Js 2:10). Obviously, these varied opinions cannot all be right, and many of them must be severely wrong.

The truth is that the Old Testament law has been replaced by the law of Christ (1Cor 9:20-21), but the law of Christ is actually a superior standard, aspiring to even higher ideals, and thereby fulfilling and surpassing the old standard. As Jesus Himself said, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill,*” (Mt 5:17). This can be seen by considering the famous Ten Commandments. Christ replaced all of these with higher standards that more than fulfill what the old standard demanded. For example, the old law prohibited adultery but the new prohibits even lust. The old law prohibited theft but the new commands to give. The old law prohibited lying but the new commands to go into the whole world and tell the truth. The old reserved one day of the week to be kept holy but the new commands that every day is to be kept holy, and also every endeavor on every day, and all this because we have a higher obligation, being now bought by the blood of Christ.

However, the fact that the old law has been replaced as a rule of practice does not mean that it has lost relevance. In fact, it has gained relevance inasmuch as its ultimate purpose can now be seen more than would have been possible before. Paul succinctly expressed this purpose in:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. – Gal 3:24

So the primary and enduring function of the Old Testament is to lead us to Jesus Christ, which it does by confirming His identity as the Messiah, by confirming that He is the Son of God, by showing His necessity in our salvation and by teaching important details about what He has done to secure it and what He will do to complete it.

If the Old Testament is divinely inspired, then we would expect it to fulfill its ultimate purpose in profound ways that surpass human ability. The purpose of this present book is to show that such is the case. However, I will apologize for the book from the very start. The Old Testament is a masterpiece in complex symbolism and no sensible scholar would claim to have captured all of it. Even highly experienced Bible students continue to discover new allegorical messages in the book. As already elaborated, God has cleverly hidden these messages, making them difficult to find. So my present book is one that will never be complete, and future editions could be as numerous as life will allow. I think it best to document what I have at present, and pray that God will bless either me or the reader to make future progress toward capturing what is missing.

The better part of this book will deal with allegorical prophecies of Jesus Christ that are scattered across the Old Testament. When speaking of Old Testament “allegories,” I refer to factual

events that were ordered by divine providence to communicate prophecy. This book does not consider all of such, but I have attempted to cover the ones where parallelisms are most numerous. In the detection of allegorical intent, there are of course two errors that one could make. The first would be to overlook an allegory. The second would be to imagine an allegory that was never intended. The nature of the case is that avoidance of one type of error increases the risk of making the other. I think most will agree that the first type of error is the greatest, so I have made priority of avoiding it. Notwithstanding, I think my greater vulnerability remains to the first error and not the second.

The second error will be of lesser concern to anyone believing in divine inspiration because the Bible itself declares the presence of allegory in many places (e.g. Jn 3:14, Gal 4:21-31, Heb 8:3-5, Rev 17:9). Most allegories I assert in this present book will be validated by such declarations. However, it would be foolish to disallow allegories apart from these. This is demonstrated by the story of Joseph, son of Jacob. This story could easily rank as the most undeniable allegory in the Bible if measuring by number of parallelisms, yet never does the Bible declare it to be allegorical. Add to this the fact that where the Bible actually declares allegorical intent, it can be in places that none would have otherwise suspected (e.g. Jn 3:14, Gal 4:21-31). This should alert the reader to be ever watchful for deeper meaning. All biblical allegories are prophetic, and most prophesy of events that have already been fulfilled. An allegorical interpretation becomes difficult to deny when its symbolic assignments are known to follow biblical habits, when its parallelisms are numerous, and when those parallelisms are properly sequenced. The last criterion compounds the odds against the skeptic. While a creative imagination might see illusory parallelisms, the probability of this plummets when the parallelisms are accurately ordered. For example, if we had only four hypothesized parallelisms, then the probability of fortuitous coincidence drops 24-fold when they are sequenced as actually fulfilled. This book will show that a sequence of such length would actually be unimpressive by Bible standards.

It is of course possible to correctly detect allegorical intent but to misinterpret its intended meaning. I acknowledge my own vulnerability to this error. I have almost surely made it at some points in this book. However, it will not be my habit to weary myself or the reader with endless qualifying and precautionary statements about the possibilities of such errors. I will typically assertively tell the story as I see it, and will depend upon the reader to be fair enough to remember the acknowledgment I have made here.

If a person remains a skeptic after considering all this allegorical evidence, then chances of persuading them are remote at best, but my final chapter will make another attempt by considering literal prophecies of Jesus Christ that are scattered all over the Old Testament. These will show that if anyone wishes to doubt or dismiss the pervasive and profound message in the Old Testament about Jesus Christ, then there are literally not enough atoms in the Universe to express the odds opposing their skepticism.

Adam

Types of Christ are so prevalent in the Old Testament that they extend back to the first man himself. The parallels between Adam and Christ are fewer than will be seen in later figures, but are of such importance that the New Testament explicitly noted them in several places and made them central to the very intent and meaning of world history (Rom 5:12-21, 1Cor 15:21-22, 15:45-49, Eph 5:22-33). It is therefore crucial that these things be understood. The worst place to take a wrong turn in a journey is at the very beginning. A misstep there could ultimately land a man the farthest from where he is supposed to be. Accordingly, the opening pages of the Bible are a very bad place to take a wrong turn, but this is exactly where a wrong turn was taken by most religions of the world, including even a large part of Christianity.

As of the very first verse of the Bible, the reader is plunged into a mystery that humans will never fully resolve, but significant insight will be gained in the last third of the book, otherwise known as the New Testament. This first verse famously said, *“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”* The problem is that the word for “God” is a plural noun, but it was placed in a Hebrew sentence structured to receive a singular. This plural noun is especially enigmatic since it introduces a book that passionately opposes polytheism. This seeming anomaly cannot be dismissed to accident, because a few verses later we have, *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”* (Gn 1:26). Here, the word “us” produces the same intrigue.

This mystery was addressed in the New Testament by the Apostle John, who commenced his gospel with similar words: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* Shortly thereafter, John further explained, *“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth,”* (Jn 1:14). So by the “Word” John meant the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. A few verses after this, John also referred to Jesus Christ as the *“only begotten Son”* of God (vs 18), and as one should expect, the same verse also referred to God the Father. With these two divine “Persons,” we can account for the plurality in Genesis 1:1 and 1:26. Then in the second verse of the Bible, we are introduced to a third Person with the words: *“...And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light,”* (Gn 1:2-3).

When we refer to the “Persons” of the Godhead, we are using the word with a special theological meaning and not in the ordinary sense. The theological sense conveys a confession of inability to comprehend the subject being considered, but the term is adopted and adapted in our quest for unquestioning compliance with what the inspired word of God has asserted. Nowhere was it more clearly asserted than by John in: *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one,”* (1Jn 5:7). Jesus Himself taught the principle in Matthew 28:19 and John 15:26. Peter taught it in 1Peter 1:1-2, and Paul taught it in Galatians 4:4-6. Further, these New Testament revelations were in complete accord with other

Old Testament statements, such as will be found in Exodus 33:19, Psalm 45:6-7, 110:1 and Zechariah 3:2. The fact that we cannot fully comprehend the conveyed truth should not deter us. Many things in the creation baffle us. How much more in the Creator?

Another reason for accepting this revealed truth is that it does much to make sense of the Bible in general and also of the testimony of our own experience. This happens upon observing:

- 1) The Father and Son are selfless in the sense that each works for the glorification of the other. This idea is expressed in numerous scriptures, including: Psalms 45:6-7 & 110:1, Daniel 7:13-14, John 7:18, 8:50, 13:31-32, 17:1, 17:4-5 & 21:19, Romans 16:27, Colossians 1:19, Philippians 1:11 & 2:11 and 2Peter 1:17. The Holy Spirit bears the same relationship to the others. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would not speak of Himself but glorify the Son (Jn 16:13-14), yet the most intimidating threat the Son ever made was against those who blasphemed the Spirit (Mt 12:32).
- 2) This explains why selflessness is the very essence of the divine law commanded of humans (Mt 22:36-40). Men instinctively know this about God's law, but are too fond of fabricating their own religions and philosophies to distract themselves and others from the point.
- 3) It also explains why the climactic point of divine revelation is the Son of God selflessly dying for men on the cross. This one event is so central to divine revelation that Paul told the Corinthians, *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,"* (1Cor 2:2).
- 4) It explains why the Devil is the very antithesis of God. The Bible describes him as an egotistical being that is bent on advancing himself, and is willing to destroy and kill whatever he must to achieve it (Isa 14:4-20, Ezek 28:12-19, Dn 11:36-37, Jn 8:44, 2Thes 2:3-4).
- 5) As will shortly be seen, the fall of man into sin and death occurred in an attempt at self-promotion, which was made after he had been deceived into thinking that such would be a good thing, and that by transgressing he could elevate himself toward deity.
- 6) Since man fell by attempted self-promotion, he obviously cannot be saved by repetition of the same error. Man is not elevated to eternal glory by his own decisions and actions. It is God that gives glory to man, and man's duty is to return glory to God for it. Our religious service is not to *get* glory but to *give* glory. A man who misunderstands this while trying to make sense of the Bible is like a man trying to play baseball on a football field. Soon a linebacker will blindside him from one direction and knock him prostrate and dazed, and as he recollects himself, a tackle will blindside him again from the other direction and knock him senseless again. He is perpetually being knocked about and dazed because he does not understand the game being played. The divine Persons seek the glory of each other. Man is called to do the same, first to his God and then to his fellow man.

7) Because the Father has rank over all, including even the Son, the wishes of the Father are the highest priorities of the creation. However, this will have an unexpected effect to anyone who is unaware of the first point above. The supreme priority of the Father is the glorification of His Son. This is therefore the supreme objective of the Universe and the ultimate reason why it was created (Col 1:15-17, Heb 1:1-2). As should be expected, it is also the supreme priority of the Bible. This explains why there is an ever-growing focus on the Son in the inspired book. It begins with Him being hidden in a plural noun in Genesis 1:1, but it ends with Him being manifest to all creatures as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 1:7, 5:13).

This then brings us to the creation of the first man, Adam. He was said to be created in the *image* of God (Gn 1:26-27). While such a statement partly describes any man since Adam, it was true of Adam in a special way, because the Bible shortly explains that man has since fallen and become a dying degenerate of what Adam originally was. So the claim that Adam was in the image of God would imply there were important parallels between them, especially to the Son of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. These parallels play a central role in God's purpose to glorify His Son, and this is why scriptures present them as being so important. These important similarities between Adam and Christ include:

1) Neither man was a product of nature. Both were brought into the world by a supernatural operation of God. Several other characters in the Bible were born of barren parents, and these were miraculous cases in their own right, but the best assumption is that in all such cases, God miraculously repaired or rejuvenated natural function, which then resulted in natural birth. Adam and Christ were unique in that neither were products of natural function.

2) Both were also in the image of God, though Adam was created as such whereas Christ was and is the *very* image of the invisible God (Col 1:15-19, Heb 11:3).

3) Both defined their respective lineages. All men since Adam were defined in Adam, being made from some combination of his genetic potential. In this sense, all men since Adam have been born in the image of Adam. Accordingly, the seed of Christ will bear His image, being predestined to that end, and will undergo partial transformation to such even in this life, but with full realization being deferred to the resurrection. Accordingly, this transformation begins with the inward spiritual man and ends with the outward bodily man. These principles are clearly expressed in the following famous passages:

The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. – 1Cor 15:47-49

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many

brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. – Rom 8:28-30

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. – 1Jn 3:2-3

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. – Phil 3:21

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. – 2Cor 3:18

The last verse shows that our transformation to the image of Christ is ongoing. To understand the verse, one must know that glass in Bible times had not been perfected to the degree of transparency we have today. To see something through a glass meant to see an imperfect image of it (e.g. 1Cor 13:12), and this is how we see Christ while in our mortal bodies; notwithstanding, as we struggle to see Him, we are gradually transformed into what we are beholding. Even so, the Bible even attributes the suffering and death of the redeemed descendants of Christ to this transformation. They suffer and die because Christ suffered and died, but they will be glorified in spirit, then resurrected and glorified in body, because these are the very things that happened to Christ (2Cor 4:10-11, Rom 8:16-18, 1Pet 2:20-21, 5:10).

These core principles of the Bible explain God's passionate hatred toward idols and images. Those who worship such divulge perverted thinking on the most basic principles of spiritual truth. When a man bows to worship an idol, God sees an image of Himself bowing to a devil. Core principles of the Bible are: a) The true image of God is Jesus Christ. b) Man was created in the image of God. c) Man fell from the image of God, but d) Man will be re-conformed to the image of God through the power and work of Jesus Christ. Many men prefer the petty rewards of devils, and this is why the world is filled with false religions, but the ultimate gift of the true God of heaven is to make men like His glorious Son. It is an offense to Him for men to compromise themselves in preferring anything short. This also explains why idol worshippers are found among the poorest and most ignorant societies of the modern world (Acts 17:30-31).

4) God chose a bride for both Adam and Christ, and in both cases, the bride had a prior connection with the husband. Eve was made from a rib of Adam, and this fact was the motivation for the following famous statement:

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. – Gn 2:23-24

Accordingly, the Bible repeatedly represents the redeemed church as being the bride of Christ. This is done in the Old Testament through various allegorical depictions, but is done in the New Testament through explicit declarations (Mt 22:1-14, Eph 5:22-33, Rev 19:5-9). The New Testament even declares that the institution of human marriage was formed by God in imitation of the relationship between Christ and His church (Eph 5:22-33). The church was elected by God unto this end and joined with Christ in an eternal covenant drawn before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3-12, 2Tim 1:8-10, Tit 1:2-3). Further, she was bought with His own blood, famously epitomized by what flowed from His side when punctured in the ribs by the Roman spear (Jn 19:34). Furthermore, the church was predestined to be conformed to His image (Rom 8:29, Php 3:21, 1Jn 3:2), thus fulfilling the implicit prophecy in Adam's statement that she "*is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.*"

5) By far the most important parallelism between Adam and Christ is that both were *federal heads* to their respective lineages, meaning that the descendants of Adam acquired his corruption to their own condemnation and death, whereas the descendants of Christ acquired His righteousness to their own justification and life. The first principle is called the doctrine of "original sin." The second is the principle of "imputed righteousness."

Many Christians object to the former doctrine, complaining that it is unfair, but this is one of the most naïve objections ever made against both common sense and plain Bible teaching. Their quest for a theory of death that comports with their sense of fairness clearly exposes them as being lost in an ideological fantasyland. Religion is of course ideological, but it must first pass the test of true science. Death is itself contrary to human ideas of fairness. It is so horrible that men naturally question whether anyone should endure it, even among those they dislike. It is indiscriminate between who they judge as innocent and guilty, and indeed, it is oftentimes brought about by the guilty slaying the innocent. Countless millions die in infancy before ever committing any wrong. These facts are sufficient evidence that death is the result of an indiscriminate curse upon mankind and all nature with it.

The Bible says this curse is owing to sin, which should be a most credible claim to anyone perceiving unfairness in it. The very nature of sin is that it produces unfair consequences, and this is why it is sinful. But if death derives from sin, then it must derive at least in part from the sin of someone other than its victims. This can be seen in the deaths of infants. Further, this sin must have been committed by the first man, because if it were committed by the second, then the first would still be alive to tell about it. So the doctrine of original sin is the most sensible explanation of death that has ever been offered, but more importantly, it is unmistakably declared by the word of God in the following passage:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned... But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many... For if by

one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. – Rom 5:12-19

Original sin is a terrifying thing, and anyone wishing to believe they are valued by their Creator must be very disturbed to find such a harsh principle being enforced upon them in the opening pages of the Bible. God created a world that was vulnerable to untold misery and death, and He did it while knowing this vulnerability would conceive catastrophe. Man would not have done this because his natural being has no greater priority than life and happiness. Obviously, these things are not unimportant to God because He is the one who designed us to treasure them, but it is also evident He has an even higher priority and that He is willing to allow sin and death to achieve it. The Bible teaches that this higher priority is the glorification of His Son. In making Adam the federal head of his race, and thus creating the possibility for sin, misery and death, God was setting the stage for an opposite case of federal headship wherein His Son would be glorified as the sure and sole source of all righteousness, happiness and life. As is the bad, so also is the good. Christians readily accept the principle of imputed righteousness, but are inconsistent in rejecting the bad. Paul plainly taught that original sin and imputed righteousness are opposite sides of the same coin. The same is true of death and eternal life.

The principle of original sin was also the original slap in the face to the pride of man. It demonstrated that man of himself is not God's highest priority and that God's love for man actually derives from His love for someone else. Indeed, in absence of this latter love, man is not only unimportant but is quite expendable. Be sure this will not comport well with human ideology, even if it makes complete sense to human science. Consider the fact that man has conjured a multitude of gods and religions over his history, and these are as varied as the imagination can be stretched, but there is one point upon which practically all of these religions are agreed: It is that all of them assume God considers humans to be important. Even atheists do this, because they almost invariably assume that if there were a God, then He would surely consider humans to be important, and would not allow evil and injustice to befall them. Atheists then point to prevalent evil and injustice as their alleged proof there is no God. This so-called "problem of evil" is their main argument. They do not seem to consider that their reasoning is based on an unproven assumption that is deluded with conceit. They never offer any credible reason why God should consider humans to be important, nor is credible reason offered by the vast majority of humanly contrived religions.

The fact is that this universal axiom of both theism and atheism has been made ever more dubious with the progress of knowledge. Scientific discovery nearly always leads to the conclusion that the Universe is even greater than formerly perceived, but the greater we know it to be, the more doubtful becomes the assumption that the great God who created it would

consider us to be of any significance. These humbling observations are only reinforced by the doctrine of original sin. It is an axe to the axiom.

However, in the midst of these disturbing realities is an encouraging fact: It is that man was created in God's image, and on such account, man has been given supremacy over all creatures of God, including even angels. Man has since become a dying degenerate from his original state, and on this account, the fact that he was made in God's image will somewhat sink into obscurity as we venture further into the Bible, but, in a beautiful display of symmetry, it will gloriously resurface as the end of the book is approached. The hope for man is that God will not endure the image of His Son to be defaced, particularly when done by the conniving of a rebelling angel who envies the superior rank of man and will do anything to degrade and destroy him.

Atheists will scoff at the idea that man was made in God's image, and will claim the very opposite is true, or that man created God in his own image and imagination. The irony is that these scoffers themselves prove the Bible to be true. The intellectual achievements of man clearly distinguish him from all other creatures. All living things apart from man are still climbing the same trees, eating the same grass and chasing the same bugs they were in the very beginning, but man has demonstrated immeasurable potential, building bridges, skyscrapers, automobiles and airplanes, discovering higher math, designing complex microscopes and telescopes, traveling space, exploring the Universe, unraveling atoms, designing computers, decoding genetics, etc., and indeed, the task of cataloguing all this knowledge now requires countless libraries scattered all over the world. As remarkable as these achievements are, they are small in comparison to what they would have been in absence of the fall, but God has blessed man in sufficient achievements to confirm what He said from the outset, namely, that man is not like other creatures. He is very special. He was made in God's image.

In all of this, the Bible gives a plausible explanation to what other religions and atheism carelessly and presumptuously assume. It explains why God should care for man and ordain his salvation. This insight of the Bible is no small matter. The challenge of religion is not to show that God exists. His existence is overwhelmingly attested by nature, and this is why unbelieving scientists, though hell-bent to the contrary, have done more to prove His existence than the most enthusiastic theists. The true challenge of religion is to prove that God cares, and to reconcile this claim with formidable evidence that would seem to contradict, including especially the principle of original sin. God indeed cares for man, and the Bible plausibly explains why, but God's ultimate priority is the glorification of His Son. If He can achieve this by sparing, then He will surely spare, but if He can achieve this by destroying, then He will surely destroy.

These thoughts and observations then necessarily lead to important principles of the New Testament, especially its claim that it is impossible for any human to be eternally damned while believing, honoring and loving Jesus Christ. Such an event would rip the very fabric of the Universe apart and overthrow the ultimate purpose for which God created it.

Scriptural teachings on the federal headship of Christ are not apt to receive much attention in many modern pulpits because the principle critically clashes with notions that are commonplace to modern Christianity. Such was not the case in bygone years when nearly all denominations were in closer compliance to the Bible. The problem can be readily seen in Romans 5 where Paul directly addressed the subject, beginning with:

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. – Rom 5:10-11

Hence, those under consideration became *reconciled* to God by the death of His Son, and intuitive interpretation says this reconciliation and death were *concurrent*. Subsequent verses prove this beyond reasonable doubt. Observe that these verses do not say that we became *reconcilable* to God by the death of His Son and were thereafter actually reconciled when other conditions were met. Sadly, most Christians tend to think in such terms. Their position sees Christ as being a mere fix-up on a botched creation plan, and says that His death only purchased a *possibility* of repair for any man, but that actual realization of such was suspended on the consent and cooperation of the man. The end effect is that the difference between a man in heaven and a man in hell is not truly in Jesus Christ, because He did no more for one than for the other; rather, the difference is in the decisions and actions of the man. In particular, men who decide to be His friends will be saved. Those who do not will be damned. Such is the dubious dogma of deluded Christianity. These conclusions could not possibly be true if Jesus had *already* reconciled us to God while we were yet enemies and before deciding to be His friends.

The next verse reinforces the contended point: “*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*” That is, now that we have ceased to be His enemies and have rather become His friends, we not only have the benefit of reconciliation but also the assurance and joy of it. The joy of reconciliation comes with gospel conversion, but reconciliation itself occurred the moment Jesus died on the cross.

The point is proven beyond any reasonable doubt by the next few verses (already quoted above) wherein Paul presented the principle of federal headship and the crucial parallels between Adam and Christ. These parallels clearly divulge the apostle’s intent in the verses just considered. The entire lineage of Adam became corrupt, condemned and mortal the moment he died in sin. This happened to them without their consent or cooperation. Accordingly, the entire lineage of Christ was rendered righteous in the sight of God the moment Christ died, and all conditions necessary for their immortality were then bought and ensured. This also happened without their consent or cooperation, and indeed, it happened while they were yet contemplated as enemies in the mind of God. The reason they thereafter believe on Christ and become His friends is that God graciously quickens their hearts, and He performs this grace because He has *already* been reconciled to them and *already* sees them as legally cleared to receive such grace and eternal life.

Accordingly, when scriptures speak of the much-misunderstood principle of justification by faith, they are referring to the *certification* of a righteous state before God, not the actual acquisition of it. The elect of God were rendered righteous before God at the moment Christ died, but they are not formally declared as righteous until brought to faith. When a court justifies a man, it is not making him innocent, and when a court condemns a man it is not making him guilty; rather, it is in either case formally declaring what is already true.

Men sin because they choose to sin, but they choose to sin because they acquired a corrupt life and nature from Adam, and this nature is something they did not choose. Men repent, believe and obey because they choose to repent, believe and obey, but they choose these things because they acquired a spiritual life and nature from Christ, and this nature is also something they did not choose. Christ bought this life and nature for them on the cross and applied it to them by the sovereign, irresistible and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit of God. As Paul clearly explained, the case in Adam and the case in Christ are symmetrical.

These conclusions not only follow from symmetry but also from syllogism. If men truly died in Adam, as God surely said, then because dead men cannot consent or cooperate with anything, it would follow that their new life could not be owing to the consent or cooperation of their old one. Accordingly, the Bible declares repeatedly that the natural man is dead to all that is spiritual and is always averse to it (e.g. 1Cor 2:14, Rom 8:5-10, Jn 6:44-65, 8:43-47, 10:26, 1Cor 1:18, 2Thes 3:1-2, Rom 15:30-31). When men perform physical action, this does not make them physically alive but shows they are already such. The same is true of spiritual action and spiritual life. Spiritual actions, such as faith and repentance and obedience, are confirmations of life, not the causes of it. Nothing has led to more doctrinal error in Christianity and other religions than a denial of this simple reasoning. There should be no surprise in this. The denial that Adam and his posterity died in his original sin was hatched by the Devil himself and was the first lie ever told and the first heresy ever taught.

The Lord had threatened Adam that he would die the *very day* he sinned (Gn 2:17). The Devil disputed this claim by obfuscating the term “death.” His argument was that man would not die in sinning, but that he would actually advance himself toward a state of deity by gaining knowledge of good and evil. Now the Devil is a clever liar, which means there is considerable truth in what he has to say, but always with a toxic twist. Adam did not “die” the very day he transgressed if “die” is intended in a physical sense, but he surely died spiritually that very day, even as God had said, and this would later produce physical death as a byproduct.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of manmade religion, including corrupted forms of Christianity, is that it continues to believe and advocate the Devil’s first lie. It denies that man truly died in Adam and continues to affirm that man has sufficient vitality that he can advance himself toward a state of deity by securing certain knowledge. This is exactly what the Devil affirmed. It is a denial of God’s claim that natural man is spiritually dead. A dead man can neither know anything nor do anything. His only hope is in resurrection, which obviously must be done

altogether by God in an unsolicited act of grace. Man is as passive in this as he was in acquiring death from Adam. John said of Christ, "*In him was life; and the life was the light of men,*" (Jn 1:4). John did not say that in Him was *light* and this light led to *life*. The idea that light can lead to life is of satanic origin. Rather, John said that in Christ was *life* and this life leads to *light*. It would follow then that an enlightened state is the confirmation, not the cause, of a living state.

I will finish this section by considering one of the high mysteries of the Bible. The book clearly teaches that the glorification of Jesus Christ was the object of creation and that He is therefore much more than an afterthought or a strand of tape to repair what was broken. Why then would God make the glory of Christ in salvation to be suspended on the sinful action of a single man? Some have sought to answer this question by essentially denying the free agency of Adam and affirming that what he did was causatively predestined by God. This is an unacceptable explanation because it would clearly make God the author of Adam's sin as much as He was the author of Adam himself. It is also a simple-minded explanation. It fails to consider that God knew what Adam would do if created and left to act freely, but that God was under no obligation to create Adam, and that it was within His power and prerogative to create another man in Adam's place who would have acted differently if put in the same circumstance. The upshot is that Adam indeed acted freely in sinning, but this does not imply that God put the glorification of His Son at any uncertainty by leaving Adam to do so.

Noah

While Adam was the father of the human race, the Bible teaches that all of Adam's descendants were destroyed in the flood except for Noah and his family. As a consequence, Noah is the father of the human race in the post-flood world. Of these two fathers, Noah has proven to be the greater. Ezekiel 14:14 names Noah as one of the greatest men who ever lived. He was honored as such along with Daniel and Job. Noah found grace in the eyes of God; the world was spared destruction on his account, and the world has been preserved ever since because of a covenant God made with him. If the Bible would set up Adam as a type of Christ, then we should suspect no less of Noah.

Indeed, we have it on the authority of Christ Himself that Noah and the events of the flood served to prefigure Christ at His two comings. Jesus famously said, "*But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,*" (Mt 24:37, Lk 17:26). This would at least mean that events surrounding Noah were parallel to Christ as of His second coming, but we can be confident that His first coming was foreshadowed as well because of 1Peter 3:18-22 where the ark and Christian baptism were presented as similar figures of the resurrection of Christ.

Parallels between Noah and Christ include:

1) Noah's name meant "rest" and this will explain what his father Lamech meant in saying:

And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. – Gn 5:29

So Noah was sent by God to comfort men concerning the curse they contracted in Eden. While the Bible is not explicit in how Noah did this, reason leaves few possibilities apart from Noah being a preacher of divine mercy and heavenly hopes. 2Peter 2:5 indeed confirms that Noah was a "preacher," and he was in fact the first man in the Bible to be distinguished by this term. In being a source of rest to the people, he prefigured the one of whom it would be said:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. – Isa 11:10

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest... – Heb 4:1-3

Noah must have given rest in some profound and unprecedented sense because he was born almost 1000 years after the fall in Eden. Hence, men of many generations had been born prior to Noah and had likely blessed the lives of others, but none of them were credited with alleviating the burden of the curse. When the Bible distinguishes Noah this way, one should be alerted to

the possibility that the inspired book was setting him up to prefigure important events and principles.

The fact that this first preacher was sent 1000 years after the fall should serve to correct the common misconception that human preaching is a cause or means of saving men to heaven. This would imply that all men had been eternally damned over the first millennium of the earth, and indeed, for even longer than this, because we have no record of any inspired text on the earth for its first 1500 years. Noah was sent to give “rest” to God’s people concerning eternal salvation. He was not sent to give them eternal salvation itself. Only Jesus Christ could do this.

2) Now one would think that a man such as Noah would be greeted by the world with joy, gratitude and inspiration, but exactly the opposite proved the case. The world instead degenerated to the point that God saw necessary to destroy it. Even so, the first coming of Christ should have been a time of unequalled joy, but instead it ended with the atrocity of the crucifixion and the destruction of the nation that crucified Him.

3) The Bible described Noah as a just man who walked with God in the midst of a perverse world (Gn 6:9). On this account, he found “*grace*” (i.e. “favor”) in the sight of God (Gn 6:8). This divine favor for him resulted in the perpetuation of the planet, and the renewed world was populated by none apart from his seed. Even so, the Bible teaches there will be a new heaven and earth secured by God’s favor for Jesus Christ, and it will be populated exclusively by His seed (Isa 65:17-19, 66:22, 2Pet 3:11-13, Rev 21:1-2).

4) While seven other souls were also saved in the ark (1Pet 3:20), nothing was said of them being saved on account of their own merit, or on account of any merit apart from that of Noah. Indeed, Ezekiel 14:18-21 implies they were saved on Noah’s account. Noah therefore saved his house even as Christ saved His house (Heb 3:1-6).

5) Noah was “*perfect in his generations*” (6:9), thus representing Him whose genealogy was in perfect compliance with all preceding prophecies as to the family lineage of the Messiah (i.e. being the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Jesse, David, etc.).

6) Noah was given the greatest natural task in human history whereas Christ was given the greatest spiritual task in human history.

7) The Bible says nothing of Noah receiving any help from others. Accordingly, it was prophesied of Christ, “*And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me,*” (Isa 63:5).

8) Notwithstanding the challenge before him, Noah was faithful and diligent to do it, and God found no fault whatsoever in Noah’s efforts to save the world. Though Noah erred at a later point (Gn 9:21), the Bible does not charge him with a single fault in building the ark, gathering

the animals, caring for the animals, etc. Accordingly, Christ faultlessly saved His people, and is of course without fault in all else as well.

Noah was the savior of the animals of the world and was set up in this respect as a type of the Savior of Men. Principles conveyed in this part of the story will seriously clash with preconceived notions of some Christians, but these principles all stand on explicit biblical teaching. Such principles include:

9) The Bible does not mention Noah losing a single human or animal in the cataclysm. Even so, the Bible says repeatedly and unequivocally that Christ will save all given to Him by the Father (Mt 1:21, Jn 6:37-39, Jn 17:1-2, Rom 8:29).

10) The animals that were saved by Noah were not chosen by him; rather, they were elected by God for salvation. The Bible says exactly the same is true of those who will be saved by Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, many modern Christians find the doctrine of election to be very objectionable, but one could scarcely find any doctrine having more support in scripture (e.g. Ps 65:4, Mt 20:16, 22:14, 24:24, 24:31, Mk 13:20, Lk 18:7, Jn 6:37-39, 10:25-28, 17:1, Rom 8:33, 9:11, 11:5-7, Eph 1:4, Col 3:12, 1Thes 1:4, 2Thes 2:13, Tit 1:1, 1Pet 1:2, 2:9, 2Pet 1:10, Rev 17:14). Indeed, the chief advocate of this doctrine was Jesus Christ Himself.

11) The animals that were saved by Noah were brought to Him by God (Gn 6:19-20). These animals appeared to be acting freely when coming to Noah, yet they were undeniably moved by a supernatural power. The same is true of those saved by Christ, as is implied by the following:

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. – Ps 110:3

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. – Ps 65:4

For many are called, but few are chosen. – Mt 22:14

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. – Jn 6:37

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. – Jn 6:44-45

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. – Mt 16:17

12) While in the ark, all living creatures were fed by Noah. Accordingly, all of the family of God are spiritually fed by the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

13) While in the ark, the only view of man and beast was heavenly through the window above. Followers of Christ are commanded to take the same view:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. – Col 3:1-4

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. – 2Cor 4:17-18

14) The Apostle Peter presented the ark as being a type of the resurrection (1Pet 3:21). In corroboration of this claim, the ark rested on land on what was probably the same day that Jesus was resurrected. The ark rested on the 17th day of the seventh month (Gn 8:4). Under the civil calendar then in use, this was the month of Nisan on the religious calendar. Jesus was crucified on the 14th day of the same month, and if we accept the theory that He was resurrected three full days later (Mt 12:40), then these two events happened on exactly the same calendar date. The landing of the ark was the beginning of the new post-flood world even as the resurrected body of Jesus was the beginning of the new, eternal creation.

15) The occupants of the ark began on earth, but when the earth was being destroyed, they were safely on high at the top of the waves. After the earth was destroyed, the occupants were then brought back down to a new earth that was exclusively for their benefit and blessing. The same pattern applies to God's elect. They will be raptured safely above the fray when the world is being destroyed, but will eventually be brought back to a new heaven and earth to which the wicked will not be entitled.

16) Noah made a sacrifice that moved God to swear that He would preserve the world (Gn 8:20-22), but this sacrifice was a mere symbol of the sacrifice that truly preserves the world, namely, the sacrifice of Christ. The planet would have been incinerated long ago had it not been for Him.

17) After the flood, all creatures were put under the dominion of Noah and his family, and this was expressly owing to the fact that man was created in the image of God (Gn 9:1-6). Accordingly, the new heaven and earth will be under the dominion of those who will be conformed to the image of Christ. These principles are taught in many places, including:

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak... thou crownedst him (i.e. man) with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of

thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him... – Heb 2:5-9

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. – 1Jn 3:2-3

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. – Rom 8:29-30

The two most prominent men in the early earth were of course Adam and Noah. One man was father to the pre-flood world. The other was father to the world that followed. When we see that God orchestrated the lives of both men to prefigure Jesus Christ, then we should suspect that Jesus Christ is much more than the most important man in history. He is the very subject of history, the object of history, and the ultimate reason there is any such thing as history. This would also explain why the allegorical message about Him will only grow stronger as we move forward through the word of God. As Solomon said, “*But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,*” (Prov 4:18)

Melchizedek

Melchizedek was mentioned in only three adjacent verses in Genesis 14, but subsequent revelation would show these verses to be earth-shaking. The 110th Psalm was the most quoted psalm in the New Testament, mostly because every verse of it was a prophecy of Jesus Christ. In the midst of this psalm, it was said of the Messiah: “*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,*” (Ps 110:4). Hence, the Messiah was to be a priest, but not of the usual Levitical order; rather, His priesthood would be portended by that of Melchizedek. This prophecy cast new light on the seemingly insignificant verses in Genesis and showed them to be of enormous importance.

The Genesis account began by telling how that a confederation of kings invaded and raided regions including Sodom and Gomorrah (years before their destruction), and these kings then carried away numerous captives, including Lot and family, who were near kin to Abraham. Abraham then assembled a small militia with which he pursued these kings and defeated them against great odds. While returning from his victory, and being accompanied by the liberated captives and the recovered spoils of war, this Melchizedek came out to meet Abraham to bless him and administer unto him bread and wine. Melchizedek was described as king of a city called Salem, and he was also priest of “*the most high God*” (Gn 14:18). Abraham responded to this in a surprisingly dramatic way. He gave to Melchizedek a tenth part of the recaptured spoils.

The last couple of facts should seize the attention. Abraham is one of the most honored religious figures in history. Jews, Christians and Muslims all honor him as their spiritual father. Yet, it was evidently the case that Abraham honored Melchizedek as being even greater than himself. The symbolism of the story will explain why: Almost 2000 years prior to the fact, Melchizedek, in administering to Abraham bread and wine, employed the very symbols used by the New Testament to represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and symbols which are everywhere used by Christians in their sacred communion services. Melchizedek was a symbol of someone who is very great. Abraham perceived it, and so should all who claim him as their father.

Melchizedek was the first priest mentioned by the Bible, and was likely the first legitimate priest ever on the earth. While Jesus Christ is of course the last of all priests, He is truly both first and last inasmuch as the elect in all ages have been accepted of God on account of Him.

Even the name of Melchizedek suggests something momentous. As explained by Paul in Hebrews 7:2, the meaning of the name is “*king of righteousness*” or “*king of peace*” – terms which, strictly speaking, could only apply to the “*King of kings and Lord of lords,*” (Rev 19:16).

Further, Genesis claimed Melchizedek was king of a city called “*Salem,*” though most agree this city was thereafter called “*Jerusalem.*” Even so, Jesus Christ is king over the New Jerusalem, a city that shall descend from heaven upon the new heaven and earth (Rev 21).

While Jerusalem would eventually become identified with true religion, this was not the case in the times of Melchizedek. It was then home to religion of such corruption that God told the Jews to utterly drive the first inhabitants out and to seize their land. Further, much of the false religion that is in the world today was spawned in that part of the world. In the midst of all this religious darkness, we have the enigmatic Melchizedek, who was described as a “*priest of the most high God*” (Gn 14:18), but no explanation whatsoever was given as to how such a remarkable man could emerge in such an unlikely place. Add to this that nothing was said of Melchizedek’s family lineage, or of when and where he was born, or of when and where he died. Nor does the Bible say anything about any predecessors or successors in his priesthood.

Some of the most important facts about Melchizedek were actually implied by this silence. The Bible was written with such powerful inspiration that even its silence was deliberate and designed. This silence concerning Melchizedek was of particular significance considering the book where he was first mentioned. The primary purpose of the book of Genesis was to relate the origin of all things, yet it said nothing of the origin of Melchizedek or of his priesthood. Melchizedek was seemingly a spontaneously generated light in the midst of great darkness. This was because he represented a heavenly light that would be sent to a darkened earth. There was no mention of his birth because he represented one whose existence extends into eternity past. There was no mention of his death because he represented one who is eternal going forward. There was no mention of predecessors or successors in his priesthood because it represented an eternal priesthood, being occupied by one eternal priest. These important points, conveyed by scriptural silence, were noted by Paul in his exposition in Hebrews 5-7.

To all of this we may add that one of the most important doctrinal verses in all the Bible would be found in the very next chapter of Genesis, where it was said of Abraham, “*And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness,*” (Gn 15:6). This verse was made foundational to the doctrine of justification by faith in the New Testament. However, the typology presented in Melchizedek will expose some technical errors in the thinking of many Christians on this doctrine. These errors have already been considered in my chapter on Adam.

Observe that Abraham did not go to Melchizedek; rather, Melchizedek came to him. Even so, no man will come to God in faith without Christ first coming to Him via the Spirit and regenerating him from spiritual death to life (Mt 11:27). This principle was reinforced by the fact that Abraham partook of the symbols of Christ’s body and blood at the hand of Melchizedek *before* the famous event where he believed God. Now it would be impossible for any man to be accounted as righteous by God without the blood and body of Christ, and equally impossible for any man to be accounted as unrighteous with them, so Abraham was actually *rendered* righteous symbolically by the visit of Melchizedek and the administration of the bread and wine, and Abraham was thereafter *certified* as righteous by his faith in God. Faith is neither a cause nor means to our righteous standing before God; rather, it is the certification of it. The cause and means are entirely the blood and body of Jesus Christ. All this is corroborated in Paul’s lengthy exposition on faith in Hebrews 11. He there said that by faith the elders, including Abraham,

“obtained a good report,” (Heb 11:2). That is, their faith did not make them righteous but showed them to be such. This principle was more clearly conveyed in the case of Abel, who through faith *“obtained witness that he was righteous,”* (Heb 11:4).

In Melchizedek we have the first priest mentioned in the Bible and likely the first priest in the history of the world. He was a father to religious priesthood even as Adam and Noah were fathers to the natural human race. When we see that providence ordained that all three would foreshadow Jesus Christ, then our reasonable conclusion should be that Jesus Christ is the ultimate reason for both our race and our religion. *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,”* (Col 1:19).

Isaac

God famously called Abraham to faith and obedience and promised him that through his seed all families of the earth would be blessed (Gn 12:1-3, 22:18, Gal 3:8). God also promised that He would make Abraham's seed as the dust of the earth and as the stars of heaven (Gn 13:16, 15:5). However, God gave Abraham a wife who was barren even in her youth, and delayed His promise until both Abraham and his wife were well past child-bearing years. This corroborates what all of us know by personal experience, namely, that while God calls on us to believe Him and His word, He does not necessarily make the task easy. However, God has also given man a nature so ingrained that, as surely as he breathes air and drinks water, so surely does he admire conviction, commitment, determination, resilience, tenacity and a refusal to surrender. Also, being endowed with the potential of one who was created in God's own image, man is never defeated so long as he believes. Further, God has put within the hearts of all men the innate belief that trials and adversity while in the pursuit of good serve to the up-building of human character. Now these innate human values were epitomized in Abraham as much as in any Old Testament saint, so there must be significance to the fact that God ordained that they would lead to the birth of a son called Isaac. These facts should cause Isaac to be a prime candidate as a type of Jesus Christ.

However, it is a persistent theme of the Bible that every man in pursuit of the high goals that God has set before him will stumble from time to time, and such was the case also with Abraham, who is, without a doubt, one of the most honored men that ever lived. Jews, Christians and Muslims all claim him as a spiritual father. In a lapse of faith, Abraham undertook to aid the promise of God by having a child through a younger concubine. Neither Jew nor Christian nor Muslim can consistently accuse Abraham in this because multitudes in every class have capitulated to the idea that God cannot fulfill His promises without their help. Such errant views are held notwithstanding the fact that the story of Abraham is sufficient to invalidate them, and indeed, throughout the word of God, His promises and prophecies were usually fulfilled by *overruling* the decisions and actions of men. Such was the case here. God disregarded the scheme of Abraham, reaffirmed His promise, even naming the forthcoming child as "Isaac" and famously proclaiming that "*in Isaac shall thy seed be called*" (Gn 21:12).

By this statement God meant that the former promise of blessing all the world through Abraham's seed was to be administered through Isaac and not through Abraham's other son. The other son, Ishmael, was to be blessed, as with all nations, but the blessing was to emerge through Isaac. However, the New Testament writers credibly contended that this promise was meant in a spiritual and symbolic sense, because Isaac had a natural son named Esau who was not counted as being part of Abraham's promised seed, and indeed, Esau would father a nation that was commonly characterized as being under a curse (Isa 34:5, Rom 9:7-13). Further, had the scripture merely intended natural relationship, then Abraham would have been told that in Jacob (a grandson) would his seed be called, because the nation Israel was to be fully and exclusively defined by Jacob's 12 sons. Add to this what Paul said:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. – Gal 3:16

That is, the promise to Abraham truly had only one descendent in view, this being the Messiah or Christ, and that by means of this one son all nations of the earth would be blessed (Gn 22:18, Gal 3:8). As great as Isaac was, both Jews and Christians acknowledge that the Messiah is far greater. Now if the blessed promise to Abraham concerning the Messiah was epitomized in Isaac, then this would make Isaac a prime candidate as a messianic type. He will be clearly shown as such provided it is understood that the Messiah was and is Jesus Christ.

Parallels between Isaac and Jesus Christ are numerous, including:

- 1) Isaac was a child who had been promised by prophecy (Gn 15:3-5, 17:15-19). Accordingly, Jesus Christ is the most prophesied human who ever lived.
- 2) Both were promised to be progenitors of numerous seed – Isaac in a natural sense and Jesus in a spiritual one.
- 3) The seed of both were to be distinguished by circumcision – natural circumcision in the case of Isaac and circumcision of the heart in the case of Christ (Dt 10:16, 30:6, Jer 4:4, Rom 2:28-29, Php 3:3, Col 2:11). Natural circumcision was a seal of the seed covenant that God had made with Abraham, and the fact that it continued to be practiced even after the birth of Isaac showed that he was not the ultimate promised seed. The practice was not done away in the inspired text until after Jesus Christ.
- 4) The promises concerning both were fulfilled after seemingly protracted periods of time that challenged the faith of those who waited for them.
- 5) Both were conceived supernaturally. Isaac was the son of an aged, barren woman. Jesus was born of a virgin.
- 6) Both were the sons of ancient fathers.
- 7) In the sequence of events leading to the births of both, another son was begotten who would prove an adversary and a rival. This was Ishmael in the case of Isaac and it was corrupted Judaism in the case of Christ. These and other important points were taught by Paul in:

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice,

thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. – Gal 4:21-31

8) These ancillary sons were both loved of their fathers but were both the occasion of great distress to them, and both such sons were eventually sent away.

9) In both cases, the conclusion was that the rival brothers could not be heirs together. Accordingly, the law and grace cannot be mixed (Rom 11:6).

10) Isaac was characterized as the “*only*” son of Abraham (Gn 22:2) even though there was a sense in which Abraham had a prior son and would have several subsequent ones. Accordingly, Jesus was also characterized as the “*only*” Son of God (Jn 3:16) even though others were elsewhere called sons of God in the scripture (1Jn 3:1). Accordingly:

11) Both Isaac and Christ were held in special, unique favor by their respective fathers.

12) But Abraham was so obedient to God that he was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, even as God the Father sacrificed His own Son. Muslims claim it was Ishmael who was offered, but even if this were so, they will be challenged the same as Jews to explain why God here commanded Abraham to perform an act that was elsewhere condemned as abomination. There are countless ways to test a man’s faith without asking him to violate the law of God. God clearly intended this event as more than a mere test of faith. It was symbolic of things to come in Abraham’s future lineage.

13) Abraham offered Isaac under the expectation that he would be raised from the dead (Heb 11:19). God the Father did the same with Jesus Christ. Isaac was delivered at the last moment when God stayed the hand of Abraham and provided him a ram to offer instead.

14) Both were offered on a mountain.

15) Isaac carried the wood upon which he was to be offered. Christ carried His own cross.

16) Both Isaac and Christ were submissive to the prospects of being sacrificed.

17) After Isaac was delivered by the miraculous, divine provision of a ram to be sacrificed in his place, Abraham was inspired to name the location “*Jehovah-jireh*,” which means “the Lord will provide,” (Gn 22:14). Moses, the writer of Genesis, explained that this part of the story became legendary in the ancient world, and was also the motivation for a proverb that was still being used 400 years later. Moses’ exact words on this point were: “*And Abraham called the name of*

that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,” (Gn 22:14). Hence, Abraham and other ancient men understood the event to be prophetic, and its prediction was that God would at some future date, on some future mountain, provide for men a sacrifice whose death would serve in their stead. This was an amazing premonition given the paucity of religious revelation that men then possessed. Jesus Christ was referring to this revelation when He told the Jews of His day, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad,”* (Jn 8:56).

Equally amazing was the degree of importance that God attached to the understanding and appreciation of the simple idea in this prophecy. True religion at this point consisted of little more than simple faith in the one true God of heaven and faith in the simple idea communicated by this prophecy. There was no Mosaic Law at this point, nor a tabernacle or temple, nor a system of sacrificial offerings, nor holy days, nor even a Bible. At the same time, modern archeology tells us that false religions were constructing some of the most impressive structures ever seen on the planet – temples, pyramids, obelisks, tombs, etc. – and these were parts of complex religious systems headed by highly honored and glorified priests. Yet all this was rejected as abomination by the true God of heaven, who accepted no religion apart from the simple one just described. All religionists today should be warned that nothing has really changed. True religion is simply profound, but it is also profoundly simple.

18) After Isaac was resurrected in a figure, and Jesus was resurrected literally, the respective fathers sent out servants to bring a bride to their son. The servant of Abraham who was called to this mission was representative of the apostles and other gospel ministers. The church is repeatedly described in scripture as the bride of Christ (Mt 9:15, 22:1-14, 25:1-13, Jn 3:29, Eph 5:22-33, Rev 21:7-9). Gospel ministers are commissioned to the task of assembling the bride and adorning her for her Husband.

19) In both cases, the appointed servants were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God.

20) Isaac was appointed a bride immediately after the passing of his mother. The Old Testament covenant with Israel was a mother to Jesus inasmuch He was *“made of a woman, made under the law”* (Gal 4:4, Rev 12:1-5), but that law was done away and replaced by the gospel church.

21) Both brides had a prior family connection. Rebekah was distant kin to Isaac. The bride of Christ was joined with Him in an eternal covenant of election made before the foundation of the world (Jn 6:37-40, 17:1-2, Eph 1:3-12, 2Thes 2:13-14, Tit 1:1-3).

22) Neither bride had a prior knowledge of their prospective husbands. The elect of God had no spiritual knowledge of Christ prior to being born again (Eph 2:1-3, Tit 3:3-7).

23) Both brides were made identifiable by their kind and virtuous acts.

24) Both brides came willingly and joyously (Ps 110:3, Jn 6:37-40, 10:27).

25) Both brides became far-removed from their prior natural connections (Mk 10:29-30, Php 3:8).

26) Both husbands put costly adornments on their respective brides. Isaac did his with jewelry and Jesus did His with a robe of righteousness.

27) In an age of prevalent polygamy, neither husband was ever married to anyone else.

Adam was the beginning of the old world. Noah was the beginning of the new one. Melchizedek was the beginning of priestly religion. Isaac was the beginning of the divine promises to Abraham, which were actually promises to all nations of the world. In all of these beginnings, providence arranged events to tell a common story. One important rule of reason states that what is last in execution is first in intent and vice versa. There is no reasonable doubt as to the divine intent regarding these who served as the first in their respective roles. This should suggest to us what will be last in execution, and all men would do well to heed it.

Joseph

What the book of Genesis started with a whisper, it ended with a shout. Adam was a type of Christ in a few things, but the parallels between Joseph and Christ are multitudinous, and no sensible Bible scholar will boast of detecting them all. The power of the typology will explain why inspiration committed so much of the first book of the Bible to telling the story of this one man. The story entailed 14 chapters of Genesis (37-50) or approximately one-fourth of the book. This is remarkable given that it covered the creation with only two chapters and the first 1500 years of world history with only six. Equally remarkable is the fact that Joseph will have a near nil role in the remainder of the Bible. His name nearly disappears from the book apart from places where it was used to identify his family. This tells us that the story of Joseph was not truly about Joseph. John the Baptist captured the true intent when he said of Jesus Christ, "*He must increase, but I must decrease,*" (Jn 3:30). Joseph would happily profess the same.

The story of Joseph is too lengthy for me to retell, so I will depend upon the reader to review it before considering the parallels I present below. I will present 100 of them, mostly because this is a good round number. Some scriptural analysts claim to have identified far more.

1) Both Joseph and Jesus were miraculously brought into the world. Joseph was born of Rachel who had been barren (Gn 30:22). Jesus was born of a virgin (Isa 7:14, Lk 1:31-35).

2) Joseph was the son of an aged father (Gn 37:3). Christ is the Son of an Eternal Father who is called the "*Ancient of Days*" (Dn 7:9).

3) The Bible never complained of any fault in Joseph even though the book had a remarkable tendency to divulge the sins of even the greatest of men. No fault in Joseph was presented because he was set up to represent the faultless Messiah.

4) Both Joseph and Christ were superior to all their brethren.

5) Both were preferred above their brethren by their respective Fathers (Gn 37:3, Mt 17:5).

6) Both were envied of their brethren.

7) The envy against both was fully provoked by inspired revelations that they would have supremacy over their brethren (Gn 37:19-20, Mt 26:64-66).

8) Joseph had two prophetic dreams. His first dream was about a time of harvest wherein his brethren's sheaves would bow to his sheaf (Gn 37:6-7). This showed that he would attain supremacy over them on earth. The same is true of Christ, whose supremacy will be fully manifested in the harvest of the world (Mt 13:37-43, Rev 14:15).

9) In Joseph's second dream (Gn 37:9-10), the sun, moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him. In this he represented one whose supremacy will extend from the temporal earth to the

eternal heaven. While these celestial bodies were also descriptive of Joseph's father, mother and brethren (Gn 37:10), the symbolism goes beyond this. With the two dreams together, Joseph represented Him who said, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,*" (Mt 28:18).

10) Joseph was adorned by his father with a coat of many colors (Gn 37:3). This is a legendary component of the story, but one which received curious emphasis. Now Jesus is adorned by His Father with an elect people of all races of men with their various colors. The meaning of the symbolism will be better seen by considering the rainbow. It was used by God earlier in Genesis as a symbol of His covenant with all living things, including all races of men (Gn 9:12-17). It is still used as a symbol of such today, though in perverted, God-defying ways. The rainbow appeared again in Revelation 10:1 in a prophecy about the end of the world. It was likely used there to show that God had honored His important covenant in Genesis 8:20-22 with all men.

11) Both were sent by their fathers to seek out their brethren (Gn 37:13-17).

12) Joseph found his brethren in a place where they were not expected to be. Christ found his brethren in a place they were not supposed to be inasmuch as their religion had drifted far from what God intended.

13) Both Joseph and Christ endured the rebellion of their brethren against their titles to supremacy.

14) Joseph's brethren conspired against him upon seeing him "*afar off*" (Gn 37:18). Accordingly, Satan conspired against Christ from the earliest days of the earth with a plan to destroy the lineage from which He was to be born (Est 3:5-6, Mt 2:16, Rev 12:3-5).

15) Reuben, a brother to Joseph, sought to deliver Joseph from this conspiracy (Gn 37:21) even as Pontius Pilate sought to deliver Christ (Jn 19:12), however:

16) Upon failing in the attempt, Reuben, like Pontius Pilate, became complicit in the cover-up (Mt 27:24).

17) Hence, both Joseph and Christ were betrayed by their own brethren.

18) Both were disrobed (Gn 37:23, Jn 19:23-24).

19) Joseph was put in a pit where there was no water (Gn 37:24). Jesus thirsted on the cross (Ps 69:21, Jn 19:28).

20) The brethren debated what to do with Joseph, but the final scheme was one proposed by Judah, who was father of the dominant tribe when Jesus was crucified (Gn 37:26-27). Most of the other tribes had been dispersed long before.

21) The proposed conspiracy made the Midianite Gentiles complicit in the crime, even as the Jews did with the Romans in the case of Christ.

22) Both Joseph and Jesus were sold for silver (Gn 37:28, Zech 11:12-13, Mt 26:15).

23) Both were betrayed to the custody of the Gentiles.

24) Joseph was carried into Egypt with spices, balm and myrrh (Gn 37:25). Jesus was buried with spices and ointments (Lk 23:56).

25) Joseph's coat of many colors was dipped in blood. Revelation described Jesus saying, "*And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God,*" (Rev 19:13). Joseph's dipped coat was also a symbol of the many races of the world being covered in the blood of Christ.

26) Jacob was deceived into thinking that Joseph was dead and he grieved many years on this account. Jacob's alternate name was "Israel" and he served as a symbol of the better element of that nation. Likewise, the nation has been deceived into thinking that Jesus is dead and has suffered immeasurably because of this illusion. Jacob said, "*I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning,*" (Gn 37:35). Even so, there have been occasions where the nation has been brought to the brink of death because of its illusion that Jesus is dead.

27) Jacob errantly assumed that Joseph had been destroyed by an "*evil beast*" (Gn 37:33). This is remarkably reminiscent of a scene described in Revelation:

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. – Rev 12:1-5

The dragon (i.e. "evil beast") here is a symbol of Satan as he will be in his consummate conspiracy. The woman is Israel, and the child is of course Jesus Christ. The scene itself is a flashback representing all satanic attempts to destroy Christ from Eden forward.

Another scene in Revelation is equally relevant:

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they

worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? – Rev 13:1-4

This evil beast is a representation of the final world kingdom and its ruler, the antichrist. Observe how the beast has a mortally wounded head but has nonetheless lived. The oldest of all prophecies about Christ had portrayed Him as wounding the head of Satan (Gn 3:15), but here we have the beast surviving the wound. The appearance is that Christ, and the oldest prophecy concerning Him, have been defeated. The result will be that almost the entire world will be brought to the illusion that Jesus is defeated and dead.

28) Joseph was carried by the Midianites into Egypt and sold to Potiphar (Gn 37:36), a high-ranking officer of a king. Jesus was delivered to Pontius Pilate, another high-ranking officer of a king.

29) In all the abuse he endured, Joseph was sold twice, once to the Midianites and once to Potiphar. Jesus was “sold-out” twice, once to Herod and once to Pilate (Lk 23:11).

30) However, Potiphar greatly prospered because of Joseph and decided to give him complete authority to manage his estate. When the story of Joseph is all told, three times Gentiles will discover that they highly prospered by putting all they had into Joseph’s hands. These will be Potiphar, the jailor and Pharaoh. Accordingly, multitudes of Gentiles would learn in the future that they reach the height of blessedness when putting all they have in the hands of Jesus Christ. As Peter commanded, “*Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you,*” (1Pet 5:7).

31) Potiphar became so wealthy under the management of Joseph that he was not even privy to the possessions he had (Gn 39:6). The Bible says that in Christ “*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Col 2:3), and it says He “*is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,*” (Eph 3:20).

32) Joseph was then tempted by Potiphar’s wife, who was a whorish and adulterous woman. Such women were repeatedly used in the Bible as symbols of those who compromise with false gods and false religious principles (Jer 3:8-9, Ezek 6:9, 16:28-32, Hos 3:1, Rev 17:1-6). It happens that all temptations of Jesus were of this sort (Mt 19:3-9, 22:16-21, Lk 4:3-13, Jn 8:3-7).

33) Both Joseph and Jesus prevailed in their temptations.

34) When the wife of Potiphar saw that Joseph would not comply with her, she incited opposition against him. The same was done to Jesus by the priests (Mt 27:15-25, Mk 15:6-11).

35) Hence, Joseph’s faithfulness initially proved to be his undoing. Potiphar’s wife likely would not have accused him had he committed adultery with her. Accordingly, Jesus said of Himself: “*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father,*” (Jn 15:24).

36) Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of defying the Egyptians (Gn 39:14). The priests, who were the most depraved characters in the story of Jesus, falsely accused Him of defying the Romans (Lk 23:2, Jn 19:12-15).

37) Joseph was cast into prison with two transgressors, the butler and baker of Pharaoh (Gn 40:1). Jesus was crucified between two transgressors who were thieves (Isa 53:12, Mt 27:38).

38) In both cases, one of the transgressors was saved but the other lost (Gn 40:20-23, Lk 23:43).

39) In neither case was any reason given why one was saved and the other lost. This shows the sovereignty of God in the matter of salvation.

40) These two transgressors had prophetic dreams about their fates. These dreams were interpreted by Joseph. The saved transgressor, or the butler, dreamed that he would do well, benefitting from a fruitful vine (Gn 40:9-13), which was the same imagery applied by Jesus to Himself in John 15:1-10.

41) The lost transgressor, or the baker, dreamed that he would fail, being harmed by the fact that birds would eat up his bread (Gn 40:16-19), which was the same imagery applied by Jesus Christ to the seed that had fallen by the wayside in His famous parable of the sower (Mt 13:3-9).

42) The baker was hung from a tree even as the impenitent thief was hung on a cross made from a tree (Gn 40:19-22, Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, 1Pet 2:24).

43) Joseph found favor with the Egyptian jailor (Gn 39:21-23). Jesus found favor with the Roman centurion (Mk 15:39).

44) The jailor put the prison under the management of Joseph and all prisoners were put under Him. Even so, Jesus said of Himself: *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death,"* (Rev 1:18).

45) The exonerated butler was restored to his position under Pharaoh but forgot the favor done him by Joseph until a time of trouble came (Gn 40:23, 41:27). People notoriously do the same to Jesus Christ.

46) When Pharaoh later had troubling dreams, the butler remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh of his extraordinary ability to interpret. Joseph was then carried instantly from the prison to the presence of Pharaoh where Joseph quickly achieved greatness. Jesus went instantly from the grave to triumph in heaven where He is seated by the right hand of God.

47) After all his humiliation, Joseph appeared before Pharaoh in honor and dignity (Gn 41:14). After the dishonor done Him, Jesus appeared immediately in glory before God the Father.

48) Joseph introduced himself to Pharaoh promising *"an answer of peace"* (Gn 41:16). All who seek counsel from Jesus will find the same. Indeed, He is called the *"Prince of Peace"* (Isa 9:6).

Accordingly, He told His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,*” (Jn 14:27).

49) Joseph informed Pharaoh that his dreams had been inspired by God, and these dreams are therefore symbols of inspiration in general. Now the wise men under Pharaoh were unable to make sense of his dreams (Gn 41:8). Accordingly, the presumed wise men of the world have never been able to make sense of the inspired word of God (Jn 8:43-47, 1Cor 2:14).

50) Joseph became renowned for the wisdom of his counsel. In a famous prophecy (Isa 9:6), Jesus was actually called “*Counsellor*” because in Him “*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,*” (Col 2:3).

51) Joseph informed Pharaoh that his dreams were “*one*” (Gn 41:25). Even so, all inspiration is unified around one common theme, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pharaoh’s dreams were interpreted as predicting that Egypt would be blessed with seven years of plenty to be followed by seven years of dearth. Joseph advised Pharaoh to store grain in the years of plenty in preparation for the dearth to follow. Hence:

52) While Joseph was before Pharaoh, they twain purposed and planned the salvation of multitudes of people. The salvation of the elect in Christ was purposed and planned between God and His Son before the foundation of the world (Rom 8:28-30, Tit 1:1-3).

53) The plan of salvation between Joseph and Pharaoh would bring great riches and glory to Pharaoh. The plan of salvation between God and Christ will bring great glory to God the Father (Jn 17:1, Php 2:9-11).

54) Pharaoh judged that none were more discreet than Joseph (Gn 41:39). God has judged the same of Christ and this is why all judgment has been committed to the Son (Jn 5:22, Acts 17:31).

55) Joseph was put in complete charge of the plan of salvation because the “*Spirit of God*” was in him beyond any other man (Gn 41:38). Accordingly, God gives the Spirit unto Jesus Christ without measure (Jn 3:34).

56) Hence, Joseph ascended to greatness in a foreign land even as the heavenly Jesus ascended to greatness here on earth.

57) The plan called for Joseph to appoint officers to gather the fruit of Egypt. Even so, Jesus appoints apostles and ministers to gather fruit unto God (Jn 15:16, Rom 7:4, Col 1:3-6).

58) Pharaoh gave Joseph a wife. Accordingly, God has given the church to be the bride of Christ (Mt 22:1-14, Eph 5:25-33, Rev 19:5-9).

59) The wife of Joseph was a Gentile, thus portending that such would be the primary composition of the church. Scriptural prophecy indicates that the Jews will be gathered to the church in the end, hence:

60) The Gentiles recognized the greatness of Joseph before the Jews, even as with Christ.

61) The Gentiles were blessed by the greatness of Joseph before the Jews, even as with Christ.

62) Pharaoh ordered that every knee in Egypt was to bow to Joseph. The same is true of Jesus Christ, as is stated in:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – Phil 2:9-11

63) The Egyptians were to raise neither hand nor foot without Joseph (Gn 41:44). Accordingly, Jesus said, “*without me ye can do nothing*,” (Jn 15:5).

64) Joseph became minister to Egypt at 30 years of age (Gn 41:46). Jesus began His ministry at the same (Lk 3:23).

65) Joseph was thrice promoted to second in command. This happened under Potiphar, the jailor and Pharaoh. Jesus is second only to His Father (1Cor 15:27), and He assumes this exalted role in eternity past, the present and through eternity future. Joseph and Jesus were also alike in that all things were put under their hands by the one who ranked first in command.

66) Joseph’s first child was named “*Manasseh*,” which means “one who forgets.” This was explained by Joseph himself with: “*For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house*,” (Gn 41:51). Now the appearance is that Jesus has forgotten His own Jewish people, though He, like Joseph, will save them in the end.

67) Joseph’s second child was named “*Ephraim*,” which means “fruitful.” Joseph explained this with: “*For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction*,” (Gn 41:52). That is, God had caused him to be fruitful among the Gentiles. The same has been true of Christ.

68) When the years of dearth came upon Egypt, Pharaoh commanded all the hungry to go to Joseph (Gn 41:55). Accordingly, God the Father sends all with spiritual hunger to Christ. This and other relevant principles are expressed in:

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all

which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. – Jn 6:35-39

69) Joseph therefore saved the hungry with bread even as Jesus is the “*bread of life*.”

70) The store of bread created by Joseph endured for seven years and was seemingly inexhaustible. Likewise, the bread of Christ will never fail (Jn 6:48-51).

71) People of many nations were saved by Joseph’s bread. Such is also the case with Christ, as is expressed in the following famous verse:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation... – Rev 5:9

72) The last of the nations that came for Joseph’s bread was Israel. The same will be true of Christ, as may be seen in:

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. – Rom 11:25-26

73) Therefore, it is true with both Joseph and Christ that multitudes of people were saved by means of the evil committed against them.

74) When Joseph’s brethren journeyed to Egypt for bread in the midst of the drought (Gn 42:1-3), they did not recognize Joseph, mostly because he deliberately concealed himself from them (Gn 42:7-8). Even so, the Jews have not recognized Jesus because their eyes have been blinded (Lk 19:42, Rom 11:8).

75) Joseph chastened his brethren and dealt roughly with them even though he intended to save them all along. Such has been God’s dealings with the Jews.

76) When Joseph’s brethren were enduring hardship, they remembered what they had done to Joseph and perceived that they were suffering the same things (Gn 42:21). The same is true of the brethren of Christ. They endure the same sufferings He endured as part of their conformation to His image. This principle is expressed in many places, including:

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. – Rom 8:16-17

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed,

but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. – 2Cor 4:7-11

77) Joseph's brethren attempted to pay him for their grain but could not. He always secretly put their money back into their sacks (Gn 42:25). Accordingly, salvation in Christ is free and cannot be bought (1Pet 1:18-20). It can only be appreciated.

78) When the brethren later found the money in their sacks, they attributed it to the workings of God, but considered it to be a judgment against them for their sins, and they thought this money would serve to their sure condemnation (Gn 42:28). Even so, the initial effects of spiritual quickening will be a sense of condemnation and mourning, even though these are truly evidences of eternal life (Mt 5:3-6, Mt 9:13).

79) At a later date, a Gentile steward would confirm to Joseph's brethren that the money in their sacks was indeed the working of their God and the God of their father (Gn 43:23), but the steward informed them that it was a work of grace, not of condemnation. This prefigures the fact that the Gentiles would come to an understanding of eternal salvation before most of the Jews, and that Gentile preachers will be important teachers of the Jews when their time will come.

80) Before Joseph revealed himself to his brethren, he privately wept for them (Gn 42:24). Jesus did the same for His brethren in:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. – Lk 19:41-44

81) Joseph's brethren mourned over their sin against Joseph. The Jews will do the same for their sins against Christ, as was prophesied in:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. – Zech 12:9-10

82) Joseph insisted that his brethren not approach him again without being accompanied with his younger brother Benjamin (Gn 42:15-20). All brothers apart from Benjamin had come to Egypt

seeking food. Joseph and Benjamin were the two sons of the deceased Rachel, who was dearly loved by Jacob, and these two sons were very special to him on such account. When the time came that Jacob and family needed grain again from Egypt, Jacob did not want Benjamin to be taken for fear of something happening to him. But Judah finally persuaded Jacob to commit Benjamin to his care. Now these two men would be fathers of the two prevalent tribes in the times of Christ. The other 10 tribes had been almost entirely dispersed long before.

83) Joseph forgave his brethren (Gn 45:1-3) even as Jesus forgave His crucifiers (Lk 23:34).

84) Joseph was not known by his brethren until he revealed himself to them. The same is true of the elect in Christ. As Jesus said:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. – Mt 11:27

85) When the brethren came to Egypt the second time, they were accompanied by Benjamin per Joseph's prior demand. However, Joseph made it appear that Benjamin was guilty of crime, and threatened to detain him on such account, thus fulfilling Jacob's fear that harm would come to Benjamin if he ventured into Egypt. Joseph revealed himself to his brethren after being emotionally moved by a speech of Judah wherein he pleaded for Benjamin and offered himself to be detained in Benjamin's stead. In this speech, Judah spoke passionately of the great love Jacob had for Benjamin and the unbearable grief that would be caused him if Benjamin were harmed. Judah also displayed great love for his father's welfare in offering himself to be detained. All this showed that Judah and his brethren had fully repented because they did not envy Jacob's special love for Benjamin as they had done for Joseph. However, the more important point is that Joseph was moved to reveal himself upon a poignant speech serving to show the father's love for his children and his children's love for him. Now all this powerfully accorded with the final prophecy of the Old Testament:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. – Mal 4:5-6

This is a prophecy about the latter day conversion of the Jews to Christ, and it characterized that conversion as a reunification of the children in fellowship with the religion of their fathers.

86) Joseph's brethren bowed to him exactly as had been predicted in Joseph's dreams (Gn 42:6, 43:26). Every knee shall also bow to Jesus:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in

earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – Phil 2:9-11

87) Joseph gave his brethren new raiment (Gn 45:22). Jesus clothes his brethren with the raiment of righteousness (Rev 3:18, 7:9).

88) Joseph prepared his brethren a feast (Gn 43:16). Even so, Christ will give His brethren the marriage supper of the lamb (Lk 14:16-24, Rev 19:7).

89) The betrayal of Joseph would lead to a sequence of events ending with the departure of Israel from the Promised Land. The betrayal of Jesus did the same. About 40 years after His crucifixion, the Jews began to be dispersed by the Romans.

90) Pharaoh ordered Joseph's family to leave their stuff in Canaan on promise that they would be well-supplied in Egypt (Gn 45:20). Accordingly, Christians are to leave all and follow Christ (Lk 14:33).

In the story of Joseph, Benjamin served as a strong type of the Jewish Christian remnant, as it existed both in New Testament times and as it will exist near the end of the world. Hence:

91) Only Benjamin, who was the smallest tribe, did not betray Joseph.

92) Only Benjamin, who was the last tribe, did not betray Joseph. In this, Benjamin was a type of the latter-day remnant.

93) Jacob said he would die of grief if Benjamin were lost. Accordingly, Israel would have been destroyed had it not been for the remnant. So said Isaiah in: *"Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah,"* (Isa 1:9). This is also why Jesus referred to the remnant as the *"salt of the earth"* (Mt 5:13).

94) Benjamin was blessed by Joseph much more than his other brethren. Even so, the remnant is highly favored by God and Christ (Rev 14:1-5).

95) Joseph hid his divining cup in Benjamin's sack (Gn 44:1-15). In like manner, Christ has blessed the remnant with special spiritual revelation, and this is why all books of the Bible were written by members of such. Christ hid His divining cup in their sack.

96) Benjamin appeared guilty to his brethren on account of the divining cup in his sack, but he was in fact innocent. Likewise, the inspired remnant has appeared foolish to the world on account of the revelation given to them. As Paul said,

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; And labour,

working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day. – 1Cor 4:10-13

97) Joseph left the world promising his survivors that God would visit them in the future (Gn 50:25). Jesus left the world promising to send the Holy Ghost (Jn 14:25-26, Acts 1:8).

98) Joseph's descendants, Ephraim and Manasseh, were made joint heirs with him to the Promised Land (Gn 48:5). All the elect of God are joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:16-17).

99) Spiritual darkness came upon Israel after Joseph's death. They became mostly ignorant of the God of their fathers and acquired the beliefs and habits of the Egyptians. The same happened to Israel after the times of Christ. Their bad state became only worse, and soon they were driven from the land and dispersed.

100) When Joseph died, his body was buried in a strange land, but was thereafter taken to the Promised Land. Jesus' body was buried on a wicked and hostile earth, but resurrected and taken to heaven.

This list of parallels is so lengthy that the belligerent will surely be tempted to say that the story of Jesus must have been fabricated and adapted to the story of Joseph, but such a theory has no credibility. Joseph is scarcely mentioned in the Bible past the book of Genesis except for purposes of identifying his descendants. New Testament writers do not even mention him as being a type of Christ, even though he is the most amazing of all types when measuring by the number of parallels. The typology in Joseph is evidently of the "*hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory,*" (1Cor 2:7).

This spectacular display of inspiration is found at the end of the most highly assailed book in the Bible. No book is more vigorously criticized and challenged by modern so-called science than the book of Genesis. Notwithstanding, many Christians, being aware of this prodigious proof of its inspiration, have been justifiably hesitant to accept as true science any theory presuming to challenge what Genesis says concerning the creation, the origin of man or the earliest days of his history. This includes Christians who are themselves highly intelligent, educated and scientific. This spectacular display of inspiration also explains why all purportedly scientific theories that defy Genesis have encountered a ceaseless sequence of setbacks as new discoveries have been made. The book of Genesis concludes with a parting shot over the bow to give fair warning to all skeptics. It is as though the Great Mind that authored the book anticipated its many critics, and erected a huge sign at the end of the book saying, "Don't tread on me."

Moses

The next several chapters of this book will consider Moses and numerous features of the law that he gave. The Jews who opposed Jesus in His times claimed they did so in honor to Moses. The truth is they did not honor him enough. Indeed, they rebelled against him, as was also the case with the Jews of Moses' own generation. The sad irony is that anyone familiar with the pagans of those days will know that Moses would have been worshipped as a god in most such cultures. The true God concealed the location of his burial possibly to protect him from such dishonor. Types and shadows of Christ are so ubiquitous to the writings of Moses that one must wonder if Moses knew more about Him than what he actually revealed. If so, then Moses wrote under divinely imposed constraint, and this theory would be consistent with God's purpose to hide Christ from the greater part of Israel. Still, Moses appears as a man seeking every opportunity to tell the story of Jesus Christ within the limits that God set. The extent and power of his testimony was such that Jesus said, *"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"* (John 5:46-47). In another place, Jesus said of the Jews, *"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead,"* (Lk 16:31). These statements not only comment upon the obstinance of the Jews but also upon the prodigious nature of the evidence they were opposing in the writings of Moses.

In many respects, Moses would be considered the extreme opposite of Christ inasmuch as one man epitomized the law and the other was the foundation of all grace. Even John noted this contrast, saying, *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,"* (Jn 1:17). Notwithstanding, the New Testament explained that the law and grace are truly complementary, and that the law was a schoolmaster intended to lead us to Christ, which it did by showing the necessity of grace, setting forth Jesus Christ in prophecy, and telling His story through a multitude of types and shadows. This claim should change our expectations because, if it is true, then Moses might very well be presented to us as a type of Christ. Indeed, upon further investigation we will find that there is no stronger type in the Bible. Moses himself declared this in some famous prophecies:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. – Dt 18:15

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. – Dt 18:18-19

The New Testament definitely referred to these prophecies on two occasions (Acts 3:22 & 7:37) and possibly others (Jn 1:45 & 5:46, Acts 26:22). The quote from Acts 7:37 was particularly important because it was a climactic moment in the sermon preached by Stephen immediately

before he was stoned. This seems to mark a critical turning point in history. From that moment forward, the gospel would be mostly taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. Also, in seeking a candidate for the terminal point of Daniel's famous 70 weeks (Dn 9:24), there is no better candidate than this. In short time thereafter, Israel endured the destruction, dispersion and desolation described by Daniel's prophecy.

Being prompted by these important prophecies to a deeper inspection of the matter, we will find that the similarities between Moses and Christ are more numerous than can be dismissed to chance. In particular:

1) Both men were given supreme authority by God. While there were many great men in the Old Testament in addition to Moses, these were subordinate to Moses inasmuch as they were obligated to his law. For example, Elijah was a great prophet, but Elijah was subject to the law of Moses. David and Solomon were great kings, but they were under the authority of Moses as much as any pauper in Israel. The authority of Moses was so great that only the voice of God could displace it, and this explains why He spoke to this effect on the Mount of Transfiguration and why every synoptic gospel recorded this important event (Mt 17:1-8, Mk 9:1-8, Lk 9:27-36). In like manner, the authority of Jesus is absolute, as implied by His saying that, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,*" (Mt 28:18).

2) Wicked men attempted to kill both while they were infants. When Moses was a babe, Pharaoh ordered that all Hebrew infants be slain if male (Ex 1:8-22). This was done to limit population growth among the Hebrews. Herod, in a deliberate attempt to destroy the Messiah before He could challenge Herod's power, ordered the killing of all infants in Bethlehem (Mt 2:16). The Old Testament prophesied this event by describing the deceased Rachel as weeping for her children (Jer 31:15-16). Rachel was actually buried at Bethlehem (Gn 35:19).

3) Both men were "drawn out" of the water. Moses was distinguished by the fact that he was drawn out of the river where his mother had hidden him in an ark of bulrushes to escape the infanticide of Pharaoh. Indeed, Moses' name means "drawn out" (Ex 2:10). The story of Jesus' ministry began with Him being drawn out of the Jordan River in baptism (Mk 1:10).

4) Moses was of earthly royalty, being the adopted grandson of Pharaoh. Jesus was of heavenly royalty, being the Son of God.

5) Both men relinquished their royalty and condescended to the common people.

6) Notwithstanding their condescension, both were initially rejected by their own people.

7) After being rejected, both took up fellowship with Gentiles and both took Gentile brides. The figurative bride of Christ is His church (Mt 22:2-14, Eph 5:25-33), which has primarily consisted of Gentiles throughout nearly all of her history.

8) Moses initially requested that Pharaoh grant the Israelites mere freedom to serve their God (Ex 3:18). Pharaoh was destroyed in the end because he was belligerent concerning this request. Accordingly, Jesus commands obedience to civil authorities, but also commands that the true God be served. Civil authorities will be destroyed in the end because of their opposition and obstruction to the latter command.

9) The adversaries of both Moses and Jesus were hardened or blinded by God that He might multiply his wondrous acts (Ex 7:3 & 14:17, Jn 12:37-41). While the blinding of Israel did not necessarily lead to more miracles being done by Christ, it surely did lead to the gospel being carried to the Gentiles (Rom 11:11), thus multiplying the men who would be knowledgeable of God's wondrous acts.

10) Both were unsurpassed workers of miracles.

11) Both were gloriously transfigured in a mountain (Ex 34:29-33, Mt 17:2).

12) Both were ordained to lead a people under divine covenant.

13) Both baptized their covenant people. The children of Israel were figuratively baptized when enveloped in water at the Red Sea crossing. They had the walls of the sea on both sides and the miraculous cloud overhead (1Cor 10:1-2). Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost (Jn 1:33) and commissioned his disciples to baptize with water (Jn 4:1-2).

14) Upon their deaths, both had their bodies taken by God.

15) Both saved their people from their sins by interceding with God in their behalf.

The last point is the most important of all because it was the foremost intent in the prophecies of Moses quoted above. This may be seen by considering the full context of what Moses said:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. – Dt 18:15-18

Hence, the primary similarity between Moses and the promised Prophet pertained to the time that Moses interceded in behalf of the nation after their transgression with the golden calf (Ex 32-34). This intercession took place on or near Moses' second trip up Mount Horeb (which is the same with "Sinai"). Close inspection of this event divulges many more parallels wherein Moses prefigured Jesus Christ and His New Covenant.

On the first trip up Horeb, Moses received the two stone plates with the Ten Commandments. These plates and the writing thereon had both been supplied by God. Because Moses tarried on the mountain longer than expected, many below assumed he had died, and they promptly abandoned the God of Moses for the worship of a golden calf they had made. In all of this, they were imitating the corrupt religion they had learned from the Egyptians. The Lord told Moses of the folly taking place in the camp below, and threatened to destroy them all except Moses. However, Moses persuaded God to spare them, claiming it would not be in the interest of His glory, and that it would seem to conflict with promises He had made to their forefathers. When Moses then came down the mountain and saw the idolatry and revelry for himself, it was evidently worse than he had expected, so that he was provoked into breaking the two stone plates. Even though God had already been persuaded to spare them, He threatened to relegate them to the oversight of an angel rather than personally accompanying them into Canaan. This threat produced great dismay in Israel because it was construed as meaning they would no longer be aided by the spectacular power that had delivered them from Egypt. Moses was also troubled and undertook to intercede with God in behalf of the people.

Now stories such as this will serve to the delight of infidels, who will adduce them as sure proof that the God of the Bible cannot be real and the Bible itself cannot be inspired. Others will sink into despair because they had verily hoped the Bible to be the word of God, but such stories seem irreconcilable with common sense. It seems altogether dubious that a mortal man could pacify and persuade an omniscient, loving God to repent of His intent to destroy an entire nation. However, when the Bible would otherwise seem ridiculous, the reader should be on high alert. Such things are done by God to amuse the foolish and to amaze the wise. The story takes on sudden sensibility when it is understood that there was a deeper intent to produce a portrait of the intercession of Jesus Christ for His people. Parallels between this story and God's scheme of redemption in Christ include:

16) Moses persuaded God to spare the people from destruction on the basis that it would be contrary to His glory and that it would put His word in doubt. These two principles would become the pillars of the New Covenant in Christ. Man is not saved because he is deserving of it but because it is in the interest of God's glory. God created man in his own image. Man has since become a fallen degenerate, so the image of God has become defaced. In the interest of His own glory, God purposed and planned to restore man to the image of His glorious Son (Rom 8:29). The next principle is that the word of God is inviolable. Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,*" (Mt 24:35). Thus, it would be easier to destroy the Universe than to overthrow even one of God's words. This is why Jesus regarded the Bible as an accurate and absolute authority, and all true Christians must do the same. If the Bible is not this, then deliverance from death to heaven could not be sure, and would be mostly based on wishful thinking.

17) While the prior point shows that God is protective of His attributes and glory, this story strangely shows that God was quite content for it to *appear* that Israel was saved solely on the

basis of the love that Moses had for his own people. In absence of this, the appearance was that the nation would have been totally destroyed. Now this strange fact should definitely capture the attention and alert the reader that something profound underlies the superficial. This seeming contradiction is, in fact, at complete accord with the New Testament principle that all thanks and praise to God for salvation are to be channeled through His Son. *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,”* (Col 1:19).

18) When Moses shattered the two plates at the base of the mountain, this was a picture of what all men have done to the law of God. *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...”* (Rom 3:23).

These points bring us to measures taken by God and Moses to remediate the transgression:

19) The people were ordered to divest themselves of all bodily ornaments (Ex 33:5-6). Even so, our salvation is in no part owing to the decisions or actions of our fleshly beings, and no glory whatsoever is to be given to such (Rom 8:5-8, 1Cor 2:14).

20) Moses set up a special structure called the *“Tabernacle of the Congregation”* for purposes of meeting with God (Ex 33:7). This was not the same structure ordinarily called the “tabernacle.” The latter had not yet been built. But it was analogous to the Holiest of Holies inasmuch as both were typical of heaven. The remainder of the story is an enactment of a far greater transaction that took place in heaven in eternity between God and His Son.

21) Moses met with God face to face as a man would speak to a friend (Ex 33:11). Accordingly, there is an eternal, loving relationship between God and His Son (Jn 17:5).

22) Moses pleaded for Israel solely on the basis of God’s favor for him personally. He offered no defense for them and made no promises of obedience on their part. God had formerly expressed favor for Moses, and Moses based his request entirely upon this fact. Even so, the elect family of God will be delivered entirely upon the basis of God’s favor for Jesus Christ.

23) Moses boldly bargained for terms even better than what Israel had before their transgression. The former terms were that God would bless them if they would distinguish themselves from other nations, but Moses asked that God would distinguish them from other nations *by* blessing them (Ex 33:16). Accordingly, Christ gave His people even better terms than they had in Eden.

24) Quite surprisingly, God instantly agreed to the terms presented by Moses without any resistance or qualification (33:14). This is also true of salvation in Christ. *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,”* (Heb 7:25).

25) Moses, evidently being emboldened by this agreement, further asked that God would show him His glory. God agreed to this also, but in a curious way, saying:

I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. – Ex 33:19

God's purpose and plan to save His people was made sure to them by His visible appearance in the form of Jesus Christ, who is "*the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,*" (Heb 1:3). The most crucial question religion will ever address is not whether God exists, because even science answers this, but it is whether God cares. The greater we perceive God to be, the less credible becomes the claim that He would consider men as being of any significance, but such fears are resolutely allayed if the one who healed us and resurrected us and assured us and died for us was in fact God manifest in the flesh to us.

Before moving to the next parallel, we should consider some profound possibilities that were produced by the scripture above. God explained to Moses that no man could see Him in full glory and live (33:20), but God agreed to show Moses all His "*goodness*" and to proclaim to him the name of the Lord. Now the term "*goodness*" does not typically mean righteousness in a generic sense but means kindness, care, benevolence, etc. (e.g. Rom 5:7). Though God would not agree to show Moses His full glory, He did agree to show "*all*" His goodness. But how does goodness occur in visible form? Also, why would God speak of the "*Lord*" as another person when declaring His name? Had not Moses already been told His name?

A plausible resolution to these questions would be that God actually presented Jesus Christ to Moses and declared to Moses His name. Curiously, Moses never divulged the name he was given, but, in retrospect, there is no surprise in this given that it was God's purpose to conceal Jesus' true identity from Israel (Isa 6:9-12). Now if all this is true, then it shows what an exceptional man Moses was. It appears that many prophets in the Bible wrote what they were moved to write without fully understanding it (1Pet 1:9-12). However, Moses may have actually understood more than he revealed, and he revealed only what God would allow. This might also shed light on the following statement Moses made to Israel:

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. – Dt 29:29

This statement shows that Moses knew there were things in the plan of God that were being withheld from Israel, and that these were mysterious things that might be very perplexing to them if known, but Moses assured them that these mysteries did not change the simple fact that Israel would be blessed in keeping the law and cursed in breaking it.

26) But for Moses to see the Lord in the form revealed, it was necessary that Moses be protected in the cleft of a rock (33:22). This part of the story is legendary, and has served to the inspiration of many hymns. Scriptures repeatedly symbolize Jesus Christ with a rock (Isa 8:14, 32:2, Dn 2:34-35, Mt 7:24-27, 1Cor 10:4), and the symbolic lesson here was that man can see Jesus in His

glory only under the protection of Jesus Himself. When Jesus returns, the same light that will gloriously transform His children (1Jn 3:2) will incinerate the wicked (2Thes 2:8).

27) When God agreed to pardon Israel, He said to Moses that He would be gracious to whom He would be gracious and would show mercy to whom He would show mercy (Ex 33:19). This was a reminder to Moses that God's kindness to Israel was not an act of debt or duty but of His sovereign prerogative. Now divine sovereignty would prove a leading principle of the New Covenant, to the extent that Jesus made it the subject of His first sermon (Lk 4:23-27) and taught it in other lessons as well (Mt 20:1-16).

28) Moses was ordered back up Mount Horeb to receive a second pair of stone tables, but this time there was a significant difference. Whereas God had provided the first pair of tables, Moses was to provide the second, though in both cases the writing was by the finger of God (Ex 34:1, Dt 10:1-2). This difference in the tables can be explained by:

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. – 2Cor 3:3

So under the New Covenant, man provides the heart and God provides the writing, even as Moses provided the tablets and God provided the writing on the second set of plates.

29) Moses was strictly commanded to ascend the mountain alone on his second trip, whereas Joshua had accompanied him on the first. This shows that eternal salvation is not partly by Christ and partly by our own efforts or the efforts of others, but it is owing to Christ alone.

30) This second set of tables was to be stored in the Ark of the Covenant under the Mercy Seat (Dt 10:2). These tables were a symbol of the law in general, and their being placed under the Mercy Seat showed that God planned to make a merciful atonement for the sins of His children.

31) God promised to do miracles on unequalled scale, and that the whole world would see them. While miracles were of course done in Israel in the Old Testament era, never were they done with greater magnitude or frequency than by Jesus Christ, and His miracles have served to strengthen the faith of men all over the world.

32) When Moses descended from the mount the second time, his face had a miraculous glow that was too strong for human eye, so a veil was put over his face. This prevented Israel from seeing his true glory. Accordingly, Israel has not yet seen the glory of Jesus Christ because the nation has been blinded (2Cor 3:12-16, Isa 6:9-12, Mt 13:10-15, Rom 11:7).

While Abraham was the father of the Jewish race, Moses was the father of the nation. If the true significance of ancient Israel was that they were to be the progenitors of the promised seed, then there should be no surprise that God would use the life of Moses to prophesy this fact. However,

the portrait of Christ seen in Moses' life will not surpass the beauty and detail of what would be depicted in his writings.

The Red Heifer

Under the law given by Moses, a person was legally defiled by any contact with a human corpse or by being in the same tent with one or even by contact with a grave (Num 19). This defilement rendered them unfit to enter the tabernacle, and it was considered an egregious offense for them to do so without first undergoing the proper cleansing ritual. This ritual had them being sprinkled with water that contained the ashes of a red heifer. As with many provisions of the law, all this will seem like ignorance and superstition at first glance, but the perspective radically changes when the procedure is taken as a symbolic message about Jesus Christ.

The specification for the red heifer was:

- 1) The heifer was to be red and without spot or blemish, and without ever having been yoked.
- 2) The heifer was to be taken without the camp and slain before the face of the priest.
- 3) Blood of the heifer was to be sprinkled in the direction of the tabernacle seven times.
- 4) The heifer was then to be completely burned with fire before the face of the priest.
- 5) Cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet were to be cast into the midst of the flames.
- 6) All who handled the heifer were to wash themselves and be counted unclean until evening. The same was true of all who thereafter handled the ashes of the heifer.
- 7) The ashes of the heifer were to be gathered and stored in a place without the camp.
- 8) The ashes were to be used in combination with “*running*” water.
- 9) If any were to be defiled by a corpse, he was to be sprinkled with a mixture of the running water and the ashes of the heifer. This mixture was called the “*water of separation*.”
- 10) He was to be sprinkled on the third and seventh day after his defilement and was counted as clean on the seventh.
- 11) The tent where the death occurred and all its contents were to be sprinkled also.

The rite of the red heifer has been somewhat enigmatic to Jews and even to some Christians. It was also an enormous burden to bear, particularly when it was not altogether clear as to why God required them to bear it. Death exists in every community and there is no practical or conscionable way to avoid the dead and dying. The dead must be honored with bodily preparation and burial, and the dying must receive medical attention to pursue any hope of saving them or to comfort them when hope is gone. The requirements specified above would require that ashes be distributed to every community, and practically everyone in every community would with regularity endure the inconvenience of separation for their defilement, and also endure the burden of the cleansing ritual. In view of all this, one should surely share the sentiments of Peter when he said concerning the law: “*Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?*” (Acts 15:10). Also, Paul said these rituals were “*imposed on them until the time of reformation*,” (Heb 9:10). The word “*imposed*” seems particularly pertinent to the red heifer.

It is also contrary to intuition and conscience that contact with the dead could be so defiling, or that the defilement could be remedied in the manner prescribed. Indeed, we would feel defiled

without such contact, because we consider it an honorable and loving thing to be with our family and friends in their final hours, and would be regretful if we were not. We also consider it an honorable and loving thing to prepare their bodies for burial. Indeed, we think favorably of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea because of the honor they showed to the body of Jesus, and on such account, we entertain high hopes for them even though they evidently were not fully obedient to the gospel. Obviously, there are biological reasons why a dead body could present danger to the living, but there is nothing in our present science to support the idea that the ashes of a red heifer would remedy this.

Unbelievers will therefore dismiss the whole matter to the presumed ignorance of Moses concerning science, but a fair analysis will show that Moses was under no illusion that the ashes of a red heifer were some kind of magical soap. This can be seen in the fact that everyone who handled the heifer or its ashes was counted as unclean. This was a key feature of the ritual. The same ashes that served to cleanse one had the effect of defiling another. The statute also distinguished open vessels as being unclean (Num 19:15) even though it later called for all vessels to be sprinkled. The likely reason for distinguishing open vessels was that they were not only to be sprinkled but also washed or destroyed (per Lev 11:29-36). This obviously was done for scientifically sound reasons of sanitation and health, thus showing that Moses was not as scientifically ignorant as some would like to assume. These considerations strongly suggest that the intent of the red heifer itself was mostly, or altogether, symbolic. However, it surely symbolized things that are of enormous importance to God. This can be inferred from the burdensome nature of the ritual. Also, any Jew failing to perform the rite was to be ejected from the congregation of Israel.

In order to resolve the enigma of the red heifer, we should begin by consulting a great man who was specifically appointed by God to explain such things in the Old Testament. In the book of Hebrews, Paul made a short but revealing statement concerning this heifer in:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? – Heb 9:13-14

The key word in this statement is “*conscience*.” This single word carries us far down the path toward understanding the subject at hand. In the rite of the red heifer, the intended defilement from contact with death was not physical but was in the effects that death has upon the mind.

The New Testament teaches that faith purifies the heart (Acts 15:9), and that without faith one is necessarily defiled (Tit 1:15) and reduced to a state wherein they cannot please God (Heb 11:6). Now there is no greater challenge to faith than the shock and sorrow of death. It reduces many to doubt and fear, and reduces some to bitterness. It also puts our condemnation and curse before our faces. Our religion may be a mere matter of theory to us on other occasions, but in times of

death, our faith will be put to the most stringent test, and we will either believe our religion or be reduced to the depths of despair. Our faith has no margin for error in time of death.

The disciples of Jesus found it easy to have faith in Him when He was walking on water, giving sight to the blind and raising the dead, but while He was dying on the cross, they were all reduced to doubt and despair. One would be hard-pressed to prove there was a single believer on the planet at that time outside of a Jewish thief. Quite possibly, the planet would have been void even of him had it not been for divine enforcement of the principle that the world cannot be left without a witness (Isa 1:9). This would also explain why God thereafter moved the Roman centurion to replace the expiring thief as a witness (Mk 15:39). So, even the disciples themselves became defiled in conscience when daunted by the death of the Savior, and they were on this account later upbraided by Him for their unbelief and hardness of heart (Mk 16:14).

If the disciples were chargeable with such error, then those Jews who rejected Christ were obviously guilty of vastly more, and this fact will do much toward explaining another intent of the red heifer. The ritual was likely instituted in light of the fact that Israel would one day defile itself in a matter concerning a dead body. This would be the worst defilement the nation would ever know. Their consciences were defiled by the dying body of Jesus Christ, because they misconstrued it as justification for rejecting Him. In their darkened understanding, the fact that He *could* die meant that He *should* die, and they felt justified in killing Him. Their taunts of Him while on the cross clearly show this to be so:

He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. – Mt 27:42-43

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. – Lk 23:35

Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. – Mt 27:47-49

The dying body of the Lord Jesus only further hardened them in their unbelief, and incited them to the inconceivable atrocity of reviling their very God while He was dying for their sins. Paul said of them, “*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock,*” (1Cor 1:23). The key word here is “*crucified*” because nearly all of them believed in a Christ, but a *crucified* Christ was totally antithetical to their preconceived notions. Their defilement in respect to this One Body, while dying and when dead, would indeed eliminate the wonder in why God required of them such a prodigious ritual, and would also lead to an explanation of its details:

1) Concerning the use of a heifer, the various sacrificial specifications of the law required either sheep or goats or cattle (in the modern sense). Doves and pigeons were also used, but were usually admitted to the poor as substitutes for the animals just named. These various animals appear to have been consecrated for sacrificial purposes in the confirmation of the covenant with Abraham (Gn 15:1-17), and were probably chosen to represent various characteristics of the one being symbolized. The sheep is known as being innocent, harmless and the common victim of predation. These traits obviously pertained to Jesus Christ, but they are not of themselves completely descriptive. The goat is an animal distinguished by its confidence and fearlessness. Members of its species will scale high mountains and perilous slopes with no compunction or fear. These characteristics also aptly describe Jesus Christ. Doves and pigeons were fitting substitutes for the poor. Though the poor have a low state in this life, they will eventually fly high because of the one represented by the sacrifice. As for cattle, their meat was luxuriant food in biblical times and not eaten as much as today; however, they were commonly trained for the yoke and used as oxen, even by the poor. So the distinguishing traits of this animal were servitude and obedience, and this described Jesus Christ also, and likely explains why an animal of this sort was used in this particular ritual. In suffering and dying under the ridicule of others, Jesus was simply being obedient to God.

This heifer was never to have been yoked *by man* because it represented one who served only God, and who was “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,*” (Phil 2:8). Yet the requirement that it never be yoked suggests that it was otherwise destined to such. This was unusual because yoked cattle were more commonly castrated males. This was on account of their greater mass and muscle. A female, when put to the same task, must have greater spirit and determination, and this fits the one of whom it was prophesied, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts,*” (Zech 4:6).

2) The redness of the heifer was owing to the fact that it represented one who was covered in the sins of others. Isaiah used similar symbolism in a famous passage:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. – Isa 1:18

3) However, the sins in this case were merely superficial. The heifer was in fact required to be without blemish or spot.

4) We need not speculate on why the heifer was killed without the camp because an inspired apostle directly addressed the question:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him

without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. – Heb 13:11-14

Hence, the heifer portended one who would die outside of Jerusalem and who would be rejected by His own nation and race. His followers should expect to endure the same rejection. The ashes of the heifer were also to be stored without the camp because Jesus continues to be rejected by the Jews unto this day.

5) The heifer was to be killed and burned before the face of the priest because the priests would be the principal culprits in the crucifixion, and they stood by and observed as it was taking place.

6) As will be explained in a future chapter, the sanctuary of the tabernacle was a type of the church. None are fit for the church while defiled in unbelief. This would explain why the priest was to sprinkle blood in the direction of the sanctuary seven times.

7) The crucifixion of Christ was an egregious sin, and this will explain why all who killed and burned the heifer were counted as unclean.

8) However, all who were thus defiled were to be counted clean automatically in the evening. This was because on the day of the crucifixion, as evening drew nigh, the dying Savior, in an unfathomable act of mercy, said, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,*” (Lk 23:34). While the Jews have suffered immeasurably since that time, this was for their rejection of Christ *since* the crucifixion (Ps 69:26).

9) The burning of sacrifices under the law is oftentimes construed as portending the sufferings of hell. While there surely is a hell, it is very amiss to view sacrificial burnings this way. They were repeatedly described in scripture as producing a sweet savor to God, which would not be the case with one being punished in hell, especially if it were God’s own Son. Rather, in these burnings, the sacrifice was being transferred from earthbound state to a heavenly state via the ascending vapors and fumes. The burnings therefore represented the heavenly ascension, in soul or body, of the one symbolized by the sacrifice. This is why it was a sweet savor to God. The ashes then became the earthly legacy of the one who ascended. Christ has gone to heaven, but His legacy remains in His word.

10) Cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet were burned along with the heifer. Christ was mocked in a *scarlet* robe (Mt 27:28). While Mark and John say this robe was purple (Mk 15:17, Jn 19:2), such as was worn by kings, this was only what the mockers *pretended* it to be, even as they pretended the reed to be a scepter (Mt 27:29) and the wrapped thorns to be a crown of jewels. The robe was likely scarlet in color, being the cloak of a Roman soldier. Christ was given vinegar to drink via a sponge impaled on a stalk of *hyssop* (Jn 19:29). The symbolic meaning of the cedar wood is difficult to ascertain, but the cross was possibly made of such wood. Cedar trees were likely very common to the area (1Ki 10:27).

11) The water with which the ashes were to be mixed was “*running*” water, or water taken from a flowing source. The Hebrew word here translated as “*running*” is also commonly translated as “*living*.” Such water was a common type of the Holy Spirit. We know this from the words of Jesus Himself and the comment that John afterward added:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) – John 7:38-39

See also John 3:5, 4:10 and Mark 1:8.

12) It was necessary that the ashes be mixed with such water because the word of Christ will never be received by any man without being mixed with the Holy Ghost.

13) The significance of the third and seventh days can possibly be explained by the structure of the week following the crucifixion. Jesus was crucified on the day of the Passover or Nisan 14th. He was of course resurrected three days later. The seven days following the 14th made up the Week of Unleavened Bread. While I hope to say more about this week later, suffice it to say for now that it represented the gospel era, with the first day corresponding to the first coming of Christ and the last day corresponding to His second. The elect family of God were pronounced *legally* clean by the resurrection of Christ on the third day (Rom 4:25). This would account for the first sprinkling. The elect will be made *practically* clean with His second coming when He “*shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,*” (Phil 3:21). This would account for the second sprinkling on the seventh day.

14) Finally, we must consider the requirement that sprinkling also be applied to the tent of the deceased and all its contents. This too is reconcilable to the idea that conscience was the real issue in the matter of the red heifer. Such objects oftentimes become revered mementos of the departed, but the memories they invoke should always be sprinkled with Christ. Sadly, there are many modern funerals where little is said of Christ or salvation, and any mention of heaven is done in presumption, and all focus is on carnal recollections. In stark contrast to this, Paul said:

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. – 2Cor 5:16-17

Mementos of old things are acceptable. God did not require them to be burned or destroyed. But these old things are acceptable only when held in faith and hope of the new, and in appreciation of the one who suffered and died to secure the new.

This explanation of the red heifer might seem to commingle two theories. The first is that the defilement remedied by the heifer is in the errant thoughts that are provoked by death. The second is that the defilement is instead owing to the denial of the crucified Christ. However, these are in fact the same thing. The thoughts provoked by death are defiling to the extent that they are entertained in denial of the crucified Christ. The underlying message of the ritual was that these defilements of mind are remedied by application of a sacrifice. Now the doctrine of many Christians is contradicted by this. This doctrine says that a voluntary cleansing of the thoughts with faith is the means whereby the benefit of the sacrifice is procured, but the ritual says the reverse, or that application of the sacrifice is the means whereby the thoughts are cleansed. In short, our faith did not buy the sacrifice of Christ; rather, the sacrifice of Christ bought our faith (Jn 6:37-40, 12:32, Eph 1:3, 2:4-10, 1Pet 1:18-21).

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle was constructed by Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness to serve as a special place of worship. It was then the centerpiece of the Jewish religion. Solomon later replaced it with the temple, which was more impressive to human eyes, but the tabernacle was superior in that almost every detail of its design and service was explicitly specified by God. Given this, there should be no surprise that the tabernacle was a masterpiece of symbolism. It conveyed a powerful and thorough message about Jesus Christ, and its implicit prophecies concerning Him traverse the entire history of the world.

The tabernacle was a rectangular tent. It had an outer court, a sanctuary and special room commonly called the “Holiest of Holies,” though the Bible calls it the “Holiest of All.” The door opened to the sanctuary, and the Holiest of Holies was at the opposite end, being divided from the sanctuary by a veil.

As one approached the entrance to the tabernacle from the outer court, he first encountered an altar known as the “brazen altar.” Sacrificial animals were typically killed next to this altar, and the altar was then used to burn them. Continuing from there toward the entrance, one next encountered the “brazen laver.” This was where the priests would wash themselves, before entering the sanctuary, from the blood, flesh, ashes, etc. they contracted at the altar. Entering the sanctuary, one would see on the far right a golden table with twelve loaves of bread on top. These loaves were sprinkled with frankincense. This bread was called the “showbread.” On the far left one would see a “golden candlestick” with seven lamps. Looking straight ahead to the opposite end of the room, one would see a “golden altar” where incense was burned. Immediately behind the golden altar was the veil dividing the sanctuary from the Holiest of Holies. Going beyond the veil into the Holiest of Holies itself, one would see the “Ark of the Covenant,” wherein the two stone plates of the Ten Commandments were stored, and on top of the ark was a table called the “Mercy Seat.” This table was of the same dimensions as the Ark and exactly covered it. Finally, on either side of the Mercy Seat were golden cherubim looking down upon it. All of these things have the profound symbolic meanings that should be expected of a structure designed by God. The tabernacle was both profoundly simple and simply profound. These are characteristics that will pervade the true religion of God. This religion is suitable to produce joy for the simple and to produce fascination to the highest intellects.

The tabernacle was also a portable structure. It traveled with the people wherever they went. Manmade religion is characterized by designated locations that are vainly imagined to be holy, whereas all these places will in fact burn with the world. The true religion of God resides in the redeemed heart and is therefore portable (Jn 4:23).

The tabernacle portrayed the plan of God for the evolution of true religion over the history of the earth. The depiction of this history began at the brazen altar, which was a symbol of the

sacrificial era that commenced with the offering of Abel and extended to the sacrifices that were killed on the very day wherein Christ was crucified.

The sanctuary of the tabernacle was a depiction of the church era. Before entering the sanctuary, it was necessary for one to wash at the brazen laver. Accordingly, baptism is required before entering the church. This washing was also symbolic of the fact that the old religion was being washed away and left behind, insofar as its practices were concerned, and a new religion was being put in its place. Of course, the new religion is no contradiction to the old; rather, it corroborates the old by replacing its types with new and more excellent antitypes.

The showbread to the right was a symbol of the body of Christ. Bread was used to represent Him from antiquity, going back to the bread given by Melchizedek to Abraham, then from there to the manna in the wilderness, and from there to many of the offerings to be made at this very tabernacle, and finally in the communion bread of the New Testament church.

Frankincense is used in the Bible to depict what is divine and heavenly. It was first mentioned in Exodus 30:34 as an ingredient of a perfume for the Holiest of Holies. Replication of this perfume for human use was strictly prohibited. Frankincense was also prohibited in connection with any kind of sin offering (Lev 5:11, Num 5:15). This is because it represented the purity of heaven. One of the most frequent uses of frankincense was that it was placed on these twelve loaves of showbread, and when this bread was replaced with new loaves, the frankincense was burned on the altar and the old loaves were eaten by the priests. Even so, eating of the bread of Christ transforms us into eternal heavenly beings. The reason the frankincense was burned at the altar was to send it back to the heaven from which it symbolically came. Frankincense was also brought to Christ in His infancy as a gift by the wise men along with gold and myrrh (Mt 2:11). The gold was emblematic of His regality; the frankincense of His heavenly, divine being, and the bitter myrrh of His suffering, human being. Now frankincense was put on these loaves of showbread to show that they represented bread of heavenly and divine origin.

The golden candlestick was a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It illuminated the interior of the tabernacle and was the reason that the showbread could be seen. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit illuminates the church, and no man will ever see Christ without being personally quickened and illuminated by the Holy Spirit (Jn 1:11-13, 3:3).

The altar of incense was a symbol of prayer (Rev 8:3-4), particularly prayers of profession and confession. Such prayers are a trusted path to temporal forgiveness if sincerely done in the name of Jesus Christ (1Jn 1:9). This altar was placed immediately in front of the Holiest of Holies because prayer is the connection between heaven and the earthly church.

The veil over the Holiest of Holies was actually a symbol of the state of ignorance that existed prior to the church era about the way of salvation. Many were saved in that era, but without complete understanding and assurance. Paul said concerning this veil, *“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first*

tabernacle was yet standing,” (Heb 9:8). This veil was rent from top to bottom when Jesus died (Mt 27:51) because the way to heaven was produced by His death and revealed to men by His gospel (2Tim 1:9-10).

The Holiest of Holies represented heaven, and this is where worship will be fully evolved and perfected. When the high priest entered the Holiest of Holies, he was a type of Christ entering heaven to finalize all legal arrangements for the salvation of His people (Heb 9:24).

The stone tables stored in the Ark of the Covenant epitomized the law. By this all men would stand condemned before God; however, the Ark was covered above by the Mercy Seat, which was a symbol of Christ. On the rare occasions where the high priest entered the Holiest of Holies, he always sprinkled blood upon the Mercy Seat, symbolizing that mercy for violations of the law would be secured through the shedding of blood. These stone tables of the law can also be viewed as the righteousness of Christ that is freely imputed to God’s elect.

The cherubim on either side of the Mercy Seat and looking down upon it can be explained by:

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Eph 3:8-11

This scripture divulges an amazing fact. It says that God is using His church not only to teach men but to teach the angelic host also. This might mean bad angels, good angels or both. This interpretation is corroborated by another scripture:

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. – 1Pet 1:9-12

While it might seem incredible that God would use mortal teachers and preachers to reveal biblical truth to angels, it must be considered that men were of higher rank than angels in the creation. Men were created in the image of God whereas angels evidently were not. It is an implausible claim that God would create beings in His own image and then give them inferior rank. Paul rhetorically asked of angels, “*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to*

minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb 1:14). So they were created for the care and service of men, and are therefore of lower rank. It must also be considered that true gospel teachers are under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and therefore under the tutelage of God Himself. So the cherubim looking down on the Mercy Seat are likely emblematic of the inquisitive interest that angels take in Jesus Christ and His church. Similar symbolism occurred in the famous vision of Isaiah recorded in his sixth chapter.

The profound symbolism of the tabernacle goes much further. Consider that its furnishings were perfectly arranged in the form of a cross when viewed from above. Add to this the fact that the tabernacle as a whole is presented in scripture as a type of the body of Christ. That it was a type of a human body can be seen in such famous passages as:

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. – 2Cor 5:1-4

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. – 2 Pet 1:13-14

But the tabernacle was especially a type of the body of Christ. This can be seen in:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. – John 1:14

It has long been known and emphasized by Bible teachers that the word John here used for “*dwelt*” strictly means “*tabernacled*.” The same translation occurs in Revelation 7:15, but the idea is most clearly expressed in:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. – Rev 21:1-3

So the tabernacle was presented as a type of Christ’s body, both before and after His resurrection. This means that when viewed from above, and taken together with its furnishing, the tabernacle was a depiction of Christ hanging on the cross. Now add this to what was said earlier about the tabernacle being a depiction of God’s comprehensive plan for religion. These

truths taken together would say that God's whole plan for religion on this earth, and in heaven hereafter, and from the very beginning, and throughout eternity, was built upon Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This supreme principle of true religion is expressed in several verses, including:

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. – 1Cor 2:1-2

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. – Col 1:16-19

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. – Rev 1:8

God also gave detailed specifications as to how the tabernacle was to be disassembled when relocated from one place to another (Num 4). This disassembly procedure conveyed an important symbolic message, but one wherein the tabernacle served as a type of the redeemed bodies of the elect. The tabernacle was to be taken down following the same stages their bodies experience in death. God's commandments concerning the disassembly of the tabernacle were strictly enforced. It was a capital offence to violate them. This meant that God wanted no blemishes or distortions to the picture He intended to create.

It is not uncommon for symbols in the Bible to represent two different things, but the two things will have a sense of oneness in other scriptural characterizations. Such is the case with the tabernacle. It represented both the body of Christ and the bodies of His redeemed people, but these bodies are elsewhere represented as being one (Eph 5:25-33).

The tabernacle was a tent of animals skins put on a wooden frame and occupied by precious, holy furnishings. Accordingly, our bodies are of flesh put on a frame of bone and occupied by an immortal spirit that has been rendered holy by the blood of Christ. A tent is also a temporary dwelling for people who are in transit through a wilderness. The same may be said of our bodies. This world is a wilderness to us. We are here only temporarily while in our journey to a better and enduring home in heaven.

When the tabernacle was disassembled per specification, the precious furnishings were the first things to be removed. In death, our spirit departs the body before it is dissolved by nature. The specification required the High Priest was to enter the tabernacle and put beautiful blue coverings on all of these precious furnishings. Blue is the color of the sky and is the color that is seen when one looks heavenward. The blue coverings were to show that our spirit has been prepared

for heaven. Our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, personally attends to our spirit in death, and He is the one who readies it for transport.

Next, the High Priest was to put on a second protective covering of leather. This was to ensure that nothing would be dented, scratched, torn or soiled. Accordingly, Jesus Christ will handle our spirit with the utmost loving care. But the leather coverings meant that when the furnishings were removed from the tabernacle, none of the observing people could actually see the furnishings or their blue coverings. The same is true of our spirits when they are taken to heaven. When God's children die, Bible believers know what is happening to them, but they cannot see it with their natural eyes. As Paul said:

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. – 2Cor 4:17-18

Once all these coverings were put on, designated men came into the tabernacle to remove the furnishings, but the High Priest remained in the tabernacle to oversee every move. Even so, our spirit is carried by angels into heaven (Lk 16:22), but our loving Savior supervises every step.

Afterward, the outer tent of the tabernacle was removed. This represented the dissolution of our flesh. Last of all, the framework of the tabernacle was taken down. This represented the dissolution of our bones. The tabernacle was not taken down to be retired, but was taken down to be reassembled at another place and time. The same is true of our bodies.

The Levitical Offerings

When Bible novices compare the Old Testament with the New, they might verily wonder if these two books could be talking about the same god, or else wonder whether all parts of the Old Testament were truly inspired. This is particularly the case after reading of the ceaseless and seemingly senseless slaughter of animals that took place in Old Testament rituals. Yet, upon considering numerous other parts of the Old Testament, there can be no reasonable doubt as to its divine inspiration. Consequently, the reader must consider the possibility that God actually intended to invoke the very emotions they feel when sympathizing with these sacrificial animals, and God also intended to invoke the initial skepticism about the whole affair, because there is indeed something about it that violates the very core of our God-given, spiritual consciences. Yet, these things were not done that we might walk away from His word in rejection, but walk toward it with inquisitive minds, trusting that there must necessarily be something very profound and important hidden in the matter.

Sacrificial offerings were of course common to religions of the ancient world, and are even prevalent in some of the world's largest religions today. Now if it is difficult to make sense of sacrifices even in a divinely inspired book, then there is no hope of making sense of them in pseudo-religion. They have no purpose there except to satisfy the blood-lusts of the devils being served. As I will elaborate elsewhere, Satan is an obsessive imitator of God, and this is why so many Satan-inspired religions have sacrifices. The problem is that these bogus religions borrowed the practices of true religion without also borrowing the principles. This left them in a state of contradiction against the most basic tenets of conscience, which surely say that the Great Creator God of the Universe can find no gratification in the killing of animals, much less see their deaths as restitution for human sins.

The New Testament affirmed these most intuitive claims by saying, "*In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure*" (Heb 10:6), and also in saying, "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,*" (Heb 10:4). The only sensible solution is that God intended these sacrifices to be symbolic. Yet, it is clear, given the prodigious burden of the matter, that the symbolic message He intended was extremely important to Him. This is corroborated by the fact that even minor missteps in regard to these sacrifices had grave, even fatal, consequences upon those who offered them. This shows that God would not endure even the slightest corruptions to His intended symbolic message.

Sacrifices are senseless abominations if not interpreted in the light of Jesus Christ, but the seemingly senseless quickly becomes sensible when Jesus is taken into account. If He is indeed the beloved Son of God, then none should be surprised if God insisted upon repeatedly reminding us of how Jesus suffered in the cruel and bloody scene of the cross. Indeed, one should expect God to do this in the most poignant ways, and to spare nothing in the process. So, if it seems unjust and inhumane that young, harmless animals should die for the sins of humans,

then one should consider that this is exactly what God intended, and if one is repelled by the bloody, gory scene that existed at the brazen altar, then they should also consider that their eternal salvation was bought for them when the Son of God endured precisely this sort of scene.

As these sacrifices had their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, they have no place in religion today. He died in our stead that we might live, and perhaps this was symbolically conveyed in the fact that He put an end to the sacrificial killing of animals too. It is noteworthy that the Bible records how various Christians in apostolic times stumbled into many errors, both doctrinal and practical. Such should be expected of people attempting to overcome the ideas and habits of Paganism and apostate Judaism. However, none of them were so corrupted or so confused as to offer animal sacrifices. They evidently all understood that sacrifices pointed to Christ and ended with Him.

In the Levitical law, there were five fundamental types of offerings. These were burnt offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, meat offerings and peace offerings. Oftentimes these were done in combination, and sometimes done with a few modifications. The law also specified the circumstances under which each type of offering was to be made. These circumstances could be where an offense had been committed, or where uncleanness had been contracted, or because it was commanded in observance of some feast or holy day.

When considering the specifications for these offerings, it is important to understand the fundamental differences between offerings in the Bible and offerings observed in nearly all other religions. All biblical offerings addressed the subject of sin and uncleanness in some degree or another, and most of them addressed nothing else. If the offering were not about sin, then it would be about thankfulness for blessings God had *already* given, and even these were done in view of the fact that such blessings had been bestowed on undeserving sinners. Hence, these offerings were entirely about sin and grace. None of them were purposed to elicit favors from God or gods in material things. While the Bible of course promised blessings to the obedient, it was not the designated purpose of these offerings to better oneself in material ways. Also, the Bible repeatedly threatened that these offerings would mean nothing, and even be counted as abominable, if not accompanied by humility and other obedience, especially as it pertained to treatment of fellow man.

Now all of this starkly contrasts with offerings seen in most other religions. Their temples and idols are effectively vending machines and their offerings are the coin they drop in the slot. They are in quest of bigger crops, fatter hogs, bigger houses, more money, etc. Some of their offerings are done in purported thankfulness, but even these are truly done to avoid interruption in the flow of goods and services. So these religions are after the very things that the Bible commands men to devalue and deny, investing themselves rather into joyous expectation and acts of appreciation of a better life to come, which has been bought for them by a suffering Savior, and is altogether a gift from a merciful and gracious God. So in this and many other things, Biblical religion is fundamentally different from other religions of the world, though many, including some purporting expertise, are satanically blinded to the difference.

The Burnt Offering

The first of the many offerings specified in Leviticus was the so-called “burnt offering” (Lev 1). Nearly all kinds of offerings entailed something being burned at the altar, but this offering was distinguished in that the entire sacrifice was burned. Also, its intent was to atone for sin in general, whereas other kinds of offerings were mostly done on account of specific transgressions. The burnt offering was likely the most common of all offerings and is fundamental to a proper understanding of offerings in general.

The procedure of the burnt offering was:

- 1) The animal to be offered was a male without blemish, either a bullock or sheep or goat.
- 2) The animal was to be taken to the north side of the brazen altar.
- 3) The offerer was to place his hands on the head of the animal and then kill it.
- 4) The priest was then to sprinkle blood of the animal all around the altar.
- 5) The legs and inward parts of the animal were to be washed.
- 6) The animal was to be cut in pieces and entirely burned on the altar.

Every detail of this protocol foreshadows facts concerning the crucifixion of Christ, including:

- 1) The offering was to be a domestic animal taken from the herd. It could not be a wild animal. Domestic animals dwell among humans but wild animals do not. The offered animal represented a heavenly being that would become incarnate and dwell in the midst of men. The offered animal was also to be flawless because it represented one who was sinless.
- 2) The animal was to be killed on the north side of the altar because the crucifixion occurred on Mount Calvary which was north of the altar of the temple.
- 3) The placement of hands upon the head signified the transferal of personal sins to the animal. Even the ancient Jews understood this fact.
- 4) The sole act of the offerer in the whole procedure was to place hands on the animal and kill it. All else apart from this was done in the offerer’s behalf by the priests. This is a powerful picture of salvation by grace. Our role in salvation from sin was simply that we sinned and caused the death of the sacrifice.
- 5) The blood being sprinkled all about the altar represented the application of Christ’s blood to a people of “*every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*” (Rev 5:9) in a 360 degree radius about Mount Calvary and extending to the extremities of the earth.
- 6) The reason that only the legs and inward parts of the animal were washed was that the animal represented one who would be bloodied and soiled at the time of His death, but who was inwardly clean and whose walk had been clean.

7) The burning of the animal at the altar is sometimes taken as representing the sufferings of hell, but this is altogether dubious. Repeatedly in scripture, this act was described as producing a sweet-smelling savor to God, which would not apply to the torments of hell, especially if endured by His own Son. Besides, the idea that Christ went to hell after His crucifixion is errant, being based on misinterpretation of a few passages. The correct explanation is that the burning of the animal's body represented its transferal from earthbound state to heavenly state via the ascension of the vapors and fumes. Hence, this part of the procedure corresponded to the ascension of Christ to heaven, which would explain why it was a sweet-smelling savor to God.

The burnt offering will surely seem as a ritual of ignorance to those who are ignorant, but when put under a Christian microscope, the fingerprints of divine inspiration will be clearly seen.

The Sin Offering

The next type of offering to be considered was the so-called "sin offering." While the name would suggest something fundamental, it was in fact the most complex of all offerings, and it had peculiar details whose symbolic meanings are difficult to ascertain.

The first peculiarity was that four different specifications of the offering were given depending upon one's station. There was one protocol for a priest who had sinned; a second protocol if the general congregation had sinned; a third was given to cover the case of a ruler and a fourth to cover the common man. For other types of offerings, the procedure was mostly the same for all parties except possibly in the type of animal that was sacrificed. Such differences were evidently accommodations to poverty. The poor were sometimes allowed to offer cheaper animals. However, in the case of the sin offering, the procedure itself could significantly differ depending upon the identity of the offender.

A second peculiarity of the sin offering was that it was designed to atone for *unwitting* sins. That is, the offender only became aware of his offense after the fact. As for deliberate sins, these were mostly covered by what the Bible called "trespass offerings." However, it is important to understand that the sin offering was not a catchall offering to cover for sins that went undetected. Rather, the offering assumed that the sin was discovered after the fact. This adds to the mystery of the offering because such sins would seem very rare. Indeed, the primary purpose of the law was to make us aware of our sins (Rom 3:20, 7:13, Gal 3:22). For these reasons, one would think that the trespass offering would occur in scripture with greater frequency and importance. Most sins are in fact deliberate, and deliberate sins carry greater culpability than unwitting ones. However, the sin offering actually occurred with much greater frequency than the trespass offering, and the Bible gave greater time and detail to its specification.

A third peculiarity was in the procedures to be followed in certain of the protocols of the sin offering. These differed significantly from the burnt offering, even though both were technically for the atonement of sin.

Finally, there was a fourth peculiarity in the fact that the sin offering was almost everywhere made in conjunction with a burnt offering. Since redundancy is unlikely, these two offerings must have had some distinction in their symbolic meanings.

Now as inapplicable as the sin offering might seem at first, it happens that the two most consequential sins in history were exactly of the sort that this offering was designed to cover. Recognition of this fact will do much to explain the importance of the offering.

The first of these momentous sins was our sin in Adam, which was committed without our knowledge or consent, yet the Bible surely teaches that the consequences of it befell us all, as though we had committed the sin ourselves (Rom 5:12). While some object to this doctrine of “original sin” as being unfair, they do so in ignorance of the plain declaration of scripture and in denial of the plain testimony of experience. They are also inconsistent because they readily accept the idea of imputed righteousness, but this is the same thing in principle, and the whole argument of Romans 5:12-21 was that these two things are opposite sides of the same coin.

The second great unwitting sin of history was the crucifixion of Christ, which was also done without our knowledge or consent, even though our own actions surely necessitated it. The Jews were especially guilty of this sin, yet even they acted in ignorance. This fact is declared by scripture itself. Peter said to the offending Jews, *“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers,”* (Acts 3:17). Paul later said the same with: *“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him,”* (Acts 13:27). While one might object that the Jews should have at least known they were killing an innocent man, this would not be true under the assumptions they were then making. If Jesus were not the Christ, then He was an unequalled liar and a blasphemer.

Now the two sins here named are at the opposite poles of the entire sin history of the world. One marked the beginning of all sin. The other marked the end of it. When the sin offering is studied in light of these facts, then the emphasis put upon it, and the details of its protocol, will start to make sense, especially after considering the second of these two great unwitting sins.

As already noted, there were four different protocols for the sin offering, but these can be divided into two near-identical pairs. The protocol for a priest and the protocol for the general congregation were nearly identical. The protocol for the common man and the protocol for a ruler were nearly identical also, but these significantly differed from what was done for a priest or the general congregation. The steps to be followed for a sinning priest were:

- 1) The offering was to be a young bullock without blemish.
- 2) The bullock was to be taken to the north side of the brazen altar.
- 3) The offending priest was to lay hands upon the bullock’s head and then kill it.

These three steps were the same as for the burnt offering, but then important differences occur:

- 4) Blood of the bullock was to be taken inside the sanctuary of the tabernacle and sprinkled before the veil seven times. This was the veil that stood at the entrance to the Holiest of Holies.
- 5) Blood was also to be applied to the horns of the altar of incense. This altar was also inside the sanctuary and stood immediately in front of the veil.
- 6) The priest was then to exit the sanctuary and apply blood to the horns of the brazen altar (8:15), and the remaining blood was to be poured at the base of such altar. Blood was not to be sprinkled around the altar as in most other cases.
- 7) The kidneys, caul above the liver and surrounding fat were to be burned on the altar.
- 8) The remainder of the animal was to be taken to a clean place without the camp where the ashes of the altar were normally discarded and the animal was to be completely burned with fire.

If this offering were made for the general congregation, the only difference from the above protocol was that the elders of the congregation, rather than the offending priest, would place hands on the head of the animal and kill it.

The protocol for the case of a ruler differed in that: a) A male goat was to be offered instead of a bullock. b) None of the blood was to be carried into the sanctuary, meaning that no blood was sprinkled before the veil and none was applied to the altar of incense, and c) The remainder of the animal could be eaten by the priests and was not therefore burned without the camp. The protocol for the common man was the same as that for a ruler except that a female animal was offered and could be either a sheep or goat.

It might seem impossible to find the symbolic significance of all this detail and of all the variations for the offering; however, as is always the case with the Old Testament, things begin to fall into sensible sequence when viewed through the lens of Jesus Christ and His crucifixion. In this case, the four different parties named in the details of the offering played different roles in the crucifixion, and these differences likely account for the differences in their protocols.

The act of carrying blood into the sanctuary was a significant distinction that the Bible itself noted. It was an emphatic rule of law that any animal whose blood was brought into the sanctuary was not to be eaten but to be wholly burned without the camp (Lev 6:30, Heb 13:11). Recall that no blood was carried into the sanctuary in the case of a burnt offering, neither was it done for a trespass offering, nor for a peace offering, nor was it done even for a sin offering in the case of a ruler or common man. So the first challenge is to understand why it was required in the case of a sin offering for a priest or for the congregation.

The instructions were for the priest to first sprinkle blood before the veil within the sanctuary seven times. The Holiest of Holies was a type of heaven (Heb 9), and the veil at its entrance was a symbol of the fact that Old Testament saints were largely ignorant of how men would enter it. In the words of Paul, it signified “*that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing,*” (Heb 9:8). This also explains why the veil was rent from top to bottom upon the death of Christ (Mt 27:51). His death opened the way to heaven and His gospel made it manifest (2Tim 1:8-10). So the veil was actually a symbol of

ignorance about the way to heaven, and it was on account of such ignorance that Israel crucified Christ. The sprinkling of blood before the veil was therefore a symbol of atonement for this.

Next, the priest was to place blood on the horns of the altar of incense. This altar and the incense emanating from it were presented in the New Testament as being symbols of prayer (Rev 8:3-4). This would explain why it was placed immediately before the entrance to the Holiest of Holies. Prayer is the connection between heaven and the earthly church. I think of all prayer it represented, the prayer of confession and profession rank supreme. The Apostle John said, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,”* (1Jn 1:9). This scripture refers to the temporal forgiveness of the child of God, yet even our temporal blessings were secured by the shed blood of Christ. It is on account of His blood that our prayers for forgiveness are answered. So the blood on the altar of incense was symbolic of the fact that any Jew seeking repentance for the crucifixion of Christ would surely receive it by confessing his sin to God and turning to Christ in faith (Acts 2:38 & 3:19). It was the blood of Christ itself that secured this mercy. As already explained, the sanctuary of the tabernacle was a symbol of the church, and this explains why Peter told the contrite Jews on the day of Pentecost that they could put away their sin of the crucifixion by repenting and joining the church (Acts 2:38). The sin offering therefore communicates through its symbolism that the blood of Christ is such a powerful remedy for sin that it covers even the act of crucifying Him.

Next, the priest was to exit the sanctuary and pour the remaining blood at the base of the brazen altar after anointing its horns. The peculiarity here was that the blood was applied to the altar itself rather than being sprinkled around it. To account for this, one must make a distinction between atonement by means of the altar and atonement for the altar itself (Lev 8:15, 16:18). In this ritual, atonement was being made for sins committed at the very altar, i.e. for the crucifixion.

After these blood atonements, the priest was to burn upon the altar the two kidneys, the caul above the liver and surrounding fat. The reason for burning these specific organs and their symbolic meanings is difficult to ascertain; however, I think we can formulate a plausible theory: The kidneys were mentioned with great frequency in the Bible, though this is partly obscured by the fact that the same Hebrew word is commonly translated as *“reins”* (Ps 7:9, 16:7, 26:2, 73:21, 139:13, Prov 23:15-16, Jer 11:20, 12:2, 17:10, 20:12). The same is done in the New Testament Greek in Revelation 2:23. Oftentimes the kidneys were mentioned in combination with the heart to describe the state of the thoughts and emotions (Ps 7:9, 26:2, 73:21, Prov 23:15-16, Jer 11:20, 17:10, 20:12, Rev 2:23). Since it seems unlikely that the heart and kidneys would symbolize exactly the same thing, it is commonly thought that the heart describes the thoughts whereas the kidneys refer to the emotions. In the case of sacrificial offerings, the kidneys seem to refer to the soul, and the burning of them on the altar would represent the ascension of the soul to heaven. Using the kidneys to represent either the emotions or the soul will seem strange in our own culture, but it will be more sensible upon considering that we readily associate the heart with inner thoughts and feelings even though this organ has little to do with either. As for the fat, this was considered to be the most excellent part of the animal and as strictly belonging to the Lord.

The Jews were prohibited from eating any fat of sacrificial animals (Lev 3:16-17, 7:23-25). The offering of the fat was a symbol of the fact that our first priority in all things is to be the Lord (Mt 6:33), and that Christ would in fact do this without fault or failure (Ps 16:8).

Finally, the remainder of the animal was to be carried without the camp and burned. This was partly to ensure that no part of the sacrifice would see corruption, and this requirement was because it represented one who would soon be resurrected after his death (Acts 2:25-31), but the greater intent was directly addressed by Paul:

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. – Heb 13:10-15

Hence, the burning of the animal without the camp was symbolic of the fact that Christ would be crucified without the city of Jerusalem, being an outcast of worldly society, and that His followers should be resolved to endure the same.

What we have described thus far has been the sin offering as it pertained to the priests and the general congregation of Israel. The protocols for a ruler or a common man, though nearly equal to each other, were very different from what has been described. The most notable differences were that no blood was sprinkled before the veil and none was applied to the altar of incense, and because no blood was carried into the sanctuary, the parts not burned on the brazen altar could be eaten by the priests, meaning that it was not necessary to burn these parts without the camp. We can account for these differences by considering the different roles these parties would play in the crucifixion of Christ.

First consider the case of a common man. Obviously, the lesser demands upon him suggest a lesser degree of guilt or culpability. Where common men assented to the crucifixion, it was very apt to have been done in ignorance, and we might therefore expect the same blood atonement to be made for them as for others. However, this consideration is evidently outweighed by the fact that the greatest spiritual lights in history have also come from this same class of men. These included most of the prophets, all of the apostles, and most especially, the Lord Himself. Add to this the claim of Mark that “*the common people heard him gladly*” (Mk 12:37), and they were sufficiently receptive that the priests and rulers were oftentimes fearful of what their reactions would be to abuses of Christ (Mt 26:3-5, Mk 14:1-2, Lk 19:47-48, 20:19, 22:2, Jn 12:19). Further, there were many of this class who were true disciples of Christ and who abhorred what was done to Him. Furthermore, scriptures state that where common people assented to the crucifixion, it was because of the provocations of the priests (Mt 27:20, Mk 15:11). These

considerations give plausible explanation for why the sin offering did not entail the blood offerings in the sanctuary that were required for the priests and for the general congregation.

Why would the sin offering for a ruler be essentially the same as that of a common man when rulers played a much greater role in the crucifixion? There are, in fact, several reasons that might account for this. First, John said there were many of the rulers who believed on Christ (Jn 12:42), though no such statement was ever made about the priests. Famous examples of such rulers were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, who together endeavored to give the body of Christ an honorable burial. Even Herod, though an exceedingly wicked man, considered Jesus to be so extraordinary that he thought Him to be John the Baptist raised from the dead (Mk 6:16), and Herod was at first excited to see Jesus, hoping to witness a miracle at His hand (Lk 23:8). Add to this that Pontius Pilate declared Jesus to be an innocent man, washed his hands of the matter (Mt 27:24), and was determined to let Him go (Acts 3:13). Second, the Jewish rulers who participated in the crucifixion were mostly acting under the advisement of the priests or submitting to mobs that had been incited by the priests. Third, and perhaps most importantly, priests were considered a separate class in the law of Moses, oftentimes being under different rules than others, but this was not the case with rulers. The law gave no recognition of a nobility class, and rulers were held to the same rules as common men. Making the sin offering of the ruler almost identical to that of the common man was in keeping with this principle and served as a reminder of it.

It is also sensible that the sin offering for the nation be the same as that of a priest. The nation was to be “*a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation*” to all the nations of the world (Ex 19:6). These two entities have also been held most accountable for the crucifixion of Christ. The priests have had their office forever removed, and the nation in general has suffered immeasurably since that time. However, a chosen element of common people within that nation have been exempted and brought to an understanding of Christ.

The above explanations account for the connection of the sin offering with the second of the two great unwitting sins of human history. As for the first, or the sin committed by all humans in Adam, this connection is suggested by the frequency and application of the offering under the law. Even though the specifications of the offering seemed to make it relevant only to rare circumstances, it was in fact almost everywhere in the law.

The sin offering was used in the consecration of priests (Ex 29:1-18, Lev 8:1-18, 9:2), the purification of mothers after giving birth (Lev 12:6), the rite of cleansed lepers (Lev 14:19), the cleansing of those defiled by sores or by unclean contact (Lev 15:15), the restoration of defiled Nazarites (Num 6:11), the completion of the Nazarite vow (Num 6:14), the consecration of the Levites (Num 8:12), the dedication of new months (Num 28:15), the daily sacrifices in the Week of Unleavened Bread (Num 28:17-24), the Day of Pentecost (Lev 23:16-19), the Feast of Trumpets (Num 29:1-5), the Day of Atonement (Num 29:7-11, Lev 16), and the daily sacrifices in the Feast of the Tabernacles (Num 29:12-40). Indeed, the supremely sacred offering on the

Day of Atonement was a sin offering. Obviously, the real intent of the sin offering was to cover much more than would be suggested by a superficial understanding of its specifications.

Additionally, in all of the events just named, the sin offering was followed with a burnt offering. In none of them was the sin offering done by itself. This plainly shows that the two offerings had different symbolic significance. The burnt offering was a general offering for the atonement of sin. The prior sin offering would therefore seem to address the root cause of sin. This would be the sin of Adam, in whom all others unwittingly sinned.

The Meat Offering

Because of changes in the English language, the so-called “meat offering” in the King James Version would actually be called a “non-meat offering” in English today. It entailed no “meat” in the modern sense of the word, but primarily consisted of flour or bread. The specifications (Lev 2) of this offering were:

- 1) The offerer was to take fine flour and mingle it with oil and frankincense. He could also use bread, provided it had been prepared or anointed with oil and sprinkled with frankincense.
- 2) The flour or bread absolutely could not be leavened, and could not be mixed with honey.
- 3) It was mandatory that the offering be salted.
- 4) This was then to be given to the priest, who was to take one handful of the mixture and burn it on the brazen altar.
- 5) The remainder was to be given for the personal consumption of the priests.

Bread has been used to represent the body of Christ from the times of Melchizedek (Gn 14), who famously administered to Abraham bread and wine – exactly the same substances used in the New Testament communion service and having exactly the same symbolic meanings. The manna in the wilderness was also a type of the body of Christ, as is explained in John 6. We also have the communion bread itself, which is the most familiar instance of all.

Oil was used in scripture to represent the Holy Spirit, with a famous instance of this being the parable of the ten virgins (Mt 25). The meat offering was always to be mingled with oil because it represented one who was given the Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34).

The Bible connects frankincense with heaven, purity and divinity. It was first mentioned in Exodus 30:34 as an ingredient of a perfume used to anoint the Holiest of Holies. Replication of this perfume for human use was strictly prohibited. Frankincense was also prohibited in connection with any kind of sin offering (Lev 5:11, Num 5:15). One of the most frequent uses of frankincense was that it was placed on the twelve loaves of showbread in the tabernacle. When a bread offering was complemented with frankincense, the intent was to show that the bread represented one who was heavenly and pure. Frankincense was also brought to Christ as a gift by the wise men along with gold and myrrh (Mt 2:11). The gold was emblematic of His regality; the frankincense of His heavenly, divine being, and the myrrh of His suffering, human being.

Salt is a symbol of endurance and preservation. Hence, Christ said to His disciples, “*Ye are the salt of the earth*” (Mt 5:13), meaning that it was on their account that the earth was preserved. In another place He said, “*Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another,*” (Mk 9:50). Most importantly, those who are saved by the body of Christ are *forever* saved by it. Salvation in Christ is secure and will always endure. A denial of this is severe error and is symptomatic of other errors in thinking that are even worse.

The meat offering was never to be mingled with leaven because the former represented the sinless body of Christ whereas the latter was a common representative of sin. This is why unleavened bread should be used in the communion service. Though the Bible does not explicitly say that the bread in the first communion was unleavened, we can know this beyond any doubt because it was taken from the Passover bread, which had to be unleavened per the specifications of Exodus 12. Also, the first communion was done at a week of year (i.e. “Week of Unleavened Bread”) when the Jews could not consume leaven or even have it in their homes.

As for the prohibition of honey, some scholars claim that honey was commonly offered to false gods, and this would possibly explain its prohibition here (thus showing that Bible-based religion did not derive from imitation of other religions), but the greater reason was likely that honey was a symbol of material affluence. The term “land flowing with milk and honey” is repeatedly used in the Bible to represent the land as being prosperous. On the other hand, the meat offering was purposed to describe one who lived in poverty.

The meat offering was burned on the altar to transform it from earthly form to heavenly form via the vapors and fumes. This part of the ritual represented the ascension of the resurrected body of Christ, and this is why the Bible represented it as producing a sweet-smelling savor to God.

The Rite of the Cleansed Leper

In every instance where the New Testament recorded Jesus as cleansing lepers (Mt 8:1-4, Mk 1:40-44, Lk 5:12-14, 17:12-19), He thereafter commanded them to show themselves to the priests. In Mark 1:44 the commandment was more specific: “...*shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*” This indicates that, in all of these cases, Jesus was commanding compliance with the law as specified in Leviticus 14:1-32. These verses required that a detailed ritual be performed in every case where a leper had been healed. The ritual was not for the actual healing of lepers, but was to be done for those who were already healed by God.

Leprosy can be cured today with modern antibiotics, though the process is typically long and arduous, and it does not correct for scarring and nerve damage done by the disease. What Jesus did was far more. He made lepers *whole*. This would be a miracle even today, but was much more so in biblical times, because medical solutions did not then exist. Indeed, there were no instances in scripture where the Leviticus ritual was ever actually performed for anyone prior to the healings done by Jesus Christ. Consequently, the ritual must have seemed largely inapplicable and irrelevant for almost 1500 years, but all this radically changed when Jesus made it applicable and called attention to it. Closer inspection of the procedure will divulge why. Its symbolism powerfully conveyed remarkable prophecy about New Testament cleansing of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.

The details of the ritual were:

- 1) The priest was to take two birds along with cedar wood, scarlet thread and hyssop.
- 2) One of these birds was to be held in an earthen vessel and killed there.
- 3) This vessel was to contain “running” water, though the Hebrew word was more commonly translated as “living.” The water was to be taken from a running spring or creek and placed at the bottom of the vessel.
- 4) The other bird was to be dipped into the blood of the first, or presumably into the blood/water mixture then at the bottom of the earthen vessel. Evidently, the hyssop was attached to the cedar wood by means of the scarlet thread, and the bird was attached to this structure when dipped.
- 5) The leper was to be sprinkled seven times with the blood/water mixture.
- 6) He was to be pronounced clean in a ceremonial sense. He was of course already clean in actuality, having been cleansed by the hand of God.
- 7) The dipped bird was to be set free.
- 8) The cleansed leper was to wash and shave.
- 9) He was to wait seven days before entering his own house but was otherwise unrestricted to move about in the camp of Israel.
- 10) He was to wash and shave again as before.
- 11) On the eighth day, he was to offer a trespass offering of a male lamb.
- 12) There was to be a wave offering of a log of oil.
- 13) Blood of the trespass offering was to be applied to his right ear, thumb and toe.

- 14) Anointing oil was to be sprinkled seven times toward the veil of the Holiest of Holies.
- 15) The remaining oil was to be put on the right ear, thumb and toe as was done with the blood. The remainder of the oil was poured on the leper's head.
- 16) A sin offering, burnt offering and meat offering were to be made by the priests in his behalf.

There can be little doubt that symbolism was intended in all this, and that the symbolic meaning was in fact the primary point. The rare applicability, or outright inapplicability, of the ritual should be sufficient to establish this claim. In our quest for the symbolic meaning, we can confidently begin with the assumption that leprosy was used as a symbol of sin, and the cleansing of the leper was therefore a symbol of absolution. When this point is taken as given, the procedure quickly transforms from seemingly senseless superstition to brilliant prophecy, provided that one believes in Jesus Christ.

The earthen vessel was a representation of the body of Christ. In speaking of our own spirits, Paul said, *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us,"* (2Cor 4:7). Clearly, the *"earthen vessels"* here are our mortal bodies. The running or "living" water in the vessel was symbolic of the Holy Spirit. The body of Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit of God. The Apostle John verified this symbolism when adding a comment to a statement of Christ:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) – Jn 7:38-39

Christ descended from Heaven and occupied a human body, albeit one that was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was killed while within this body, even as the first bird was killed inside the earthen vessel. The second bird represented the sinner to be saved. This bird was delivered after being dipped in the blood of the first, and was set free to fly in the heaven from which the first bird had come. The second bird was dipped in a mixture that also included the running water. This symbolized the fact that the elect of God are not only dipped in the blood of Christ but will also be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

We can easily account for the hyssop and scarlet in the ritual also. Christ was given vinegar to drink via a sponge that was impaled with a stalk of hyssop (Jn 19:29, Ps 69:21). He was mocked with scarlet robe (Mt 27:28). The cedar is more difficult to explain, but one good theory would be that the cross was made of such wood.

The leper was then pronounced clean, even though in truth he was clean already. Indeed, the whole ceremony was predicated upon his being such. Even so, the entire elect family of God was truly rendered clean the moment Jesus died for it on the cross, but as individuals they are not formally declared clean until brought to faith in Jesus Christ. Curiously, the leper was commanded to wash himself *after* he was declared clean. This washing was representative of the

repentance and practical sanctification to which we are obligated by the free cleansing we have received through Christ, but this washing is done *after* Christ has truly and eternally cleansed us in the sight of God. Nothing done by either the leper or the priests truly contributed toward the cleansing from leprosy. These human actions only served to declare and certify what had *already* been done by God *alone*.

After he had washed, the leper was freed to enter and move about the camp of Israel in normal manner for seven days; however, he was not permitted to enter his own tent. While there were likely practical reasons for this, the symbolic meaning was of greater importance. It represented the fact that the cleansed sinner is severed from his old natural ties and made the eternal member of a new heavenly family – a family here symbolized by the camp of Israel. So Christ said:

Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. – Mk 10:29-30

So the cleansed sinner exchanges his old family for a new one. The old was after the flesh; the new is after the spirit. As Paul said:

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. – 2Cor 5:16-17

After his seven-day separation from his own tent, the cleansed leper was to make a trespass offering. This might seem strange because the Bible never described his leprosy as being retribution for any particular sin. However, the law also required trespass offerings in special cases where persons had sinned ignorantly “*in the holy things of the Lord*” (Lev 5:15). This would have been the case here if the leper had handled such holy things while still in a state of uncleanness. This explanation is supported by the fact that the leper was required to offer a *male* lamb. The typical trespass offering entailed a female, but the law specified that a male was to be used in the special case of an unwitting sin against holy things. Now all this showed that the leper had not been cleansed by approaching holy things or by touching them. He was required to make amends for any such behavior. Rather, he had been cleansed because a Holy Thing had touched him. As it was with the leper, so it is with all who are cleansed by the blood of Christ. They are not cleansed by approaching unto holy things, and they can only defile what holy things they touch. The reason they are clean is that a Holy Thing had touched them.

The remainder of the ritual has a remarkable resemblance to the procedure for consecrating a priest (Lev 8, Exo 29). Consider the following points of similarity:

- 1) Both were to wash themselves.
- 2) Both were to observe a seven-day period of separation.
- 3) Both had blood applied to their ear, thumb and big toe – all on the right-hand side.
- 4) Both cases had anointing oil being applied to the tabernacle or its furnishings.
- 5) Both were themselves anointed with oil.

Hence, the lowly leper was elevated beyond mere healing to the honored place of being a priest unto God. This reflects the important passage:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. – Rev 5:9-10

The most distinguishing similarity of the two rituals was the application of blood to the right ear, thumb and great toe. In these things, the subject was being prepared for the work of God. Atonement was made for his ear that it might receive instruction. Atonement was made for the hand to render it fit for the work it was called to do. Finally, blood was applied to the foot because it is called to follow the footsteps of another. Jesus Christ has already blazed the trail the leper is called to tread. These applications were made to the right-hand side because the calling was unto an honored work. The left-hand side might be deployed toward natural necessities, but highest priority and chief affection must be directed toward the spiritual things represented by the right (Mt 6:33). As Solomon said, “*A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left,*” (Eccl 10:2). The case of the leper was even more blessed than that of the Levitical priest. The leper's right ear, thumb and toe were also anointed with oil, indicating that he was to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in his appointed work. He has been elevated from his uncleanness to a state of priesthood, but a priesthood of far greater honor and power than under the law of Moses.

The order in which these things were done is also of great importance. The blood anointing was done first. The oil anointing was done second. Accordingly, the blood of Christ was applied toward the cleansing of the elect when He died for them on the cross, and His death purchased for them the subsequent oil-anointing they will receive when the Holy Spirit quickens them in the new birth to eternal life. Unfortunately, most Christians err in teaching the reverse, or that the Spirit first moves a man to faith, and then the blood is applied to him on such account. This is based on a misinterpretation of the principle of justification by faith. The elect of God were blood-anointed and *rendered* righteous in the sight of God the moment Jesus died. They are individually *declared* as righteous when brought to faith. The ritual of the cleansed leper corroborated this. The leper was truly cleansed by God before the ritual was ever implemented. The ritual itself entailed human actions serving to declare and certify this fact.

The Purification of New Mothers

Some of the most peculiar provisions of the law were contained in Leviticus 12, which dealt with the purification of mothers after giving birth. This is yet another case where it will be difficult or impossible to make sense of the law unless interpreted as foreshadowing Jesus Christ. However, it communicated remarkable prophecies of Him when placed under that “*true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,*” (Jn 1:9).

This chapter required that if a woman were to give birth to a male child, she was to be considered physically unclean for seven days. On the eighth day, the child was to be circumcised. The mother was then to be counted ceremonially unclean for an additional 33 days. This meant she could not touch any hallowed thing and could not enter the sanctuary of the tabernacle. However, in the event she gave birth to a female child, all this was to be doubled. That is, she was to be counted physically unclean for 14 days and ceremonially unclean for 66 days more. With either a male or female, she was to offer a sin offering and burnt offering at the end of the period of her ceremonial uncleanness, and upon so doing, she was to be counted as clean.

This ordinance actually appended a new commandment to an old one. The practice of circumcising male children on the eighth day was commanded of Abraham hundreds of years prior to Moses and the law (Gn 17:11-12). Jesus Himself made this point (Jn 7:22). Paul also emphasized that circumcision was a pre-law commandment (Rom 4:11-13). Because two commandments are being combined in this chapter, there is likely good basis to interpret them under different terms.

As to the old commandment, circumcision was of course a sign of the promise that God would fulfill His saving covenant by bringing up the Messiah through the seed of Abraham. Accordingly, Paul described it as a seal or certificate of the imputed righteousness whereby we are saved (Rom 4:11). There were likely both practical and symbolic reasons why circumcision was done on the eighth day. Even animals could not be offered to God until at least eight days old (Ex 22:29-30, Lev 22:27), likely because of the uncleanness they contracted from their mothers in birth. However, the primary reason was almost surely that the Bible used eight as a number of new beginnings. All Bible students will know that seven is a number commonly denoting perfection or completion, so eight marks the beginning of a new era or regime after a former had been completed. Accordingly, the birth of the Messiah would mark the completion of one era and the beginning of another.

As for the remaining features of Leviticus 12, these were additions made by the law. To arrive at an explanation for them, consider that when a Jewish birth resulted in a male, the child came under the Abrahamic covenant once circumcised, and was therefore potentially the Messiah. In the event he were actually such, then 33 years later, all the elect, including the mother, would be rendered eternally clean before God by His death on the cross. Almost all scholars agree that

Jesus was 33 years old when He died. Hence, the mother of a male child was to be considered unclean 33 days but then clean once her sacrifices were made. This aspect of the procedure was therefore remarkably prophetic. It also gave symbolic support to the fact that God's elect were actually cleansed in His sight immediately upon the death of Christ. When the Bible speaks of "justification by faith," it is referring to the *declaration* and *certification* of one as personally righteous, but the *application* of that righteousness occurred when Jesus died. This principle was communicated in symbolism all over the law, and stated repeatedly in the New Testament as well (Rom 5:10, 2Cor 5:18-20, Eph 2:14-17, Col 2:13-15, Heb 10:14).

Now to resolve the case of the female, one must understand the common scriptural intent of "doubling." It commonly meant to make *indefinitely* or *immeasurably* longer or greater. Such was the meaning in all of the following scriptures:

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. – Isa 40:2

For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. – Isa 61:7

Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee. – Zech 9:12

For her (i.e. Babylon) sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. – Rev 18:5-6

The birth of a female child in Israel produced no new possibility that the Messiah had come, and so the time of uncleanness was "doubled" or made indefinitely longer because nothing had happened that would bring messianic cleansing within the foreseeable future.

In corroboration of my introductory chapter, this ritual is a prime example of "spit" that natural men will not want in their eyes (Jn 9:1-7). They will almost surely reject the ritual as patently superstitious and misogynistic. This is especially true of modern men with all their intellectual conceit. Be warned that the Great Creator of the Universe will not be the least deterred by the fact that bunnies of dust judge Him in such unfavorable ways. Indeed, the profundity of the ritual was so cleverly hidden that one must wonder if the reaction of the scoffers was an intended effect. "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence,*" (1Cor 1:27-29).

The Hem of the Garment

One of the peculiar provisions of the law was that all Jews were to have fringes on their garments. These were also called hems or borders. The specific commandment was:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.
– Num 15:38-41

Hence, the fringe was to serve as a reminder of their debt of allegiance to God and to His law. The Bible does not explain the ribbon of blue, but the best theory is that blue was used to depict the divine and heavenly. The ribbon could therefore be representative of the fact that the only righteousness God will accept for admission to heaven is the imputed righteousness of the divine and heavenly Messiah. Even accepting this explanation, the general commandment was strange, particularly since it imposed a considerable burden, affecting millions of garments over hundreds of years. However, the motivation for the commandment became manifest approximately 1500 years later when Jesus Christ was walking on an unnamed street in an unnamed city of Israel. The event was of such importance that it was recorded in all of the synoptic gospels (Mt 9:18-22, Mk 5:22-34, Lk 8:40-48).

Jesus was then en route to heal a very sick girl of 12 years of age. The girl actually died before His arrival, but He resurrected her from the dead. There was also at that same time an older woman who had a humiliating infirmity of 12 years. It is perhaps no coincidence that she contracted her infirmity about the same time that the younger girl was born. The ailments of both were purposed to serve to the glory of God. The older woman, believing that Jesus had power to heal her, resolved that she would quietly approach Him from behind and touch the hem of His garment. She felt that a mere touch would be sufficient.

The woman had multiple reasons for being unimposing and inconspicuous. The first was that Jesus was thronged by multitudes, so capturing His attention seemed nigh impossible. Second, the younger girl's malady would normally be considered of greater importance. Physicians nearly always prioritize the young over the old. The girl was also nigh to death. One would therefore assume that Jesus would be moving with great urgency and that He would be annoyed by any distractions or delays. Next, the woman had already spent her substance on physicians but with no good effects. She had nothing left to pay, and any doctor who would presume to treat her stood nothing to gain apart from a probable blemish on his resume. Finally, her ailment was likely of a humiliating nature.

The plan of the woman worked wonderfully except for her intent to remain inconspicuous. She touched Jesus and was instantly healed, but He halted the throng and asked who it was that touched Him, claiming that He felt “*virtue*” going out from Him. His reaction will be better understood upon considering the symbolic meaning of the hem. It was a symbol of virtue and a reminder of the obligation to be virtuous before the Lord.

The symbolism in the woman’s healing was both powerful and beautiful. Though millions of people are under the salvation and care of the Son of God, this does not limit His ability to care for them personally. Being the eternal and omnipotent God, He has no lack of time to attend to their needs and it is never necessary for Him to move with haste. Their needs are no challenge to Him. A mere touch will suffice. He is surely sovereign in the administration of His grace, but His saving power is such that He need not neglect one person in order to save another. Since He is the perfection of love and grace, people with the most humiliating sins and maladies can find healing in Him. He will mercifully take their case when all other physicians have failed. He requires no money and will provide what money can never buy.

The woman, of course, had to humbly bow to Him while reaching down for the hem of His garment, but in so doing, she became a legendary beneficiary. On the other hand, her bowing would seem to be of little significance to Him. Whatever honor He receives from men bowing to Him would be comparable to the honor men perceive from the adoration of a mangy, tick-infested dog. Upon considering this, His humility appears even greater than hers.

After witnessing the miracle experienced by this woman, many others undertook to be healed by the same means, and they were accordingly blessed (Mt 14:35-36). The Bible gave little detail about these, but all synoptic gospels told of what happened to the dear woman.

Now God’s earlier commandment concerning the hem of the garment had affected millions of garments over many hundreds of years. Countless hours were spent by countless seamstresses in sewing them. This raises the important question: Would God require all this effort over all these years to portend a fleeting moment that happened on a street of Israel many years ago? In my judgment, the answer a man gives to this question will show the depth of his understanding of the word of God. Before answering it, all readers should consider the enormous amount of Bible that was committed to telling the story of what happened in the space of a few hours on one day to one man who died on one mountain. These facts should give firm indication as to the true identity of the man who was on that mountain and who walked that street.

The Heifer of the Valley

Deuteronomy 21 specifies a ritual that will seem very strange when compared to the habits and norms of the law. The contemplated circumstance was one wherein the slain body of a man had been found but the slayer was unknown. The slain man was counted as being innocent (vss 8, 9). Restitution for this injustice against him was to be made in the following way:

- 1) The elders and judges were to measure the distances from the location of the body to the cities thereabout to determine the nearest city.
- 2) The elders of the nearest city were to choose a heifer that had never been worked or yoked.
- 3) The heifer was to be taken to a “*rough valley*” that was not “*eared or sown*.” Some translations construe the Hebrew underlying the expression “*rough valley*” to mean a valley with a stream running through it. Contextual evidence supports this idea. Hence, I assume it to be a rough valley not sown with crops and containing a stream.
- 4) The elders were to behead the heifer.
- 5) While under the oversight of the priests, the elders of the nearby city were to wash their hands over the heifer and make the following oath: “*Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge...*” (Dt 21:7-8).

Assuming the completion of these actions, it was said, “*And the blood shall be forgiven them. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord,*” (Dt 21:8-9).

While this ritual surely had underlying meaning, it is admittedly difficult to ascertain, but I think a surprisingly sensible theory can be offered.

The ritual was very strange to the law for several reasons. The first was that it called for a sacrifice in a place apart from the tabernacle. While the same was done with the red heifer of Numbers 19, even there the tabernacle seemed to be nearby. Sacrifices done away from the tabernacle were explicitly prohibited in other areas of the law (Lev 17:3-5, Dt 12:1-14). Though rare exceptions were thereafter admitted (e.g. 1Sam 7:9, 1Ki 18), these seem to have entailed exigent or extraordinary circumstances. The heifer of the valley was unusual in that the law itself called for a sacrifice away from the tabernacle. A second great peculiarity was that it demanded an offering from men who were thereafter required to swear to their own innocence. In all other offerings, there was an acknowledgment of guilt or corruption. The ritual was also strange in that it omitted detail seen in other offerings. There was no sprinkling or anointing with blood. Nor was anything burned at the altar or elsewhere. The priests had no role but to oversee the proceedings. The ritual was also unusual in that all was to be done in a valley, whereas most offerings in the Old Testament were made on mountains, especially the temple mount at Jerusalem. Further mystery was added by the requirement that the valley be rough, containing a stream, and not sown with seed.

However, these odd aspects of the ritual become sensible upon the supposition that the slain man represented one who, through the neglect of others, had died without being taught the word of God. A murdered man is used to symbolize such destitute people in order to impress upon the reader the severity of any negligence that left the victims in this state. The ritual might also apply to living unevangelized people. Though alive naturally, they *appear* dead spiritually because they lack the sure confirmations of eternal life that only the word of God can give.

God once told Ezekiel that He had made the prophet a “*watchman*.” It is the *duty* of a watchman to warn the people of imminent danger. Hence, the Lord exhorted Ezekiel, saying:

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. – Ezek 3:17-19

This warning shows that scriptures can view the guilt of evangelical negligence as being comparable to the guilt of murder.

Now when such negligence occurs, it is not altogether clear as to who should bear the blame. Anyone and everyone having knowledge of the word of God could be at fault. This is why the slayer in the ritual was undetermined, yet all people in all cities near the body were put in fear of accountability. Notwithstanding, the clearest culpability rested upon those who were located nearest to the victim. This explains why the elders were to measure from the corpse to determine the nearest city, and why the heifer was offered to secure mercy for all its residents.

As to the imagery of the valley, it should be considered that much of God’s word was given on mountains. Important promises to Abraham were made on the mountain where he offered his son Isaac. The law of Moses was largely given on Mount Horeb. The so-called Sermon on the Mount contained some of the most famous teachings of Jesus Christ. He also preached on the Mount of Olives and the Mount of Transfiguration. In foreseeing all this, Isaiah famously declared, “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*” (Isa 52:7, Rom 10:15). Of course, Jesus was also crucified on a mountain; He left the world from a mountain, and some Christians think He will return to a mountain. This prevalence of mountains in the word of God perhaps explains why the Syrians in the days of Elijah and Ahab foolishly claimed that the God of Israel was a god of hills but not of plains. In retribution for this impudence, the Syrians were slaughtered when they attempted to lure the Israelites to a fight on a plain (1Ki 20:23-30). Now all this suggests that a valley would be a fit representation of places where the word of God had not been carried. However, the true God is a God of the valleys also, as the story of the heifer will tell.

This symbolic meaning of the valley was reinforced by the requirement that it not be sown with seed. In His famous parable of the sower, Jesus compared the teaching of God's word to the sowing of seed (Mt 13:3-23). This valley had not been sown because it represented a place where the word of God had not been preached. This interpretation also accounts for the simplicity of the ritual and its absence of detailed protocol. The case being contemplated was one wherein the details of religious truth and practice were never taught.

However, these sad and seemingly hopeless circumstances are remedied by the sacrificed heifer. The surest aspect of the ritual was that the heifer represented Jesus Christ. Though He was actually crucified on a mountain, this heifer was carried down to a valley to show that the blood of Christ can reach even His destitute elect, including those who die in infancy and those lacking faculties to receive external teaching. This valley also had a stream in it, representing the Holy Spirit, who works when and where He pleases (Jn 3:8), even in the hearts of those who have not been reached by human teaching. These workings of Christ and the Spirit explain why the slain man was counted as an innocent man.

The symbolism of this ritual communicates inspiring and comforting truths attesting to the power and glory of God in the salvation of His people. This great God does not need the help of man to execute His saving work. Yet men are not thereby relieved of their duty to spread His word to as many as they possibly can. This was demonstrated by the fact that the elders were required to wash their hands over the heifer, swearing they were not responsible for the slain man and had no knowledge of the slaying.

The Water of Jealousy

The fifth chapter of Numbers presents what is perhaps the most bizarre ritual in all the Old Testament. This ritual dealt with cases where a wife was suspected of adultery by her jealous husband, but the evidence against her was insufficient to sustain a charge. Of course, adulterers were to be put to death under the law (Lev 20:10), but the law also required due process for all accused individuals (Dt 17:6-7, 19:15-21). The resolution in this indeterminate case was a ritualistic test using what has been called the “water of jealousy.”

The specifications of this ritual were:

- 1) The suspecting husband was to bring his wife to the priest and also bring barley to be offered in her behalf; however, it was not to be mixed with oil or frankincense as per usual.
- 2) The woman was to be set before a priest, evidently in the sanctuary of the tabernacle, with her head uncovered and with her offering in her hand.
- 3) The priest was to put holy water in an earthen vessel, and he was to add to this water dust taken from the floor of the tabernacle. The water was evidently to be taken from the brazen laver. This is the only place the Bible speaks of “*holy water*,” and though modern Christian rituals make use of such, these rituals are mere products of human tradition.
- 4) The priest was to sternly warn her of being cursed if guilty. His charge to her dictated that she would be given the solution to drink, and if she were innocent, it would do her no harm, but if guilty, then it would cause her thigh to rot and her belly to swell.
- 5) The words of this charge were to be handwritten before her.
- 6) The accused woman was then to give her consent to the test.
- 7) The priest was to take of the offering from her hand and burn it at the brazen altar.
- 8) The charge against her that had been handwritten by the priest was then to be blotted out using the prepared solution. Such was done regardless of her innocence or guilt. This was obviously one of the most peculiar parts of a peculiar ritual.
- 9) The woman was to then drink the water, and she was thereafter observed for the effects.
- 10) If unaffected, she was declared clean and free to conceive seed.

Most unbelievers will consider this ritual to be foolish and superstitious, but the Bible says “*the foolishness of God is wiser than men*,” (1Cor 1:25). The ritual actually had brilliant prescience. It was a symbolic prophecy about Jesus Christ and His church. While there were possibly cases where the ritual was actually applied, none are mentioned in scripture, thus further indicating that its main intent was symbolic.

The likely symbolic intent was to represent a test purposed to delineate faithful versus unfaithful religion. The Bible commonly portrays religions and their devotees to women or wives (Isa 54, Jer 31:32, Hos 2:16-23, Gal 4:22-31, Eph 5:25-33). False religions are frequently depicted as whores or as adulterous wives (Isa 57:3-8, Jer 13:25-27, Ezek 16:28-39, 23:43-45, Hos 2:2-10, 3:1-3, Rev 17). Accordingly, scriptures represent God as a jealous husband (Ex 20:5, 34:14, Dt 4:24, 5:9, 6:15, Josh 24:19, Ezek 39:25, Joel 2:18, Na 1:2, Zech 1:14, 8:2). Of course, the omnipotent God has no insecurities, but He is “*jealous*” in the sense that He has little toleration

for those who resort to other gods and false religions. Now these symbolic assignments were so common to the Old Testament that Paul assumed that anyone knowledgeable of the law would find them familiar. This assumption was made in Romans 7:1-4, which said:

Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. – Rom 7:1-4

So the religions of the law and gospel were both compared to wives that were married to God. The latter marriage was made legitimate by virtual death under the former.

While God surely knows the difference between faithful and unfaithful religion, this difference is not so apparent to men. Even true religion, though as a faithful wife to God, can appear to be in disfavor with Him, especially in the eyes of wicked men wanting to see it as such. As Jesus told His disciples, “*They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service,*” (Jn 16:2). Even of Jesus Himself it was said, “*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,*” (Is 53:4). If this were true of Jesus, then much more would His faithful followers be vulnerable. He Himself said, “*If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*” (Mt 10:25). Because of such things, Paul said, “*For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,*” (Rom 8:36). These are reasons why a definitive test was needed.

This test became most needful in New Testament times when the gospel was first preached to the Jews. They were then presented with two competing religions, both of which were accused of being adulterous. Jesus Christ denounced His generation as being wicked and adulterous (Mt 12:39, Mk 8:38). On the other hand, His generation denounced Him as being a blasphemous corrupter of religion (Mt 26:65, Jn 10:33).

To solve the symbolism of the ritual, it is best to start with the mysterious solution:

1) The water taken from the brazen laver represented the Holy Spirit. Water is commonly used this way in scripture (e.g. Jn 7:38-39). A possible reason for this is that, when water is poured on dry and dead ground, it causes the ground to come to life, bearing beautiful plants and trees. Water especially has this effect on arid regions such as Israel and thereabout. Accordingly, when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the earth in the last day, He will bring forth the dead to immortal life. Paul actually compared our deceased bodies to seeds in 1Corinthians 15:35-44.

2) The earthen vessel containing the water represented the human body of Jesus Christ. As incarnate God, He became an earthen vessel filled with the Holy Spirit (2Cor 4:7, Jn 3:34).

3) This explains why the water from the earthen vessel was used to blot out the charge against the woman, even if guilty. Jesus died to erase the sins of the guilty, including even those who, at various times and degrees, had been caught up in whorish religious systems. Practically all converts in the New Testament were taken from such systems.

Paul probably alluded to this part of the procedure when praising Christ as “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,*” (Col 2:14). Notice that he spoke of the blotting of *ordinances* rather than sins. This correlates the two cases because what the priest blotted were also ordinances. Technically, he did not blot out her sins because guilt had not yet been established. There would be no error in saying that Jesus blotted out sins, but the point here is to note the similarities between the two cases. The moral ordinances of the law were not blotted out by Christ in the sense of being abrogated, but in that they can do no harm where His blood has been applied.

4) The dust was a symbol of man, who was formed from dust, and who returns to dust in death (Gn 2:7, 3:19). However, the dust used in the ritual was *sanctified* dust, being from the floor of the tabernacle. This dust represented the elect of God. The imagery is strengthened by considering that the tabernacle projected the image of a body on a cross. It was a rectangular tent over seven holy furnishings. These furnishings were arranged in the form of a cross, and the tent itself was compared to a body (2Cor 5:1, 2Pet 1:13-14, Rev 21:3). Hence, the dust of the tabernacle was under the protection of a body on a cross, even as the elect are “*sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,*” (Heb 10:10).

5) These things taken together have the elect of God, or the sanctified dust, safely within Jesus Christ, or the earthen vessel, and baptized in the Holy Spirit, as represented by the water. This arrangement is in accordance with representations that are everywhere in the New Testament. The phrase “*in Christ*” is recorded in the New Testament 77 times, and the phrase “*in Jesus*” is there seven times, and at least seven places explicitly refer to the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Mt 3:11, Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16, Jn 1:33, Acts 1:5, 11:16, 1Cor 12:13).

6) Now these things also happen to provide the complete recipe for resurrection in Christ, which is the centerpiece of religious truth. This fact divulges the meaning of the test. If a religion finds these things agreeable, then it is a true religion that is a faithful wife to God, but if it finds these things disagreeable, then it is an imposter and an adulteress. Apostate Judaism was a corrupt religion that was worsened by the resurrection of Christ because it was provoked into even greater rebellion and corruption (Jn 15:24), but this same event served to the vitality of true religion, joyously inspiring it to a lively hope (1Pet 1:3).

With these symbolic meanings in hand, we can resolve details that were presented earlier:

7) The woman was taken to the tabernacle because this was the seat of true religion.

8) The head of the woman was unveiled because the resurrection of Christ was publicly declared to all and was witnessed by a multitude (1Cor 15:5-8). It contrasted with other miracles of Christ in these respects (Mt 12:39-40). His other miracles were usually done privately, and those who witnessed them were commonly commanded to be reticent about what they had seen.

The Bible also represents true religion as being unveiled (2Cor 3:12-18), thus allowing it to see clearly, whereas false religion is veiled and blinded, though all religions claim clairvoyance.

9) All religions claim to make offerings to god or gods, but the substance of these offerings were supplied by God Himself. This is why the husband was to provide the offering for his wife.

10) The offering used in this ritual was one of the cheapest under the law. It consisted merely of barley, a comparatively cheap grain, and was to be without oil or frankincense. Frankincense represented what is generally divine and heavenly. Oil represented the Holy Spirit. The thing being tested is whether the considered religion truly had an offering of heavenly sanction and of inspiration by the Spirit; hence, these things were omitted. These are crucial criteria, but they cannot be directly observed by men. They must be ascertained by indirect means. Offerings are also vain unless done in faith, but this offering was to be made before faith had been symbolically verified by the water of jealousy.

11) The exonerated woman was described as free to conceive seed, suggesting that the ill effects of the water on the guilty woman rendered her barren and unfruitful. True religion will bring forth fruit unto God, but false religion will be as the fig tree Christ once cursed, saying, *“Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever,”* (Mt 21:19). This was also a symbolic event foretelling the rejection of the corrupt and fruitless religious system of the Jews. As John the Baptist once warned, *“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,”* (Mt 3:10).

12) The procedure handled the accused woman in a stern manner, as if under a presumption of guilt, yet the procedure itself would surely lead to her acquittal if left to the laws of nature. The water of jealousy could not have the threatened effect without a miracle from God. Some have concluded from this that a practical intent of the procedure was to protect women from spurious accusation. However, the symbolism is of greatest importance. In an ordinary court of law, there is a presumption of innocence. This presumption of innocence does not actually imply innocence, but it means that the burden of proof is on the accuser. However, it does not work this way in the virtual court wherein men are judged as saved or unsaved, or where their religions are judged as true or false. In this court, there is a presumption of guilt, because all men are fallen and condemned in Adam. This presumption of guilt does not imply guilt, but it means that the burden of proof must be borne by the defense. This burden is met when, and only when, the accused has faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and its implications.

This ritual also had similarities to the famous trial of the adulterous woman in John 8:3-11, even though important differences must be acknowledged. These differences were that there was no record of her own husband being among the accusers, and her guilt was presented by the scribes

and Pharisees as being settled. However, the similarities are more than can be dismissed. Some Christians have questioned the case against her because her accusers were not credible witnesses, and mention of the male offender was suspiciously absent. Her case was also committed directly to the Lord for judgment, even as was done in the ritual. Most importantly, Jesus wrote in the dirt while she was being accused, much like the priest wrote in the ritual. While the story of Jesus is the most written subject in world history, this was the only time He was ever recorded as writing Himself. This seems significant. He was also recorded as stooping to write in the dirt twice. While it cannot be proven, His second writing may have served to scratch out the first, in like manner with the priest of old. Scriptures do not provide sufficient detail to draw firm conclusions, but it seems very possible that the correlation between the cases was deliberate.

The Dietary Restrictions

One of the most familiar aspects of the law was that it required the Israelites to adhere to dietary rules (Lev 11, Dt 14). These rules are still observed by religious Jews today, and since they were commanded approximately 3500 years ago, this makes them among the oldest continuing religious practices on the earth. Many have thought these rules were in the interest of health. There is probably truth in this theory, but health concerns could not be the foremost reason for the rules. They were rescinded by Christ and His Apostles for the New Testament church, and it cannot be thought that God has less interest for the physical health of His church than He had for Israel. In pursuit of answers, one must first consider the fact that there were restrictions of any sort, and must then consider what the specific restrictions were. Health considerations, whether known or unknown to modern science, probably account for the specifics. But the simple fact there were any restrictions is of greater importance toward understanding the Bible. The general reason for the dietary restrictions is explained in the New Testament when it tells of the conversion of a Gentile named Cornelius (Acts 10).

This conversion was one of the most revolutionary events in religious history, serving to radically reshape many cultures of man. With this event, the Christian church ceased to be a strictly Jewish entity and became open to Gentiles also. This was the beginning of a movement that would make Christianity the world's largest religion. The event was also revolutionary in that it put an end to the dietary rules.

The seeds of this great Gentile movement were sown by Jesus Himself when He showed unusual kindness to them, especially in the cases of the centurion (Mt 8:5-13), the Phoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30) and the woman of Samaria (Jn 4:1-42). Jesus also prophesied this movement in several places (e.g. Mt 8:11, 22:1-14, Lk 13:28-30, Acts 1:7-8). Gospel outreach to the Gentiles started with a deacon named Philip, who preached to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8). However, the case of Cornelius was of greater significance because it officially made Gentiles a part of the church and as equals to the Jews. The great impact of this conversion was owing to the fact that it was done under Peter, who was a notable apostle, and who acted under heavenly commandment. Peter's actions were also endorsed by the fact that Christ had previously given him a surprising degree of authority in such matters. In particular, Jesus said:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. – Mt 16:19

The meaning of this became clear with the conversion of Cornelius. It meant that Christ would use Peter to officially open the doors of church fellowship to people who had formerly been omitted. Peter's authority in this respect was to be honored by others as having the backing of heavenly decree. This authority would also be great enough to terminate the long-held customs of the Jews with respect to the dietary rules.

As with almost all things under the law, the dietary restrictions were mostly symbolic, and were done away when their symbolic intent was served. The fact that the real significance of the rules was symbolic was implied by famous teachings of Jesus when He said:

Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. – Mk 7:14-15

Notwithstanding the common sense of this statement, it was so contrary to the thinking of the Jews that they were offended by it, and even the disciples of Jesus struggled to grasp the underlying principle (Mt 15:12-20). The statement surely shows there is no moral gain or loss in what a man eats. As Paul said, “*But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse,*” (1Cor 8:8). But Paul made an even stronger statement elsewhere, saying, “*For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,*” (1Tim 4:4-5). These claims cast serious doubt on the idea that health considerations were a major factor underlying the dietary rules. This leaves little possibility for their motivation apart from a symbolic message. This message was clearly delivered with the conversion of Cornelius.

The story of Cornelius began with an angel appearing to him in the ninth hour of the day and commanding him to seek out Peter for instructions in things that Cornelius ought to do. Cornelius was described as a devout and prayerful man with a devout household. He was evidently a believer in the God of the Jews. The likely reason that the angel appeared to him at the ninth hour (3pm) was that Christ died on the cross at that very time, thereby rendering Cornelius clean, and all other elect of God with him. The remainder of the story will be about the issue of cleanness before God, and this is why the dietary rules of the law are a central part of it. Those rules had designated certain animals as being clean and others as being unclean for purposes of consumption.

Upon receiving the angelic commandment, Cornelius promptly sent three Gentiles under his command to fetch Peter. On the next day at the sixth hour (i.e. noon), and as the three Gentiles were approaching his gate, Peter was on his rooftop praying. He was overcome with great hunger and fell into a trance wherein he saw a sheet attached at its four corners and being lowered from heaven as a net, and captured within the net were unclean animals of all sorts. Peter was commanded by a voice from heaven to slay and eat, but Peter resisted, claiming that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. The voice then replied, “*What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common,*” (Acts 10:15). The net was lowered thrice, in obvious connection with the three Gentiles at the gate, and then the net and its contents were taken into heaven.

The imagery in Peter’s experience was powerful, and also pertinent in every detail. These events happened at noon because this is a time when all cultures of men gather to eat. Mealtime is also a favorite forum of fellowship. For as long as men have existed, they have gathered around tables, around campfires, beneath shade trees, etc. for food and fellowship. This is also why cooks are dear to men. Cooks not only supply food but also unite men in this favorite forum.

Because of these human traits, eating and drinking are used in the Bible as metaphors for fellowship (Mt 24:48-49, Mk 2:16, Lk 22:29-30, Jn 4:31-32, 1Cor 5:11, Heb 13:10), and indeed, the Jews took such actions as being outright declarations of it (Mk 2:16, Acts 11:2-3, 1Cor 10:18, Gal 2:11-13). A prime instance of this symbolism is in the Christian communion service. It entails eating and drinking, but the Greek word for “*communion*” actually means “fellowship.” It is the highest form of fellowship, and this is why Paul prohibited it where the communicants were in a state of dissent (1Cor 11:20).

The communion service also shows that to eat or drink can mean the highest form of fellowship for the things being consumed or for what they represent. Hence, the communicant symbolizes that his eternal life is owing to his oneness with Christ. This interpretation is confirmed in:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? – 1Cor 10:16-18

Paul’s reasoning here was borrowed from Christ Himself:

I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. – Jn 6:48-51

Add to this that when John was commanded to eat a book in the hand of an angel, the meaning was that John was to become one with it by making it an accepted part of his mind and heart (Rev 10:9). The same was true when Ezekiel was commanded to eat a scroll (Ezek 3:1-4).

Peter was put in a state of hunger because hungry men are not apt to find fault, either with the food they eat or those with whom they eat it. A full man will loathe a steak, but a hungry man will love a hamburger. Peter’s God-given hunger was symbolic of the fact that his heart was being trained by God to desire peace and brotherhood with people he had formerly loathed. As Paul would later say, “*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another,*” (1Thes 4:9). When men are united in peace and fellowship, it is because God has given them hunger for such.

The heavenly net resolved the mystery of the symbolic intent of the dietary restrictions. They symbolized the strict separation that was to exist between the Jews and all other peoples of the world. The restrictions were also an effective way of enforcing this separation. If one cannot eat what other people eat, then one cannot sit at the same table with them, thus severing fellowship. Therefore, God’s commandment that Peter eat the things in the net implied revolutionary change from long-held, Bible-based customs. Ratification of this change would require authority in Peter far surpassing what God ordinarily gives to men, and this explains the surprising strength

of the statement wherein Christ committed to Peter the keys of the kingdom (Mt 16:19). Some have misconstrued this statement as generally conferring to Peter headship over the other apostles. This is clearly contradicted by scripture (Mt 23:8-11, Mk 9:33-37, Lk 22:24-32), and refuted by Peter himself (1Pet 5:1-4). The exceptional authority given to Peter pertained to this particular matter of admission to fellowship of the kingdom.

The animals in the net were truly unclean under the specifications of the law, but they had been cleansed in a sovereign and gracious act of God. The various animals in the net were therefore perfect symbols of the varied Gentiles embraced in the covenant of grace. However, the Jews were in exactly the same situation, and this is why God prohibited their segregation in the church. Accordingly, given the symbolic meaning of the dietary restrictions, they became highly inappropriate for the church. Men of all nations, races, etc. are saved in like manner by God's grace and are to be united in Christ and His kingdom. All this was beautifully explained by Paul to the Gentile Ephesians:

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. – Eph 2:11-22

When Peter insinuated that the animals in the heavenly sheet were common and unclean, he was corrected with the words, “*What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common,*” (Acts 10:15). Peter was not told that he would be the cause or means of their cleansing; rather, God alone was the cleanser. Nor was Peter told that the Gentiles at his gate would shortly be cleansed; rather, they were *already* cleansed by God. These claims correct the beliefs of many Christians, who think that cleansing before God happens at the point of gospel conversion. The Bible implies that Cornelius and company were cleansed *before* the gospel ever reached them. The conflicted thinking derives from a misunderstanding of the principle of justification by faith. To be “justified” means to be *declared* righteous, not to be rendered righteous. When a court justifies a man, it is declaring a preexisting state of innocence. God's elect were legally cleansed the moment Jesus died on the cross (Rom 5:10, 2Cor 5:18-20, Eph 2:14-17, Col 2:13-15, Heb 10:10-14). This is why Cornelius and company were *already* clean, but their gospel conversion *declared* and *certified* this cleansing, thereby bringing glory to the gracious God who cleansed

them. Accordingly, when the Bible speaks of the righteousness of faith, it means the righteousness that is *denoted* by it.

When the angel appeared to Cornelius, the angel might have simply told him to believe on Christ, repent, be baptized, etc. This was not done. Rather, the angel told Cornelius to receive his instructions from Peter. The reason is that the honor and duty of telling the gospel of Jesus Christ has been given *to men*. All believers should be inspired by this fact to a higher degree of evangelical service. This duty and privilege is toward all races and societies of men, as implied by the heavenly net seen by Peter. As Paul said, “*I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel...*” (Rom 1:14-15).

The Seven Feasts

The law required that the Jews observe seven primary feasts through the course of a year. Technically, these were not all feasts, but were characterized as such because some of them were, and because they collectively symbolized beautiful and festive things. When properly understood, these feasts tell the story of Jesus Christ and New Testament redemption. The first four feasts occurred early in the year (per the religious calendar) and corresponded to the first coming of Christ. The last three occurred in the seventh month. These corresponded to His second coming. All these feasts were conveniently enumerated in Leviticus 23, though further details might be recorded in other places.

The Passover

One could scarcely find an event in the Old Testament of greater prominence than the Passover (Ex 12). If Jesus Christ is the ultimate subject of the Bible, then one should expect something as important as the Passover to foreshadow Him powerfully. This was in fact done in ways that are so obvious that even the simplest Christians are aware of them, but they may not be aware that even in remotest detail did that event foretell of Christ, His crucifixion and its glorious effects.

Of course the Passover refers to the final plague brought against Pharaoh and the Egyptians when God liberated the Israelites from their oppression. In this final plague, God destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt, both of man and beast, but in execution of the plague, God “passed over” the children of Israel and spared them upon provision that they had put the blood of a lamb on the doorway of their houses. The blood was applied to both doorposts and to the lintel above. The parallels between this event and the crucifixion are numerous, including:

- 1) The application of the blood was done in a way to form the points of a cross, with the blood being situated the same as the nail-pierced hands and the thorn-pierced head of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ex 12:3-7).
- 2) The blood was taken from a lamb – a symbol repeatedly applied by scripture to Jesus Christ (e.g. Isa 53:7, Jn 1:29, Acts 8:32, 1Pet 1:19, Rev 5:6, 7:14, 12:11, 14:1, 15:3, 19:7, 21:14, 22:1).
- 3) The lamb was to be without blemish as it represented one who was sinless (Ex 12:5)
- 4) The blood was not to be applied to a wall or roof or floor, but to the door of the house. This symbolized the fact that blood served to create a portal from earth to heaven.
- 5) This lamb was to be killed on the 14th day of the lunar month of Nisan, which was the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. It is a well-documented fact of scripture that Jesus was put to death on the very same day.

6) This lamb was to be set aside on the 10th day of such month, which would correspond to the day that Mary famously anointed the feet of Jesus and when He commended her action, saying, “*Against the day of my burying hath she kept this,*” (Jn 12:7). John said this event occurred six days before the Passover (Jn 12:1), but for reasons shortly to be explained, the Jews in New Testament times commonly applied the term “Passover” to the 15th of Nisan, which would mean that Mary’s action took place on what we would consider the 9th, but the Jewish day advanced at 6:00pm and this event took place in the evening after supper, so it was on the 10th day of the month by Jewish reckoning.

7) The Passover lamb was not a luxuriant feast. It was crudely roasted and eaten with bitter herbs (Ex 12:8-9). This was because it represented the bitter experience of the crucifixion.

8) Nothing of the lamb was to remain until morning. All remnants were to be burned with fire. This was because it represented a body that would never see corruption (Ps 16:10, Acts 2:29-36).

9) God also commanded, “*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover,*” (Ex 12:11). When God traversed Egypt in destruction, this foreshadowed the second coming of Christ, when He will traverse the world in destruction, but His blood-bought elect will be resurrected and raptured to their heavenly home. Hence, the Passover was to be eaten with a readiness to depart. Accordingly, Christians honor the true Lamb of God with a readiness to leave the world behind them, having their affections set on their heavenly home before them, and anxiously ready to imitate its perfections even before they depart.

10) Not only was the Passover observed to commemorate deliverance from Egypt, but also to remember the fact that God had then decimated all of the Egyptian so-called “gods,” though they were in fact devils. Christ did the same to Satan and his accomplices, as is stated in:

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. – John 12:31-32

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. – Col 2:13-15

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. – Eph 4:8

11) The Passover could be eaten by foreigners in the midst of the Israelites, but only on condition that they be circumcised (Ex 12:48). Under no condition was any uncircumcised person

permitted to eat it. Even so, all the elect of God, whether Jew or Gentile, will receive circumcision of heart in the spiritual birth, and these only are beneficiaries of Christ's death.

12) Gentiles who partook of the Passover were to observe exactly the same rules as the Jews. As God said, "*One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you,*" (Ex 12:49). This represented the fact that wherever and whenever God eternally saves people, it is always done by a common cause and by a common means.

13) The Passover meal was not to be carried from house to house but was to be eaten only by the house to which it belonged (Ex 12:46). Accordingly, Christ did not die for men in aggregate, or for groups of men in aggregate, but died for men personally and individually (Gal 2:20).

14) No bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (Ex 12:46). Jesus was crucified along with two thieves, both of whom had their legs broken by the Romans to hasten their deaths, but because Jesus was already dead at that point, having given up His life, no bone of Him was broken (Jn 19:31-33).

The Week of Unleavened Bread

In conjunction with the Passover was the Week of Unleavened Bread. During this week, the Jews were commanded to remove all leaven (i.e. yeast) from their homes. The week began on the day after the Passover, or on the 15th day of Nisan, and was to extend through the 21st day of the same. The first day of this week was a feast day and a Sabbath. The last day was also a feast and a Sabbath (Ex 13:6, Lev 23:6-8). We need not speculate about the symbolic meanings of these events because Paul explained them:

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. – 1Cor 5:6-8

Hence, the apostle confirmed that the sacrifice of the Passover was a symbol of the crucifixion of Christ, and Paul's comments thereafter show that:

15) The Week of Unleavened Bread was symbolic of the church era. Leaven was a common symbol of sin, and the removal of leaven from the home was symbolic of the fact that the Passover lamb, or Christ, had removed the curse of sin for all who had eaten it. It was also symbolic of the fact that all who are beneficiaries in this respect are called to repentance to show honor and appreciation for the grace they have received.

16) The Week of Unleavened Bread commenced with a feast and a Sabbath. This feast was in celebration of the first coming of Christ, and the Sabbath was observed to show that our salvation in Him is not owing to our own works.

17) The Week of Unleavened Bread also ended with a feast and a Sabbath. This feast was in celebration of the second coming of Christ, which will mark the end of the church as it exists on the present earth.

The Offering of Firstfruits

The Offering of the Firstfruits was made in the week immediately following the Passover. This time also corresponded to the beginning of the harvest season. Since the Passover clearly corresponded to the crucifixion of Christ, the Offering of the Firstfruits would chronologically match His resurrection. The specific timing of it was given in:

When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. – Lev 23:10-11

Both Jews and Christians understand “*morrow after the Sabbath*” to refer to the Sabbath following the Passover. However, it is not entirely clear what is meant by the word “*Sabbath*.” Matters are complicated by the fact that the day following the Passover was always a Sabbath even if not a Saturday. This day was the 15th of the first month and marked the commencement of the Week of Unleavened Bread. So the words “*morrow after the Sabbath*” could refer either to the 16th or to the Sunday after the first Saturday following the Passover. The Jews evidently opted for the first interpretation, meaning that they simply did the Offering of the Firstfruits on the 16th. However, the fact that the Jews interpreted the text this way does not necessarily mean this is what scripture intended, and I think subsequent verses actually lend support to the second interpretation, meaning that the Offering of the Firstfruits should have been done on the day after the first Saturday Sabbath following the Passover.

Either interpretation is supportive of the idea that the Offering of the Firstfruits foreshadowed the resurrection. According to traditional thinking, Christ was crucified on Friday the 14th and resurrected on Sunday the 16th. If this is true, then the Jewish scheduling of the firstfruits is almost surely correct. We can definitely say that Christ was crucified on the 14th and resurrected early on Sunday, but there are some who reject the traditional idea that the 14th was on a Friday. These say Christ was crucified on a Wednesday and placed in the tomb at the beginning of Thursday (which would have been around 6:00pm on what we would consider to be Wednesday); that He was resurrected after 6:00pm Saturday evening and that His resurrection was discovered near the dawn of the next morning. This theory is motivated by Matthew 12:40, which is taken to imply that Jesus would spend three complete days and nights in the tomb. Under this theory, Jesus was resurrected well after the 16th, but it was still on the “*morrow after the Sabbath*” if “*Sabbath*” is taken to mean an ordinary Saturday Sabbath.

Christ was the firstfruits in the sense that He was the first ever to be resurrected from the dead in an immortal body. All who had been previously resurrected died again. Paul said more to

reconcile the Old and New Testaments than any other scriptural writer. He explicitly referred to Christ as the “*firstfruits*” in the following famous passage:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. – 1Cor 15:20-23

The law strictly commanded that absolutely nothing was to be harvested and eaten until the firstfruits were offered (Lev 23:14). Accordingly, none could be resurrected to immortal bodies until the body of Christ had been raised. Also, it was always barley that was offered in the firstfruits because this was the first grain to ripen. Barley is used primarily for animal consumption today and the preferred grain for human consumption is wheat, but barley has a higher yield than wheat, thus making it a better alternative to poor people. Even so, Christ Himself was of the poor, and is honored as Savior by the poor in spirit.

The Day of Pentecost

The Day of Pentecost was computed by counting to the seventh Sabbath from the day on which the firstfruits were offered, then adding one day. So it occurred on the same weekday as the firstfruits. Alternately, it was described as being placed 50 days after the firstfruits (under inclusive reckoning), and this is what motivated the name “*Pentecost*.” It was also called the “*Feast of Weeks*” (Dt 16:9-10) on account of the counting methodology used to schedule it. It was also called the “*Feast of Harvest*” (Ex 23:16).

This reckoning would seem to cast doubt on the Jewish idea that “*Sabbath*” meant the 15th in Leviticus 23:11 where the Offering of the Firstfruits was scheduled. If the 15th happened to be a Tuesday, then the next seven Tuesdays would be denominated as “Sabbaths” for purposes of computing the Day of Pentecost. This is unexpected terminology. The more natural reading is that “Sabbath” meant a Saturday Sabbath in Leviticus 23:11, and the next seven Sabbaths were ordinary Saturday Sabbaths as well. Also, this interpretation would always place the Day of Pentecost on Sunday. This is not a necessary conclusion, but it is an appealing one to Christians.

This feast doubtlessly pointed to the events described in Acts 2. The New Testament church was there empowered by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ. This day was so significant to church history that many Christians teach that it marked the very beginning of the church. The Bible does not say this, and given that Christ Himself is a member of the church (Heb 2:12), and is the head of the church, it would be better to think of His baptism as the mark of its beginning. Notwithstanding, the Day of Pentecost could be credited as being the day when the church was first empowered by the Holy Spirit, and was in any event a day momentarily identified with the church.

One very intriguing peculiarity of this feast was that it called for an offering of *leavened* bread (Lev 23:17). It was the only occasion under the law where leaven was even allowed as an offering, much less commanded. This symbolized the fact that the imperfect offerings of the church would be rendered admissible to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. Even Jesus Himself spoke of His kingdom as enduring leaven:

Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. – Mt 13:33

Many commentators put a positive spin on leaven as used in this parable, but leaven is consistently used elsewhere in the Bible as a symbol of corruption, especially of corrupted doctrine. The parable therefore seems to be teaching that error will work its way into the pure teachings of Christ and His apostles and that His entire kingdom will be affected to some degree or another. This interpretation is corroborated by many prophecies to the same effect (Mt 24:24, Lk 18:8, 1Tim 4:1, 2Tim 3:13, 4:3, 2Pet 3:3-4, 1Jn 2:18-19). These prophecies especially pertain to the last days. The three measures of meal possibly represent three divisions of scriptural teaching. Jesus repeatedly divided the Old Testament into two parts, namely the “law” and the “prophets,” then adding the New Testament would produce a third. Of course, there is no surprise to the claim that every church will possess error to some degree. Every sensible church will admit to it. Yet, it must also be true that there are extremities of error to which a presumed church ceases to be a genuine church in the eyes of God. Only God knows where the limits are located; however, we can surely say that God’s mercy to His churches is both undeniable and remarkable. If modern churches, with all their man-made doctrine and practice, were held to the same standards that God demanded under the law, then multitudes of those churches would be instantly incinerated.

This extraordinary mercy was prophesied in the Old Testament in a great vision that Isaiah had concerning the church (Isa 54). The church was portrayed in this vision as a woman who had become a virgin widow and had gone childless. The covenant upon which the church is based had existed from before the foundation of the world, but the church had no converts until late in world history. The one to whom she was betrothed died on the cross, leaving her a virgin widow. In this she was said to be “*forsaken*” for a small moment, which occurred when her prospective husband famously cried, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” (Mt 27:46). Yet the one to whom she was betrothed was none other than God Himself. Because of this, she was promised that, notwithstanding these setbacks, she would have more children than the married wife. This meant she would have more converts than did the law, and this would happen because her deceased husband would rise from the dead. Also, her greater number of children would derive from the fact that they would include Gentiles as well as Jews. In the midst of all these prophecies, there were promises of the extraordinary mercy that would be shown to her. These included:

In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. – Isa 54:8-10

This explains why an offering of leavened bread was accepted on the Day of Pentecost. The imperfect service offered by the church would be accepted of God because of the atoning blood shed by Jesus Christ.

This use of leaven in connection with the church should be sufficient to show that it is not the church that eternally saves; rather, it is Christ that eternally saves the church. Many imagine that none are saved apart from the visible church, or that the visible church will fill the earth in the sense of being extended to all the elect of God. The scriptures do not so teach. The purpose of the church is to glorify Jesus Christ as Savior and not itself. The leavening of the church prophesied by Jesus Christ should be a humbling reminder of this fact.

However, this same observation serves to the sure condemnation of those who excuse their lack of support for the church on the complaint that it or its members are unworthy. These complaints, which are often made in confident conceit, do more commonly divulge a pathetic state of spiritual ignorance. The church is indeed leavened, and acknowledges itself as being such, but God has accepted it for Jesus' sake. It is a presumptuous and precarious thing to condemn what God has acquitted, particularly when done in hypocrisy. Isaiah warned all such critics, saying prophetically to the church, "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn,*" (Isa 54:17). The critic should consider that he, being a sinner, can only present a leavened offering to God, but the church is the *only* leavened offering that God will take.

I have addressed the first four of the seven feasts. These all primarily pertained to the first coming of Christ. Not surprisingly, the last three will primarily pertain to His second.

The Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets was scheduled on the first day of the seventh month. This corresponded to the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the destruction of the wicked. The New Testament repeatedly claimed that these events would be preceded by the sound of a great trumpet (Mt 24:31, 1Cor 15:52, 1Thes 4:16, Rev 10:7).

The Day of Atonement

The Day of Atonement was to be observed on the tenth day of the seventh month. This was the most sacred day of the year to the Jews, though it would be impossible for any of them to

understand it truly without knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the complexity of the rituals involved have somewhat baffled even Christians. One of the most important distinctions of this day was that the high priest would then enter the Holiest of Holies to perform various duties. This was the only day of the year that any human could enter this most sacred place.

This day symbolically corresponded to the Day of Judgment, and this fact is necessary toward a proper understanding of other symbolic details. Now atonement for God's people was actually secured the moment Jesus died on the cross, and this fact was declared and certified by His resurrection (Rom 4:25); however, all this was done in preparation for the great Day of Judgment, and it will be then that the most important benefits of atonement will be fully seen.

The sketch of the procedure for this day was given in Leviticus 23, but it was introduced in Leviticus 16 where the full protocol was given. Indeed, that entire chapter was dedicated to the subject. The occasion was that two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been struck dead by the hand of God for burning incense with "*strange fire*," or fire that had evidently been taken from some place other than the brazen altar. This was doubtlessly a shocking experience to all, and impressed upon them the potential deadliness of missteps in tabernacle service, whereupon the Lord took the occasion to teach them the essential details of the deadliest rituals of all. These would be the ones they would perform on the Day of Atonement. Considering both this chapter and Leviticus 23, we infer that the procedure to be followed on this day was:

- 1) It was to be a day of fasting and a day in which no work was to be done. Violation of either was punishable by death, and God declared that He Himself would destroy any man who violated the prohibition against work (Lev 23:29-30).
- 2) The tabernacle was to be vacated of all people (Lev 16:17). Only the high priest could enter.
- 3) The high priest was to wash himself and put on plain linen attire. He was not to wear his glorious robe, crown or ephod.
- 4) The high priest was to take a bullock and two goats, all meeting the usual specifications for a sin offering. The bullock was for himself. The goats were for the congregation. The priest was also to take a ram for a burnt offering. The peculiarity of this animal selection was the use of two goats rather than one; however:
- 5) The two goats were then brought before the door of the tabernacle. Lots were to be cast for them to determine which was to be used as a sin offering for the congregation. Two lots were used – one designated "*for the Lord*" but the other designated "*scapegoat*" (Lev 16:7-9). The goat receiving the lot for the Lord was to be offered. The term "*scapegoat*" has been much debated by both Jews and Christians. The underlying Hebrew word is "*Azazel*," and of the various theories that have been offered for the meaning of this word, the most convincing to me is that it is a concatenation of two Hebrew words that together mean "goat of departure." The purpose of this goat will shortly be explained.
- 6) The high priest was to make atonement first for himself by offering the bullock for a sin offering; however, rather than sprinkling the blood before the veil as was typically done, he was to actually carry the blood beyond the veil into the Holiest of Holies.
- 7) The high priest was also to carry incense and coals from the brazen altar. Before sprinkling the blood, he was to put the incense to the coals so as to create a cloud over the Mercy Seat. God claimed He would appear in such cloud (Lev 16:2), though the exact nature of this appearance

was not explained. Not surprisingly, God warned that failures in respect to this cloud would be punished by death to the priest. Recall that Nadab and Abihu had just died because of their misuse of the incense and coals.

8) The priest was then to sprinkle the blood of the bullock on the Mercy Seat seven times in an eastward direction (Lev 16:14). In this he was making atonement for himself.

9) The priest was then to offer the goat “*for the Lord*” in identical manner as the bullock. This was done to make atonement for the congregation. In the general specification of the sin offering in Leviticus 4, when it was done specifically for the congregation, a bullock was to be used, but almost everywhere else in scripture, this variant of the offering was done with a goat, as was the case here. Similar places were Numbers 15:24, 28:22 & 30, 29:5. The difference is evidently in what was meant by “congregation.” In Leviticus 4 the term was obviously exclusive of the leaders, but in the other places it was inclusive of the leaders, and such was the case here.

10) Of the remaining blood of both the bullock and goat, the priest was to apply to the horns of the brazen altar and sprinkled thereon seven times. This was similar to what was done in standard sin offerings.

11) The priest was then to place his hands upon the head of the living goat, confessing the sins of Israel and putting them on the goat, and then a “*fit man*” was to carry the goat to the wilderness, into a land uninhabited, and release him.

12) The priest was to put off his linen attire and wash himself and put on his usual attire.

13) The priest was to burn at the altar the whole ram for a burnt offering and the fat of the bullock and goat to complete the sin offerings.

14) The man who took the scapegoat into the wilderness was to wash himself.

15) The bodies of the bullock and goat that were used in the sin offerings were to be carried without the camp and completely burned. This was also standard procedure for sin offerings.

16) He that burned these bodies was to wash himself.

The procedure here was obviously elaborate, making an understanding of its symbolic meaning more difficult; however, we can start with points where we need not doubt:

1) Paul explained with much detail in Hebrews 9 that the priest entering the Holiest of Holies was a type of Christ entering heaven to offer His own blood for the sins of His people. Hence, these distinguishing features of the Day of Atonement symbolized the fact that true atonement would end in a heavenly transaction, and would therefore be perfect, singular and final.

2) Paul explained in Hebrews 4 that the rest taken in Sabbaths was symbolic of the fact that we should relinquish all confidence and dependence on our own works for purposes of eternal salvation and invest all trust in God’s mercy and grace alone. This will explain why God prohibited work on the Day of Atonement. Since God threatened death to violators, even saying that He would destroy them Himself, this should show that works-based salvation is an abomination to God, and every Christian in proper possession of his senses should flee from it in terror. This means he should resolutely reject all forms of Arminianism. Indeed, given the severity of the matter, he should even wish to abstain from the very appearance of evil by fleeing many forms of Calvinism also, specifically the ones that play their confused and confusing shenanigans with notions of human means and instrumentalities in salvation. By such corruptions, they reduce the doctrines of grace into a mere puppetized form of Arminianism.

3) Further, these notions that sinful humans are causes, instruments or means in the eternal salvation of others were clearly refuted by the fact that the tabernacle was to be vacated of all humans on the Day of Atonement except the high priest, who obviously served as a symbol of Jesus Christ.

4) Given the symbolism of these proceedings, it is truly a wonder that all but a remnant in the religious world are under the illusion that their salvation will come through their performance of some religious action(s). The truth is that Jesus had to die to cover for our religious failings the same as for all other failings. In the technical specifications of Leviticus, when the High Priest was doing the two sin offerings with their various blood-sprinklings, he was cleansing the tabernacle itself, with all its furnishings, from desecrations brought upon it by the sins of Israel (Lev 16:16-20, 33). Accordingly, the protocol for the Day of Atonement was introduced to Israel after the desecrations done by Nadab and Abihu. Now the tabernacle and its furnishings were the supreme objects and symbols of the Jewish religion. The fact that these things were to be cleansed by blood at the beginning of the proceedings should show that the same religiosity that most Christians think to secure blood atonement is in fact in need of blood atonement. Who could doubt this after considering his own failings in religious matters, including failings in faith, failings in repentance and failings in obedience? It is a near universal rule that religious heresy is complicated and confusing, but fundamental religious truth is clear and simple. The clear and simple truth here is that we are eternally saved by the blood of Christ alone, and that our own actions, including even religious ones, have nothing to do with it. Faithful religious actions are to be treasured as the marks of a saved state that serve to confirm it, but we are saved neither by our religious actions nor by their means; rather, we are saved notwithstanding them.

5) The fact that these most sacred offerings in the Holiest of Holies were technically done for the cleansing of the tabernacle is in no contradiction to Paul's claims that they were done for our personal atonement. This is because the tabernacle was itself a symbol of the church, which is the body of Christ. So in the two sets of offerings on the Day of Atonement, with the sin offerings done first and the burnt offering done thereafter, the sins of men were symbolically divided between their religious sins, which are sins of the most egregious kind, and sins of other sorts. The first received blood atonement through the sin offerings and the last through the burnt offering. Of all religious sins Israel would ever commit, the worst was the crucifixion of Christ itself, and, as explained in the chapter covering this offering, the details of its protocol can be understood only after considering the details of the crucifixion.

6) The plain attire of the high priest in these procedures foreshadowed the fact that Christ would be a man of low social stature and that His blood atonement would be made in humiliation.

7) While much on the Day of Atonement was in reference to Christ's first coming, the greater emphasis was upon His second coming and the general judgment that will ensue. This accounts for the emphasis upon the cloud created over the Mercy Seat and the claim that God would appear in it. As the book of Revelation famously said, "*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and*

every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him,” (Rev 1:7. See also Mt 24:30, 26:64, Mk 13:26, Mk 14:62, 1Thes 4:17). This also explains why failings in respect to the cloud were punished by death. If Jesus does not come in the clouds as promised, then we will all surely be dead, never to be resurrected, but our bodies will be eternally condemned to the ashes of the earth.

8) The priest was commanded to be facing this cloud in the east when he sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat. The reason for this is that Jesus will come from this direction when He returns. While considerable proof could be offered for this, His own simple warning will suffice: *“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be,”* (Mt 24:27).

9) The two goats are possibly among the most complex symbols in the Bible, but I think they portray a vast swath of scriptural truth when understood.

Lots were cast between these goats to show that choice among them was committed to the Lord. Men today consider the lot as a symbol of randomness or chance, but in the Bible it was a daunting symbol of divine sovereignty and choice (Prov 16:33, Jonah 1:7, Acts 1:26). More will be said about this in my chapter on Esther. Casting lots between the goats was not the same as tossing a coin at a modern football game. It was a depiction of the sovereign, eternal election by God of His people. Of course, election was not truly a random matter with God, but it appears this way to men, mostly because the elected *“were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,”* (Eph 2:3). We can better say what did *not* motivate election than say what did. It was *not* on account of our own acts or decisions, because in these we were the same as others. Accordingly, there was nothing in physical appearance to distinguish between the goats. Election was purposed to make us different, not on account of our being different. Accordingly, these two otherwise-identical goats will take on vastly different roles because one will be chosen of God.

Since the chosen goat was thereafter sacrificed, one might object that he must represent Christ and could not therefore represent the elect. But at the point being contemplated by the symbolism, this distinction will be somewhat blurred, because at His second coming, Christ will be made one with His people, even as He prayed in John 17:20-23. God will gather together into one all things in Christ, both in heaven and in earth (Eph 1:10), and the elect of God will be made joint heirs with Him (Rom 8:16-17). This goat was therefore a *complex* type representing *both* Christ and His people. The second goat was a complex type also.

Now the second goat, or the scapegoat, has been a matter of much debate. Most Christians think he too was a type of Christ, but there are others, including myself, who think nothing could be further from the truth. The preponderance of evidence says this goat was a type of Satan and his people, even as the first goat was a type of Christ and His people. The primary reason that many think the scapegoat was a type of Christ is that the goat was said to bear all the iniquities of Israel

(Lev 16:22), but the goat did not bear them in such a way as to expiate for them, either for himself or for anyone else. There are other instances in the Bible where one was said to bear the iniquity of another without expiation (e.g. Ezek 33:6-8, Mt 23:33-35). Also, Paul said it was a universal principle of the law that “*without the shedding of blood there is no remission*,” (Heb 9:22). The scapegoat shed no blood and therefore remitted nothing. Besides, it is very clear that the first goat was the one foreshadowing Christ.

In further proof of these claims, consider that the first goat was described as being “*for the Lord*.” By implication, the scapegoat was *not* for the Lord. Additionally, the scapegoat was to be banished from the camp of Israel. He was to be sent to an uninhabited land where he would never have contact with humans again. Further, those who handled him were counted unclean and required to wash. Sometimes washing was also required even after handling types of Christ, such as with the red heifer, but in these cases, the unclean person had played the role of His crucifiers. There is no symbolic sense in which the scapegoat was crucified. It was counted as inherently and eternally unclean, and this is why those who handled it were required to wash. Add to this that the Jews had a remarkable way of developing traditions that tended to corroborate the very Jesus they denied. Evidently, the Jews so abhorred the scapegoat that to prevent all possibility of it wandering back into camp, they had a tradition that the one who carried it into the wilderness was to shove it off a steep precipice to ensure its death. Finally, the Hebrew word that is translated “*scapegoat*” could plausibly be translated as “goat of departure.” This should surely remind of the ominous sentence passed on the goats in Jesus’ famous depiction of the final judgment: “*Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*,” (Mt 25:41). These things surely are not what one should expect of a type of Christ.

To understand the scapegoat, one must bear in mind that Satan has had a long practice of mimicking God, particularly in matters concerning Jesus Christ. This is one reason why the goat representing Satan had the same appearance as the one representing Christ. Isaiah said that Satan conspires to be like the Most High (Isa 14:14), which not only means to imitate His greatness but also to imitate Him in detail. As unreasonable as this obsession might seem, the strategy has actually worked very well for him. What better way to deceive people than by presenting them with a form of godliness but lacing it with a tincture of toxin? To see this imitation, consider that God’s purpose for history is represented in scripture as a body whose head is Christ. The various other members of this body are made up of His elect (1Cor 12:12-31, Eph 5:23-33, Col 1:18), and the whole body is representative of His church, upon which “*the ends of the world are come*,” (1Cor 10:11). In Daniel chapter two, we are presented with Satan’s purpose for history, and it too is represented by a body, having a golden head, silver arms, brass trunk, iron legs and feet of iron mingled with clay. The satanic plan imitates the divine. This habit of imitation is especially exposed in Revelation. For example, God exists in the form of a Trinity, so Satan there manifests himself in the form of a trinity also, consisting of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet. God has a Son, so Satan too has a son, the son of perdition (2Thes 2:3). Since

God's Son was accompanied by a prophet, John the Baptist, Satan's son is accompanied also, but by the false prophet (Rev 13). God's Son was followed by apostles who are to be enthroned (Mt 19:28). Satan imitates by joining his son with 10 kings. God's Son has a virgin bride to whom He is faithful. Satan has a bride too, the Babylonian harlot, but he betrays her and burns her with fire (Rev 17:16). God has a city, the New Jerusalem. Satan has a city too, namely Babylon. God has a resurrection, so Satan simulates his own resurrection in the mortally wounded head of the beast (Rev 13:3). Other points of imitation could be given.

So in a fitting act of justice, God will require Satan to imitate His Son in a way that Satan does not intend and does not want. God's beloved Son chose to bear the sins of others. Satan will be forced to do the same, though not in ways to expiate for them, nor in ways to secure glory and praise to himself, but with everlasting shame, contempt and punishment. This is what is depicted in the scapegoat. The sin-laden scapegoat was cast out of the camp of Israel. Even so, Satan will be cast out of heaven. The Jews of old shoved the scapegoat off a cliff. Even so, the scapegoat will be shoved into the bottomless pit where he will deceive men no more, and finally, he will be shoved into the lake of fire.

On this unique and momentous event where blood was carried into the Holiest of Holies, the blood of a sin offering was used. The sin offering was designed to make atonement for *unwitting* sins. Such sins would seem rare since most sins are deliberate, and unwitting sins would also seem the least egregious of all sins. Consequently, one would not expect the emphasis that the Bible puts on the sin offering, or its frequency, or its complexity, or that such an offering would be made in the Holiest of Holies when a burnt offering or trespass offering might seem a better fit. But the two most consequential sins in history would actually fall under the specifications of the sin offering. The first of these was our sin in Adam, which was done without our consent or knowledge, yet it is the root of all sin ever committed. The second was the crucifixion of the Son of God, which was necessitated by the original sin and its derivatives, but the vast majority of the human race never conspired to commit the crucifixion, and even those who did acted in ignorance, albeit in inexcusable ignorance. So these two sins serve as the opposite poles of the sin-history of the world, and about them does that history revolve. This would explain the importance of the sin offering, and why it was the offering chosen for the Holiest of Holies. It would also serve to explain why the scapegoat bore the guilt of so much sin. Satan's culpability in the original sin is evident, and if in the original sin, then in all others.

The Feast of the Tabernacles

The last of the annual feasts was the Feast of the Tabernacles. This feast was also called the "*Feast of Ingathering*" since it occurred at a time when the harvest was complete (Ex 23:16, 34:22). It was an eight-day period commencing on the 15th day of the seventh month. The first and eighth days were Sabbaths, and for the first seven days, the children of Israel were to dwell in temporary structures made from tree limbs. These structures, called "*booths*" or "*tabernacles*," were to commemorate how they had lived while in the wilderness.

This feast corresponded symbolically to the glorious eternal state after the resurrection and judgment. It occurred when the ingathering of crops was done because it portended the time when the ingathering of the elect will be accomplished. Now it might seem strange that heavenly existence would be symbolized by people living in temporary, crude structures of sticks, but it must be remembered that while this was happening to the children of Israel in the wilderness, there was in their midst the tabernacle of God wherein He dwelt symbolically above the Mercy Seat (Ex 25:22, Lev 16:2, Num 7:89). So God and the children of Israel were living together, both being in structures called “*tabernacles*.” Accordingly, in the eternal state, men will dwell in the visible presence of Jesus Christ, with all being in immortal, glorified bodies. Such ideas were the clear intents of John when he wrote:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. – Rev 21:1-3

The seven feasts ordered by God tell the story of Jesus with astounding accuracy. They even suggest His two separate comings. There were four feasts at the beginning of the year. These had undeniable correlation to His first coming. Then there was a lengthy empty span until the seventh month when the final three feasts occurred. These last three matched beautifully to His glorious second coming. For thousands of years, the Jews have been observing these feasts in near oblivion to the symbolic message they convey, and being now caught in the empty interval separating the feasts, many have become weary and disillusioned, even as their forefathers did in the wilderness, and they have cast aside the most brilliantly contrived and most highly corroborated religion the world will ever know.

Various Types in Exodus

The book of Exodus tells about the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in the land of Egypt and their subsequent wanderings in the wilderness. These times witnessed a deluge of miracles such as the world had never seen before and would not see again until the coming of Christ. The miracles in Exodus are legendary, but it is important to understand that the famed miracles of the book are of little importance in comparison to a hidden miracle that was then taking place. The story of Christ was miraculously being told in these famed miracles, and being told almost 1500 years before the fact. Many Christians and Jews today envy the Israelites of old because of their opportunity to witness so many miracles, but the same Israelites were almost altogether blind to the greater miracle – a miracle that was then hidden but is now open for all reasonable minds to see. If God had any obligation to show all men miracles, then modern man surely cannot complain of being slighted. God has set His formerly hidden miracle before the eyes of the whole modern world.

Since the story of Exodus is better known than many other parts of the Bible, the novice might assume that the Bible is everywhere filled with miracles even as in Exodus. The fact is there were remarkably few of them given that the book spans thousands of years and millions of people. Further, most miracles of the Bible were concentrated in only a few generations. The vast majority of people in biblical times never witnessed any miracle that we know about. This teaches what we already know from personal experience, namely, that insofar as our senses can tell, God is highly disposed against upsetting the natural laws He has ordained. This is why we can be confident that our engines will start, lights will burn, etc. God preempted His moral law for one reason alone, the glory of His Son, and I think it likely that He preempts His natural laws only for the same reason.

We find the same disposition in Jesus Christ that we see in God. Jesus did at times seem loath to perform miracles (Mt 12:39, Jn 2:3-4, 4:48), and when He did them, they were always to meet practical necessities and never done where ordinary means would serve. For example, He raised Lazarus from the dead, but then commanded men to remove his grave clothes (Jn 11:43-44), and He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, but then commanded men to give her something to eat (Mk 5:41-43). His miracles were never done for the mere sake of show, and He commonly commanded the witnesses to be silent about what they had seen. Obviously, if He is the Son of God, then He is in no need of man's approval or acclaim.

Perhaps one reason that God rarely does miracles is that they have remarkably little effect upon those who observe them. In fact, the three generations in the Bible who witnessed the most miracles were also among the most faithless in the book. These generations were: the one that left Egypt in Exodus, the one contemporary with Elijah and Elisha, and most especially, the one that personally witnessed Jesus Christ. All were notoriously skeptical and rebellious. Since God knew this would be the case even before performing His miraculous acts to them, it follows that

the miracles were done more to expose the belligerence and inexcusability of the observers than to secure their conversion. This is a dire possibility that all should consider when longing to witness miracles. Jesus rebuked the sign-seeking Jews as being of a wicked and adulterous generation, and shamed them with examples of Gentiles who had repented and turned to God upon hearing the sensible message of God's word without it being accompanied by a display of wonders (Mt 12:39-45). He also told His disciple Thomas, "...because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed," (Jn 20:29).

This inability of miracles to produce believers is even more relevant today than in the past. There are millions in the modern world who dismiss the Bible on the very account of its miracles. They complain that the Bible is not credible because it asserts things that are contradicted by science. They will also complain that even the most patently ridiculous religions of the world make claims to miracles. God is surely aware of these facts, and He has Himself warned against being deceived by purported miracles that are only fabricated or feigned. Consequently, God has done something in His word that cannot be replicated by the false religions of the world: Not only does His word tell stories of miracles, but it tells them in stories that are themselves miraculous. Further, these latter miracles can be witnessed and verified by all men. This leaves the skeptic in a double predicament. Even could he attain his goal of proving the Bible to be fictitious, he would be left with the problem that it would then be fiction that only God could write. Of course, no true Christian believes the Bible to be fictitious, but this reasoning shows that the ultimate issue is not whether we believe the miracles in the Bible; rather, it is whether we submit to the obvious fact that the Bible is itself a miracle. This is why Jesus said, "*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead,*" (Lk 16:31).

The book of Exodus tells many miracles, but the greater point is that the book of Exodus is a miracle of itself, as will be seen when we believe on Jesus Christ.

The Rock

Hardly any image of Christ is more prevalent in scripture than that of a rock. He is the rock in whose cleft Moses was sheltered when viewing the glory of God (Ex 33:22). He is the rock serving as the cornerstone of the spiritual temple of God (Isa 28:16). He is the headstone of the same (Zech 4:7). He became the cornerstone with His first coming and will become the headstone with His second. He is also the rock serving as the perfecting plummet stone with seven eyes (Zech 3:9, 4:10). He is the rock upon which Israel stumbled (Isa 8:14). He is the rock upon which the church is built (Mt 16:18). He is the rock upon which the house remained secure in the midst of the storm (Mt 7:24-25). He is the rock that annihilated Nebuchadnezzar's image and then grew until it filled the whole earth (Dn 2:34-35). But perhaps the most famed instance of all was the first: He is the rock in the wilderness from which the children of Israel freely drank (Ex 17:1-7, Num 20:1-13). Concerning this rock Paul said:

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. – 1Cor 10:1-4

So we have it on divine authority that this rock was a symbol of Christ, and further inspection will show the parallels to be more than coincidence will allow. Such include:

1) The children of Israel were sustained by this rock while struggling in the wilderness after they had left Egypt. Nearly all Christians understand that Egypt was used in scripture as a symbol of the sin-cursed world; that the Promised Land was used as a type of heaven, and that the intervening wilderness was a type of the church. Indeed, in a momentous sermon, Stephen actually referred to the wandering Israelites as the “*church in the wilderness*” (Acts 7:38). It was obviously Paul’s intent in the quote above to draw upon the analogies between those in the wilderness and those in the church.

While in the wilderness in journey to their promised home, the Israelites were hated and opposed by nearly all. In every attempt to ease their journey by taking an expeditious path, they were denied passage by the Gentiles. They were also attacked. Attempts were even made to curse them. When they could not be destroyed by such means, Satan and their enemies conspired to seduce them toward self-destruction via fornication and idolatry. Then, in addition to all these burdens, they were dealing with a God who was demanding higher standards of them than of all other people on the earth. Anyone familiar with scriptural characterizations of the true church could not fail to see the similarities.

Now it was in this context that they were sustained and refreshed by the rock. Paul said this rock actually followed them, which likely was not intended in a literal sense, but the meaning was that the Spirit and power represented by the rock, and manifested through the rock, was actually sustaining them at all times, though usually not in ways that they could perceive. As it was with them, so it is with His church in this world. Christ Himself warned that it would be hated and vigorously opposed. He said, “*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*” (Jn 15:19). However, He said in another place, “*...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,*” (Mt 28:20). This is the ultimate reason His elect can find any happiness whatsoever in this world or even survive in it. He is their rock in a hostile wilderness.

2) This rock was a smitten rock, and it was through being smitten that it blessed the people of God. Water flowed from the rock when Moses struck it with his staff. Only the blind could fail to see the correlation. The prophet Isaiah saw it from over 700 years away, saying:

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he

hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
– Isa 53:3-5

3) The particular blessing that derived from smiting this rock was an outflowing of water. Now water is used in scripture as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:38-39). Even so, when the True Rock was smitten, the consequence was an outflowing of the Holy Spirit to the church. Jesus promised that such would be a benefit of His death and departure in:

But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. – Jn 16:6-7

By the “Comforter” He meant the Holy Spirit of God, which He said would come to them as a consequence of Himself being smitten.

4) The scriptures said nothing about the appearance of the rock in the wilderness, and there is no reason to suppose it was anything but an unexceptional, unadorned rock. The same is true of Christ. The New Testament said nothing of His physical appearance, and the Old Testament said nothing apart from the famous statement by Isaiah:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. – Isa 53:1-2

This prophecy claimed that His physical appearance would be unexceptional, even as was the case with the rock.

This fact also explains why God-ordained religion has always been plain and unimpressive to the eyes of men. As is the Savior, so also is His religion. When the false religions of the world were building the most impressive structures on the planet for purposes of their worship, the one true religion of the world was congregating at a tabernacle. When the false religions were erecting elaborate altars of hewn stone, God said to the Jews:

An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon. – Ex 20:24-26

The day would come when the Jews would follow the example of the world in building a great temple to replace their tabernacle. That same day almost exactly marked the end of their ascent and the beginning of their decline.

Christianity has too frequently committed the same error. All Christians should heed the fact that the final symbol used by the Bible to represent the false religions of the world was a gloriously arrayed harlot (Rev 17:1-7). This woman wore impressive apparel, even as the religions of the world are adorned by impressive temples, cathedrals, mosques, and also by impressive pomp and ceremony, but this glorious woman was in fact a whore.

5) The typology of the rock will also explain one of the most unexpected events in the Bible. When the Jews needed water on a second occasion (Num 20), Moses was instructed to speak to a rock, but being in frustration and anger with the people, he smote the rock twice instead. Though water flowed abundantly from the rock, God was angry with Moses for smiting it (or possibly for smiting it twice), and He denied Moses entrance to Canaan on such account. No doubt, nearly all Jews and Christians who have read this story were surprised at the harsh action God took against His faithful servant for a seemingly small transgression, but the enigma is removed upon considering that the rock was a type of Christ.

Moses was the father of the nation (though not of the race) and served here as its representative. That nation would one day smite Christ and be forgiven on the same day when He prayed, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,*” (Lk 23:34). The problem is that the nation has continued to smite Him since His resurrection and has suffered immeasurably for it, being denied the blessings of God and the assurances of salvation, even as Moses was denied the land of Canaan. All this was prophesied by David when he spoke in the place of Christ, saying:

Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. – Ps 69:20-26

A key feature of this verse is the present tense of “*persecute.*” The verse did not say “*persecuted.*” The problem is that the persecution is ongoing. Nonetheless, the elect of that nation will one day be turned to Christ (Zech 12:9-14, Mt 23:37-39, Rom 11:25-36), and water will flow abundantly to them from the Rock notwithstanding their transgression, even as it flowed from the rock in the wilderness notwithstanding the transgression of Moses.

This interpretation of the rock in the wilderness is strongly supported by the claims of Moses himself. As he approached the end of his life, he wrote all the law in a book (Dt 31:9), thus giving us the beginnings of the Bible. He commanded that a copy of it be stored in the Ark of the Covenant that it might serve as a witness against Israel (Dt 31:26) and serve as an explanation for the evils that would befall them in the latter days (Dt 31:29). One of the last things he wrote was a divinely inspired song to further serve as a witness against them (Dt 32). This song used the word “rock” 12 times in describing the Lord. Obviously, the Rock was then much on Moses’ mind, and there is no reasonable doubt that he had often pondered what had happened to him when he transgressed by hitting a rock twice. It is reasonable to speculate that he, being the father of that nation, became a symbol of it in that event, and that his transgression was an omen of things to come.

The Manna

It is a well-known fact that while the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, they were sustained by a miraculously given form of bread that fell from heaven. They would have surely died without it. The land was far too barren to produce food for so many people. This bread, which they called “manna,” was a strong type of Christ, and we can say this without speculation because Christ Himself said such in:

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. – Jn 6:32-35

This was said to the Jews after Jesus had miraculously fed thousands of them from the lunch of one lad that merely contained five barley loaves and two small fish. This miracle was an exhibition of power surpassing even what most Christians perceive. If He could multiply five loaves into thousands, then it seems safe to surmise that He could multiply thousands into millions, millions into billions, and so forth, until He filled an entire Universe with bread. Bear in mind that secular scientists claim the whole Universe was made from hydrogen. If they can come up with a Universe starting only with hydrogen, then it takes much less imagination to do it with bread, which happens to contain hydrogen and many other elements as well. Add to this the fact that the miracle had thousands of witnesses, and that it was something no deceiver or magician could even begin to simulate. Notwithstanding all this, many of the Jews impudently dismissed His miracle as being no more than what Moses did when giving manna to their forefathers in the wilderness. This then moved Jesus to reply as quoted above. When He referred to Himself as the “true” bread, this was not to deny that the manna was actually bread, but it was to affirm that the manna was a symbol of a greater form of heavenly bread. It represented Jesus Christ, and did so in the following ways:

- 1) It came down from heaven even as Christ came from heaven.
- 2) It was freely given even as salvation in Christ is altogether of grace.
- 3) Contrary to the claims of the Jews, Moses was neither a cause nor a means to the manna. He only announced it. Accordingly, men have the joyous role of proclaiming the salvation of the Lord, but they are not causes or means of it.
- 4) The manna was a perfect food because it was designed by the Creator of the human body. Christ is the perfect food for sustaining the soul. Accordingly:
- 5) The manna was accompanied by nothing else. God did not rain down steaks, pork chops, etc. in addition to the manna. Salvation is by Christ alone.
- 6) Through all their transgressions and failings in faith, the manna continued to descend from heaven. Though God punished them in numerous ways, He never denied them the manna. Without the manna they would have died. While God wants obedience, and blesses for obedience, a man can obey nothing after he is dead. In the same sense, a greater fellowship with Christ can be secured through obedience, but Christ is also prerequisite for life and therefore prerequisite for obedience (Jn 15:4-5).
- 7) The manna was ground and beaten when prepared for consumption (Num 11:8). Accordingly, Isaiah famously said of Christ, *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,"* (Isa 53:5).
- 8) In the gathering of this manna *"he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack,"* (Ex 16:18, 2Cor 8:15). This reminds of Christ's claim when He said of His kingdom, *"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first,"* (Mt 19:29-30, 20:1-16). The meaning was that God in His sovereignty could take a man like Paul, who spent much of his life as a rebel, and elevate him to be equal or greater to another man like John, who had been faithful from the beginning. Accordingly, His eternal salvation will apply as much to dying infants as to men who spent years in studying and preaching the gospel.
- 9) The manna had a magical property in that it was of very transient usefulness toward natural sustenance. It almost immediately deteriorated when stored for such purposes. But it endured throughout all generations when stored in the Ark of the Covenant next to the tables of the law. Even so, when Christ meets our natural needs, the natural benefit is either soon gone or followed by another such need. For example, even if the Lord were to graciously heal a man of a malignant tumor, the threat of death will soon come again, as it does for all men. A man may also be blessed in his labors to acquire much money, but as soon as it is in his hand, he might learn that his son or daughter is entrapped in a grievous sin that no amount of money can correct. This promptly puts the man to his knees in prayer again. In this natural life, one dispensation of

manna is soon followed by need of another. However, the situation is very different when it comes to our protection from the condemnation of the law. There, one pot of manna will suffice forever. *“So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation,”* (Heb 9:28). *“I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.”* (Jn 6:48-50).

10) The name “*manna*” itself likely conveyed a hidden message about Christ, and the message was both ominous and glorious. The name means “what is it?” (Ex 16:15). In choosing this name, Israel confessed they could not identify what it was. This was likely a symbolic prophecy that a day would come in which they would look upon the True Manna of God and not be able to identify what they were seeing. Nor do Gentiles have occasion to boast, because Christ is unsearchable to them also (Rom 11:33, Eph 3:8). *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,”* (1Tim 3:16).

The Tree of Marah

Several scriptures refer to the cross as a “*tree*” (Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, Gal 3:13, 1Pet 2:24). This was partly done because of a declaration in the law that it was a curse to hang from a tree (Dt 21:23). The New Testament writers wished to emphasize the fact that Christ bore our curse while hanging on the cross. Portraying the cross as a tree also divulged the kind of symmetry that is common to divine providence. Men fell into sin and ruin by means of a tree in Eden. They acquired righteousness and glorification also by means of a tree. But another possible motivation for this view of the cross was a mysterious tree mentioned in Exodus 15:22-26.

When the children of Israel had ventured into the wilderness only a few days after exiting Egypt, they came to a place called Marah where there was much-needed water, but it proved undrinkable because of its bitterness. God then showed Moses a certain tree, which Moses cast into these bitter waters, upon which they not only became drinkable but also became sweet. The extraordinary nature of this event should raise suspicion of an underlying symbolic meaning.

Believers in Christ must endure most of the same hardships in life as others, and they must endure many hardships that others do not. These adversities are well-described in:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. – 2Cor 4:6-11

The many troubles mentioned here are bitter waters to the child of God, but they are made drinkable, and even sweetened, when the cross is cast into them. The cross reminds us that Christ endured the same, but that His every trial was with divine purpose, and with a higher end in view. Because He endured these trials, He is now triumphant in all things, and He commands us to follow in His path, and promises that our triumph is as sure as His.

Water is also used in scripture as an emblem of the Holy Spirit. Now it is the belief of nearly all Christians that the personal experience of eternal salvation begins with the Holy Spirit making a man sensible of his sin and unworthiness, thereby bringing his mind and heart to a sense of defeat. Hence, the man's first drink of the Holy Spirit is a bitter one, but it is sweetened with hope, assurance and joy when the tree of the cross is cast into the midst.

The Serpent

We can say with confidence that God intended the serpent in the wilderness to be a type of Christ, but this likely would have not been seen by anyone had Christ not revealed it. The last thing any Christian would do is liken Christ to a serpent, but we are constrained to do it by His own famous statement:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. – Jn 3:14-17

In Numbers 21, the children of Israel, being weary and discouraged by the hardships of their journey, spoke against God and Moses, saying it would have been better had they remained in Egypt. Their ingratitude was then so extreme that they even complained against the manna, saying, “*our soul loatheth this light bread,*” (Num 21:5). As already shown, the manna was a powerful type of Christ, so one might expect that God would have little toleration toward those who would disdain it or desecrate it. The very sons of Aaron were consumed by fire for their missteps in handling such types. Even Moses was denied entrance to Canaan for merely smiting a rock that represented Christ. Not surprisingly, the Lord also severely punished the Israelites for their contempt of the manna by sending “*fiery serpents*” among them whereby many died. When warning the Corinthians with this very event, Paul said, “*Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents,*” (1Cor 10:9). This is satisfactory evidence that God's wrath against the Israelites was owing to their disrespect for a symbol of Christ. The Jews over the last two millennia have failed to learn from these examples and have also suffered immeasurably for it.

When the Israelites thereafter repented, God gave Moses a most peculiar remedy. He told him to put a brazen serpent on a pole, and to display the serpent throughout the camp, and that when those bitten looked upon it, they would be healed. When the Bible presents such strange and

seemingly foolish things, the intent is to move fools to derision and laughter, but to alert the wise to take a deeper look.

Since the Israelites had shown contempt for a symbol of Christ, God gave them the most contemptible of all such symbols and demanded that they honor it lest they die. Now in truth, the serpent on the pole had bitten no one and was completely harmless, but it had the appearance of the serpents that were destroying them. In this God was displaying the fact that His Son would have the appearance of sinful men, and might on such account be disdained, but in truth He would be a sinless and harmless man, and would serve to the salvation of all who looked on him in faith. Paul expressed the same principles in:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. – Rom 8:3-4

Finally, the Bible did not say that only the guilty Israelites were bitten; rather, it left us with the impression that all were guilty but only some were bitten. The brazen serpent was of benefit only to the bitten. Accordingly, Christ is of benefit only to those who see themselves as sick and dying with sin. *“They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,”* (Mk 2:17).

Aaron's Rod That Budded

One of the most important symbols of the Old Testament was Aaron's Rod that budded (Num 16 & 17). The importance of this rod may be inferred from the fact that God ordered it to be stored in the Ark of the Covenant as a memorial. The rod was a symbol of resurrection, and the surrounding story communicated many accompanying facts.

The story leading to the rod began with a major insurrection against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. This revolt was very threatening because the instigators were from the leaders in Israel. These leaders were over 250 in number. Many of the common people afterward became complicit, but it was the leaders who incited them. The rebels were from two collaborating factions. The first was a group of Levites headed by a wicked man named Korah. These Levites objected to the religious authority given to Aaron, who had been appointed as the High Priest. Korah and company wanted the power and glory of this office. The second faction consisted of Reubenites under the leadership of men named Dathan and Abiram. These Reubenites objected to the civil authority of Moses. Reuben was the eldest son of Jacob, so the best theory is that these dissenting Reubenites thought that Moses had usurped power rightfully belonging to them by the principle of primogeniture.

All of this has a ring of familiarity to those having knowledge of the New Testament. The Jews of those times also revolted against the God-given authority of the Messiah, and this revolt was headed by the leaders of Israel, namely the priests and elders. While the common people generally received Jesus gladly (Mk 12:37), they too became caught up in this malicious frenzy, being incited by the leaders. All this of course led to His crucifixion on the cross. Further, this revolt against Christ was against both religious and civil authority, because God had ordained Him to be both. He was prophesied to be both a priest and a king (Zech 6:9-15). This was implied by the fact that He was foreshadowed by Melchizedek (Ps 110:4). Melchizedek was the first man on earth represented by the Bible as being a priest, and he was also a king (Gn 14:18-20, Heb 5-7). Now the bad actions of these men in the days of Moses were overruled by the hand of God to tell a greater story to the praise of Christ. As a psalm once said, "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain,*" (Ps 76:10).

In an attempt to settle the revolt, and to determine who had divine approval for the positions at issue, Moses commanded that the 250 members of the Levite faction appear the next day before the tabernacle with brazen censers for purposes of offering incense. The Bible does not explain how these censers were to be used to ascertain the will of God, but the rebels should have known that the test could have dire consequences on those who failed. A short time prior, Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, had been killed by fire from God because of their unauthorized use of incense. Notwithstanding the fear that should have been invoked by this memory, the Levite rebels impudently appeared with their censers the next morning as challenged. They also stirred up a mob to support them. As for the Reubenite rebels, they refused to show themselves at the

tabernacle since this could be construed as obedience to Moses. They obstinately remained at their tents.

God was angered at the rebels and the deceived mob, and told Moses to distance himself from them so that He could destroy them all. However, Moses and Aaron interceded for the mob and persuaded God to spare them. This too foreshadowed the case of Jesus Christ, who interceded for His crucifiers, saying, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,*” (Lk 23:34).

All the rebels met with horrific ends. The dissenting Reubenites were swallowed by the earth and taken alive into the pit. Immediately afterward, the rebellious Levites were devoured by fire, leaving their 250 censers in the ashes. Interestingly, the book of Revelation prophesied the same two fates for the wicked in the last days. Some of these are prophesied to be cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years, then these and others will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev 20:1-9).

Amazingly, these terrifying events did not quell the revolt against Moses and Aaron. The Israelites continued to complain. So God commanded another test to conclusively resolve the matter. The conflict had not been settled by death, even of the most horrific sort, but God’s last test would finally settle it by life.

Each tribe was commanded to bring a wooden rod with its name on it. The house of Aaron was to do the same. These rods were then to be placed overnight in the tabernacle in the Holiest of All. When the morning came, the rods were to be inspected, and the rod that had miraculously come to life and budded would identify who God had authorized for the priesthood. When the test was actually applied, Aaron’s rod was the one that budded, and it was also bearing fruit. When the children of Israel witnessed this miracle, they were moved to submission and the revolt was ended. God then commanded that the rod be stored in the Ark of the Covenant as a memorial. The rod was from an almond tree.

This procedure seemed strange, and it was also strange that it should successfully settle a conflict that had not been settled by the spectacular destruction that had already been witnessed. However, when the Bible becomes strange, this is good indication that deeper meaning is intended. In this case, several Biblical prophecies and principles were communicated in the symbolism of the story:

1) The world has had countless religions, all of which claimed to be ordered by God or gods, though they were truly the inventions of some man claiming religious insight and authority. The Jews themselves worshipped many gods over their history, and even in worshipping the true God, they were divided into various denominations and factions. These facts lead one to ask: Which of these countless religions, if any, truly has divine authority? The answer is the religion whose rod budded, or that was quickened from death to life. A rod is of course a symbol of authority. The authority of the Christian religion is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead. This resurrection was the signature of God serving to certify His true religion.

As Paul said, Jesus was “*declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,*” (Rom 1:4).

2) Aaron’s rod not only budded but it also brought forth fruit. God’s religion will be fruitful, leading to truth, love, virtue, peace and liberty among men. In the history of the world, no religious teacher has produced more such fruit than Jesus Christ. Of course, there can be a significant difference between what represents itself as Christianity and what is the actual truth of Christ, but where He is truly taught, these will be the blessed effects.

3) Even though Jesus Christ is God’s appointed religious and civil authority, all men by nature are rebels against Him. Their corruption is so deeply rooted that, as with the rebels against Moses, not even threats of death and hell will reform them (Lk 16:19-31).

4) However, life will succeed where threats of death and hell will not. The Bible teaches that a man will submit to Jesus Christ in faith only when that man has been quickened by the Holy Spirit of God. That is, something must miraculously bud within the dead spiritual being of the man. Scriptures represent this internal quickening as being analogous to the resurrection of Christ, and also as being guaranteed by it. This principle was expressed in the following verses:

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places... – Eph 1:19-20

These important verses say that our belief in Jesus Christ, occasioned by our spiritual quickening, was produced by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. This interpretation is confirmed a few verses later, where it is said:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus... – Eph 2:1-6

Hence, our spiritual quickening was not only guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ but was also portended by it. Spiritually, we were dead rods that miraculously budded, and this is the reason we cease our rebellion against Him and submit to Him in faith.

5) Aaron’s Rod budded in the Holiest of All to symbolize the fact that the miraculous spiritual quickening it represented occurs under a heavenly power (Jn 1:11-13).

6) Aaron’s Rod budded in the solitude of the tabernacle, away from the means of man, to show that spiritual quickening is completely and directly a work of the Holy Spirit of God (Jn 3:3).

7) Aaron's Rod budded away from the eyes of man to show that spiritual quickening is invisible to the natural eye, though it may be ascertained by its fruitful effects (Jn 3:8).

But perhaps the strangest part of the story of Aaron's Rod was in how it ended. God declared that the 250 brazen censers of the rebels were holy, and commanded that they be retrieved from the ashes and beaten into plates to cover the altar. This was to be done as a memorial and warning. Now all this was very surprising because one would normally expect these censers to be considered abominable, having been the instruments of wicked and rebellious men. As it happened, from that day forward, no man would ever see the altar again in its original form. Rather, as he looked to the altar, he would see what had been the instruments of wicked men, yet these were curiously accounted as holy. Now it happens that the cross was also an instrument of wicked men, and might be considered an abomination on this account, but it is now the sacred symbol we see in our imaginations when we think of the true altar and sacrifice of God. The image of the old altar has been displaced by the image of a cross.

Eldad and Medad

As early as their second year in the wilderness (Num 10:11), the camp of Israel contained many who longed for Egypt and its food, namely, the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. A significant number of enslaved people of other nations had accompanied the Israelites in the exodus. The discontent began with these, but the contagion of complaint spread to the Israelites also (Num 11:4-6). All were weary of the manna and wanted more, and they emotionally stoked themselves into a state of weeping. While relating this to the reader, Moses gave a detailed explanation of the manna, the ease with which it was gathered, and of its good taste. The intent was to show the ingratitude of the complainers. Moses explained that the manna fell along with the dew, and that it had the taste of fresh oil. The New Testament later explained that the manna represented Christ (Jn 6:30-51), which would suggest that the accompanying dew represented the Holy Spirit. Oil is also a common representation of Him in the Bible. These two divine Persons descend together from heaven to bless the children of God on earth. However, the camp expressed no gratitude for this miraculous manna; rather, it complained for its lack of the natural things of the world. The correspondence between their case and ours is too apparent (Jn 6:26-27). God thereafter appeased them by giving abundance of quail to eat, but it only served to their sickening, even as the money He gives many is commonly abused by them to pierce themselves through with many sorrows (1Tim 6:10).

God was greatly angered with these complaints, but the self-pity of the camp provoked Moses into a state of irrational exasperation. In uncharacteristic manner, Moses emotionally protested to God that it was unreasonable that he should bear the burden of such obstinate, ungrateful people. He complained that he was not their father, and therefore should not be responsible for them, and that the burden God had put on him was more than he should or could bear. Moses was so frustrated that he even requested that God kill him instead of perpetuating his plight. Moses evidently did not know that his struggles with the Israelites were only beginning. He would bear the burden of them for almost another 40 years. All this showed that even the mighty Moses was in need of learning patience. As Paul later said:

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. – 2Tim 2:24-26

As He commonly does, God corrected the great man by means of lesser ones. God calmly told Moses to choose 70 men from among the elders of Israel and to gather them at the tabernacle, whereupon God would put upon them the same spirit He had given to Moses. These 70 would then relieve Moses by sharing his burden. Many writers of both Christians and Jews claim that 70 was actually a rounded number, and that the precise number was 72, with six being taken from each of the 12 tribes. While this is a nonessential detail, it will prove an interesting

possibility in what follows. These 70 were assembled at the tabernacle as ordered, and when the Spirit of God was poured upon them, they began to prophesy, and did it without ceasing. There has been much speculation about what they prophesied. In the Bible, “*prophesy*” can simply mean to preach religious truth, and may or may not entail foretelling the future. The Bible does not explain the nature of their message, but it does relate the more important fact that, whatever they preached, the Spirit moved them to do it without ceasing.

However, there were two who had been summoned to the tabernacle but who did not appear as ordered. Notwithstanding this omission, the Spirit fell upon them also, and they prophesied even as did the others. These two separate elders were named Eldad and Medad.

There was likely important prophecy in all this. Christ personally appointed and sent 70 men to preach His word (Lk 10:1-20). These 70 are commonly thought to consist of men who thereafter became leading teachers in the New Testament church. However, at a later date, the Holy Ghost added two more to further His purpose of spreading the gospel among the Gentiles. These were Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas was one of several who traveled with Paul, but Barnabas was distinguished by the fact that he was *expressly* appointed by God (Acts 13:2), even as was done with the 70, and he and Paul were the last express appointments in the New Testament. The Holy Ghost ordered that they be “*separated*” for their work. Also, while both were Jews, both were outsiders in other respects. Both originated outside of Israel. Paul was of Tarsus in modern-day Turkey. Barnabas was of Cyprus (Acts 4:36). Further, their appointments were made outside of Israel at the church of Antioch in modern-day Turkey. In all this they seem to be aptly represented by Eldad and Medad.

Many commentaries note the correlation between the 70 appointed by Moses and the 70 appointed by Christ, but some carelessly claim that Christ acted in imitation of Moses, whereas anyone knowing the true identity of Christ will also know that exactly the opposite was true.

Now when Joshua learned of Eldad and Medad and their prophesying, but how they had not assembled at the tabernacle as ordered, he reported the matter to Moses, expecting them to be censured. Joshua could have reasonably expected them to be punished also. Those who disobeyed Moses commonly suffered severe consequences. As Paul said, “*He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses...*” (Heb 10:28). However, in a rare and surprising moment, the seemingly flawless Joshua was admonished by an unusually merciful Moses, who said to Joshua, “*Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!*” (Num 11:29).

These words of Moses seem to have been stated with contrition. He was merciful to Eldad and Medad because he had himself committed error. He had bitterly and boldly complained to God about the burden of being His prophet, and had even expressed his desire to quit. But upon further reflection, and after his emotions had settled, Moses realized that, as a prophet, he had been blessed in ways that all of God's people wish for themselves, and in ways that Moses should wish for all of them. Further, when 70 lesser men had been given the same Spirit

wherewith Moses had been blessed all along, they neither quit nor wanted to quit. Rather, they prophesied without ceasing.

The dreamful wish of Moses that all of the Lord's people could prophesy has been largely realized in the New Testament. All followers of Jesus Christ, whoever they be and wherever they are on the earth, are blessed with the authority, duty and privilege of telling Him to the world. This was foreseen by Joel, who famously said, "*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit... And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call,*" (Joel 2:28-32).

Balaam

One of the most curious characters in the Old Testament was a Gentile prophet named Balaam (Num 22-24). Though a wicked man, Balaam was coerced by God to utter many true and impressive prophecies. Indeed, all that Balaam said has been verified, either by the facts of history or by corroboration from what true prophets later revealed. There is also important typology in the story of Balaam that serves to supplement his prophetic utterances. As with all inspiration, the central theme of these prophecies was Jesus Christ, particularly as He will be at His triumphant second coming, though the prophecies were made around 3500 years ago.

The presence of typology in this story will be strongly suggested to the attentive eye upon beholding the general setting and cast. While Israel was in the wilderness, but in its final year there, and at its final place of encampment, and when it was soon to cross over Jordan River into the Promised Land, Satan purposed a formidable assault against it. His conspiracy was orchestrated through a Moabite king named Balak, who was assisted by a group of princes, and also by Balaam, who would become the most infamous false prophet of the Old Testament for his ignominious role. Now all this remarkably correlates to the prophecy of the last days as recorded in Revelation. This book says that when the elect family of God will near the end of its wanderings in the wilderness of this world, and shortly before the resurrection and rapture, wherein all the elect will be carried across to the true Promised Land of heaven, there will be a formidable assault against it also. In further parallel with the story of Balaam, this assault will be headed by a wicked king called the son of perdition (2Thes 2:3-10), who will have the collaboration of 10 subordinate kings (Rev 17:12-14), and also of the infamous false prophet of Revelation 13. This satanic conspiracy will be resoundingly overthrown by God, as was foreshadowed thousands of years before in the story of Balaam.

The children of Israel had wandered in the wilderness for a space of almost 40 years, but the time of their entrance to Canaan drew nigh. They would enter by crossing Jordan River on the eastern side, but this region was well-populated by adversarial nations who would not grant them passage to the river. This included the nation of Edom to the far south, then Moab immediately north of it, then Ammon to the north of Moab. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, and the Moabites and Ammonites were the descendants of Lot. Now a short time prior, certain of the Amorites, a tribe of the Canaanites, had conquered a sizeable swath of land along the border of Moab and Ammon. These conquests were under the leadership of Amorite kings named Sihon and Og. After being denied by the Edomites and Moabites, the Israelites resorted to these Amorites for passage. They were denied again, but the Amorites further offended by assembling themselves to attack. The Israelites retaliated and resoundingly defeated both Sihon and Og, and took possession of their land. By such means, the Israelites acquired access to Jordan. Now these victories invoked terror in Gentiles on both sides of the river, because Sihon and Og were perceived as being very powerful, yet they had been annihilated by the Israelites.

Balak, king of Moab, was among these terrified Gentiles, and he reckoned his power to be inadequate to defend against the mighty Israelites, or at least without supernatural aid. This is why he wanted to secure the services of Balaam, who was a prophet from Mesopotamia, and famed for his purported ability to secure blessings and curses through divination. So Balak sent elders from Moab to fetch Balaam to curse Israel. Balak also offered Balaam a large sum of money. Balaam was a believer in the true God, but the prophet was of a roguish sort. The Bible says that even devils believe (Js 2:19), but their belief is held in objection and fear. Such was the case with Balaam. After the party from Balak arrived, Balaam consulted with the Lord to determine what answer to give them. He was told that he was not to go with them, nor could he curse the Israelites because they were a blessed people. Balaam submitted, and conveyed these words to the group, who then returned to Balak to report their failed mission. But Balak responded by sending another group consisting of princes and offering more money. When Balaam consulted the Lord about what answer to give this second group, he was told not to go with them unless they repeated their request, and, in any event, that he was to say only what the Lord authorized. However, Balaam disobeyed the next morning by promptly saddling his ass and departing before the request had been repeated. This exposed the true disposition of the prophet. He was inwardly anxious to curse Israel so that he could secure the sizeable payment from Balak (2Pet 2:15, Jude 11).

The Lord was angered at Balaam's actions, so He sent a sword-bearing angel to confront Balaam and his ass while en route to Balak. The ass could see the angel but Balaam was blind to his presence. The ass took evasive action by turning from the road into a field. The angel then reappeared where the road went between two walls. Again the ass took evasive action but injured Balaam's foot by pressing it against one of the walls. The angel appeared a third time in a narrow place where there was no possibility of turning. Being without options, the ass balked and reclined to the ground. On all three occasions, Balaam punished the wayward ass by beating it, but with greatest severity on the third.

At this point, a bizarre miracle occurred wherein God enabled the ass to speak. The only other instance of such in the Bible was the serpent in Eden, but this hardly seems to compare since this serpent was an extraordinary creature that does not exist today. When the ass asked why she had been beaten these three times, Balaam replied that it was because she had mocked him, and he threatened that he would have killed her if only he had a sword. The ass protested that Balaam knew that her wayward actions were out of character, implying he should have known that the circumstances were exigent. At that point, the eyes of Balaam were opened, enabling him to see and hear the angel, who rebuked him for abusing the ass, claiming that she had thrice saved him from the angel's sword. The angel told Balaam to resume his journey, but warned him again that he was to speak what, and only what, the Lord would have him say. These instructions would lead to a series of prophecies that I will now relate, but will defer explanation until all are told.

When encountering Balak, the king took Balaam to a high place of Baal from which the entire camp of Israel could be seen. Seven altars were erected, and seven bullocks and seven rams

were offered. Balaam then left Balak at the altars and went a short distance to speak with the Lord, who then told Balaam to return to Balak with the following words:

Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! – Num 23:7-10

Balak was understandably shocked that Balaam had altogether blessed the people he had been hired to curse. Balaam defended his actions by claiming he was constrained to speak what the Lord would have him to say.

Balak then took Balaam to a second location where only the outermost part of the camp could be seen. He evidently thought that Balaam had been intimidated by the sight of their great numbers, and that the new, less daunting scene would allow him boldness to utter a curse. But after doing sacrifice as before, and meeting with the Lord as before, Balaam was commanded to return to Balak with words of even greater force:

Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain. – Num 23:18-24

Balak was frustrated that Balaam had again blessed when he had been hired to curse. But, as before, Balaam defended his actions by claiming he could only speak what the Lord commanded.

Having failed to secure a curse at this limited view of the camp, Balak took Balaam to a third location where the entire encampment could be seen again. As before, seven altars were erected and a bullock and ram were offered on each. However, Balaam did not go meet with the Lord as at previous times because he realized the futility of so doing. Instead, he beheld the camp of Israel and fell into a trance, whereof he said:

Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles,

O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters. He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee. – Num 24:3-9

Balak was moved to fury at this third pronouncement of blessing, but Balaam explained again that he could only speak what the Lord commanded.

Balaam's true testimony has deceived some Christians into thinking that he was an upright man and a true prophet of God. The New Testament simply will not allow this. He is mentioned there thrice, always portraying him as a reprobate (2Pet 2:15-17 Jude 11-13, Rev 2:14). This will not be so unexpected after considering other scriptures, which indicate that, after Balaam failed to curse Israel for Balak, he gave him counsel to seduce them with idolatry and fornication, evidently hoping they would bring a curse upon themselves (Num 31:16, Rev 2:14). The more important point is that those who think too highly of Balaam likely misinterpret his claim that he could only speak what the Lord commanded. They take this to mean that Balaam considered himself morally bound to the word of God. It is far more probable that he meant himself to be *physically* bound to *involuntarily* speak only what the Lord would have him to say. Balaam uttered prophetic truth, but he was a mere puppet in the hand of a ventriloquist.

This explains the episode with the ass, which was a prophecy of events soon to come. The ass was moved to speak against its own natural limitations even as Balaam was moved by the Lord to speak against his nature. Whereas the ass claimed to be acting out of character, Balaam too was acting out of character when uttering true prophecies. Thrice did the ass detour from the path directed by its rider. Even so, Balaam prophesied thrice contrary to the wishes of the king who hired him. Yet, the resistance of the ass did thrice save Balaam, even as Balaam thrice saved Balak from certain ruin by prophesying contrary to his wishes. Further, Balaam pronounced sentence against himself when he told the wayward ass that he wished to kill her with a sword, because Balaam himself died by the sword of the Israelites in a later battle with the heathen (Josh 13:22). In addition to all this, Balaam himself charged the ass with *mocking* him. In the imagery of the story, the ass represented Balaam. Balaam was no true prophet of God. He was a mere ass that was moved to speak as God commanded.

When the men from Balak first came to fetch Balaam, the Lord did not allow the prophet to go, but He permitted it on the second attempt upon condition that Balaam speak exactly as the Lord commanded. The same pattern was seen in the episode with the angel. The angel initially blocked Balaam's path, but eventually gave him passage upon the same condition. These actions were not owing to indecision by God; rather, they communicated prophecy concerning the son of perdition and his false prophet in the last days. Paul said concerning the former:

And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. – 2Thes 2:6-7

So Satan was bent on executing his consummate conspiracy long ago, even in the times of Paul, but Satan has been repeatedly blocked by the Lord, and will continue to be blocked until God's appointed time. This possibly explains why history has produced several false alarms of the last days. Several wicked leaders have emerged who resembled the son of perdition, but eventually proved to be far less. However, these may have derived from Satan's attempts to implement his plan, but they became failed efforts because God blocked them. At His appointed time, God will allow Satan to move further forward with his plan, but only in a way that will exactly fulfill what God has said in His inspired word. Balaam had a strong appearance of piety because he served to represent a great deceiver, but Balaam's hidden desire from the outset was to secure reward by cursing the people of God. He was initially prohibited from pursuing this purpose, and though he was thereafter allowed to advance with it, he was limited in that his actions were required to fulfill the word of God.

The most amazing part of the story was Balaam's three prophecies. These dealt with the three stages through which God will carry His kingdom. The first stage was under the Old Testament. The second was under the New Testament. The third stage will be when the kingdom is delivered up to God in heaven.

In the first prophecy, Balaam saw the entire camp of Israel and declared, "...*the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*" This was true throughout the Old Testament era. The Israelites were then commanded to be a distinct and segregated people from all other nations of the world. This would end with the gospel era when men of all nations were united in the church. Balaam also said, "*Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?*" By this he meant they would greatly multiply, which they in fact did. His statement concerning the "*fourth part*" is explained by the orderly manner in which they were encamped. The tabernacle was at their center, and their own tents were arranged around it in four parts, with three tribes being situated to the north, three to the east, and so forth. Finally, Balaam exclaimed, "*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*" This declaration derived from the typological significance of the things just described. Israel represented the multitudinous elect of God, which will not be reckoned among the condemned nations of the world but will die in a righteous state to be gloriously resurrected in the last day.

The second prophecy is the most amazing of the three. Balak resituated Balaam where he could see only an outskirt of the camp. While this was likely done to make the scene less daunting, Balak unwittingly stumbled into powerful imagery that was deadly to his cause. The outskirts of the camp of Israel are used by the Bible as representing Christ and His Jewish Christians. Christ was crucified on the fringes of Jerusalem. He was also treated as an outcast of Israel. His followers were told to expect and endure the same. Christian Jews remain on the fringes of their own society to this day. All these things were symbolized when the priests were commanded to

burn sacrificial animals without the camp. The red heifer was also burned without the camp, and this is where her ashes were stored. These things were explained by Paul:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. – Heb 13:11-14

This interpretation is corroborated by what follows. When Balaam met with the Lord the second time, he was told to return and rebuke Balak for supposing that the mind of God could be changed. The words to this effect were, “*God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it.*” While this claim is true as a general principle, it becomes of insuperable importance in New Testament redemption, because eternity itself is there staked on the immutability of God’s word. The prophecy then said, “*He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel...*” This does not mean they were without sin because their transgressions in the wilderness were numerous and notorious. Rather, it meant that God graciously viewed them as righteous for reasons explained by the New Testament. But the next statement is particularly potent: “*...the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.*” That is, the Lord God Himself was in the midst of this people on the fringe of the camp, as was the case when Jesus walked among His disciples, and though this people may seem small in comparison to the camp, they are themselves undeterred and fearless, joyously shouting as they confidently throng their triumphant king. Balaam was emphatic regarding the times contemplated by this part of the prophecy, saying “*...according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!*” God has wrought no greater wonder than His New Testament scheme of redemption in Jesus Christ. Such was the substance of Balaam’s second prophecy.

However, Balaam’s third prophecy was different from the previous two. He did not go to consult with the Lord as before, because he knew that all hope of gaining permission to curse had been lost. This time, while beholding the entire camp, he fell into a trance that he might behold the scene of another world. It was too late to curse Israel in the contemplated scene because it had been transported to the safety and security of glory. As Balaam said, “*How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river’s side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.*” Now these were not the actual circumstances at hand. The Israelites were still in a rough wilderness region. Nor was there much beauty in their actual tabernacles. They were merely huts made of sticks. But the camp of Israel was a typological depiction of heaven. The reason was that it had the tabernacles of the people surrounding the tabernacle of God, and God Himself dwelling in His own tabernacle between the cherubims over the Mercy Seat (Ex 25:22).

These tabernacles were each symbols of glorified bodies, and the general scene had the glorified bodies of the people dwelling together with the glorified body of Christ in their midst. John borrowed from this symbolism when describing the new heavens and earth, declaring:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. – Rev 21:3

So the three prophecies of Balaam corresponded to the three stages of the kingdom of God, with the last being its glorified state in the new heavens and earth.

Balak then dismissed Balaam, losing all hope of securing a curse through him, but Balaam uttered a fourth prophecy before departing. He claimed this prophecy pertained to the latter days, though much of it has already been fulfilled or fulfilled in a preliminary way. These early fulfillments are of great importance because they serve to verify the inspiration and accuracy of the prophecy as a whole. This was likely their primary intent. Balaam's last prophecy was:

Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever. – Num 24:15-24

The Star that is to arise out of Jacob is Christ. He is called the “*bright and morning star*” in Revelation 22:16, and Peter, using the same imagery, called Him a rising day star (2Pet 1:19). When He appears in the sky, it will mark the commencement of a new and eternal day.

Balaam's first claim concerning Christ was, “*I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel...*”

Hence, the prophecy pertained to a future generation. This may have been stated to inform Balak that the Israelites posed no imminent threat to him or to his own generation, so that it was fruitless and foolish for Balak to seek their destruction. However, Balaam added that at the future time being contemplated, Christ “*shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*” This meant that that Moab will be thoroughly destroyed by Him, but in a general destruction that will involve many more. While there has been much

disagreement on the meaning of “*Sheth*,” the best theory is that it simply meant Seth, the son of Adam. Seth is actually called “*Sheth*” in 1Chronicles 1:1. While Adam and Eve likely had many sons and daughters, their descendants were all destroyed in the flood apart from some of Seth, thus making the “*children of Sheth*” to comprise the surviving human race. These revelations further showed the foolishness of opposing the Israelites, and therefore rendered Balak and Balaam inexcusable for continuing to seek their harm even after the failed attempts to curse them. Balaam’s prophecy next said that destruction would also befall the Edomites, Amalekites and Kenites. There has been much disagreement on the meaning of “*Kenites*,” but they seem to have been reckoned among the early Canaanites (Gn 15:18-21), and are possibly used here to refer to them as a whole. The nations named thus far had commonality in the fact that they all opposed Israel in its journey to Canaan. This included the Canaanites themselves, who once crossed over Jordan to attack them (Num 21:1-3). Balaam continued with, “...*the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.*” This referred to the Assyrian invasion wherein many of the people in Canaan and thereabout were deported. “*Asshur*” was an ancient name for Assyria, though it may be used here to include the Babylonians also, who were neighbors to the Assyrians in Mesopotamia. Finally, Balaam said, “*And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.*” “*Chittim*” was an ancient name for Cyprus, though some think it referred to all islands of the Mediterranean. It was an important place in the empires of both the Greeks and Romans. Both invaded and subdued the regions previously named, including Israel (which descended from Eber), thus shifting world power from the Middle East to Europe. However, Balaam said that even these great European powers will “*perish for ever*,” which will occur when Christ returns.

Several of these prophecies described Israel as being valiant or as being like a dangerous lion ready to attack its prey. While this has already been fulfilled in the military exploits of the country, both ancient and modern, its ultimate fulfillment will be in the last days when God will empower them against the son of perdition (Mic 5:8, Zech 12:8).

The saga of Balaam contains some of the most ancient prophecies concerning Christ and His great power, but it also tells of the bountiful and pervasive administration of God’s love and care for His people. Even when they are targeted by the highest and most heinous powers of hell, God will turn these assaults against them into blessings. Such will be the case even in the terrible times of the last days.

Crossing Jordan

One of the most magnificent scenes in the Bible was when the children of Israel crossed Jordan River, leaving the wilderness and entering Canaan, otherwise known as the Promised Land (Josh 3). Notwithstanding its impressiveness, it was merely an event of a transient world. Memory and appreciation of it soon faded even in the minds of those who experienced it. On the other hand, the Bible is an eternal book that tells of eternal things having eternal relevance. Though it records history, it has a much higher purpose than to educate the reader of past events. The true value of those past events was that God oftentimes ordered them to foretell of eternal matters. Such was the case with the crossing of Jordan. The typology in this story is so pronounced that Christians have believed it for as long as there have been Christians. Consequently, much of this chapter will tell what has already been told, but will hopefully add enlightening details.

While the congregation was camped near to Jordan on the border between Canaan and the wilderness, Joshua sent spies into Canaan to take military reconnaissance. Three days after receiving a favorable report, he sent officers through the camp to announce that all were to cross the river the next day. These officers were to alert the people, saying, “...*ye have not passed this way heretofore*” (Josh 3:4). The intent was to emphasize the importance of heeding the subsequent instructions. These instructions were that the Israelites should strictly follow the Ark of the Covenant as it led them to the river. The Ark was to be carried by the priests and the congregation was to follow, but staying at a good distance of approximately 2000 cubits (or 1000 yards). When the Ark reached the edge of the river, the waters would become miraculously blocked far upstream, thus leaving a dry riverbed upon which the congregation could cross over. The Ark was to be held stationary by the priests in the riverbed until all had passed.

The Ark was central to this story, and as the astute reader should expect, this was because it was a powerful and multifaceted symbol of Jesus Christ. First, it contained the two plates of the law. These represented the righteousness of Christ as freely given to His people. It also contained the golden pot of manna. This manna was a type of Christ also, particularly of His power to vitally sustain His people through eternity. These two objects therefore represented both the legal and vital aspects of salvation. Next, the Ark contained Aaron’s rod that budded. This symbolized Christ’s resurrection, which was the certification of His sufficiency for both our legal and vital needs. Finally, there was the Mercy Seat, which covered all the things just named, showing that all was provided mercifully, being bought by the blood of Christ, as represented by the blood that was routinely sprinkled thereon.

Once the typology of the Ark is understood, the whole story embracing it suddenly transforms into a typological masterpiece foretelling of Jesus and His salvation. Parallelisms include:

- 1) The Israelites had of course begun in the bondage and darkness of Egypt. They had been in Egypt for so long that they had acquired the darkened religious thinking of that nation, and had largely forgotten the God of their forefathers. Even Moses himself, when first encountering God

at the burning bush, enquired concerning His name (Ex 3:13). Insofar as religious truth was concerned, the Israelites were no better than their Egyptian captors. Christians have long believed that Egypt in this story served as a type of the wicked and darkened world, and that the enslaved Israelites were types of the elect of God while yet in unregeneracy and the bondage of sin. Paul said these elect, before their regeneration, “*were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,*” (Eph 2:3).

2) The Israelites were then liberated by the mighty hand of God, but being distinguished from the Egyptians only by covenant made to their patriarchs and by the blood of a Passover lamb being applied to their doorposts. This blood was applied on the very day of the year that Jesus died on the cross. Accordingly, those who are liberated by the spiritual birth had been distinguished only by their election in the covenant of grace and by the blood of Christ being shed in their behalf.

3) The children of Israel left Egypt and entered the wilderness by passing through the parted waters of the Red Sea. Paul said this event was analogous to a baptism (1Cor 10:1-2). This fact teaches that baptism should be done by immersion, because the children of Israel were not merely sprinkled with rain; rather, they had the walls of water on either side and had a miraculous protective cloud overhead. Hence, they went across being immersed in water.

4) All this implies that the wilderness was a type of the church era. The Israelites were baptized into the Red Sea to enter the wilderness, even as believers are baptized to enter the church. When preaching his last sermon, Stephen actually described these Israelites as the “*church*” in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). Other scriptural writers admonished the New Testament church by drawing analogy between it and the wilderness experience (1Cor 10:1-11, Heb 3:16-4:2, Jude 5). The wanderings in the wilderness entailed many hardships, oppositions and trials. So also does service in the church. However, the people in the wilderness were sustained by the manna and the rock, even as the temporal church is sustained by the hope and help of Jesus Christ.

5) Canaan would then be a type of heaven. It was a land flowing with milk and honey. It was the Promised Land to the people of God and their joyously anticipated destination.

6) But to reach this blissful land, one must first cross the Jordan River, which happened to be high and turbulent when Israel was confronted by it long ago. These turbulent waters can be viewed as representing either of two things: They can represent the troublesome time of death when our spirits cross over from this world to heaven. They can also represent the perilous times of the last days when the resurrection will carry our bodies from this world to the next.

If these general symbolic assignments are wrong, then Christians have been wrong about them for as long as Christians have existed. Christian language and songs are filled with references to this symbolism. However, closer inspection of the story will divulge even more design.

7) On the day before the crossing, the Israelites were commanded to sanctify themselves on account of the wonders the Lord would do the next day (Josh 3:5). Accordingly, all sensible men know, both instinctively and by revelation, that the day will come in which they will face the wondrous God, and that they should prepare themselves to that end.

8) Before approaching the river, the children of Israel were warned “...ye have not passed this way heretofore” (Josh 3:4). This is also true of death. No living sinner has experienced it. Nor has any man in history experienced the unprecedented tribulation and deceit of the last days.

9) The remedy against these unknown perils was to carefully follow the Ark the entire way to the river. As already shown, the Ark was a type of Christ. Christ has experienced death and has experienced resurrection from death to immortal life. He has also experienced both earth and heaven. He is, therefore, the optimal and sufficient choice to lead anyone facing such unknowns.

10) The Ark went into Jordan before all others. It entered to create a passageway for those that followed. Christ was the first to enter death with foreordination to immortal resurrection, and His experience created a passageway along which millions of others will be carried.

11) The waters were stayed far upstream where they accumulated in a heap. A dry and crossable riverbed was produced from a city called “Adam” all the way to the Dead Sea where the Jordan River empties. In like manner, the death and resurrection of Christ created a passageway for people from the first man Adam to the death of the world.

12) Though the Ark was likely famous among the Israelites, it is doubtful that any had actually seen it apart from the High Priest. The Ark had been constructed decades earlier and had been kept in the Holiest of All where none but the High Priest could enter. Even when the tabernacle and its furnishings were moved from place to place, the Ark was first covered by the High Priest where none could see it while in transport (Num 4:1-6). So on the day of the crossing, all of the Israelites, while passing through the riverbed, first beheld what they had frequently contemplated and discussed. Even so, Christ is the most analyzed subject in the history of man, yet none in the present world have actually seen Him, though all will see him in spirit at their death, and in body at their resurrection.

13) While threading through the wilderness to the banks of the river, the Israelites were to remain behind the Ark a distance of 2000 cubits. This was far enough that the Ark was barely within view, and sometimes obscured to weak eyes. Also, the terrain was rough, causing some to stumble and causing the feeble to need assistance. Such is descriptive of the journey of faith taken by the church in this world. Temptations and trials obscure vision in those whose eyes are weak, and cause the feeble to stumble, but the strong are commanded to aid them.

14) As the river was approached, because the Ark was held stationary in its midst, the Israelites drew nearer and nearer as they pressed forward. Accordingly, God’s children typically draw nearer to Christ in heart as their final days are approached. Then, in the midst of the river of death, He is manifested as a sure presence and steadfast companion, and there men behold with clarity what they had long-struggled to see before. As Joshua himself said, “*Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you...*” (Josh 3:10).

15) We will hope that a cubit in this story stands for a year, and that, whereas the Israelites were to trail the Ark by about 2000 cubits, we will trail our Lord in resurrection by about 2000 years.

16) As the 12 tribes crossed the river, a representative from each was ordered to take a stone from the bed of the river, and these 12 stones were set up as a memorial on the other side. The whereabouts of these stones is unknown today, but their memory is preserved forever in the eternal word of God. The symbolic meaning of this memorial might be found in Revelation 7 and 14, where the general resurrection is said to be preceded by first-fruits taken from the 12 tribes of Israel, with 12,000 taken from each tribe. Hence, these 144,000, being glorified and carried across to the true Promised Land, will serve as harbingers of the greater harvest to come.

17) When the crossing was done, not a single soul was left behind. As Joshua recorded, “...*all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan,*” (Josh 3:17). This portended the inspiring truth proclaimed by Jesus:

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. – Jn 6:37-39

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. – Jn 17:1-3

Samson

In the era of the Judges, there emerged the famous Samson (Jdg 13-16), an Israelite from the tribe of Dan, whose superhuman feats would become legendary over the world. The history of Israel would produce many warriors but Samson was the mightiest of them all. Samson was also named in Hebrews 11:32 among men and women of faith in the Old Testament era. This means that, though a very flawed man, Samson was an object of God's grace. All these facts should alert to the possibility that the Holy Spirit would order the events of Samson's life to tell a greater story. This story will prove to be an allegorical prophecy about the nation Israel in general, and it will foretell a period from Samson's times unto the end of the world. Samson himself will represent Israel in this story and this will be his primary role in the allegory. However, Israel was formed as a nation for the purpose of telling and fulfilling the story of Jesus Christ. Not surprisingly, there will be points in Samson's life where he will foreshadow Christ also. The imagery of the story is complex. Few Christians have completely grasped it. While I hope to do better, I definitely allow that my own interpretations could need correction.

Dual types such as Samson can occur elsewhere in the Bible but they always entail antitypes that have a sense of oneness. For example, Christ and His people are considered as one (Jn 17:20-26, Heb 2:11), so sometimes they can both be represented by a single type (e.g. Isaac). The Father and Son are one (Isa 9:6, 1Jn 5:7), so they can both be represented by a single type too (e.g. the king of Persia in Esther). Now Christ and Israel are one in the sense that the latter was created on account of the former. Paul implied this when he said, *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ,"* (Gal 3:16). So the promises made to Abraham concerning the nation actually had a deeper meaning wherein they were ultimately about Jesus Christ. Accordingly, Paul added, *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,"* (Gal 3:29). This says that Israel, when properly defined, is altogether in Christ. This is why Paul rejected the idea that anyone could be a true Israelite if outside of Christ (Rom 9:6-8). This explains why Samson, while mostly representing Israel, will foreshadow Christ at certain points. Such will also be done by other biblical types (e.g. Jonah).

Samson's life can be divided into three major allegorical sequences, all of which conveyed remarkable prophecies of things that were yet to come.

The Philistine Fiancée

The parallels between Samson and Israel are especially apparent at the beginning of his story. This tells of his birth and his purpose to marry a certain Philistine woman. In particular:

- 1) Samson was miraculously born to a mother who had been barren. This was also true of Israel. The nation was distinguished as being called in Isaac, but Isaac was born of the barren Sarah.
- 2) The births of both Samson and Isaac were announced by heavenly revelation. The birth of Isaac was promised by God personally. The birth of Samson was foretold by an angel.

3) Samson was born under a covenant known as the “*vow of a Nazarite*” (Num 6:2), and compliance with this vow would be key to his power. Israel was also born as an organized nation under a covenant, namely, the law given through Moses, and compliance with this covenant was repeatedly presented as key to its strength.

4) The Nazarite vow could be taken either by man or woman and it entailed three major commitments (Num 6:1-21): The first was total abstinence from strong drink, including even wine. The Nazarite was also to abstain from grapes or anything made from them. While this would include many things, the statute curiously put express prohibition on vinegar (which is commonly made from grapes). The second commitment was that the hair of the head was never to be cut. The third commitment was the avoidance of all dead human bodies. The Nazarite could not exempt himself in this even for the sake of his deceased parents. These commitments could be made for a designated period or for life. Samson was to be a Nazarite from birth till death by the order of God Himself.

The motivation for the Nazarite vow would be indicated 1500 years later when Christ vowed at the Last Supper, “*But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom,*” (Mt 26:29, Mk 14:25, Lk 22:18). The importance of this statement may be inferred from the fact that all synoptic gospels recorded it. The Nazarite vow was evidently in imitation and honor of the Messiah as He would be from the time of His own vow until the time of His visible return and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:5-9). This includes especially the time of His invisible heavenly reign. The specific prohibition against vinegar was likely motivated by the fact that Jesus, in keeping with His own vow, refused vinegar while on the cross, even though it was mixed in a concoction that might have alleviated His pain (Mt 27:34). This interpretation also explains why the Nazarite was to avoid all dead bodies. The death of Christ will put an end to all corpses, and there are no dead bodies in heaven where He now lives and reigns. Obviously, the Nazarite vow was very incriminating to unbelieving Jews because it affirmed exactly what they deny. They do not deny that Jesus once was, nor will they deny Him at the time that “*every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him*” (Rev 1:7), but they deny almost everything about Him in the period of time contemplated by the vow.

Some think Jesus actually ingested vinegar on the cross in the final moments of His life, but I think this is unlikely. He was actually offered vinegar twice. The first time was evidently before He was nailed and elevated. This was in a mixture of vinegar and gall (Ps 69:21, Mt 27:33-34, Mk 15:23). Some have speculated this concoction was designed to alleviate pain. Whatever the case, it is clear that Jesus refused it after tasting it. The second time occurred at the very end after Jesus cried, “*I thirst,*” (Jn 19:28). This time, one of His crucifiers, likely a soldier (Lk 23:36), soaked vinegar in a sponge impaled on a hyssop stalk and elevated it to Jesus’ mouth. While John said Jesus “*received*” the vinegar (Jn 19:30), there is no reason to suppose this meant anything more than contact with His mouth, as had happened in the earlier case. John also explained that Jesus expressed His thirst after nearly all scriptures had been fulfilled, and that His

statement was purposed to finalize the remainder. So His real intent was not to mitigate His misery but to fulfill the word of God, especially Psalm 69:21. This means no purpose would have been served by Him actually ingesting the vinegar. It is also possible that the intent of the soldier was interrupted, because other crucifiers, likely among the Jews, objected to his action, cynically claiming that Jesus should be left to the deliverance of Elijah (Mt 27:47, Mk 15:36). The vow taken by Jesus in Mark 14:25 makes it improbable that vinegar was actually ingested.

5) But all familiar with the story of Samson will know that the most crucial condition of the Nazarite vow was that his hair be uncut. We need not speculate as to the symbolic meaning of this. Paul explained it in 1 Corinthians 11 when he said that long hair is a symbol of allegiance to authority. In the case of the Nazarite vow, it was likely a symbol of allegiance to the heavenly Messiah being portended by the vow. This will do much to explain what will follow in the story of Samson. His life will fall far short of our expectations of a Nazarite, and he will seem to show much disregard for his vow, but God will extend him remarkable forbearance and continue to empower him on condition that his hair remain uncut. However, if the hair be cut, that is, if the authority of the Messiah be rejected or betrayed, then woeful consequences will follow.

This principle does of course hold for men in general. Though their sins may be many, they are assured of forgiveness if they believe on the Messiah and honor Him. However, if they deny or dishonor the Messiah, then scriptures threaten them with direst destruction. This principle is obviously true to the New Testament, but it was also communicated in the Old Testament inasmuch as harsh consequences always befell those who desecrated or mishandled types of Christ, even if they did it unwittingly.

6) Notwithstanding his greatness, Samson had a bewildering stupidity concerning women. While men commonly lack judgment in this respect, Samson was so indiscreet that he loved even women who were clearly bent on his destruction. Such was also the case with Israel. It loved the false gods and false religions of the very nations that were hell-bent on destroying it.

7) Given that he was a judge of Israel, Samson was a surprisingly impudent man. Accordingly, the nation he represented was charged by scripture as having exactly the same character. It was said to be “*impudent*” (Ezek 2:4) and “*hardhearted*” (Ezek 3:7) and was repeatedly described as being “*stiffnecked*” (Ex 32:9, Dt 9:6, Acts 7:51, etc.).

8) However, Samson was moved to penitence and piety in the final days of his life, even as Israel will be mightily moved to Jesus Christ in the final days of world history.

9) Samson was presented as a man who received the Spirit of the Lord from time to time, and it was at such times his power was great (Jdg 13:25, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14). Such was also the case with Israel, which experienced the extraordinary power of God at some times but not at others. This contrasted with Christ, who had the Spirit continuously and without measure (Jn 3:34).

The remainder of the story of Samson will be about his personal war with the Philistines. These were a people who had migrated to the land of Canaan from a place known as “Caphtor” (Jer 47:4, Am 9:7), which is commonly thought to be modern Crete. They were intruders upon a

region properly belonging to Israel by divine promise. The Philistines sometimes subdued and oppressed the Israelites in other parts of Canaan. Such was the case in the times of Samson. These circumstances portended things to come. Israel was invaded and subdued by the Romans prior to the first coming of Christ, and will be invaded by the antichrist and his armies prior to the time He comes again. In both instances, God directed, or will direct, a successful counterattack against the invader. In the first case, the counterattack was spiritual, with the religion of the Romans and other Gentiles being defeated and displaced by Christianity. In the last case, the counterattack will be physical and final.

Samson desired to marry a certain Philistine girl, and though his parents objected, Samson insisted that they make the customary wedding arrangements. This marriage, though undesirable in Jewish culture, was technically in compliance with the law of God. God had prohibited marriage to the Canaanites, but the Philistines were no part of the Canaanite tribes. Also, while Samson would later consort with prostitutes, his courtship with this Philistine girl seems to have been honorable. Most importantly, scriptures state that the courtship was “*of the Lord.*” However, the actual divine intent was to use it for the purpose of provoking a conflict wherein the Philistines would endure great destruction. Now the marriage quickly ended in breakup, perhaps even before it was consummated, but the effort to make it happen did indeed provoke a conflict. This foreshadowed a far greater conflict that would rage for centuries, especially across Europe, to the decimation of the false gods and religions of the Romans and other Gentiles.

Of course, Christ and His church are united in a marital relationship, so our first impulse might be to interpret Samson's intended marriage as portending such, but the fact that it abruptly ended in malice shows that something in this interpretation is amiss. It is to be remembered that Samson is primarily a type of Israel, and is a type of Christ only in that Christ is the ultimate Israelite. Samson's marriage was therefore representative of a union that might have been, and should have been, between Israel and the church, but this union was to be broken to serve purposes in the profound plan of God.

While Samson and his parents were en route to the girl's home for purposes of making the wedding arrangements, Samson ventured alone into a vineyard where a young lion roared at him. Using his extraordinary strength, Samson killed the lion by ripping him with his bare hands. However, his parents were not witness to the event, nor did Samson inform them.

10) Accordingly, it would come to pass that the nation Israel would do what seemed to require inconceivable strength when it killed the “*Lion of the tribe of Judah*” (Rev 5:5), the very Son of God. Of course, Israel could have never done this without being empowered by divine permission, even as Samson was divinely empowered when he killed the lion.

11) Scriptures do not state that the young lion actually attacked Samson, even though this is what the reader would hastily assume. Rather, the lion was only described as roaring at Samson. Accordingly, Jesus did not physically attack Israel, but they found His words to be very provocative and threatening (Jn 7:44-46).

12) This lion was killed at a vineyard, even as Jesus characterized His own death in the prophetic parable of Matthew 21:33-39.

13) However, the Israelites, like Samson's parents, were oblivious to the death of the Great Lion and its momentous implications.

At a later date, when Samson returned to take his betrothed wife, he found that a swarm of bees had nested in the lion's carcass. He took of the honey and ate, and also gave a portion to his parents, but remained reticent about his destruction of the lion and about the origin of the honey.

14) This foreshadowed the fact that the death of Christ would be accompanied by the sweet effect of securing eternal salvation for His people, yet,

15) Even in this, the Jews would generally remain oblivious.

Many have interpreted Samson as violating his Nazarite vow by making contact with the lion's carcass, but the statute only forbade contact with dead *human* bodies. Had it included animals, the Nazarite could not even eat a piece of chicken or wear a fur coat.

16) Upon arrival, Samson made a feast of seven days in celebration of the prospective wedding. This seven-day feast probably corresponded to a seven-year period wherein the gospel was sent almost exclusively to the Jews. The first 3.5 years of this were under the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus, and 3.5 years more were added under the ministries of the apostles after Jesus ascended to heaven. This latter interval ended around the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7), at which time the gospel was revealed to the Gentiles. This extraordinary period was actually compared to a wedding feast by Jesus Christ (Mt 22:1-14).

17) Thirty companions were assigned to Samson to serve as a groom's party. The Bible does not state whether these companions were all Philistines or partly Israelites. They were representative of the earliest believers in Christ who witnessed His ministry and believed in His resurrection. While these were mostly Jews, they also included Gentiles (e.g. the Samaritan woman, the Syro-Phoenician woman and the centurion), and even the Jews in the group were, or would be, held in contempt for fellowshipping Gentiles. Now in the midst of the celebration, Samson put forth a riddle to his thirty companions, promising them each a change of sheet and raiment if they could solve it by the end of the seven-day feast. However, in the event they could not solve it, then they would owe thirty changes of the same to him. His riddle was, "*Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,*" (Jdg 14:14). Obviously, this riddle was based on Samson's experience with the lion, but under the deeper meaning of the story, the riddle was a symbol of the Old Testament, and the solution to the riddle is Jesus Christ. He is an "*eater*" in the sense that He is the most terrible and destructive thing that will ever happen to the human race, yet He also provides the sweet manna and living bread that gives eternal life. This wonderful food derives from His deceased body, even as honey came from the body of the lion.

18) The reward for solving the riddle was a change of sheet and raiment, thus the recipient would have new covering for whether he was awake or asleep (1Thes 5:10). Now Jesus Christ is the

answer to the riddle inasmuch as He is the solution to the mystery “*which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God*” (Eph 3:9). The blessing to all who apprehend this mystery and embrace it by faith is the assurance of a change of raiment wherein they are divested of the filthy garment of their own sinfulness and are clothed with the new raiment of Christ’s righteousness. The matter of the riddle therefore symbolized the gospel principle of justification by faith.

19) The solution of the riddle would be instantly obvious to anyone having knowledge of the lion, but utterly impossible to anyone without it. Such is also the case with the riddle of the Old Testament. It is senseless without knowledge of the Lion of Judah, but is both sensible and marvelous once the Lion is known.

20) But none could solve Samson’s riddle. Not even could Samson’s own parents solve it. This symbolized the fact that even faithful Jews of prior generations could not fully solve the riddle of the Old Testament. As Jesus once said to His disciples, “*For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them,*” (Mt 13:17). The only one who could solve Samson’s riddle was the very one who formulated it, that is, Samson himself. The same was true of the riddle of the Old Testament. It could only be solved by the one who inspired it, the Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul said:

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. – Rom 16:25-26

So God prepared a great mystery that was revealed at the first coming of Jesus, but it was revealed by means of Jewish writings that had been in hand for hundreds of years. Those writings had been an unsolvable riddle until Christ came, and only He could reveal the solution. As He said:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. – Mt 11:27

21) So the wedding party, being in frustration, and seeing that the seven-day period was about to expire, threatened harm to Samson’s wife unless she found for them the meaning of the riddle by coaxing it from Samson himself. She promptly and successfully complied. The wedding party here represented first-generation Christians, and Samson’s wife represented the church, particularly as it would be among the Gentiles. Those first-generation Christians learned the meaning of the great riddle of the Old Testament from the church, which obtained it from Jesus Christ Himself. The Gentiles discovered the answer to the riddle at or after the end of the seven-year, New Testament period in which God labored with the Jews.

22) The riddle became known to the wedding party because of Samson's relationship to his wife. Accordingly, the riddle of the Old Testament was made known to Christians because of Christ's relationship to His church.

23) The wedding party was in a state of malice toward both Samson and his betrothed wife before the riddle was revealed, thus showing that even believers are aliens to Christ and His church before God puts the truth in their hearts by grace.

24) The manner in which the wedding party found the solution to the riddle created a complex circumstance that is remarkably analogous to the scheme of redemption. In terms of what was *morally* right, the wedding party was indebted to Samson because they had not resolved the riddle under the terms assumed when the wager was made. Accordingly, the elect are morally indebted to God because they did not keep the law according to the terms assumed when it was given. On the other hand, Samson owed the wedding party only under *legal technicality*, and indeed, no fair-minded person would have faulted him for refusing payment.

25) The thing that the wedding party morally owed Samson was exactly the same as what He technically owed them. They owed Him sheet and raiment, symbols of righteousness, but this is what they received from him instead. Even so, we morally owe God righteousness, but in His wondrous scheme of redemption, He has given it to us instead.

Samson foreshadowed Christ in these last few points. In what follows, Samson will resume his role as a type of the nation in general. Now Samson was infuriated that his riddle had been revealed to these Gentiles, so he went to a nearby Philistine city and slew 30 Philistine men, taking their garments as spoils, and used them to pay his wager. Therefore,

26) Each of the men in the wedding party became clothed in a new garment that properly belonged to an innocent man who had forfeited it in death. Such is also the case with all of the elect of God. They are clothed in the righteousness of an innocent Christ who was killed for them. This also showed that Christ died for men individually and not in aggregate.

27) But Samson then returned to his father's house in anger without taking his bride. He later returned with the intent of taking her, but found that she had been given in marriage by her father to one who had been Samson's friend in the wedding party. This "*friend*" was likely analogous to what we would call the "best man" in our western culture. Now the kingdom of God had originally been put under the care of Israelites, but Jesus warned them, saying, "*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,*" (Mt 21:43). The word here translated as "*nation*" can simply mean "people." Hence, the kingdom of God would be taken from Israel and given to another people. It was removed from the religious leadership of Israel and placed under the direction of the apostles, all of whom had formerly been dutiful members and friends of the Jewish religious system.

28) The father of the girl had given her to another because he assumed that Samson had been moved to hate her. This was a reasonable assumption. It was also reasonable to assume that Israel had similar hatred for the church, judging from its treatment of John the Baptist, Jesus

Christ and His disciples. But as a concession to Samson, the father offered a younger sister, whom he claimed was the prettier girl. Samson was not appeased, and besides, the law of God would not allow it so long as the older sister were alive (Lev 18:18). This younger sister likely portended the fact that certain Jews in New Testament times, being bent on making the church more appealing to Jewish culture, concocted a new religion by mixing true Christianity with features borrowed from their traditional religion. These attempts came to naught because they were vigorously opposed by the apostles and because most Jews eventually discarded Christianity altogether. The law and the gospel are sisters, and marriage must be made to one or the other. It cannot be made to both (Rom 7:1-4).

29) These events happened at the time of the wheat harvest when the fields were ripe or partially harvested with sheaves. Samson, being filled with rage, took 300 foxes and put them into pairs having their tails attached at torches. He sent them scurrying through the fields of the Philistines, everywhere igniting and burning with devastating effect. This is one of the bizarre events in the Bible that should arouse suspicion of deeper meaning. Now Jesus Christ set an important precedent when He sent seventy of His disciples in various directions to preach. He sent them out in pairs, even as with Samson's foxes (Lk 10:1). This practice would be imitated in the book of Acts and continued by many Christians to this day. God put fire in the mouths (Acts 2:3) of His early church members on the Day of Pentecost (which happened around the wheat harvest), and then the Jews unintentionally spread these fires everywhere by persecuting the Christian "foxes" and forcing them to flee to other countries. Their flight, and the fires they ignited while fleeing, had devastating effect on the false gods and religions of the Gentile world. These early Christians ignited their fires all across Europe, then to the British Isles, then to Scandinavia, and then to the Americas. When the conflagration was done, the long-entrenched idolatry and polytheism of these Gentile regions were burned into near extinction.

It is a great irony of history that the Jews accomplished little toward eradicating these false religions in all their concerted efforts to oppose them, yet these same religions would be decimated as the unintended effect of the estranged relationship between the Jews and the church. All this was brilliantly prophesied when the Philistine fields were ablaze as a result of the estrangement of Samson with his Philistine fiancée. This also explains why their courtship and subsequent breakup were of the Lord. It was symbolic of the means whereby He would displace religious lies with religious truth in great regions of the Gentile world (Rom 11).

30) The Philistines, in their perverted way of thinking, believed they could placate Samson by killing his former fiancée, so they burned her and her father with fire. Now Christians have been persecuted in countless ways, but one of the most infamous was in AD 64 when Nero of Rome bound them to stakes, coated them with combustibles, and then burned them as torches to illuminate his gardens. These events contributed to what historians commonly consider to be the first great persecution of the church. Only six years later, the same Romans would burn Jerusalem and the temple, which were of course places where the Christian religion was begotten. Nero's cruel actions had unexpected consequences. He did not deter the spread of

Christianity, but very likely fueled it, thus accelerating the destruction of the Pagan religions that Christianity displaced. As with many Roman emperors, Nero claimed himself to be incarnate deity, but after reinforcing the Roman people in such notions, many of them could readily see the stark contrast between the perversion and cruelty of their deified emperors and the incarnate God that was in the Merciful Messiah. The egotism and deceit of the emperors were therefore turned to their own ruin. Accordingly, the cruel actions of the Philistines against Samson's former fiancée did not have the expected effect. He reacted with fury and vengeance, slaughtering the Philistines in even greater numbers than before.

31) The Bible used a peculiar expression when describing this slaughter. It said that Samson smote them "*hip and thigh*," (Jdg 15:8). Many commentators interpret this expression as simply meaning "thoroughly," though they admit that the expression is of unknown origin. However, it is perhaps more than coincidental that in the timeline represented by the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dn 2), this slaughter of Pagan religion occurred in the hips and thighs.

This slaughter might also point to the second coming of Christ and to the peculiar roles the church and Israel will play in the plan of God at that time. Even though the church and Israel are estranged and adversarial, they have a complex relationship with a peculiar affinity. There are multiple reasons for this: They have intersecting destinies, as is believed by the church. They are both hated by the same devil. Most importantly, they are both loved by the same God, and both play leading roles in the execution of His plan for the world. However, these roles are very different. The true church is a nonviolent, harmless institution intending peace and good will. If it is not this, then it is a degenerate imposter. However, this is not the case with Israel. Rather, it is the "*battle axe*" of God (Jer 51:20), and is a "*flame*" among stubble and wood (Isa 10:17, Obad 18), and is a devouring "*lion*" in the midst of the forest (Mic 5:8). Israel is associated with violence from Abraham to Armageddon. These two roles are coordinated in the plan of God in that the destruction that will be dealt by and through Israel in the last days will be partly in retribution for abuses done to the church. Samson's slaughter of the Philistines possibly foreshadowed those times.

When Samson heard of the Philistines killing the woman he had purposed to marry, he said to them, "*Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease*," (Jdg 15:7). So he intended his attack to fulfill all vengeance for the injustice done him concerning the woman. The conflict would actually be far from done, but Samson's intents suggest that one allegorical sequence had been completed and that another was to commence.

The Jawbone Slaughter

Thinking himself to be done taking vengeance, Samson traveled to Judah, distancing himself from the Philistine border, and dwelled atop a rock in a place called Etam. However, the Philistines were bent on pressing their domination, so they foolishly sent a large force into Judah to abduct him, and this force spread itself over the land. These events would set the stage for yet

another allegorical prophecy of Jesus Christ, and one that comprehended both His first and second comings. In this prophecy, Samson will represent Christ from beginning to end.

The men of Judah, being alarmed by the intrusion of this large invasion force, went to Samson with the intent of binding him and turning him over to the Philistines. However, these men approached Samson in fear and respect. Though there were 3000 of them, they made no attempt to overpower Samson, but besought him to surrender voluntarily. Samson agreed on terms that they would not kill him themselves but only bind and deliver him to the Philistines. They then bound him with two cords and delivered him as agreed. The Philistines shouted for joy upon seeing Samson captured and bound. However, he broke the two cords with ease, picked up a new jawbone of an ass, and slew 1000 Philistines using it as his weapon. This slaughter left their bodies in heaps. In all this, we have yet another amazing prophecy:

32) Approximately 1200 years later, the very men of Judah would deliver Jesus Christ bound to the Romans for crucifixion. They did this because they could not legally execute Him themselves. The Romans had deprived them of the right of capital punishment.

33) These same men of Judah were partly acting in fear of their Roman invaders, much like their counterparts in the days of Samson. The council of chief priests that condemned Christ to death had concluded: *“If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation,”* (Jn 11:48).

34) However, the Jewish armed force sent by the chief priests to abduct Jesus was intimidated much like the force that had been sent to abduct Samson. The reason was that when Jesus verbally identified Himself to them, they were mysteriously overpowered and sent falling backward to the ground (Jn 18:6). It was a unique moment to His first coming in that it gave a glimpse of the destructive power with which He will return. Moments later, Peter drew a sword and cut off the ear of one in the abduction party, but Jesus rebuked Peter and miraculously restored the ear with a mere touch (Lk 22:49-51). All this served as warning to His abductors that He was a man of extraordinary power and that they best approach Him cautiously.

35) While Jesus was literally bound with cords the same as Samson (Mt 27:2, Mk 15:1), the cords of Samson likely foreshadowed something far greater. This would be explained on the Day of Pentecost when Peter said to the Jews:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. – Acts 2:23-24

Hence, the crucified body of Jesus appeared to be in the bonds of death, but He as easily broke these bonds as Samson broke his cords.

36) After breaking the bonds of death, the resurrected Jesus will return and destroy the wicked at His second coming, even as Samson destroyed the Philistines after breaking his bonds.

37) The jawbone is, of course, associated with speech, and such is also true of the destructive coming of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:11-21 describes Him as returning to destroy the wicked with a sword in His mouth and with Him being called "*The Word of God*." This means that the wicked will be destroyed exactly as foretold by His prophets and apostles, and that in such times, every inspired word of God will have proven to be true.

38) Of course, an ass cannot speak by nature, but there was a famous case of one doing it by the miraculous power of God (Num 22). This was Balaam's ass, which protested against the corrupt prophet's intent to curse the children of Israel. Accordingly, the prophets and apostles of Jesus Christ foretold what they could have never known or understood by nature. They were moved by the miraculous power of God to speak. As with Balaam's ass, their prophecies were filled with warnings to wicked men of the dangers of opposing the people of God.

39) This jawbone was of a deceased ass because all the great prophets and apostles will have died when their words are finally fulfilled.

The Destruction of Dagon's Temple

This leads us to the last episode of Samson's illustrious life. In this he will resume his primary role as representative of Israel. The story began with him traveling to the Philistine city of Gaza to see a harlot. When the Philistines became privy to his presence, they purposed to ambush him at daylight. However, at midnight, Samson ripped out the gate of the city, dislodging the posts, and carried the gate and posts on his shoulders to Hebron where he cast them to the ground.

40) This part of Samson's story, as well as what is to follow, shows that Israel will be consorting with harlots, or false religions, in all but the very end of its history.

41) Notwithstanding, God's word to them will remain true. Now one of God's promises to Abraham was that his seed would possess the gate of his enemies (Gn 22:17). Abraham was actually buried at Hebron, the place where Samson left the gate. The other patriarchs were buried there as well. Samson's mighty action was a dire omen to the wicked of things to come.

Samson then fell in love with the infamous Delilah, who also appears to have been a harlot. Delilah was a symbol of all the false religions that will have deceived Israel when its history is done. Now the lords of the Philistines bribed Delilah with a great sum of silver to seduce Samson to divulge the secret of his strength. With her first attempt, Samson lied to Delilah and said his strength would be lost if he were bound with seven green withes. Delilah then tied him with such, but he effortlessly broke them. On her second attempt, Samson lied again and said his strength would be lost if he were bound with new ropes. Samson broke these also. On her third attempt, Samson lied yet again and said his strength would be lost if his hair were woven and bound to a beam. This attempt failed also because Samson simply ripped out the beam. After all these demonstrations of Delilah's malicious intents, Samson continued to consort with the harlot. Even so, Israel was addicted to the false gods of nations that were bent on destroying it.

But on Delilah's fourth attempt, Samson told the truth, namely, that his strength would be lost if his hair were shaved. She shaved him in his sleep, and then called the Philistines to take him. Being helpless to resist them, the Philistines overcame Samson, put out his eyes, bound him, put him in prison and forced him to grind grain like an ox.

After Samson had endured a time of this oppression and humiliation, a multitude of Philistines were gathered in a temple of their god Dagon to celebrate their victory over Samson. They brought him out of the prison to make sport of him. They eventually set him between two pillars that upheld the house. By this time, his hair had begun to grow back. He then humbly prayed to God that His great strength be restored, only but once, that he might get vengeance for his two eyes. Samson then famously dislodged the pillars and brought the temple down on its wicked worshippers and himself, killing more men in his death than he had done in his entire life.

All this was a remarkable allegory prophesying the story of Israel as it would happen over most of its history, though almost none had happened at the time the allegory was enacted.

42) Many years later, the nation would be invaded and bound by the Assyrians, but these bonds would be broken when God sent an angel against the Assyrian army and destroyed 185,000 of them in one night. This was foreshadowed by the first binding of Samson.

43) Later, the Jews would be bound again by the Babylonians, who carried them away into captivity. However, after only 70 years, God sent King Cyrus of the Medes and Persians against the Babylonians and conquered them. Cyrus and subsequent kings then liberated the Jews and permitted them to return to their home. Thus the bonds of Babylon would be broken also.

44) Then Israel would be subdued by the Greeks and Seleucids, and would be grievously persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes of the latter, but the Jews tenaciously fought back, finally securing their freedom. For a third time would they break their bonds.

45) But the fourth binding would prove different from the previous three. This time they would be conquered and dispersed by the Romans, and would remain separated from their land for a longer period than the entire history wherein they had occupied it. The reason was that they had essentially cut their hair, the symbol of their allegiance to the Messiah, because they had betrayed their Messiah by crucifying Him at Calvary and denying Him after He was resurrected.

In all these cases, Israel was bound and oppressed because it had become deceived and corrupted under the seduction of religious harlots, the last being the Jewish priests themselves with their apostate Judaism.

46) The failure of the Jews to perceive the Messiah would partly be owing to blindness, but their blindness became even worse after they rejected Him. As Jesus warned, "*For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath,*" (Mk 4:25). The Israelites lost their spiritual eyes, even as Samson lost his natural eyes, and being in blindness, Israel could not understand the very book that it had been inspired to write.

47) This heinous betrayal of Samson was done by Delilah for the reward of silver. This was just retribution because Jesus too was betrayed for silver, paid by the Jewish priests to Judas Iscariot.

48) But in the midst of these very sorrowful circumstances, Samson's hair began to grow back. This portends the much-prophesied return of Israel to their Messiah in the final days of the earth (Isa 11:11-12, 55:3-13, Jer 32:37-40, 33:14-26, Ezek 34:23-24, 36:22-27, 37:24-25, Hos 3:4-5, Joel 2:28-32, Zeph 3:8-9, Zech 12:9-10, Mt 23:37-39, etc.). This will be brought to pass by God's sovereign grace and the outpouring of His Spirit.

49) Samson prayed to God for strength to avenge his eyes. In the mysterious workings of God, the Israelites had been blinded for the very sake of the Gentiles that the latter might see the glory of the Messiah (Mt 22:1-10, Rom 11). But the Gentiles will one day come to a generation that disregards and despises this precious gift, and hates the Israelites who had been deprived for their very benefit. These Gentiles will therefore be worthy of destruction, at which time, Samson's eyes will be avenged.

50) An unexpected part of the story is that Samson himself died when all these wicked Gentiles were destroyed. But the day will come in which the earthly, natural Israel will die and cease to exist. It will melt with a fervent heat like all the earth. It will be displaced by a heavenly regime where there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal 3:28). But when natural Israel thus falls, multitudes of Gentile invaders will also meet their end, and indeed, the whole world will fall with it.

The story of Samson is the story of Israel, but the story makes no sense without Jesus Christ. He is the one who gives the story meaning and purpose, even to the parts that are otherwise bad and sad. The regrowth of Samson's hair portends a day in which Israel will acknowledge this fact, upon which the wicked world will fall and eternal glory will follow.

Ruth

The book of Ruth pertains to the era of the Judges and is therefore ancient even by Bible standards. The book began by describing a Jewish family of four who were driven from Israel to Moab on account of a severe drought. This family consisted of a husband, wife and two sons. The name of the wife was Naomi. While residing in Moab, the two sons each married Moabite women. Now the Moabites were Gentiles, being descendants of Lot, whom he conceived in a drunken act of incest. They were also worshippers of false gods. Consequently, it was considered a dishonorable thing for a Jew to marry of that race. One of these Moabite women was named Ruth. While in Moab, the husband of Naomi died, and the two sons died shortly thereafter, leaving the three women as destitute widows. As I will shortly relate, the remainder of the story will be about the deliverance of Naomi and Ruth through the benevolence of a great Jewish man named Boaz, who will also make Ruth his wife through a curious act of redemption. Ruth was elevated by these events from her loathed condition as a Moabite to one of the most honored women in the history of Israel. Because of the beauty of the story, Ruth is famous among both Jews and Christians, but, as is usually the case with the Old Testament, there is much more to the story than meets the eye. The book is an allegorical prophecy of astounding detail of how the Old Covenant would eventually be replaced by a new one under Christ.

Widowhood in this story was symbolic of a religious state that is destitute of the blessings of God. Such could be the case either because the religion was corrupt or because it was obsolete. On the other hand, the story portrays divinely blessed religion as being happily married and as living in the land of Israel. These same symbolic assignments were made elsewhere in the Bible. For example, Isaiah said:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. – Isa 62:1-4

As is well known, the word “Beulah” means to be married, and the marriage here described accompanied a happy and blessed state in the land of Israel. Hosea used the same symbolism when describing Israel in her future glorified state: “And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali,” (Hos 2:16). The word “Ishi” means a friend or husband. Even the New Covenant was described as being a widow while still

in its unrevealed state (Isa 54), but it was described as being joyously married to God Himself thereafter. Finally, the Babylonian harlot boasted that she was no widow (Isa 47:8, Rev 18:7), fancying herself to be a religious prodigy and in favor with her gods, whereas she was in fact an abominable imbecile to the true God of heaven.

Naomi represented the honorable Old Covenant, but she fell into widowhood because the covenant she represented had been rendered obsolete by the emergence of a new and better way. After noting that Jeremiah had explicitly prophesied of a “*new covenant*,” Paul said, “*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away,*” (Heb 8:13). Accordingly, Naomi had waxed old and was also fruitless in that she was no longer capable of bearing children. She had not become a widow because of any divine retribution against her. Rather, she had simply run her course and fulfilled her appointed time. However, this brought her to a sad condition, as was indicated by her own words:

And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? – Ruth 1:20-21

Accordingly, the Old Covenant started full with the powerful and glorious deliverance of the Israelites from the land of Egypt, but it ended empty with the same Israelites being reduced to disobedience, dispersal and dismay. Almost all of the old prophets complained of her dismal condition near the end. But this was exactly the condition the Old Covenant was designed to produce. Its purpose was to leave every person empty by showing him to be lost in sin and in need of the mercy and grace of God. This fact was clearly stated in the New Testament with:

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. – Rom 7:12-13

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. – Gal 3:21-22

For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. – Gal 2:19

While the Old Covenant was honorable, it produced many sons who were not. These were the Israelites who became unequally yoked to the corrupt religions of the world and formed illegitimate marriages between the true doctrine and practice of God and the false ideas and ways of man, especially devil-inspired idolatry, polytheism, etc. Such Israelites were represented by Mahlon and Chilion, the sons of Naomi. Both married Moabite women, and while this was not

prohibited by the law, it was still a questionable action given the corruption of Moabite religion. Because of this corruption, Israelites were required to put Moabite wives away in the days of Ezra (Ezra 9 & 10).

Mahlon and Chilion were indistinguishable except by name. Both had the same parents. Both were driven from the land of Israel. Both married Moabite women. Both had unflattering names, with Mahlon meaning “infirmity” and Chilion meaning “wasting.” Both died before their time. So both sons represented apostate Jewish religion, and likely little is to be gained by searching for a symbolic distinction between them. The real difference was in the women they married, as will shortly be explained.

With the deaths of these two sons, all three women were left as widows, meaning that all three represented states of rejected religion. Naomi was in rejection because of her obsolescence. The two daughters of Moab were rejected because of the corruption of Moabite religion. All were left in poverty, being separated from the visible blessings of God.

However, these three widows received word that conditions had improved back in Israel, and that “*the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread*,” (Ruth 1:6). The specific wording of this statement should capture the eye. Israel had changed for the better because of being *visited* by God, as would literally be the case when Jesus Christ was within its midst. Also, Israel had been visited in the form of freely given *bread*. Bread is one of the most frequently used symbols of Christ in all the Bible, starting with the bread given by Melchizedek to Abraham, then to the grain distributed by Joseph, then to the manna that fell in the wilderness, then to the showbread of the tabernacle, then to the meat offerings under the law, then to the barley cake in the story of Gideon, and finally to the unleavened bread of the Lord’s Supper. Bread in Israel meant Christ in Israel, and it is a pattern of scripture that Christ in Israel means that all nations shall flow unto it (Isa 2:2-3, 60:1-5, 66:17-20, Jer 3:17, Mic 4:1-2, Zech 8:20-23). Even so, both Jew and Gentile were prompted by the news of bread to embark upon a journey there. When they arrive, they will happen upon a very special man who had bread in great abundance, even as Christ had sufficient bread to famously feed the multitudes.

Before their departure for Israel, Naomi exhorted her two daughters-in-law that she had nothing left to offer them. She lamented that, because she was old and barren, she could not give birth to any more sons that they might marry. Of course, none would have expected these two mature women to wait for husbands who were not yet even born, but strange statements like this should alert the reader that higher meaning is intended. When the first covenant was young and viable, Gentiles could obtain religious acceptance with God by becoming proselytes to the Jewish religion, and in fact some of them did, but now that the covenant has waxed old, having run its intended course, it no longer represented a solution to Gentile widowhood.

Naomi therefore sought to persuade her daughters-in-law to remain in their own country and to seek husbands from their own kind. One daughter, named Orpah, conceded, opting not only to

remain with her own people but also with their gods; however, the other daughter, named Ruth, gave a reply that would become famous to Jews and Christians:

Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. – Ruth 1:16-17

These events divulge special insight into the intended symbolism of the story. In particular, Orpah represents those Gentiles who would be introduced to the God of Israel but would persist in their allegiance to false gods and religions. Ruth represents those Gentiles who would turn from their errant ways to serve Jesus Christ and His church. Inasmuch as those Gentiles would make up the vast majority of the church over its history, Ruth is also a symbol of the church itself and of the New Covenant upon which it is based. Her deep and enduring love for Naomi produced a seemingly unlikely friendship. Naomi, the symbol of the Old Covenant, acquired an eternal friend in the New Covenant, as symbolized by Ruth. As with these two women of old, these two covenants live and die together. Now Bible novices and critics often perceive these covenants as being adversarial and contradictory, much like Jews and Moabites were typically seen as enemies, but deeper understanding will show these covenants to be eternal friends.

Naomi and Ruth then ventured into Israel to the town of Bethlehem, the very birthplace of Jesus Christ. Still being impoverished, Ruth resorted to gleaning to sustain them both. The law had commanded that harvesters be less than thorough in their gatherings, and to allow the poor to glean after them (Lev 19:9-10). Fortunately for the widows, it was the time of barley harvest, which marked the beginning of the general harvest season, making it an ideal circumstance to glean. Accordingly, the Gentiles were introduced to the church at a time when a lengthy spiritual harvest was beginning, and when, according to the words of Jesus Himself, the fields were “white already to harvest” (Jn 4:35) and when the harvest was “plenteous” (Mt 9:37).

Ruth happened upon the field of a man named Boaz, who was wealthy in grain, and though he was unknown to her, he was a near kinsmen to her deceased husband, and therefore in line to marry her by the provisions of Deuteronomy 25:5-10. These verses commanded that if a married man were to die childless, his brother, if not already married, was to take the deceased brother’s wife to himself, and that the first child born to this latter union was to be counted as the progeny of the deceased for purposes of inheritance. The living brother was left with the option of refusal, but was to endure contempt for so doing. As is commonly the case with constitutional law, the statute was sufficient to communicate general spirit and intent, but left details to be settled by lower legislatures and courts, whereupon it was resolved that if there were multiple brothers, then obligation befell them by order of age, and if no brothers, or no consenting brothers, then the obligation moved through lower layers of kinship.

While Ruth was gleaning, she caught the eye and admiration of Boaz, who told her to glean in no other field but his, and to avail herself of the food and drink provided for the Jewish harvesters, and that he would command the young men to show her respect. When the noon meal came, Boaz gave her a surplus of food that she might have some to carry home. Finally, he privately commanded his harvesters to deliberately drop “*handfuls of purpose*” (Ruth 2:16) to expedite her gleaning. Now all of this is remarkably reminiscent of the times that Jesus Christ fed bread to the multitudes by miraculously multiplying but a few loaves and then commanding His disciples to distribute. However, with either event, there was a spiritual meaning underlying the natural bread. After miraculously feeding the multitude, Jesus told them, “*Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead,*” (Jn 6:49). The same was true of the bread they ate that day, but it was symbolic of a spiritual bread whereof Christ said, “*This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die,*” (vs 50). The “*handfuls of purpose*” dropped by Boaz to Ruth suggest that, even before the Gentiles were united with the church, Christ was administering to them His spiritual bread, even though in portions for mere gleaners.

When Ruth returned home and Naomi saw the size of her gathering, she happily asked for an explanation of Ruth’s success. Her joy was then escalated upon hearing of Ruth’s encounter with Boaz and of the love he had shown her. Naomi informed Ruth that Boaz was a near kinsman. She exhorted Ruth to glean in no other field but his. Ruth faithfully followed this instruction and other counsel that Naomi would give her in forthcoming days. Naomi was privy to the prospects of matrimony even before Ruth, and gave Ruth instruction concerning the courtship and marriage customs of the Jews. The typology in this is powerful and touching. Naomi, being a type of the Old Covenant, was advantaged by the prescience of her prophets, who had foretold from antiquity of the marriage between Christ and His Gentile bride. Naomi then performed her highest and most honored role of being a *schoolmaster* to lead the young bride to Christ (Gal 3:24).

Naomi counseled Ruth to watch for a time when Boaz would sleep on the threshing floor where the harvested barley was being winnowed. She instructed Ruth to lie at his feet, then to obey his instructions when he awoke. Naomi’s instructions were evidently in accordance with the customs of the times, and were a way for a widow to plead her right of redemption to a near kinsman. Upon his awakening, Ruth said to Boaz, “*I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman,*” (Ruth 3:9). While all these actions were likely in keeping with the traditions of the times, they are nonetheless strange to us, and rare to the Bible itself. As elsewhere noted in this book, when the Bible becomes strange, this is strong signal that search should be made for deeper meaning. The Bible was written to amuse the foolish and to amaze the wise. Now at a time when the wicked world will be threshed upon the threshing floor of God, and the wheat gathered to His garner, but the chaff burned with unquenchable fire (Lk 3:17), Christ will spread His skirt over His bride, thus clothing her in His own righteousness that she might be spared.

However, Boaz explained to Ruth that there was a legal technicality that complicated his taking her to wife. Though Boaz was a near kinsman, there was another even nearer than himself, and that marriage was not possible unless this nearest kinsman forfeited his legal claim to Ruth. Boaz announced his intent to meet with this kinsman to address the matter.

Before Ruth returned to her home, Boaz told her not to go to her mother-in-law empty, so he wrapped six measures of barley in Ruth's veil for her to carry. I think it likely that the symbolic meaning of Naomi somewhat evolves at this point, and rather than being a symbol of the Old Covenant itself, she becomes a symbol of those who would be adherents to that covenant even after the emergence of the church. That is, she becomes a representation of the Jews who have served the Old Covenant from New Testament times until today. The sending of barley to Naomi represents Christ's care and providence to such Jewish people, but the manner in which the barley was sent communicates important details.

As to the six measures, most Christians take a negative view of the number six on account of a dubious interpretation they make of Revelation 13:18 where the number 666 was declared to be the number of the satanic beast. The triplicated six in this number is taken as proof that six is symbolic of evil. What they do not consider is that this number results in three sixes only in our modern numeric system – a system that did not become of extensive use until around a thousand years after Christ. A triplicated six would not have resulted in the numeric systems commonly used in ancient times. For example, in Roman numerals, the number 666 would be DCLXVI, which obviously does not entail three sixes. It is possible that the Holy Spirit intended a triplicated six in anticipation of our present numeric system, but this idea is in need of more proof than is at hand. A better theory is obtained by considering where six is relative to seven. All agree that seven is used in scripture to denote completeness or perfection. Six would therefore suggest imperfection but with perfection in prospect. Accordingly, eight would suggest that one regime has been completed (in reaching seven) and another has just begun. Hence, eight is a number denoting new beginnings.

Numerous examples of these applications can be found in the Bible: Man was created on the sixth day of creation, and while he was then good, he was susceptible to death, but had a secured immortality in prospect. God ordained a week that had six days of labor, but in anticipation of a day of rest. There were six cities of refuge, and while they offered imperfect security, they were in anticipation of a seventh city, or the heavenly Jerusalem, where safety will be complete. Now to eight: Eight souls were on the ark, and from these the new world after the flood would be populated. Jewish boys were circumcised on the eighth day, because if the boy happened to be the promised Messiah, then an old era would then be ended and a new one begun.

Six measures of barley to Naomi would then suggest that she was in a state of imperfection but with perfection in prospect. Paul said of the Jews, "*For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,*" (Rom 10:2). In another place he said, "*For the law*

made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God' (Heb 7:19), but of Christians he said:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. – 1Cor 2:6-7

By this last statement, he did not mean that Christians are flawless; rather, he meant that the Christian system could clearly see the plan of God to its ultimate purpose and end. Judaism cannot do this; hence, *"blindness in part is happened to Israel"* (Rom 11:25), but true Israel has perfection in prospect because *"all Israel shall be saved,"* (Rom 11:26).

These six measures of barley were delivered to Naomi in a veil. The likely idea here was that Christ's care and providence for the Jews would be hidden from them and possibly from Gentiles too. Accordingly, the last question asked of Jesus before He ascended out of this world was, *"...wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"* (Acts 1:6). His answer was, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power,"* (Acts 1:7). Hence, God's purpose for the Jewish people is hidden in a veil, or at least with respect to the timing of it. Paul dedicated three chapters discussing God's plan for Israel in Romans 9-11, but concluded this profound narrative with: *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* (Rom 11:33). God's plan for Israel is incomprehensively complex, and His care for them has been obscured by their many persecutions and trials. Indeed, His care and plan are so well hidden that even Gentile Christians have hatched up foolish eschatological theories wherein the Jews have no real significance.

With regard to this veil, it is also to be considered that Paul described the Jewish people themselves as being blinded by a veil in:

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. – 2Cor 3:12-16

Ruth's veil was likely a large outer garment that covered more than the face, but such garments could in fact be designed to cover the face, as was the case with Moses. Obviously, Ruth was unveiled (or with "open face") at that moment, which is how Paul described the church:

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. – 2Cor 3:18

Boaz met with the near kinsman as promised, and at first it appeared the kinsman would not forfeit his legal claim to the inheritance at issue, but when he heard that it would become incumbent upon him to marry Ruth, he abstained, complaining that such a marriage would mar his inheritance. The symbolism here is clear to any open mind: The near kinsman was in fact *too near* of kin. Naomi was a symbol of the Old Covenant and her near kinsman was a symbol of the moral law that was a part of that covenant. The moral law did not want Ruth because she would be a blemish on the perfect righteousness it demanded. Ruth was a Moabite, conceived in sin and shame. Even so, the elect of God were born in the sin of Adam, and therefore rejected by the law. So the near kinsman forfeited His claim to Ruth, and sold it to Boaz, who redeemed her to be His wife, even as Christ redeemed His church after she had been rejected by the law. Boaz described his own actions with the amazingly prescient words:

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. – Ruth 4:10

Accordingly, there are millions who lie in graves, having returned to the dust, but though in this ignominious state, they have a heavenly inheritance, being joint heirs with Christ Himself (Rom 8:16-17), who will raise their dead bodies to possess their inheritance.

There were ten witnesses to the transaction wherein Boaz redeemed the Gentile Ruth. It is likely no coincidence that, when the book of Acts documented the gospel being taught to the Gentiles, ten Jews were named as being their teachers. These were: Peter, John, Philip, Paul, Silas, Barnabas, John Mark, Luke, Apollos and Timotheus.

Finally, it is to be considered that this book has context in the era of the Judges and therefore in the ancient past. The book is so old that even the Old Covenant was new as of the time, yet the book foretold of how that covenant would be displaced by a new and living way. The book of Ruth was surely inspired by one who declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done (Isa 46:10).

David

David was the greatest king Israel ever had when measuring by criteria that are important to God. God also promised that He would raise the Messiah from David's descendants, and that because of this, the throne would forever remain in David's house (2Sam 7:12-16, Isa 11:1, Jer 23:5-6). David was perhaps more of a prophet of Christ than a type of Christ; notwithstanding, the parallels are sufficient to prove a deliberate allegorical message. The life of David foreshadowed the life of Christ in that:

- 1) David was in a sense the first legitimate king over Israel. Jacob had prophesied that the Jewish kings would emerge from the tribe of Judah (Gn 49:10). However, Judah himself brought a curse on his own house by having an illegitimate child (Gn 38). The law specified that such a curse would remain unto the 10th generation (Dt 23:2). This curse remained on the house of Judah until the generation preceding David (Ruth 4:18-22). This is the likely reason why Saul, the first nominal king of Israel, was taken from another tribe (Benjamin). Accordingly, Jesus Christ is rightfully the first and everlasting King over His people, but He has been preceded by inferiors because of the curse of sin on mankind.
- 2) Hence, both David and Jesus Christ were kings by divine ordination.
- 3) Both were born at Bethlehem (1Sam 16:1).
- 4) Both were portrayed as shepherds (1Sam 17:15, Jn 10:1-18).
- 5) God made an everlasting covenant with both (2Sam 23:1-5, Jn 6:37-40, 17:1-2).
- 6) The Spirit of the Lord was continuously upon both (1Sam 16:13). David was the first divinely inspired king of Israel. Jesus is the last.
- 7) Both were accompanied and corroborated by great prophets. These were Samuel in the case of David and John the Baptist in the case of Jesus Christ.
- 8) Both these prophets were of the tribe of Levi.
- 9) Both these prophets were born of barren women.
- 10) Neither prophet was a notable worker of miracles; notwithstanding, both were revered and feared (1Sam 12:18, 16:4, Mk 11:29-33).
- 11) When choosing David as king, God warned that His criteria would not include outward appearance but that He would look upon the heart (1Sam 16:7). The same was true of Christ (Isa 53:2 & 12). While scriptures describe David as a handsome man, he was unimpressive in appearance when anointed as king by Samuel and also in his battle with Goliath. This was

because he was a mere youth. He is commonly estimated to have been 10-15 years of age when anointed and 15-19 years old in the battle.

12) Though rightfully king, David commanded obedience to Saul, the inferior and rejected king. Accordingly, Christ commands obedience to worldly authorities (Mt 17:25-27, 23:1-3).

13) The inferior king had a schizophrenic relationship with David, sometimes knowing him and at other times being strangely unfamiliar with him, and sometimes praising him while at other times seeking to destroy him. Such has been the relationship of the kings of the earth to Jesus Christ ever since He was born.

14) However, only David could give the schizophrenic king soundness of mind (1Sam 16:14-23). The same is true of kings under Christ. *“The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will,”* (Prov 21:1).

15) Though Israel consisted of the people of God, and though the name “Israel” meant a prince, yet they were being humiliated by the taunts of a wicked giant named Goliath. Accordingly, man was created in the image of God, and therefore ranks supreme among all creatures of God, yet he is humiliated by a giant named Satan.

16) When David came to the army of Israel, he found them all fearing and repeatedly fleeing from Goliath. This was technically in violation of the law because it commanded that all the fearful were to return to their homes before the battle ever commenced (Dt 20:1-9). Hence, they were all in violation of the law even as Jesus found all men to be in violation of the same.

17) The reward for defeating Goliath was great riches, to be married to the king’s daughter and the liberation of all his kin (1Sam 17:25). Because Christ defeated Satan, He has been made heir of all things, has been given the church as a bride and all His people have been set free.

18) When David approached Saul for permission to confront Goliath, his concern was for the cause of God and Israel (1Sam 17:26) and the faith of the soldiers (1Sam 17:32). Even so, Christ died on the cross to serve the cause of God and to secure the faith of His elect family (Jn 12:32).

19) When David confronted Goliath, the terms of the fight were that all Israel would win if David won, and all Israel would lose if he lost (1Sam 17:8-10). Christ confronted Satan upon exactly the same terms.

20) In preparing to confront Goliath, David refused a sword (1Sam 17:38-39) and chose rather the power of God. Christ also refused a sword in Gethsemane on the same account (Mt 26:52).

21) In this battle with the giant, David was disdained and reviled by both friend and foe – the same as with Jesus Christ.

22) David chose five stones for destroying Goliath but used only one. One theory about these much-debated stones is that Goliath seems to have had four brothers, all of whom were later

destroyed under David's command (2Sam 21:15-22). The four stones held in reserve are therefore interpreted as being prophetic of this fact. This theory is likely as good as any. However, the scene was remarkably similar to what happened in Nebuchadnezzar's dream where he saw a colossal image representing world history (Dn 2). This image had five layers: a head of gold, arms of silver, trunk of brass, legs of iron and feet of iron mingled with clay. The entire image was brought down by a single stone, and there is no doubt this stone was symbolic of Christ. Nebuchadnezzar's image represented a sequence of kingdoms that would arise in the world, but it also represented the final world kingdom, which will be a giant formed by Satan by reviving and combining the kingdoms that preceded it. This is why the entire image was destroyed at once by a single stone, which will be done at the second coming of Christ.

23) David was beloved of the common people because, though he was a champion, his deportment was that of a common man (1Sam 18:14-16). Christ has been loved by millions on the same account.

24) Though David had been his comforter, Saul curiously did not recognize David when he triumphed over Goliath. Even so, the Jews did not recognize Christ when he triumphed over Satan at Calvary.

25) Saul became envious of David after his victory. Accordingly, the Jews were repeatedly described as being envious of Christ and Christianity (Mt 27:17-18, Jn 11:48, Acts 13:45, 17:5).

26) Saul repeatedly attempted to ensnare David even as the Jews attempted to ensnare Christ (Mt 22:15-46).

27) However, David had a faithful ally among Saul's children in Jonathan, even as Christ had a faithful remnant in Israel.

28) On account of David's love for Jonathan, the poor and crippled son of Jonathan named Mephibosheth was sustained and blessed by David after Jonathan died. By such means, the house of Saul was preserved. Accordingly, Israel has been preserved on account of the faithful remnant, even though that remnant has been poor and weak. As Isaiah said, "*Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah,*" (Isa 1:9).

29) Because of Saul's persecutions, David took refuge among the Gentiles. Christ also turned to the Gentiles after being persecuted by His own people

30) While among the Gentiles, David appeared to be an enemy of Israel though in truth he was its friend. Jesus Christ also appears as an adversary to Israel though He will save it in the end.

We can add to all the above that "David" was actually used as an alternate name for Christ in the Old Testament (Ps 89:19-37, Isa 55:1-5, Jer 30:8-9, Ezek 34:23, 37:24, Hos 3:5). This shows beyond reasonable doubt that the above parallels were not coincidental.

Jonah

When critics accuse the Bible of being partly fictitious, they will almost surely point to the book of Jonah as instance of claim. They think it incredible that a man could emerge alive from a whale's belly after a stay of three days and nights. Such a feat is indeed impossible by known laws of nature, but exactly the same may be said of resurrection. Consistency therefore demands that if the story of Jonah is to be dismissed as fabulous, then the literal resurrection of Christ must be rejected also, and this would mean that little would be lost by casting the whole Bible aside. Sound reasoning dictates that a purported god that is bound to the laws of nature is truly no god at all. There could be no enduring benefit of studying or serving such a so-called god. The time would be better spent studying the laws of nature that dominate him. However, if there is a true Creator God, then He is obviously capable of forming life from dead elements, implying that He can resurrect also, and if capable of this, then it is no challenge for Him to bring life from the belly of a whale.

Indeed, the experience of Jonah in the whale's belly and the resurrection of Christ are connected ideas in scripture. Jesus Himself connected them. When replying to unbelieving Jews who demanded a sign from Him, He famously said:

An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. – Mt 12:39-41

These verses are sufficient to establish the typological significance of Jonah. They at least prove a parallel between his experience in the whale's belly and the resurrection of Christ. However, deeper inspection of the story divulges so many other parallels that the unbeliever is placed in a real predicament. Even could he prove the story to be fictitious, he would then be left with the problem that it would be fiction that only God could write.

While Jonah was a type of Christ at a certain point of the story, he was more generally a type of the Jews as they would be before, during and after His resurrection. Of course, Jesus was the most important Jew of all time, and He is the ultimate reason that the race exists, so the life of Jonah could not tell the story of the Jews without also telling the story of Jesus. Jonah was an evolving type that first represented the Jews prior to Jesus, then represented Jesus Himself, and finally represented the Jews as they would be after His resurrection. The story of Jonah foretells of how the Gentiles would be radically changed by this resurrection, but the Jews would be little affected, mostly because they would be blinded by their antipathy for Gentiles and the loathsome thought of being united with them in Christian fellowship.

The story of Jonah began with God commanding him to go preach repentance to the great Gentile city of Nineveh. This was an unusual and odious command to a Jew. While Jews sometimes testified of their God and religion to the Gentiles, it was usually under exigent circumstances. To do it without necessity was rare, and would remain rare until New Testament times when God would change history by sending a small number of Jews into the Gentile world to report the resurrection of Christ and its glorious implications. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because he hated its residents and wanted to see their destruction. He actually feared they would heed his preaching, repent and then be spared. Now it is a very rare thing for a preacher to fear that his hearers will believe him, but it happens that the decree against Jesus by the high court of the Jews expressed exactly this same concern:

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. – Jn 11:47-48

This statement suggests that the Jewish council had a fearful premonition that the Gentiles would have a strange honor for Jesus that they did not have for their corrupted Jewish religion. Acting on similar fear, Jonah went in another direction from what God commanded, heading for Tarshish (of modern Spain) instead. Jonah fled in hope that he could disqualify himself by his rebellion from the odious task that God had commanded him to do. The Bible curiously described him as seeking to depart from the presence of the Lord.

All this portended the state of the Jews before Christ. They had no zeal for the conversion of Gentiles to the Lord, or even loathed such a thought, and they themselves were continuously departing from Him except where He arrested them by His grace. This was notwithstanding the fact that God had called them to be a “*kingdom of priests*” to the nations of the world (Ex 19:5-6). While Gentiles were occasionally converted in the Old Testament era, it was not usually to the thanks of the Jews, but was done in spite of them, and was owing to spectacular workings of God’s power and grace. The Jews persisted in their evangelical aversion notwithstanding the fact they should have been encouraged by many harbingers of mass Gentile conversions to come. God placed Jewish prophets among nearly all of the great Gentile powers in the Old Testament, and most of these prophets were received with respect. This included Joseph to the Egyptians, Jonah to the Assyrians, Elisha to the Syrians, Daniel to the Babylonians, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah to the Persians, Jaddua to the Greeks (not recorded in the Bible) and then Jesus and His apostles to the Romans.

Jonah’s disdain for Gentiles was partly motivated by the fact that God had commanded the Jews be a distinct, segregated people. They were to view many Gentile ways with disapproval, particularly in matters of religion. However, the Jews carried these commandments to extremes that God did not intend. This is a vulnerability of commandments that call upon men to look upon others with disapproval. Such commandments are so easily kept that there is great incentive to exaggerate their importance and to misapply them in ways to justify carnal

contempt. This is exactly what the Jews did, and they conveniently discounted numerous other commandments requiring them to treat Gentiles with courtesy (e.g. Ex 22:21, 23:9, Lev 19:10, 33-34, 25:35-37, Num 15:14-16, 19:10, 35:15, Dt 1:16, 10:17-19, 14:29, 23:7, 24:17-18). These commandments could be so strong as to say: “*And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God,*” (Lev 19:33-34). Gentiles could even be legal participants with Jews in many of their religious rituals, including the supremely important Passover itself, though the latter was on condition of circumcision.

Jonah’s contempt for the Gentiles of Nineveh paralleled the attitude of Jews in the times of Christ. Their extreme thinking can be seen at several points in the New Testament. For example, they would not drink water that had been handled by a Samaritan (Jn 4:9). Many were obsessive hand-washers for fear of having made contact with morally defiled people (Mk 7:1-4). This happened before men had knowledge of bacteria and viruses, so their reasons for washing were not always reasonable. Also, certain Jews would not enter a Roman judgment hall for fear of defiling themselves, yet the same persons had no qualms about murdering an innocent man on the same day (Jn 18:28). Peter was called into question for even keeping company with a Gentile (Acts 10:28). This was notwithstanding the fact that the Gentile was a worshipper of the Jewish God. These prejudices were so strong in their culture that even the disciples of Jesus were adversely affected by them. This can be seen when they were disposed to reject a troubled Syrophenician woman who came to Jesus merely wanting help for her daughter (Mt 15:22-28). Now any reader of the law will have difficulty seeing how it called for such extreme ostracism, and even the Old Testament ridiculed it as being overbearing and hypocritical (Is 65:1-6).

The extent to which this prejudice blinded the Jews to the gospel was implied by Paul when he told the Galatians, “*And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased,*” (Gal 5:11). This insightful revelation claimed that if the gospel had capitulated to the Jews on this one point, thus preserving a crucial distinction of Jewish culture, then the Jews would not have been offended by it. Evidence of this can be seen in Acts 22 when an angry Jewish mob gave surprisingly patient attention to Paul as He told of Jesus and how He appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus; however, when Paul spoke of being sent to the Gentiles, the mob instantly erupted in rage (Acts 22:22).

Now while Jonah was en route to Tarshish, God caused an epic storm to overtake the ship and brought great peril to all its passengers. The Gentiles aboard were sensible of the fact they were the objects of divine wrath, but they despaired to know the God they had offended. On the other hand, Jonah was then fast asleep in the hull of the ship. His case was in all points the opposite of the Gentiles. He had knowledge of the one true God of heaven, but seemed oblivious to the storm. This great storm was a symbol of the wrath of God against all men for their sinfulness. Denial of such sinfulness, or complacency concerning its consequences, is not a good attitude. Jesus said, “*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,*” (Lk 5:32).

Jonah's sleepiness was symbolic of the spiritual state of the Jews in the times of Christ. Paul said they were asleep:

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. – Rom 11:7-8

Paul here quoted Isaiah (6:10), who prophesied of this slumbering state over 700 years before. Paul also said that the Jews "rested" in the law (Rom 2:17), whereas its actual intent was to awaken men to their sinfulness and to their need of mercy and grace in Christ (Rom 3:19). To rest in the law was as foolish as sleeping in a deadly storm. The shipmaster understandably awakened Jonah and rebuked him for his complacency. He commanded Jonah to do as all others in calling upon his God for mercy and deliverance.

The mariners struggled mightily to save themselves from the storm. They even cast all of their valuable cargo into the sea. However, all this was to no avail. Their failed actions represented the futility of salvation by human effort. The men aboard simply could not save themselves. They could only be saved by God, and this required that His wrath be appeased.

The mariners then decided to cast lots to determine the culprit causing divine wrath. These lots fell on Jonah. In the interrogation that ensued, Jonah explained that he was a Hebrew and that he was in flight from the supreme God of land and sea. This terrified the mariners even more because the heathen gods they worshipped were seldom conceived as being so powerful. These gods were in truth no more than devils. When Jonah was asked what must be done to appease his great God, the prophet replied that they must cast him into the raging sea. At this point, the prophet took an uncharacteristic turn. Though ordinarily a Gentile hater, he became so magnanimous that he was willing to be sacrificed for them. In this he was obviously enacting the role of the greatest of all Jews.

Upon hearing Jonah's radical remedy, the mariners only rowed with greater determination, not wanting the blood of Jonah on their hands. This reminds of the actions of Pontius Pilate, who vainly sought multiple measures to avoid the crucifixion Christ (Jn 18:31-19:16, Lk 23:13-24). Pilate first attempted to dismiss the case, leaving it to the judgment of the Jews. However, they were not content with this because they were seeking capital punishment and only Roman officials had authority to order it. Pilate then interrogated Jesus and found no fault in Him, but the mob was undeterred by his judgment. Pilate then offered them a robber and murderer named Barabbas in the stead of Jesus. Pilate also attempted to appease the Jews by having Jesus scourged. None of these measures succeeded. Finally, Pilate surrendered to their wishes by washing his hands in water, declaring himself innocent of Jesus' blood (Mt 27:24). Thus, as with the mariners of old, Pilate rowed and rowed, but all to no avail.

When the mariners perceived the futility of their actions, they concluded that the God of Jonah had already ruled in the matter that Jonah must be forfeited to the sea. As they capitulated by casting him overboard, their prayer was: “*We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee,*” (Jonah 1:14). Thus, as with Pilate, they attempted to rid themselves of the guilt of shedding innocent blood. The fate of Christ was also determined by God before His crucifiers ever acted. This was divulged by important scriptures after the fact, namely:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain... – Acts 2:23

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. – Acts 4:27-28

While the wicked crucifiers of Christ were left to act out their wicked wills, it was God who chose the setting and cast of the crucifixion scene, and He did it while knowing what their decisions and actions would be if left to their own devices.

Now when Jonah was cast into the sea, it ceased to rage, even as he predicted, and the Gentile mariners, upon beholding the miracle, were moved to sacrifice to the God of Jonah and to make vows unto Him. The tranquility of the sea represented the reconciliation of God toward His elect, both Jew and Gentile. The sea was calmed the moment Jonah was cast into the water. Accordingly, God became reconciled to His people the moment Jesus died on the cross (Rom 5:10, 2Cor 5:18-20, Eph 2:14-17, Col 2:13-15, Heb 10:14). The mariners responded to the tranquility of the sea with grateful sacrifices and vows, even as the elect are moved by a reconciled God to thanksgiving and faith. Faith, repentance, practical sanctification, etc. are all important to the scheme of eternal salvation, but in logical ordering, their place is subsequent to the reconciliation that was secured by the crucifixion.

The conversion of the mariners was also prophetic of things that would take place at the foot of the cross. The crucifixion of Jesus was administered by Roman soldiers. When Jesus died, a great earthquake occurred, and when certain of the crucifying Roman soldiers beheld this and other miracles, they were moved to say, “*Truly this was the Son of God,*” (Mt 27:54).

In both stories there was a remarkable irony at this point. Jonah’s whole purpose in boarding the ship was to prevent the conversion of Gentiles, yet his actions were overruled by God to produce exactly this effect. Accordingly, the Jewish high court had condemned Jesus for fear that the Romans would believe on Him (Jn 11:47-48), yet their actions eventually produced the very outcome they had purposed to prevent. The Bible tells many such stories, all of them designed to communicate the fact that men are not saved by the actions of other men; rather, they are saved in spite of such actions and altogether to the praise of a Gracious God.

However, the number of converted Gentiles aboard the ship would pale in comparison to the thousands of conversions that would take place in Nineveh in the next step of the story. This too was prophetic. The believing Roman soldiers at the foot of the cross were mere first-fruits of a harvest that would expand to include millions of Gentiles in every continent of the world. Both of these subsequent gatherings would happen after a resurrection – a literal one in the case of Christ and a symbolic one in the case of Jonah.

Jonah was famously swallowed by the whale and carried to the depths of the sea. Ironically, his initial intent had been to escape the presence of the Lord, but he was here reduced to a circumstance where his only hope was that the Lord's presence is inescapable. Jonah's helpless condition was a testament to the necessity of grace in salvation. Jonah could do no good works. He could not pay a tithe or offer a sacrifice. He could not even bow to an idol. He could not perform any of the works-based salvation plans that human religions have foolishly invented. These plans are patently paltry for the salvation of many, and are truly paltry for the salvation of any. For example, they are no help to a man who is on the precipice of death and drawing his final breaths. The only thing Jonah could do was call upon the Lord, yet the promise of God to all such petitioners is so strong that scriptures order that their prayer be made without any doubt, and as if the prayer were granted before even uttered (Rom 8:28-30, 10:13, Eph 1:3-12). So Jonah, in compliance with scriptural command, confidently prayed in the whale's belly, saying, *"...I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord,"* (Jonah 2:8-9).

The whale then vomited up Jonah after three days and nights, and we can be confident by the Lord's own words that this foreshadowed His resurrection (Mt 12:39-41). However, the prophet, having completed his enactment of Christ and His resurrection, resumed his primary role as a type of Israel in general. This can be seen in the fact that the monumental miracle he had just experienced had remarkably little effect on his errant thinking. He obediently redirected toward Nineveh, but only because he was compelled by divine providence to do so. His antipathy toward the Ninevites remained the same. His denial of the plain implications of the miracle foreshadowed the Jews after the resurrection. The overwhelming majority of them denied it, and even those who professed it commonly became corrupters of what it meant. In all this, they fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus when He said, *"...neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead,"* (Lk 16:31).

Jonah went to Nineveh as commanded, but distorted the word of God in what he preached to the Ninevites. He boldly told them they would be destroyed unconditionally in 40 days, whereas he should have told them they would be destroyed *unless* they repented. In truth, it would be Jerusalem, not some Gentile city, that would be destroyed 40 years after the resurrection of Christ. But the prophet chose to tell what he wanted to believe rather than what God actually said. Such false teaching has abounded not only among Jews but even among Christians. Jesus Himself taught that Christianity would eventually become a highly leavened religion and that all but a remnant of it would become apostate in the end (Mt 13:33, Lk 18:8). The intent in this is to

show that men are saved by Christ, not by Christianity. God saves without the help of men and oftentimes does it in spite of them. He did this in the case of Jonah and the rebellious Jews he represented. Both stumbled in opposing the conversion of Gentiles, but God used their stumbling to produce the opposite effect. As Paul said of the Jews, *“I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy,”* (Rom 11:11). Accordingly, God moved the hearts of the Ninevites to believe that His mercy and grace were greater than what Jonah implied. Acting on such hope, the city was mightily moved to repentance on a scale seldom, if ever, seen in Israel. Anyone familiar with New Testament history could not fail to see the correlation.

This mass repentance among the Ninevites only exacerbated the envy of the prophet. In this he became a sign of the recalcitrant Jews in the New Testament era who were blinded by an identical type of envy (Mt 27:17-18, Acts 13:45, 17:5). The repentance of the Ninevites was not a hopeful sign to a man who was desirous of their destruction. Being stiff of neck and hard of heart, he thought that God would surely repent from the error of His ways and capitulate to the prudence of the prophet. So Jonah exited the city and camped in a place where he could observe the destruction he desired. In vain did he wait there for a scenario to play out that was merely of his own machinations and no part of the plan of God. In vain did he disregard or deny the implications of his miraculous experience with the whale. Accordingly, the Jewish people he represented have waited in vain for 2000 years for a scenario that is a mere product of their imaginations and flatly contradicted by the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Further, while he waited, he was reduced to a troubled and miserable existence, even losing his desire to live, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Moses to the Jews: *“In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!”* (Dt 28:67).

Then, God gave Jonah a moment of reprieve by miraculously causing a gourd to grow up overnight to provide him shade. The prophet was exceedingly glad. He likely construed the gourd as being a sign that was favorable to his cause. It was indeed to serve as a sign, but not according to the prophet’s interpretation. His misinterpretation likely explains why Jesus refused signs to the Jews apart from His own resurrection. Such signs would have only been diverted or dismissed. When Jesus cast out devils, the Jews said He did it by Beelzebub (Mt 12:24). When He healed the blind man, they denied the miracle, suggesting it came only by some esoteric use of mud (Jn 9). When He fed thousands with only a few loaves and fishes, they said it was no more than what Moses had done with the manna (Jn 6).

However, the prophet was infuriated when, only one day later, the gourd was destroyed by a worm. In all this, the Lord had laid a trap for Jonah to expose his inconsistency. The prophet had readily seen the tragedy of a supernaturally generated gourd being destroyed by a common, natural worm, but he would have rejoiced to see the natural destruction of those Gentiles whose hearts had been miraculously changed by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit of God.

This brilliantly orchestrated prophecy concluded with the words:

Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle? – Jonah 4:10-11

This outstanding statement implies that God's eternal grace extends to multitudes of infants, who obviously can contribute nothing to aid Him in their salvation, yet scriptures say not a word about their salvation being by different causes or means than that of anyone else. Indeed, even the animals have received mercy through Jesus Christ in a temporal sense, because since His crucifixion, neither lamb nor goat nor bullock has been required to die at the altar.

The episode with the gourd and worm was perhaps prophetic of what would happen to the Jews about a century following Christ. Around 132AD, many of them were deceived into thinking that a man they called Bar Kokhba was their messiah, and they enthusiastically followed Bar Kokhba in a revolt against the Romans. This revolt had surprising success at first, even to the point of securing independence for much of Judea. However, the reprieve proved very short. The revolt was utterly crushed in 135AD when Hadrian retaliated by sending even more legions than had been done in 70AD with the siege of Jerusalem. By some estimates, two-thirds of the Jewish population in Judea was killed by Hadrian, and the remainder was dispersed all over the world. The whole affair was such a crushing disappointment to the Jews that many of them abandoned literal interpretation of messianic prophecies, and ironically, this happened while millions of Gentiles were joyously arriving at exactly the opposite conclusion.

However, the primary point with the gourd was that the prophet had done nothing to produce it, but he had endured a storm and been swallowed by a whale for the sake of the Ninevites, and his preaching to them, though done with wrong intent, had nonetheless been used by God to produce mass repentance among them. The prophet should have been exuberant with joy, but he persisted in bitterness and rebellion. To any thinking mind, this is a prophecy of the most profound and powerful sort. The Jewish people have endured a storm of judgments by a God who has demanded more of them than any other people. They have been repeatedly swallowed by the nations of the world. However, for all their labors, trials and persecutions, they have for their reward multiplied millions of Gentiles who have rejoiced in their divinely inspired writings and who have repented and turned to God on the same account. Indeed, God has overruled even the many errors of the Jews to produce a better and happier world. Yet the Jews will take little joy in this, but will consider followers of Christ as deluded degenerates, even as Jonah contemptuously viewed the Ninevites. What is the reason for this tragedy? Paul explained, "*For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed,*" (Rom 9:32-33).

Elisha

Shortly after the death of Solomon, the twelve tribes became divided into two nations. The northern nation, which consisted of 10 tribes, became known as “Israel” or “Samaria” or “Ephraim” in the Old Testament. The southern nation was known as “Judah,” and consisted mostly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Both nations greatly departed from God and His law, but this was especially true of the northern one, whose kings were consistently corrupt, and whose people were persistently imbibing in false gods and religions of one kind or another. This eventually led to their destruction and dispersal by the Assyrians, and they have remained dispersed ever since. Not long before this tragedy, God exposed their inexcusability by raising within their midst two of the most spectacular prophets in history. The first of these was the famous Elijah, who was then followed by his understudy Elisha.

Elisha has been viewed by both Jews and Christians as dwelling in the shadow of his predecessor Elijah. While it is true that Elisha was brought up under Elijah, scriptures will not support the idea that Elisha was in any sense inferior. Elisha was one of the most spectacular miracle-workers in the Old Testament, being challenged only by Moses in this respect. The extraordinary power of this prophet should alert to the possibility that the Holy Spirit would set him up as a type of Jesus Christ.

The first indication of this was in how Elisha was empowered by the Holy Spirit. Both he and Jesus received confirmation as being filled with the Holy Ghost at approximately the same location beyond Jordan River. In the case of Jesus, this was done after His baptism when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven upon Him in the resemblance of a dove – a fact so important that it was recorded in all four gospels (Mt 3:16, Mk 1:10, Lk 3:22, Jn 1:32). The Spirit that then descended on Jesus had and has power to both create and annihilate the Universe, but for the next 3.5 years it would manifest itself in dove-like form, doing miracles designed to help others in gentle, kind and beneficial acts. Now in the case of Elisha, the endowment of the Spirit was marked with the descending mantle of Elijah while he was being raptured up to heaven.

Jesus was preceded by a prophet who was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb (Lk 1:15 & 1:41), yet that babe became John the Baptist, who both promised and warned that he was to be followed by one who would have the Holy Spirit without measure (Jn 3:34, Mt 3:11). Accordingly, Elijah was so empowered by the Holy Ghost that scriptures make him a symbol of the prophets in general, yet Elisha was given a double portion of this same Spirit. As shown in a prior chapter, to double a thing commonly meant in scripture to make it immeasurably greater (Job 11:5-7, Isa 40:2, 61:7, Jer 17:18, Zech 9:12, Rev 18:6). Even so, the power of the Spirit possessed by Jesus was immeasurably greater than that of any other man.

This double portion of the Spirit had been boldly requested by Elisha near the end of Elijah’s time on earth. Elijah agreed on condition that Elisha would be with him when he was caught out of the world. As a consequence, Elisha followed Elijah wherever he went, refusing to leave him

even when permitted to do so. Accordingly, Christ always abides with His prophets. If this were not true, so that His prophets sometimes spoke in truth and sometimes spoke in error, then none of us could know when to heed them. Elisha could therefore receive his extraordinary request only if He imitated Christ in this important regard, upon which he was to become a type of Him in many other ways.

Shortly after being endued with the Spirit, a large group of children came to mock Elisha and to ridicule his claim that Elijah had been caught out of the world (2Ki 2:23-25). These children were likely from families that were corrupted by the idolatrous religions that had infested the land. In retribution for their mockery, two bears came from the woods and “*tare*” them in a vicious attack. While there is reason to believe these “*children*” were older than is suggested by the translation, the reader had best be cautious about softening the claims of the text. The severity of the retribution was in keeping with scriptural pattern. When the Jews of old disdained or desecrated types of Jesus Christ, even if done unwittingly, they were met with the severest consequences, such as when Moses twice smote a rock, or when the children of Israel disdained the manna, or when Nadab and Abihu mishandled the incense. The message of God in this was clear: There would be no forbearance in such matters because all forbearance of men is strictly on account of Jesus Christ. Man is the crown gem of God’s creation when he honors Christ, but when he dishonors Him, man becomes very expendable. People today would do well to heed the warning.

The harsh incident with the bears would not be indicative of what was to come. The ministry of Elisha was as beneficial as any found in the Old Testament. The prophet was an itinerant who everywhere did acts of kindness to both men and women, rich and poor, good and bad, Jew and Gentile. His miracles were of a practical and beneficial nature, and did things as small as recovering an axe head to as great as resurrecting life. In all these things, He was remarkably similar to Jesus Christ.

The nature of Elisha’s miracles also bore similarity to the mighty works of Christ. In particular, he transformed waters (2Ki 2:19-22), raised the dead (2Ki 4:34-35), multiplied food to the hungry (2Ki 4:42-44), cleansed a leper (2Ki 5), defied the laws of buoyancy (2Ki 6:6), restored sight to the blinded (2Ki 6:18-20), and read the minds of both friend and foe (2Ki 5:26 & 6:12). All such works were later done by Christ on a much greater scale.

The personality of Elisha also reminds of Jesus Christ. Elisha was bold and fearless and did not cower or cater to powerful men. He performed miracles with supreme confidence and authority. Notwithstanding the kindness of his acts, he was a man of a sharp tongue that would rebuke or correct even men of high rank. He was also a man of meager means and plain deportment. These were all famous characteristics of the Savior.

The final mention of Elisha in the Old Testament entailed one of the most unusual miracles of the Bible but one which comported with his role as a type of Christ. After the prophet was dead

and buried, the Jews were attempting to bury another man when they saw hostile Moabites approaching, so they hurriedly cast the body in the tomb of Elisha. Upon making contact with the prophet's bones, the man was made alive and stood on his feet. So the prophet's most spectacular miracle was after he had died, and such will be the case with Christ also when He resurrects the totality of the human race in the last day. Moreover, a great multitude of these will rise in glorified bodies because they had been touched by Jesus Christ through the workings of the Holy Spirit of God.

Samaria was conquered and dispersed by the Assyrians around a century after Elisha's death. The ten tribes that occupied that nation have never been reunited. This tragedy would not have happened had Elijah and Elisha been heard. All this prefigured things to come. Judah was later blessed with the ministries of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ, but because these men were rejected, Judah was dispersed about 40 years later by the Romans. The Jews remain scattered all over the world until this day. Both dispersals were arguably the severest judgments that God would ever bring against the sons of Jacob.

The great God of heaven declares the end from the beginning and from ancient time things that are not yet done (Isa 46:10). Even so, at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ, in His first recorded sermon, He declared how things would end with His short but spectacular career on earth. He said, "*No prophet is accepted in his own country,*" (Lk 4:24). By this He prophesied that He would be rejected by His own Jewish people. He prophesied that they would defy Him with the proverb, "*Physician, heal thyself,*" which is exactly what they did in their taunts of Him while He was hanging on the cross (Mt 27:42-43, 47-49, Lk 23:35). He then drew an analogy between His own circumstances and those of Elijah and Elisha. These two men, though rejected by many of their own people, were moved by the sovereign choice of God to do mighty works among the Gentiles. Such has been the case with John the Baptist and Jesus Christ, and will remain so until "*the fullness of the Gentiles be come in,*" (Rom 11:25).

Naaman the Syrian

The importance of Naaman the Syrian may be inferred from the fact that he was a primary character in the first recorded sermon of Jesus Christ. In teaching the principles of divine sovereignty and election, Christ then said, “*And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian,*” (Lk 4:27). By “*Eliseus*” He meant who we more commonly call “Elisha,” who had lived around 900 years before. These words were spoken to a Jewish congregation in a synagogue. The intent was to warn them of the power and prerogative of God to save people like Gentiles while bypassing the Jews. This so angered the congregation that they attempted to cast Jesus off a cliff. While their reaction was extreme, it is true that all men struggle with the sovereignty of God, though some vainly struggle to deny it whereas others only struggle to be reconciled to it.

There is an uninspired proverb that says, “A hint to the wise is sufficient.” This proverb is very applicable to the Bible. Where Christ and His apostles confirm the presence of allegorical parallelisms in Old Testament stories, deeper investigation will commonly divulge even more parallels than were noted. If God leaves a gold nugget on top of the ground to be easily seen, He is very apt to bury another fistful beneath it to reward the diligent digger. Such is true of Naaman the Syrian. His story is an allegorical prophecy of God’s purpose to save Gentiles and bring their salvation to light through the gospel (2Tim 1:9-10).

Elisha was a strong type of Christ in several ways. Elisha especially foreshadowed His miracle-working power. Elisha’s miracles included feats such as multiplying food, defying the laws of buoyancy, blinding, giving sight again, and raising the dead. These were all things Christ did on a greater scale. Elisha was also like Christ in that he was preceded by a prophet named Elijah whose power seemed impossible to surpass, yet Elisha did twice as many miracles. This doubling over Elijah’s power (2Ki 2:9) extended even to resurrections. God used Elijah to perform the first resurrection in the Bible, but Elisha was used to perform two. In similar manner, Jesus was preceded by a prophet named John the Baptist, who was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother’s womb (Lk 1:15), yet this seemingly unsurpassable mark was exceeded by Christ, who was given the Holy Ghost without measure (Jn 3:34). Elisha also had a personality that resembled that of Christ perhaps more than any other man in the Bible. Like Christ, Elisha was absolutely confident, fearless, and sharp-tongued.

Syria, an adjoining nation to the north, was the primary adversary of Israel in those days, and the Syrians had the upper hand in many of their conflicts. Part of their success was owing to the skill and valor of Naaman, their great commander. Naaman appears to have been rich, powerful and famous, and also prized by the Syrian king, but Naaman had a serious affliction in that he was a leper. Leprosy is used elsewhere in the Bible as a type of sin, and such is the case in the story here. Leprosy was then incurable, and while modern medicine does better, leprosy can still leave its victims with monstrous scarring and physical debilitation. Thus, notwithstanding his greatness, Naaman had a problem that only God could solve. Such is the case with all men.

They are all afflicted with sin and condemnation, and no amount of wealth, fame or power can remedy them. This was especially apparent in the great but wicked Gentile nations in whose shadow the Israelites then dwelled.

In their various incursions, the Syrians took slaves of the Israelites. One of these was a young girl who became a servant in Naaman's house. This girl, in speaking to Naaman's wife, told of a great prophet in her homeland named Elisha, and expressed her confidence that he could heal Naaman of his leprosy. These words were relayed to the Syrian king, who promptly sent the king of Israel 10 talents of silver, 6000 pieces of gold and 10 changes of raiment. This enormous sum was accompanied by a letter explaining that it was payment for the healing of Naaman. But the Israelite king, rather than rejoicing in this horde of wealth, was deeply vexed, even rending his own garment, because he assumed the Syrian king was trying to provoke a fight with him. He reasoned there could be no other motive, because the Syrian king could not be so absurd as to suppose that any man could cure leprosy.

This part of the story communicated a principle stated by Jesus when He said, "*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes,*" (Mt 11:25). The young servant girl of Naaman had complete confidence in her Christ-like prophet, and so did the Syrian king, even though he too was a mere child insofar as his spiritual understanding was concerned, yet the king of Israel, notwithstanding all his religious advantage (Rom 3:1-2), was a complete skeptic. This skepticism caused him to be vexed when he had reason to rejoice. Such was also the case of the unbelieving Jews when they heard of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When Elisha learned of what the Syrian king had done, and how the Israelite king had reacted, he admonished the latter for his skepticism. He commanded that Naaman be sent to him, and confidently declared that Naaman would surely learn from the experience that there was a prophet in Israel. The same was true of Jesus Christ. Though the Jews view Him with derision and doubt, millions of Gentiles honor Him as being the greatest Jewish prophet of all time.

Naaman then went to the location of Elisha as instructed, but the Syrian came proudly in his chariot, expecting to be honored by the prophet, and also expecting an elaborate and impressive ritual for his cleansing. He was rudely surprised when the prophet did not even exit his dwelling to greet him. Instead, the prophet sent out a messenger telling Naaman to simply go to Jordan River and dip himself seven times. Naaman was angered by this treatment, and he purposed to disregard the prophet and leave. However, Naaman's servants implored him to do as instructed, pleading that it was inconsistent for him to be willing to do a complex and arduous ritual, but unwilling to follow the easy instructions he had been given. This was another case where the poor and lowly proved wiser than the rich and mighty. Naaman then submitted to his servants; he went to the river and dipped himself as told, and on the seventh dip, he was completely healed, coming away with the flesh of a child.

Each of these dips in Jordan was essentially a baptism serving to symbolize death, burial and resurrection. Now there were seven resurrections in the Bible up through the resurrection of

Jesus Christ. The first was raised by Elijah (1Ki 17:17-22). The next two were by Elisha (2Ki 4:32-35, 13:21). Moving to the New Testament, Jesus is recorded as raising three, starting with the widow's son (Lk 7:11-15), then Jairus' daughter (Lk 8:52-55), and then the famous case of Lazarus (Jn 11:43-44). This would make the resurrection of Jesus Himself the seventh, but with this momentous event, all the elect family of God were pronounced clean, even as Naaman was cleansed on the seventh dip. It also seems significant that the book of Acts describes seven baptism events involving Gentiles. These were of the Samaritans (ch 8), the Ethiopian eunuch (ch 8), the house of Cornelius (ch 10), then Lydia (ch 11), the Philippian jailor (ch 16), the Corinthians (ch 18) and the Ephesians (ch 19).

The simple and unimpressive instructions given to Naaman correspond to the simple terms upon which eternal salvation is assured to a man. Jesus said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*" (Mk 16:16). These terms are so simple and easy in comparison to the infinite promise that no reasonable person would believe them unless the terms had come from the mouth of God Himself. Essentially, the assurance is conditioned on believing what is impossible to disbelieve and confirming this belief simply by being dipped in water – a thing men routinely do to themselves anyway. The simplicity of these terms are intended to impress upon all men the fact that salvation is of free grace – a fact that the remainder of this story will emphatically show.

When Naaman saw that he was cleansed on the seventh dip, he was humbled and filled with gratitude. He went back to Elisha, and this time the prophet went out to greet him. Naaman joyously exclaimed that there was no god in all the earth apart from the God of Israel. This change in Naaman's attitude produced a curious contradiction. When he was defiled in leprosy, he was presumptuous and proud, but when he was cleansed, he became grateful and humble. These are the exact effects of eternal salvation on the hearts of those who are given it.

Naaman urged Elisha to take payment of him but the prophet utterly refused. It was not an acceptable thing to do because payment had already been arranged and made by another, namely the Syrian king, who had given an enormous amount for Naaman's cleansing. This had been done at the outset of the story. Accordingly, payment for salvation of the elect was made by God in giving His precious Son, and this had been arranged from before the foundation of the world.

Naaman then had two requests of Elisha. The first was that he could take some dirt home with him. He wanted as much as two mules could carry. This request was granted. Hence, this Gentile was given a portion of the Promised Land, even as multitudes of Gentiles will be given a place in heaven by the God of Israel. His next request was that he be forgiven whenever bowing in the house of a false god named Rimmon. Naaman explained that his master back in Syria was a worshipper of Rimmon, and that his master would be commanding Naaman to accompany him into the house of this false god. Naaman likely served as a bodyguard. Elisha replied to this by telling Naaman to go in peace. The strong suggestion here is that God's saving grace is applied even in the heathen world, but these saved heathen are given radically changed hearts that will possess no real faith in the religious beliefs and practices of their native communities.

As Naaman was riding away, a servant of Elisha named Gehazi privately objected that the prophet had refused reward. He secretly resolved to pursue Naaman and take payment of him while out of Elisha's sight. When he overtook the Syrian, Gehazi lied to him, saying that Elisha had changed his mind, and now wanted a talent of silver and two changes of garment. Naaman, still being filled with joy and gratitude, insisted that Gehazi take two talents of silver, or twice what he had asked. This shows that even though the elect are freely saved by the grace of God, their salvation gives them thankful and generous hearts that seek opportunity to do good things.

However, Elisha, through his prophetic power, knew of Gehazi's mischief. He sharply rebuked Gehazi upon his return, telling him that the leprosy of Naaman would be transferred to him and to his seed, and that they would endure it forever. Gehazi instantly became a leper. All this was remarkably prophetic of things to come. After the ascension of Christ, the apostles went among the Gentiles teaching salvation by free grace through Christ alone; however, there afterward arose a sect of Jews who claimed to be Christian but insisted that salvation was not altogether free, but was conditioned on circumcision and other obedience to the law. These corrupted Jews pursued the newly converted Gentiles and attempted to persuade them to their cause. The apostles foresaw these corruptions (Acts 20:29, 2Pet 2:1), like Elisha miraculously knew of Gehazi, and the apostles vigorously opposed the corrupters, even pronouncing curses upon those who advocated their false doctrine (Acts 15, Gal 1:8-9, 2Pet 2:1-3, 12-15, Jude 3-4).

The transferral of leprosy from Naaman to Gehazi also foretold a great enigma noted by Paul:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. – Rom 9:30-31

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. – Rom 10:19-21

The harsh treatment of Gehazi was in keeping with Biblical pattern. Where God orchestrated events so as to symbolically foretell of Christ and His New Testament redemption, any dishonor to symbols of Christ or corruptions to the intended message were met with the severest consequences. Such was the case with Nadab and Abihu when mishandling the incense, and of Moses when mishandling the rock, and of the children of Israel when disdaining the manna, and of Uzzah when mishandling the Ark of the Covenant. Salvation is by grace alone in Christ alone, and those who dissent, disdain, dishonor or disregard are given direst of warning.

Esther

The story of Esther is about a time when the Jewish people were on the brink of annihilation by an act of genocide, but they were saved by means of a beautiful Jewish woman named Esther. The story is rightfully a favorite among women. It also serves as the basis for a joyous holiday of the Jews known as Purim. This holiday would be far more joyous to them if they could understand the complex but beautiful allegorical message that underlies the story. It is a story about Christ, at both His first and second coming, and about His redeemed church.

The chronological placement of Esther was near the end of the Old Testament era, and nearly 1500 years after Abraham, yet the story was clearly orchestrated by the same Invisible Hand that had been ordering events from the beginning to communicate the same prophecy. This protracted period of time should be sufficient to show that the Almighty God is timeless, and that a millennium to Him is nothing, even no more than a day is to us (Ps 90:4, 2Pet 3:8), and that He remains committed to His purpose and plan to exalt Christ.

The typology of Esther is complex, and even many Christians are confused by it, but I think the following points will satisfy reasonable minds:

1) Most of the complexity centers upon the symbolic representations of Christ. This is because Jesus Christ is Himself complex, being both God and man, and being in some ways distinct from God the Father but being one with Him in others (Isa 9:6, Jn 10:30, 14:9). Better sense can be made of the symbolism in Esther by understanding it as evolving, and in the same manner as our understanding of God evolves as we journey through the Bible. God is initially seen as the great Creator of the Universe, and in this form He is a Spirit, and our initial tendency is to identify Him with what we know as God the Father, but the more we learn, the more commonly do we perceive Him in His person as God the Son, whom we also conceive as having human form. Accordingly, in the book of Esther, the role of God the Father and God the Son will initially be mixed in the great king of Persia, but as the story evolves, the role of God the Son will be progressively transferred to Mordecai the Jew. Accordingly, the book of Esther begins by talking of the greatness of the Persian king but will end by talking of the greatness of Mordecai.

While the Son of God assumed the form of a common man in Jesus Christ, yet in this form, He will become greater and greater in our perception. Hence, it was said of Mordecai late in the book of Esther: “...*his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater,*” (Est 9:4). Nebuchadnezzar also saw Christ initially as a crude insignificant stone, but the same stone destroyed a glorious image made of valuable metals and then grew until it filled the whole earth. Accordingly, Isaiah said, “*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end....*” (Isa 9:7).

So the complexity of the symbolism is a meaningful symbol within itself inasmuch as it communicates the unfathomable complexities of Jesus Christ. *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...”* (1Tim 3:16).

2) The Persian king ordered a festive period of 180 days during which the glory of his kingdom was put on display. This culminated in a seven-day feast at the capital city of Shushan. These numbers will be familiar to those who are knowledgeable of gospel chronology. John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus, and both are thought to have commenced their ministries at 30 years of age. Hence, for approximately 180 days before the ministry of Jesus, John announced to Israel the imminent manifestation of the Messiah. John was the last of the Old Testament prophets, and according to Jesus Christ Himself, there had never been a greater man in the history of the world (Mt 11:11). Notwithstanding his unsurpassed greatness, John proclaimed that his successor would be far greater than himself (Mt 3:11), clearly implying that Israel was about to experience the greatest man in its illustrious history.

This 180-day span was followed by the most extraordinary seven-year period in the history of the world. The first 3.5 of these years were under the ministry of Jesus Himself and ended with His resurrection. This was followed by another period of approximately 3.5 years wherein the apostles labored with the Jewish people, proclaiming the resurrection and being corroborated by great signs and wonders. This 3.5-year period ended around the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7, after which the gospel was taken primarily to the Gentiles, where it has remained ever since. These two divisions in God’s outreach to Israel were prophesied by Jesus in His famous parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-14), wherein He also prophesied of the gospel being twice rejected by the Jews before taken to the Gentiles.

3) In the case of the seven-day feast prepared by the Persian king, much wine was provided, but none were required to drink in violation of the law. Accordingly, the feast of Jesus Christ was a joyous one, and even involved fine wine that He had made from water, and then other wine that He used in the first communion, but all festivities were in full compliance with the law of God.

4) Vashti, the wife of the Persian king, did not participate in this feast, but was off throwing a party of her own with other women. When she was summoned to appear before the king on the seventh day to participate in the festivities, she refused to come, thereby sealing her demotion and divorce. Accordingly, God waited for a period of seven years for the Jews to join the feast of Jesus Christ. During these seven years, the Jews opted to celebrate another party of their own making, and significantly patterned after ideas they had acquired from other women, that is, the false religions of the world. Vashti was therefore symbolic of Christ-rejecting Judaism.

5) So the Persian king put Vashti away and made search for another wife. This search led to the discovery of Esther, a beautiful Jewish girl, but an orphan who had not been raised by her natural parents, but was adopted and brought up in obedience to Mordecai, an honorable Jew whose greatness would become increasingly manifest as the story unfolds. The replacement of the old

rebellious wife with a new obedient one was foretold in both beautiful and astounding detail by Isaiah in his 54th chapter. Esther was therefore a symbol of the New Testament church, particularly as it existed in earliest form.

6) Esther was raised and taught by Mordecai while he was yet in a state of humility and before it was evident that providence was setting him up as a glorious type of the Messiah. Accordingly, Jesus taught His church while His true greatness was not yet manifest, and indeed, when His circumstances were very humble. The teachings of Jesus while in this humble state are still being communicated to His church today through the Bible.

7) Esther was not taught by natural parents, even as the church of Christ is not taught merely by nature or the world. It has a super-natural level of instruction (Mt 16:17, Jn 6:45).

8) Esther was adopted even as the elect of God are described by scripture as being adopted by Him (Rom 8:15, Gal 4:4-6).

9) Esther was chosen by the great king of Persia very early in the story. Even so, the elect were chosen by God before the foundation of the world.

10) Esther would remain obedient to Mordecai throughout the story. The true church of Jesus Christ remains obedient to Him and follows the pattern He set while in humble, human form.

11) Mordecai had instructed Esther that she was not to divulge the fact she was a Jew. Accordingly, the church is of Jewish origin but is not to identify itself as Jewish (Gal 3:28).

12) There was a man named Haman whom the Persian king promoted to greatness, even making him a prince over all princes. However, this man would subsequently prove to have an enormous ego and was willing to commit the most heartless acts of wickedness to promote himself. Accordingly, God created Satan with great glory and power, and made him “*the anointed cherub that covereth*” (Ezek 28:14), and even God referred to him as “*the prince of this world,*” (Jn 14:30).

13) The Persian king commanded that Haman be respected. God also commands that Satan not be taken lightly (Jude 8-9). Underestimation of Satan is disrespect for Him who destroyed Satan.

14) But as the story progressed, it became apparent that Haman’s egocentricity was such that he wanted honor that would ordinarily be given a king. Even so, Satan wants worship and wants to be honored like the Most High (Isa 14:12-15, Ezek 28:12-17, Dn 11:36-37, 2Thes 2:3-4).

15) Mordecai refused to show Haman the honor he demanded, and this infuriated Haman and became an obsessive grievance to him. Even so, Satan tempted Christ at the beginning of His ministry and promised Him great power and riches if Christ would only worship him (Lk 4:5-7).

16) Being thus infuriated, and knowing that Mordecai was a Jew, Haman devised a plot to have all Jews in the Persian empire murdered. Such ruthlessness boggles any healthy mind and seems

too outlandish to be real; notwithstanding, many Gentiles over history have had a seemingly inexplicable hatred for the Jews and have sought their extermination or harm. This part of the story divulges the true underlying cause for this: The same Satan who passionately hates Jesus Christ also hates the Jews because Jesus was of the Jews. Satan therefore moves others to the same insane hatred in hopes of seducing them to carry out his vengeance.

Haman was an Amalekite and a descendent of a king called Agag. Many centuries prior, Saul had been commanded to utterly destroy Agag and his people (1Sam 15), but Saul disobeyed, and it was on this account that he was deposed. This demonstrated the foreknowledge of God, because the descendants of these same wicked people would be plotting the total destruction of the Jews in the times of Esther.

17) Haman and certain of his collaborators cast lots to determine the day upon which all Jews would be exterminated. These lots were similar to our modern dice. This action would become the signature event of the whole affair and motivate the name later given to it. Now to modern men, the lot is a symbol of chance or randomness, but in the Bible it was a powerful symbol of divine sovereignty and choice. Even heathens like Haman viewed it as such, though they vainly imagined it to be controlled by their own deities. To the contrary, Solomon said, *“The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord,”* (Prov 16:33).

If this seems to assert more providence than scientific observation will allow, then the reader should consider two things: First, the one who casts the lot may perceive himself as acting autonomously, or of his own freewill and ability, whereas this may in fact be illusory. The Bible says, *“A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps,”* (Prov 16:9). Second, even if the Lord were to leave the casting of the lot to the laws of nature, these would still be laws that He had ordained. Of course, when the outcome of the lot is seen, one will be left to wonder which of these two scenarios pertained, and such also is typically the case with the events of life.

The lot appears frequently in scripture as a daunting symbol of divine sovereignty and choice. It is daunting because men view it with suspense as it tumbles, even as they wait with suspense for divine verdicts in crucial matters wherein they have prayed, such as the outcomes of medical exams or job applications or court rulings. When the mariners cast lots in the book of Jonah, they were not committing the circumstance to chance but were trying to ascertain the minds of their gods. Much of the Promised Land was divided by lot. Israel itself was distinguished from the nations of the world by lot, so that Jacob was called the lot of the Lord's inheritance (Dt 32:9). The meaning here was that they were not chosen on account of anything seen or foreseen in them, but strictly out of divine sovereignty. On the supremely sacred Day of Atonement, God ordered that choice was to be made between two goats by lot. The chosen goat would be for the Lord but the other for eternal banishment. This was a strong symbol of divine election, which has no basis in human choice, but is rooted in the incomprehensible complexities of divine sovereignty. The lot also occurs in the New Testament. Matthias was chosen as an apostle by

lot, and the clear intent was to commit the matter to the Lord (Acts 1:23-26). Peter addressed the elect of God saying they had “*obtained like precious faith with us*,” but his word for “*obtained*” meant to obtain by lot, so that even our faith is a sovereignly bestowed gift of God (2Pet 1:1).

It was an act of supreme impudence and mockery for Haman to have the destruction of the Lord’s people to be dictated by lot, because it was by lot that they had been divinely elected and set apart for blessing. As a consequence, Haman’s doom was sealed as soon as the lot left his hand. The lot dictated the 13th day of the 12th month for the Jew’s annihilation, but this would instead be the day in which their enemies would be destroyed.

According to the commandment of scripture, the Jews celebrate a holiday in remembrance of this story that they call “Purim” which derives from “pur” referring to a lot (Est 3:7 & 9:26).

Lots were also cast when Jesus was crucified to determine who would possess the robe in which He was mocked. Obviously, only a perverted or ignorant mind would presume to adorn itself in such a shameful garment. However, in Haman’s perverted mind, these heinous executions would clothe him in the honor he thought he deserved, whereas in fact he was only clothing himself in shame and condemnation.

18) Haman offered the king of Persia a great sum of silver to secure authorization to carry out his plot. Mordecai and the Jews were therefore sold for silver even as Jesus was sold for silver by Judas Iscariot.

19) However, the Persian king granted authorization without taking the silver. So in the cases of both Mordecai and Christ, the promised silver was never finally exchanged. Judas Iscariot returned the silver he was paid by casting it on the temple floor and leaving it.

20) The king and Haman carelessly drank wine together after consent was given, but Jews all over the empire were put in a state of shock and terror as the news arrived and as they saw the extensive preparations being made for their annihilation. All this portrays some hard realities about the dealings of God. This wicked plot was not owing to the king but altogether originated in the wicked minds of Haman and his co-conspirators. The king only gave his permission. The same king will eventually order Haman’s execution and the deliverance of the Jews. Still, it was shocking what the king permitted Haman to do. Accordingly, God will eventually destroy Satan, but in the meantime, it can be shocking what God can permit Satan to do, even permitting him to crucify the Son of God Himself. Men are therefore in terror of what God might permit Satan to do next, but must have faith that good will prevail when the full plan of God is performed. The *appearance* can sometimes be that Satan and God are in collaboration, but Satan is in a most ominous circumstance whenever this is so.

21) Mordecai passionately exhorted Esther that she must use her favored position to intervene in behalf of her people. In his exhortation, Mordecai assured that the Jews would be saved by God one way or another, but that it would best be done by means of Esther. Accordingly, the divine

preservation of the Jews has been assured by God in His word and is necessitated by promises He made to their fathers. Notwithstanding, the Bible exhorts the New Testament church that it is not to view the Jews contemptuously for their rejected state but to treat them mercifully. It also warns Christians that they could experience the same rejection and be themselves separated from the temporal blessings of God if they do not continue in faith (Rom 11:17-36). While God has of course made promises to preserve His church as an institution, local churches can still fail and this is why they were warned.

22) While Esther was willing to act as exhorted by Mordecai, she was confronted by a problem in that none could approach the king unless they had been summoned. Anyone presuming to do so was to be executed unless the king exempted them by extending his golden scepter toward them as they approached. All this was likely done to prevent assassination. However, it foreshadowed the important principle taught in the New Testament that the carnal man cannot and will not approach unto God unless drawn by Him. As Jesus said, *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him,”* (Jn 6:44).

23) However, when Esther mustered the courage to put herself at risk by approaching the king, she found that he joyously received her. This portended yet another principle taught in the New Testament, namely, that the redeemed and spiritually quickened church of Jesus Christ has free access to God. As Paul said, *“For through him we both (i.e. Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father,”* (Eph 2:18), and he therefore said elsewhere, *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,”* (Heb 4:16).

24) Esther approached the king with an unexpected request. She asked that both the king and Haman join her in a banquet she would prepare. This would entail an unlikely combination of characters given their symbolic assignments. It would have God, the church and Satan all seated at the same table. Yet, this is amazingly what happened under the New Testament. Christ ate the famous Last Supper with His disciples, who then composed His church, and at the same table was Judas Iscariot, who was possessed by Satan himself (Lk 22:3, Jn 13:27).

25) Haman became inflated with pride when he learned that he was exclusively invited to this banquet of the king and queen, but his exuberance was spoiled when later the same day he encountered the hated Mordecai, who once again refused to show him honor. This was the second recorded occasion in which Mordecai refused to submit to Haman, and as already noted, the first corresponded to the satanic temptation of Christ in Luke 4. However, Luke ended his description of this temptation by saying, *“And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season”* (Lk 4:13). This suggested there was a second occasion where Satan made a monumental attempt to thwart Him. The Bible is not explicit about when this happened but I will offer a theory:

On the 10th of Nisan, and four days before His Crucifixion, Mary anointed the feet of Jesus with extremely costly ointment, worth 300 pence, in times when a pence was equal to a day's labor. Judas angrily objected to this, claiming that the ointment should have been sold and the revenue used to help the poor (Jn 12:3-8). His argument was so convincing that even other of the disciples were persuaded by it and were angered by the alleged waste (Mt 26:8-9, Mk 14:4-5). John explained that Judas did not truly care for the poor, but wanted the ointment to be sold so that he could abscond with the money (Jn 12:6).

The argument that Judas made was exactly the kind of argument that Jesus would ordinarily make Himself (Mt 19:21, Lk 12:33), and there never was a man more predisposed toward helping the poor than Jesus Christ. The argument was therefore tempting. However, the problem was that God had foreordained this anointing to sanctify Jesus as the true and ultimate Passover Lamb, and Jesus Himself indicated this in His reply (Mk 14:8, Jn 12:7). This explains why God had commanded that Passover lambs under the law be set apart on the 10th day of Nisan. To refuse the anointing would be to refuse His foreordained role as the sacrifice for His people. So Satan was playing in Judas his favorite game of forfeiting long-term blessings for short-term gratification. What the ointment might have done for the poor in the short term was nothing in comparison to the eternal life that Jesus was about to secure for them.

When Jesus refused to capitulate to Judas in this matter, Judas immediately sought to betray Him (Mt 26:14, Mk 14:10), accordingly:

26) Haman and his family were so provoked by Mordecai's second refusal to submit that they decided not to wait for the genocidal decree to eliminate him but to hastily move to have him hanged the next day. Haman on the same night ordered that gallows be built for such purpose. Even so, Satan has desired the destruction of all servants of God, but was particularly anxious to destroy Jesus Christ, and Satan thus moved wicked men to have Him hanged on the cross.

27) On that same night, the Persian king was sleepless, and requested that a reading be made to him from the chronicles of the king's court. Upon so doing, an entry was found where some years earlier, Mordecai had been faithful to warn the king's court of an assassination plot against him, whereupon the conspirators were abducted and executed. This passage had been put in the chronicles by Esther herself. So we have Esther, a type of the early church, faithfully recording the deeds and words of Mordecai, a type of Christ, even as the Apostles and other early Christians faithfully recorded the deeds and words of Jesus Christ in the Bible. In both cases, these deeds and words had enduring and enormous effect.

Another important parallel was that Mordecai definitively identified the enemies of the king and Christ does the same. The enemies and friends of God are not always easy to delineate. All races of men are found on both sides. Simple men are found on both sides. Sophisticated men are found on both sides. Small sinners are found on both sides. Big sinners are found on both

sides. But the one criterion that is definitive is Jesus Christ. Those who honor Him are God's friends. Those who dishonor Him are God's enemies.

28) The king then asked the reader whether there was anything done to reward Mordecai for his faithful actions, and after searching the record, the reader found nothing. Accordingly, Christ received no earthly reward for His faithful service to God and His actions in behalf of His people. It was all done freely.

29) The king then commanded that Haman be summoned so that the king could hear his counsel as to what should be done to rectify this oversight. The king expressed to Haman his desire to honor a great man, but did not divulge the name of the man. He then requested Haman's advice as to how this should be done. Haman, being deceived by his own ego, thought that the man to be honored was surely himself, so he advised the king that such a man should be adorned in royal apparel, have the royal crown placed on his head and be paraded through the streets of the capital city on one of the king's horses. Haman was then stunned when the king told him that the intended man was Mordecai, and commanded that Haman personally see that the prescribed honors be exactly done. This part of the story demonstrated how Satan aspires and conspires to be equal to God Himself, and explains why he is perpetually found in scripture as imitating God and Jesus Christ (Isa 14:12-21). It also demonstrates how God not only defeats his enemies, but commonly does it by means of their own wicked intents and actions. "*He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong,*" (Job 5:13). Satan purposed to destroy Christ by crucifixion, but in such action, he secured his own ruin. Hence, Paul said of the crucified Christ, "*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it,*" (Col 2:15).

30) The salvation of the Jewish people from annihilation began with the salvation and glorification of Mordecai. The salvation of the elect of God began with the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ.

31) Haman returned to his home in dejection, and was there told by his wicked family that he was surely ruined and that he would fall before Mordecai. Even so, lesser devils under the command of Satan seemed to perceive the inevitable triumph of Christ before Satan did himself (Mt 8:28-29, Lk 4:41, 8:30-33).

32) While his family was speaking to him, officers of the king arrived to escort Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. While at this banquet, Esther divulged that she was a Jew and that the plot of Haman would destroy both her and her people. Now, as already explained, this banquet was parallel to the Last Supper of Christ and His disciples, and in both cases, the conspiracies of Satan were then exposed.

33) The king responded to Esther's revelation in wrath toward Haman and went to his garden to reflect. Upon returning, he found Haman had thrown himself on the bed of Esther to plead for mercy. The king interpreted this as a reproach to Esther and ordered that Haman be instantly

hanged on the same gallows Haman had prepared for Mordecai. Accordingly, the deceitful actions of Judas Iscariot were a reproach to the church because he had been a nominal part of it and had been its beneficiary. Judas also died by hanging himself on a tree of his own choosing.

34) At this point, the symbolism shifts to the last days and the second coming of Christ. At that time, great numbers of the Jews will be converted to Jesus Christ and the church will take on a strong Jewish composition. Hence, it was at this corresponding point that Esther identified herself as Jewish.

35) The king then issued a decree that the Jews in all parts of his kingdom were authorized to defend themselves against the former decree by destroying all those who had purposed to destroy them. This was to be done on the very day that the Jews were to be annihilated, that is, the 13th day of the 12th month. Curiously, the king did not rescind his first decree because Persian law would not permit it; rather, he issued a second decree to offset it. The same was done by God. He did not rescind the moral law that demanded our condemnation. That law will forever stand. But God issued another decree in Christ to negate the condemnation of the former. As Paul said, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death,”* (Rom 8:1-2).

36) According to my understanding of future prophecy, the following sequence of events will occur in the last days: a) The man of sin, or antichrist, will occupy Israel and Jerusalem and set his throne in what is falsely claimed to be the temple of God. b) After 3.5 years of occupation, many Jews will be turned to Christ, and will be immediately empowered to drive the man of sin and his forces from the city of Jerusalem, but they will not be able to destroy him. c) The man of sin will attempt to retake the city by assembling the armies of the world against it. d) These armies, being assembled at Armageddon and around Jerusalem, will be destroyed by the second coming of Jesus Christ. The empowerment of the Jews by the Persian king against their enemies would portend (b). See Zechariah 9:11-17, 12:6-8, Micah 5:8, Isaiah 31:5-9, Revelation 16:10.

37) The last to be destroyed under the king’s second decree were the 10 sons of Haman. Accordingly, scriptures teach that the antichrist will be in league with 10 kings, all of whom will be destroyed when Christ returns (Ps 110:6, Rev 17:12-14).

38) In all of this destruction of their enemies, the Jews took no spoils of war because their actions portended a time when the glory of heaven will be imminent, thus rendering such worldly possessions as worthless.

39) The Jewish celebration of their salvation commenced on the next day (14th), but this celebration would be inexplicably described as occurring in unwalled towns (Est 9:19). However, a crucial prophecy of the last days in Ezekiel 38 would describe Israel as being a land of *“unwalled villages”* (vs 11) at that future time, as indeed it already is in these modern times.

40) In the concluding chapters of Esther, we have important statements about Mordecai:

For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. – Est 9:4

For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed. – Est 10:3

Hence, a book that commenced with a description of the glory of the Persian king ended with a description of the glory of Mordecai. The Bible does exactly the same. It commences with the glory of the Godhead in general but increasingly draws attention to God the Son in the form of the man Jesus Christ.

Elijah

Types of Christ considered thus far in this book were primarily depictions of Him at His first coming. The remaining chapters will deal with characters and events that added significant depictions of His second coming. These too might foreshadow His first coming in powerful ways, but are distinguished from other types by the greater attention they give to His return. I have chosen to start these with the story of Elijah even though it is out of chronological sequence. The reason is that his story provides a good place to introduce the eschatology (i.e. “doctrine of last things”) necessary for understanding such types.

Elijah was one of the most fascinating prophets to the Jews. Christians are intrigued with him as well. There are several reasons for this. One is that Elijah was the first man in the Bible used by God to perform a resurrection. Since resurrection is a primary theme of the book, this fact must be of great importance. It should lead us to expect that Elijah would be used as a type of Christ and Christian principles. Another reason is that Elijah was raptured out of the world without dying. The Bible claims that the saved of God who are alive when Christ returns will experience the same (Jn 11:25-26, 1Cor 15:50-58, 1Thes 4:13-18). This should lead us to suspect that Elijah might prefigure this group of people. Yet another reason is that Elijah was a power prophet who meted out destruction on God’s enemies. While Moses did the same, few other prophets did. Most of them suffered or died at the hands of their persecutors. Since the wicked will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ, this should give us further reason to suspect that Elijah might have something to do with that event. However, the foremost reason for the fascination with Elijah is that he was a man of mystery. His name is mentioned 30 times in the New Testament, and in almost every place, these statements contain shades of mystery, even by Bible standards. The mystery always entailed the idea that Elijah would one day be sent back to earth.

All of this gives rise to much discussion, and this will account for the length of the present chapter. It might also be the most complex of the book. Of course the second coming has not yet happened, so in resolving allegories concerning it, we cannot match against actual historical events, but must correlate to literal prophecies that are recorded elsewhere, or demonstrate alignment with other allegorical prophecies of clearer meaning. This complicates the problem and necessitates that scriptures of the latter sort be properly interpreted. So I will include in this chapter an eschatological framework that I use here and elsewhere when dealing with allegorical prophecies of the second coming. Eschatology is one of the most highly controverted parts of the Bible, and an adequate treatment of it would swell this book far beyond its intended size. I will not undertake to give full proof of the positions I take. I will only summarize my views and provide scriptural references for them. I hope to give more complete proof in another book.

The idea that Elijah would be sent back to earth was largely rooted in the final verses of the Old Testament:

Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. – Mal 4:4-6

The intuitive interpretation of this text says that Elijah would come back to earth before its final destruction. As extraordinary as this claim might be, it is clear that the Jews in the times of Jesus Christ interpreted the prophecy exactly this way (Mt 16:14, 17:10, 27:49, Mk 6:15, 8:28, 9:11, 15:36, Lk 9:8, 9:19, Jn 1:21). Many Christians do the same, and I am highly disposed to agree. It is always a precarious thing to depart from intuitive interpretation, particularly when done for the dubious purpose of rationalizing the most extraordinary times in world history. Not much could be more irrational than to rationalize the glorious second coming of Jesus Christ and the end of the world. Further, one cannot dismiss the possibility of Elijah returning to earth when it has *already* happened once. Long after he had departed the world, Elijah appeared again with Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Some Christians claim the Malachi prophecy has already been fulfilled in John the Baptist and has no applicability to the future. There are several problems with this position. The first is that the verses used to support it are themselves wrapped up in the mystery that almost everywhere follows Elijah. This should be clear warning not to oversimplify the matter. A second problem is that John was directly questioned on this point by the Jews, who asked, “*Art thou Elias?*” (Jn 1:21). John unambiguously answered, “*I am not.*” Elias is the New Testament name for Elijah. Now this answer must be interpreted in light of the fact that the Jews were very conscious of the final verses of the Old Testament and were waiting for their literal fulfillment. John almost surely interpreted their question as specifically asking whether he was the primary fulfillment of this prophecy. He said he was not. Instead, he claimed to be the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3. A third problem is that the prophecy spoke of Elijah being sent before “*the great and dreadful day of the Lord,*” which seems far more descriptive of Christ’s second coming than His first. A fourth problem is that the prophecy seemed to anticipate a greater degree of reformation in Israel than what happened in John’s times. It is surely true that John the Baptist fulfilled these verses in some *preliminary* sense, but this does not mean they are *finally* fulfilled.

The argument that dismisses the prophecy to the past is mostly based on some statements made by Jesus Christ. One such statement was:

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. – Mt 11:13-15

The problem here is that the statement was qualified in a mysterious way. Jesus said John was Elias “*if ye will receive it.*” It is a well-known fact that the Jews did not receive it, as Jesus

Himself elsewhere declared, so what would John be in that case? There is mystery in the statement that should caution against simplistic interpretation. In another place we read this:

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. – Mt 17:10-12

So Jesus claimed that John was in some sense Elijah, and that Elijah would surely come and restore all things; but then Jesus said that John had come and that he had been disregarded and discarded. Again, there is a paradox in this statement that should caution against being simplistic when interpreting it. Jesus said the Jews would do the same to Him as they did to John the Baptist. All will agree this fact will not prevent Jesus from returning in power, nor is there anything to prevent Elijah from returning in power.

The most plausible interpretation is that *both* comings of Christ are to be preceded by an Elijah character. John the Baptist was that character in the case of the first coming, but the prophecy of Malachi primarily referred to the second. This future coming of Elijah was very likely prophesied in Revelation 11:3-13 where he was presented as one of two “*witnesses*” to be sent into the world in the last days, but more will be said about this later. The mysterious statements made by Jesus concerning Elijah should make much more sense by the end of this chapter.

The story of Elijah is a lengthy prophetic allegory having three major parts. The first part is about Christ’s dealing with the Gentiles. The second is about His dealings with the Jews at His first coming. The third part is about His dealings with them at His return.

Christ with the Gentiles

1) The story of Elijah began in 1Kings 17 where he abruptly appeared and boldly declared that there would be neither rain nor dew on Israel except according to his word. An ensuing drought would last for three years and six months (Lk 4:25, Js 5:17). Now water and rain will be used in the story of Elijah in various ways, but all of them in connection with the Messiah, and it here symbolized a spiritual state wherein the Messiah would be recognized. The 3.5 years of drought portended the desperately dry spiritual state of Israel during the 3.5-year ministry of Jesus Christ. Though the Messiah was before their very eyes, doing miracles on unprecedented scale, and fulfilling multitudes of prophecies that distinguished Him, they were blind to His presence. This was especially true of the leadership. Indeed, the leaders in the early church were almost never taken from the leadership of the Jews, even though this is what one might have expected. Jesus repeatedly called them a wicked and adulterous generation. He was among them as a light in the midst of darkness, and as John said, “*the darkness comprehended it not,*” (Jn 1:5).

The same was true of Elijah, who was himself a symbol of the Messiah in this part of the story. Though Jews in later generations would revere Elijah and be fascinated with him, in his own generation he had only a handful who heeded his word. Notwithstanding, his word had been endowed with enormous power by God, to the extent that it would rain when, and only when, he called for it to do so. Accordingly, Jesus said:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. – Mt 11:27

That is, it rained in a revealing, spiritual sense only when and where the Son of God so decided.

2) To alleviate the hardships of the drought, God commanded the prophet to retreat secretly to an area east of Jordan River to a brook named Cherith where he would have sufficient water to sustain him. This portended the fact that the blindness of the Jews to the Messiah was partly owing to Him being deliberately hidden from them by God. This was especially so in His youth when God brought Him up under very humbling circumstances, causing men to think He was an illegitimate child by giving Him virgin birth, and raising Him up in the despised city of Nazareth, and doing all this in the depths of poverty. However, God also said to Elijah that He would command the ravens to feed him by the brook, bringing him flesh and bread. The raven is a large, rapacious bird known for its intellect and agility. The reason these ravens fed Elijah was that they perceived him to be a fledgling of their own kind. Even so, the humble child born at Bethlehem and raised at Nazareth would become a great raven to the enemies of God at His second coming. Isaiah called Him a “*ravenous bird from the east*,” (Isa 46:11). He will come from the east because Christ Himself said, “*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*,” (Mt 24:27). Elijah too was on the eastern extremity of Israel when the ravens fed him. This extraordinary prophet would rain fire down from heaven on his enemies at both his first and last appearance (Rev 11:5), and he will defy Satan and his accomplices at the very apex of their power. Further, he would eventually leave the planet as a flying bird, being raptured by God, and this would be true at both his first and last appearance (Rev 11:11-12). The same may be said of the Christ he portended. Elijah was a great raven to the enemies of God, and Jesus Christ will be the same at His return.

Some have been distracted from the symbolism in the raven by the fact that it is an unclean bird, but this fact is of no relevance. The lion also is unclean for purposes of consumption, but it is doubtlessly a symbol of Christ (Rev 5:5). The fact that Elijah was fed by this unclean animal actually reinforces the imagery. When Christ was a babe, to escape the maddened infanticide of Herod, He was taken to Egypt, a place notorious for spiritual uncleanness, and He was nourished there until it was safe for Him to leave the nest.

3) Because of the increased severity of the drought, Elijah was commanded to leave the brook of Cherith and head northwest toward the Gentile region of Zidon. God told him that He had commanded a widow woman there to sustain him. Accordingly, the spiritual dryness of Israel would eventually lead to the gospel of Christ being carried from the Jews to the Gentiles.

4) As already shown in my chapter on Ruth, widowhood was used in the Bible to represent a rejected religious state that was destitute of the blessings of God. Such would be the case of the pagan Gentiles when the gospel was first preached to their ears. While the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles would mostly happen after the resurrection of Christ, He surely initiated it in a powerful way by commending their faith as surpassing all of Israel (Mt 8:10, 15:28).

The drought had also extended to the region of Zidon, thus further showing that the Gentiles were in the same dry spiritual condition as the Jews. However, things were about to change radically for some of them. When Elijah encountered the chosen widow woman, he requested that she bring him water and bread. She replied that she was left with only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a cruse, and that it had been her intent to prepare a small amount of bread with this so that she and her son could eat it and die. The prophet assured her that the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil would neither waste nor fail through the duration of the drought. Such proved to be the case. Hence:

5) These Gentiles were fed supernatural meal that never failed. As already shown in prior chapters, bread and meal and grain were repeatedly used in the Bible as types of Christ. He Himself said, *“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world,”* (Jn 6:33). Then He said, *“I am the bread which came down from heaven,”* (6:41). Yet later He said, *“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die,”* (6:50). This last verse will become very important as the story progresses.

6) These Gentiles were also fed supernatural oil that never failed. This oil represented the Holy Spirit, especially in His work of the new birth.

7) The meal and oil were mixed to make bread. Even so, Christ and the Holy Spirit must be mixed in the born-again child of God. A man will not receive Christ without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and a man will not be given the quickening power of the Holy Spirit unless Christ has bought it for Him on the cross.

8) God had told Elijah that the widow woman would sustain him, but we see that, in fact, Elijah was sustaining both her and her son. Accordingly, the Gentiles would appear to sustain the cause of Christ that had originated with the Jews. The Gentiles would carry it forward through the modern era after the Jews had largely abandoned it. However, deeper inspection will show that Christ has in fact sustained the Gentiles through it all.

Now it came to pass that the son of the widow woman died, but Elijah then raised him from the dead. This would be the first resurrection in the Bible. As should be expected, the providence of

God ordered this event to teach many crucial principles that will pertain to all blessed resurrections thereafter. Some of these principles are misunderstood even by many Christians, so a careful examination of them is very needful:

9) The first principle is that resurrection happens to those who have eaten of the supernatural meal and oil that never wastes nor fails. Jesus Christ is “*the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.*” Paul further explained, “*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you,*” (Rom 8:10-11).

10) The prophet began by carrying the corpse of the child to the prophet’s own room and bed, and it was upon this bed that the child was raised. Accordingly, all the elect of God were virtually resurrected on the bed of Jesus Christ. When He was resurrected, their own resurrection, and all conditions thereto, were simultaneously met or assured. Hence, Paul said in a famous passage:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. – Eph 2:4-10

In another place he said, “*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,*” (Col 3:1). Notice he did not say that if you *would* be risen with Christ then you should satisfy this condition or that; rather, it was that if you *already are* risen, then certain obligations befall you as an object of His grace. The former sense would be absurd and in denial of your resurrection itself, because if you were truly resurrected, as is claimed, then you were truly dead before, and therefore incapable of performing the alleged conditions. The conditions were met and assured by Christ alone. Our personal faith, repentance and obedience are *confirmations* that the conditions were met, and are also our *obligations* for the resurrecting grace we have already received.

Accordingly, when scriptures teach that we were raised on the bed of Christ, this does not mean that God merely foresaw it as happening. It was something that could not have happened without His unsolicited, resurrecting grace. A dead man cannot contribute toward his own resurrection. The elect were virtually raised on the bed of Christ by the ordination of God.

11) The prophet raised the child by stretching himself over the child’s body. This established another very important principle, namely, that resurrection and quickening are always done in

the Bible by *immediate* or *direct* contact with Christ Himself. God does not quicken by means of servants. God does not quicken with the use of instruments. God does not even quicken by the so-called and much-preached “means of grace.” All people who were quickened or resurrected in the Bible experienced the direct touch or breath or voice of God Himself. This extended back to the first man himself, of whom it was said, “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul,*” (Gn 2:7). Hence, man’s body was formed from the dust that God had created, but his *life* came *directly* from God. The same is true of spiritual life, as is indicated by the words of Christ:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. – Jn 5:25-29

These verses speak of two resurrections done by Christ. The first was ongoing as of the time He spoke. This was a resurrection from spiritual death to spiritual life. The second was the resurrection from bodily death to bodily life. This one will occur at the last day. Both were said to be by the power of His *voice*. There will be no human intermediaries or instruments in the latter, and therefore none are in the former.

Humans and other instruments serve as a means to teaching, correcting, exhorting, encouraging and assuring others, but they are not a means to life. This principle will be emphatically reinforced only a few pages later (2Ki 4:1-37) when another mighty prophet named Elisha will attempt to resurrect a man by means of a servant (Gehazi) and an instrument (his staff) and *will fail*. However, He will succeed after resorting to the immediate contact method of Elijah.

12) Though it cannot be proven, it is strongly suggested that, when Elijah stretched himself out on the child, an image of a cross was formed. This suggests to us that resurrection has something to do with a cross.

13) Elijah stretched himself upon the child three times. This portended the fact that the ultimate resurrection, and cause of all subsequent resurrections, would take place on the third day.

14) With this joyous resurrection, the widow said, “*Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth,*” (1Ki 17:24). Hence, the Gentiles, who had been buried in the most pathetic forms of religious ignorance, would be moved to belief of the truth by the occurrence of a resurrection. The case with the Jews would be very different.

Christ with the Jews at His First Coming

In the next part of the saga of Elijah, God will portend Christ's dealings with the Jews at His first coming. This might seem to tell the story out of order because Christ was first preached to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, but the story presents things in order of cause and effect. The reason God allowed the terrible drought on Israel was His purpose in saving many Gentiles. More will be said about this later.

In the third year of the drought, God commanded Elijah to show himself to Ahab, king of Israel. God also told Elijah that the drought would soon end. Ahab was one of the wickedest kings Israel ever had. Much of this was owing to the influence of his wife, a woman named Jezebel, whose very name is synonymous with female depravity. Both were worshippers of Baal, and both had nearly murdered worshippers of the Lord into extinction, but Jezebel was the worst of the two. The governor of Ahab's house was a man named Obadiah, who was a clandestine worshipper of the Lord, and who was also a very courageous man. He had used his advantageous position to secretly save the lives of at least a hundred true prophets from the persecutions of Jezebel. Obadiah would have been executed had these actions been discovered. In what follows, these characters will be brilliantly ordered by divine providence to foretell the story of Jesus Christ and the Jews at His first coming. In all of this, Elijah will serve as a type of Christ, Obadiah of His disciples, Ahab of Herod and Jezebel of the corrupt religious leadership of the Jews in the considered times.

15) With the drought having reached the apex of its severity, Ahab and Obadiah went searching for water and green grass for the purpose of saving their horses and mules. They divided the land between themselves by agreement and went searching in different directions. This portended the fact that the Jews, both good and bad, would be searching for the Messiah in the times of Jesus Christ, but they would be searching in very different directions and for very different reasons. To wicked Ahab, this otherwise noble quest for the glorious Messiah was no more than an attempt to feed the mules. Even so, Jesus claimed that most of His followers were simply seeking a free meal (Jn 6:26).

16) This diligent search in the times of Jesus was partly owing to the fact that some of the Jews were keen to certain Old Testament prophecies that seemed ripe for fulfillment (e.g. Dn 9:24), but the greater reason was that they were under dire circumstances, being oppressed by the Romans. Hardship therefore prompted the search in both accounts.

17) In his search for water and green grass, Obadiah encountered Elijah en route to see Ahab. Elijah remains a symbol of Christ in this part of the story. So Obadiah's discovery of Elijah foreshadowed the fact that, while Jews of all kinds were searching for the Messiah in the times of Jesus, only His disciples would find what they were seeking.

18) Obadiah, suspecting that the man before him was Elijah, fell on his face and asked, "*Art thou that my lord Elijah?*" (1Ki 18:7). Elijah affirmed and told Obadiah to go tell Ahab of his intent

to face him. Obadiah was terrified at this demand because it would place him at great risk. He had been hiding prophets of the Lord and had been lying to Ahab and Jezebel to make them think all such prophets were dead. Ahab and Jezebel had especially sought to find and kill Elijah, to the extent that Obadiah said, *“As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not,”* (1Ki 18:10). These words portended Herod’s diligent enquiry of the foreign wise men as to the location of the infant Jesus (Mt 2:7-18). Herod was so bent on killing Him that he indiscriminately murdered all babies at Bethlehem in the effort. This was Herod the Great, father of Herod Antipas.

19) As for Herod Antipas, he too wanted to see Jesus after he heard of His miracles (Mt 14:1-2), but there was a bizarre sense in which he actually thought that Jesus was dead, even as Ahab thought Elijah was dead. Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead (Mk 6:16). Indeed, this was a common opinion of Jesus among the unbelieving Jews, with some even thinking He was Elijah himself returned from heaven (Mt 16:14).

20) Obadiah therefore urged Elijah not to show himself to Ahab. Accordingly, the disciples of Jesus, fearing danger to themselves, urged Him not to cross over Jordan into Judea when He was resolved to commence His journey to the cross (Jn 11:7-16) – a journey in which He would show Himself to Herod, Pilate and the religious leadership of the Jews.

21) In urging Elijah, Obadiah said, *“And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth,”* (1Ki 18:12). This is yet another instance of where strange words in the Bible should pique the attention of the reader. In His resolve to stand before Herod, etc., Jesus was initiating a sequence of events that would separate Him from His disciples and lead to His being carried away to heaven by the Spirit of the Lord. This would leave His poor disciples to deal with the madness of Herod and successors, who eventually killed James and very nearly killed Peter (Acts 12). While Jesus was in the world, He had a protective, providential umbrella over His disciples (Jn 18:7-9), but He warned that they would be in peril after His ascension (Lk 22:35-37). Add to this that when Jesus was resurrected, the disciples initially reacted in fear, because they were apt to be accused of taking His body (Mk 16:5-8, Jn 20:19).

22) When Elijah met Ahab, the king infamously greeted him saying, *“Art thou he that troubleth Israel?”* (1Ki 18:17). Elijah countered by charging Ahab with being the true troubler of Israel by forsaking the Lord and lusting after Baal. In the conspiracy against Jesus Christ, He was charged as being a menace to the nation. Hence, the Jewish authorities argued it would be better for Him to die than for the whole nation to perish (Jn 11:49-50).

Elijah then commanded the king to gather all the false prophets supported by Jezebel to Mount Carmel on the Mediterranean Sea for what would become a legendary showdown between their

respective gods. The terms were that they each would put a sacrificial bullock on an altar and call on their god to consume the offering by fire sent down from heaven. The god who answered was to be worshipped and the other disregarded. Elijah's burnt offering in this event will be the most dramatic and most famous animal offering of all time. This should be a sufficient hint as to the real story being told. This offering happened at the end of the 3.5-year drought, even as Christ's offering was made at the end of his 3.5-year ministry to the dry and doubting Jews. Elijah's offering was a bullock, an animal known for obedience and servitude. Even so, Christ "*became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,*" (Phil 2:8).

23) There were 450 of these false prophets, but Elijah declared himself to be the last remaining prophet of the Lord. Now the scene that was about to develop was a depiction of what would happen at Mount Calvary. Jesus worked alone on that occasion even as Elijah did in this.

24) The prophets of Baal then called on their god to send down fire, but nothing happened. Consequently, they became the more urgent in their appeals, even cutting themselves with knives and lancets so that their blood gushed all about. This showed that false religion will bleed itself to death before capitulating to the truth. The principle of human depravity is taught from the opening pages of the Bible, and all the more emphatically as the reader ventures into the book, until it reaches an inglorious climax in the final book of Revelation. This doctrine had no greater teacher than Jesus Himself (Mt 12:33-37, 23:33, Jn 5:40-41, 6:44, 8:43-47).

25) Elijah then repaired an old altar of the Lord that had fallen down. Accordingly, Jesus Christ took the deranged and dilapidated religion of the Jews and restored it to its original intent in the covenant with Abraham. This reconstruction of the altar by Elijah also looked to the second coming and the reformation that would be brought about by means of him at that time. The famous prophecy of Malachi predicted that Elijah would turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and vice versa (Mal 4:6). The change of heart it prophesied can be better understood by considering what had been said before. In Malachi's view, the Jewish religion had degenerated from what it had been in the days of the patriarchs or "*fathers.*" Legalism, ritualism, traditionalism and the influences of paganism had carried the religion far from where it started – a religion centered on messianic promises and heavenly hopes. However, the prophet also spoke of a time of restoration (3:1-6). This is what was meant by his final verse, where his claim was that the children, or Jews of the latter days, would be reunited in religious fellowship with the fathers, or the patriarchs. All this was depicted in Elijah's reconstruction of the fallen altar.

26) Next, Elijah put his offering on the reconstructed altar and commanded that 12 barrels of water be poured over it. This meant that Elijah's offering represented a Messiah who was drenched in the Holy Spirit of God. As John the Baptist would later say, "*God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him,*" (Jn 3:34).

27) Then at the time of the evening sacrifice (the ninth hour to the old Jews but at 3:00pm to us), and at the very hour Jesus died on the cross, Elijah called on the Eternal God to send down fire from heaven on the altar.

28) The fire came down spectacularly and consumed the offering. As I have explained in previous chapters on offerings, the purpose of burning was to transfer the offering from earthbound state to heavenly form. Even so, the offering of Elijah was completely burned and gone, showing that the Messiah would be taken to heaven, happily received by God. This is why the burning of the old animal offerings produced a sweet-smelling savor to the Lord.

29) But the altar was gone too, thus showing that no animal would ever again be required to die on a divinely authorized altar. In an instant, the sacrifices and other services of the Old Covenant were fulfilled and done away. Any religion that does animal sacrifices today does so in defiance to the Son of God, and its actions are sufficient proof that devils are being served.

30) Elijah then utterly destroyed the prophets of Baal. The powerful symbolism in this was that all competing religions were utterly destroyed with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Old Covenant was then retired as a rule of practice because it had been completed and confirmed. Multitudes of its prophecies had just been spectacularly fulfilled. Its endless types and shadows were brought into clear focus, divulging unmistakable divine design. The word of God was overwhelmingly proven to be true, and anything presuming to challenge it was exposed as abomination. Rival religion had been ransacked by the Raven (Ps 68:17-18, Col 2:15). While many such religions continue to this day, they are as dead as the corpses of Baal's prophets.

31) The Israelites, being awed by the fire from heaven and its effects, recanted their false religion and declared the Lord to be God; however, in only a matter of days, it would become apparent that there was no real reform, and they were back to their errant ideas and ways. The same happened with the death and resurrection of Christ. The initial appearance was that a great reformation would occur in Israel, with 3000 joining the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), and another 5000 men alone at Solomon's porch (Acts 4:4), but in short time, many of these Jews either defected altogether or became corrupters of the New Covenant.

32) Elijah then went to the top of Mount Carmel overlooking the Mediterranean, and he began to pray for rain. God had already promised the prophet He would send such rain (1Ki 18:1), but this did not deter the prophet from praying for it. Accordingly, God made promises to His Son before the foundation of the world, but this did not deter His Son from praying for such things while He was in the world. All this will be better understood upon remembering that the Persons in the Godhead selflessly seek the glory of each other. Now God had already inspired the prophet to declare from the outset that it would rain only at the prophet's word (17:1). So God had glorified the prophet by empowering his word. But then the prophet returned the glory to God by uttering his empowered word in the form of a prayer. This prayer would in fact become legendary and serve to God's glory for millennia to come.

33) Elijah famously prayed to God seven times from atop Mount Carmel. In this the prophet was still foreshadowing Jesus Christ, who would utter the greatest prayer in the history of mankind while petitioning for the salvation of His people (Jn 17). This one great prayer can be viewed as seven because it made seven requests: 1st) That God would glorify His Son that His Son could then glorify Him, 2nd) That God would keep His people through His own name, or that their salvation would be manifestly owing to Him, 3rd) That God would fulfill in them the joy possessed by Jesus Christ, 4th) That God would keep them from evil, 5th) That God would sanctify or distinguish them through His truth, 6th) That God would unify them as one, and 7th) That God would cause them to be in heaven with Jesus Christ.

34) With the seventh prayer, a little cloud appeared over the sea having the form of a man's hand. It had this form because the cloud actually represented one man in the beginning and many men in the end. The cloud became greater and greater until it filled the entire sky, and the man it represented would become greater and greater until He filled the whole earth (Dn 2:34-35). Of course, clouds build by the process of evaporation wherein earthbound water is converted to heavenly form and elevated. Over the history of the Old Testament, beginning with Adam and ending with John the Baptist, this cloud had collected witness after witness to Jesus Christ and the free righteousness He would give. These witnesses provided their testimony, ran their course, died and ascended to heaven to join the ever growing heavenly cloud. Now the cloud had become full, and what these saints testified was ready to burst forth upon the earth.

35) The cloud then released abundant rain upon the desperately parched nation. This rain derived from Elijah's great prayer and offering, and it portended the outpouring of the Messiah's righteousness upon the earth. Isaiah beautifully spoke of this same rain:

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it. – Isa 45:8

The rain of righteousness described by Isaiah happened when Jesus died on the cross at His first coming. Isaiah said righteousness would thereafter spring up out of the ground on account of this rain. This refers to the resurrection of our bodies at Jesus' second coming. So Elijah's rain represented this rain of righteousness, and it fell in great abundance on a very unworthy land.

Wicked Ahab then hastily rode hard in his chariot to return to his palace in Jezreel, and very unexpectedly, Elijah girded up his loins and joyously ran in front of the chariot, being filled with the Spirit of God as he ran. As is commonly the case with the Old Testament, when things get strange they also get profound:

36) The Old Covenant had passed and there was now a New Covenant with a new way of thinking. As Paul said, "*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...*" (Rom 12:2). Righteousness was raining down freely from heaven on unworthy sinners. The whole land had been parched. None were worthy. It was no time for one

to be critical of another. It was no time for anyone to boast of his comparative good. Rather, it was a time of rejoicing, to be expressed in mercy, forgiveness and longsuffering because of the abundant grace that was freely raining down. Even the rapacious raven was raptured in the joy.

37) Neither was it a time for apathy and complacency. While the righteousness was free, it imposed a moral obligation to think, speak and live in a way to give glory and thanks. Hence, the prophet “*girded up his loins*” (1Ki 18:46). This was a scriptural expression motivated by their dress at the time. The long outer garment they wore was loose, so it was tightened with a belt at the midsection when they were attending their daily chores, but the belt was loosened in times of leisure. Hence, Christ said, “*Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning,*” (Lk 12:35). And Peter said, “*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*” (1Pet 1:13).

38) The prophet also ran with the burgeoning cloud in the sky. He ran in miraculous power because man by nature cannot keep pace with horses, but Elijah was empowered by the Holy Ghost. Even so, the redeemed of God are commanded to run a race, with a promise they will be empowered by the Holy Ghost in so doing. This race is also beneath a great cloud:

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. – Heb 12:1-2

39) Elijah ran in front of the chariot because it is the duty of the redeemed of God, whether they be great or small, to take the lead, even before the kings of the earth, in exhibiting joy, thanks and praise for the righteousness that Jesus Christ has freely rained down.

40) But concerning Ahab, the words of Isaiah would soon come to bear:

Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them. – Isa 26:10-11

In short time, Ahab became envious of a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth. Because Naboth would not sell him the vineyard for money, wicked Jezebel ordered that Naboth be falsely accused and executed. Her orders were written in the name of the king and certified by his seal. After the murder, Ahab presumed to take the vineyard to himself. This act of wickedness secured Ahab’s doom. Elijah confronted the king and told him he would die an ignominious death wherein dogs would lick up his blood.

Ahab's compliance with the wicked actions of Jezebel therefore proved to be his undoing. Such was also the case with Herod Antipas. His wicked wife Herodias, who had conspired to secure the murder of John the Baptist, eventually served to her own husband's ruin. Antipas was technically a "tetrarch" (Mt 14:1, Lk 3:1, 3:19, 9:7, Acts 13:1), meaning a ruler among four. He was not fully a king. When Caesar Caligula promoted Herod's own nephew Agrippa to the title of king, Herodias, being moved with envy, coaxed her husband to petition Caligula for the same honor. However, Agrippa, not willing to be outdone, countered by charging Antipas with treason, whereupon he was deposed and exiled.

Christ with the Jews at His Second Coming

This brings us to the last act in the drama of Elijah. This part will correspond to the second coming of Jesus Christ and God's dealings with Israel at that time. This section will be lengthened by the necessity of setting forth an eschatological background.

Now when Jezebel heard that Elijah had humiliated and destroyed all her prophets, she was enraged, and swore she would retaliate by having the prophet killed. As indicated earlier, Jezebel is a symbol of false religion. Both scriptures and experience teach that false religion will defend itself to the depths of damnation. Jezebel represented something as old as the world, and she will persist until she meets her final fate at the end of time. In the prophecy of Revelation, she takes her final form as the Babylonian Harlot (Rev 17, 19:1-3). This is the role that Jezebel plays in what follows. Many have speculated about which false religion this harlot represents, but she is likely a mixture of several. A prevalent theme in biblical prophecy of the last days is the *consolidation* of evil, and this will likely occur at both civil and religious levels.

Another important character in future prophecy is the so-called antichrist. In the Bible he is called the son of perdition or the man of sin (2Thes 2:1-5). This man will be Satan's imitation of Jesus Christ. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. The antichrist will be Satan manifest in the flesh. One is the "*mystery of godliness*" (1Tim 3:16). The other is the "*mystery of iniquity*" (2Thes 2:7). Paul said this mystery of iniquity was already at work in his own times. This was because the satanic plan is in imitation of the divine, and the divine had just been fully disclosed with the appearance of Jesus Christ. Satan then set his own plan in motion, and has already made many attempts to implement it since the crucifixion, but he has been obstructed by the hand of God, who will continue to obstruct him until the ordained time. The antichrist will emerge as ruler over a consolidated kingdom wherein 10 kings will submit to him. The antichrist and his kingdom are symbolized in Revelation as a seven-headed, ten-horned beast (Rev 13 & 17). Daniel also discussed this same beast (Dn 2 & 7). Satan wants to be worshipped in his form as antichrist, even as Jesus is worshipped as Christ. Satan will eventually accept no rivals to himself, whether of true religion or false (Isa 14:4-22, 2Thes 2, Rev 13). His aim is to occupy Israel and set himself up as god in the temple (Dn 11:45, Isa 14:13, 2Thes 2:4). This temple must obviously be rebuilt, but it will not be with the approval or blessing of God.

Scriptural prophecy also calls for the emergence of a Jewish Christian remnant in the last days. These will be granted miraculous refuge in the wilderness from the harlot and beast for a period of 1260 days. These are Jews who will be turned to Jesus Christ either shortly before the rise of the antichrist or early in his reign. These play a prominent role in future prophecy and will be foreshadowed by Elijah in what is to come. They are most clearly presented in Revelation 12 where they are symbolized by a woman in the wilderness. They are also under consideration at the beginnings of Revelation 7 and 14 where they are numbered at 144,000. They are mentioned in numerous places in the Old Testament as well (Hos 2:14-15, Ps 74:14, Isa 11:11, Jer 31:1-2, Ezek 20:33-38, Ps 55:6-11, Joel 2:32, Mic 5:7-8, Zeph 3:8-13, Zech 14:4-6).

There are two in this remnant who are exceptional and extraordinary. These are the two “witnesses” described in Revelation 11. The preponderance of evidence says these two witnesses will be none other than Moses and Elijah, who were of course advocates of Jesus Christ long ago. These will be endued with great power by God, and sent by Him to witness against the antichrist and to counter the deceiving wonders he will perform. Their empowered ministries will last for 1260 days, which is the exact same 1260-day period that their Christian cohorts will be protected in the wilderness. When God was delivering Israel from Egypt with the purpose of raising them up as a nation in His name, Satan sent two wicked Egyptian magicians named Jannes and Jambres with the intent of discrediting the mighty works of Moses. God is one who takes vengeance, and much of Revelation describes Him as doing so. The two witnesses will be payback to Satan in his own attempt to form a kingdom for himself.

When the man of sin occupies the temple in Israel, he will become what Daniel called “*the abomination that maketh desolate*,” (Dn 12:11). There were actually three such abominations. Two are past and the antichrist will himself be the third. At such time, the remnant, acting on the prophecy of Jesus Christ Himself (Mt 24:15-16), will flee to the wilderness, or to the same general region to the southeast of Israel where the children of Israel wandered many years ago. They will be miraculously protected there by the hand of God for a period of 1260 days. Accordingly, Daniel said the man of sin will be unable to conquer this region (Dn 11:41). Nonetheless, he will subdue Jerusalem and reign there over the same period. He will eventually have the two witnesses put to death, but they will be miraculously resurrected after 3.5 days and caught up to heaven (Rev 11:11). With the murder of these two witnesses, the man of sin will seal his own doom. He and his kingdom will quickly unravel from that point. This was prophesied in Daniel, where the following was said of the antichrist:

And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. – Dn 12:6-7

So the most oppressive part of his reign will be for “*a time, times, and an half,*” meaning 3.5 years, or 1260 days, as Revelation repeatedly confirmed (Rev 11:2, 11:3, 12:6, 12:14, 13:5), and it will end when “*he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people.*” When Revelation 11:3-6 described the two witnesses, thrice was the word “*power*” used, so when Daniel referred to the “*power*” of the holy people, there is no better theory than that he was referring to these same two witnesses. After the remnant will have been scattered to the wilderness and their two power prophets slain, the man of sin will have secured his end.

The Spirit of God will then be mightily poured out on Jerusalem and will produce a massive conversion of the Jewish people (Zech 12:10-14, Joel 2:28-32, Rom 11:26, Rev 11:13). While the Holy Spirit is being thus poured, seven vials of divine wrath will also be poured on the beast and his kingdom (Rev 16), thus empowering one while weakening the other. The fifth of these vials will be poured out on the very seat (i.e. “*throne*”) of the beast, and the empowered Jews will evict him from Jerusalem and his throne (Zech 9:12-17, 12:1-14, Isa 31:4-9, Mic 5:8-15); however, the Jews will bruise him without destroying him. He will then gather the entire world against the city for purposes of retaking it, as indicated by the sixth and seventh vials, but Jesus Christ will return and utterly destroy him and his armies (Zech 12:1-10, 14:2-3, Joel 2:28-3:2, Isa 29:5-8, Zeph 3:8-9, Rev 14:19-20, 19:19-21). All this will take place over a short period of time (Mt 24:22). While we must be very cautious about setting dates and times, the final verses of Daniel suggest that the antichrist will be driven from Jerusalem 30 days after the resurrection and rapture of the witnesses (thus carrying to 1290 days), and that he will be utterly destroyed 45 days after this (thus carrying to 1335 days).

Christ will also resurrect and rapture His people at such time, but this will be shortly preceded by the rapture of the remnant, which includes the two witnesses. The remnant will then become the first-fruits of the subsequent harvest (Rev 14:4). This raptured remnant will later accompany Him in the sky as He crosses over Jordan and enters Israel. This is why Jude said, “*Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*” (Jude 14, Dt 33:1-3, Rev 14:4). These will then be joined by multitudes of resurrected elect from all the ages of the earth. They will also be joined by the newly converted multitudes in Israel who will be raptured. While these things are taking place, the wicked will be entirely and utterly destroyed.

I present all this as one who is ready to be corrected where better interpretation demands. The Lord commanded all to watch, and this surely means to remain diligent students of His word to the very end. However, I present this framework with reasonable confidence, and will now undertake to match the allegory of Elijah to it:

41) Jezebel had power because she was married to a king that she could manipulate. She manipulated Ahab into killing the prophets of the Lord. She also abused her regal authority to murder Naboth. These things prefigured the first coming of Christ because Herod was also manipulated by his adulterous wife, Herodias, into beheading John the Baptist. However, the pattern does not stop with Herod and Herodias. Revelation portrayed the Babylonian Harlot as

riding on the back of the beast in the wilderness (Rev 17:3). The harlot will seek to manipulate the beast. This means that the satanic-inspired, consolidated, religious system of the last days will seek to manipulate the consolidated, civil system into executing her wicked conspiracy. However, she is headed for a rude awakening near the end. Events will take a very different turn from what she intends and expects.

The image of the harlot on the back of the beast says much about the general biblical view of government. The New Testament generally presents civil government as a good thing, and it commands Christians to yield a surprising degree of obedience to it (Mt 17:24-27, Rom 13:1-8). However, the Bible considers false religion to be an abomination to which no man should yield. This obviously implies that the two things should not be mixed. When they are, the Christian is potentially put in a predicament. The biblical view is that, when civil government goes bad, it is because of being manipulated by a harlot on its back. That is, the bad has been germinated from some corrupt religion or philosophy whereby that government has been deceived.

42) The Babylonian Harlot was seen as riding the beast *in the wilderness*. At an earlier point in Revelation, we were told about another woman in the same wilderness (Rev 12). This woman was clothed with the sun and had the moon at her feet and had a crown of twelve stars on her head. These were exactly the symbols Joseph saw in one of his dreams (Gn 37:9-10). His father Jacob told us what these symbols meant: They were representative of Jacob's family, which was of course the nation Israel in embryonic form. This interpretation is confirmed beyond doubt by the fact that Revelation further described this woman as giving birth to Jesus Christ. However, John ended Revelation 12 with yet another consequential clue: "*And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,*" (Rev 12:17). Hence, the woman not only represented Israel but she specifically represented *Christian* Israel. She is a remnant of Israelites who will be converted to Jesus Christ in the last days. There will be many more to follow these, but these will be the first, and will be first-fruits in this respect, and will also be first-fruits in the resurrection/rapture. Revelation 12 explicitly claimed this woman would flee to the wilderness to escape the persecution of the dragon (i.e. Satan), and that God would miraculously feed her there for 1260 days. The harlot is seen riding on the beast *in the wilderness* because she, being inspired by Satan and being intoxicated with the blood of saints she has already drunk (17:6), is out to murder the other woman by means of the beast.

Satan will be hell-bent on the destruction of this good woman because he knows that, if these Jewish conversions are not stopped, he is ruined. Hence, in the same context, John wrote, "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time,*" (Rev 12:12). Jesus had already said to Jerusalem, "*For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,*" (Mt 23:39). So the conversion of Jerusalem would lead to the second coming of Jesus Christ, but the second coming of Jesus Christ would lead to the destruction of this sinful world, and the destruction of this sinful world would mean the end of

Satan's kingdom. Revelation 12 also described him as being cast out of heaven, meaning that he had been reduced to an earthbound being; thus, the ruin of the earth would be the ruin of him.

In the vision of the prior chapter, John saw an earthquake striking Jerusalem, causing a tenth part of the city to fall and killing 7000 men. This is probably symbolic language corresponding to the great filtration process described in Amos 9 where God said He would sift Israel through the nations like corn, and not the least grain would fall to the ground. By this He meant that He would thoroughly remove the wicked and rejected element of that nation. The earthquake is likely the last mighty shake of this sieve, and with it all chaff is removed. This then leads to the next statement, "...and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven," (Rev 11:13). The Greek word here for "remnant" means "the remainder" and is not the same word used in Romans 9:27 and 11:5 where it meant a small portion. Accordingly, "remnant" here does not refer to the remnant in the wilderness; rather, it refers to all that remained in Jerusalem. The city of Jerusalem was at this point giving glory to God, which it could not do while denying Jesus Christ. Hence, a mass conversion had quickly taken place (Rom 11:26). Now for our present purposes, the next few verses are most important:

The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.
– Rev 11:14-15

Therefore, the conversion of Jerusalem will be the last chapter of world history, even as Jesus Christ had implied (Mt 23:39). It will promptly bring on the seventh and last trump, with which time for this earth will be no more (Rev 10).

The conversion of Jerusalem was of course one of the most highly prophesied events in the Old Testament. It might therefore seem strange indeed that such a momentous event would be comprehended by Revelation in a single clause as brief as: "...and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." It is almost as if the statement were actually designed to escape the attention. However, it is to be remembered that the last thing Jesus did before ascending into heaven was to deny His apostles' request for more information on this very subject (Acts 1:6-7). Accordingly, Paul implied that God had wrapped this subject in great mystery (Rom 11:33-36). So the brevity of the statement in Revelation is not so surprising after considering these facts.

The reason the conversion of the Jews would bring on the seventh trumpet, and spell the end of the earth, is to be found in the promises God made to their fathers. The word of God is eternal and is stunningly harmonious when properly interpreted. It never has God forgetting any promise He has ever made. Some of His promises to Israel were:

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach

them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. – Dt 11:18-21

The first part of this statement was fair warning by God that the Jews would surely misinterpret His word with anything short of the most assiduous study. This prophecy did of course come to pass. Modern Christianity is quickly moving into the same precarious position. But the final words of this statement so much as promised that God would give them a heaven on earth if they would hear and obey Him. This is a sizeable promise, as is also:

Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever. – Dt 4:40

This verse surely says that the earth would be given them forever if they obeyed, and it could be construed as saying they individually would live on it forever too. Additionally, it was promised that there would not be a single male or female among them that would be barren, whether of men or cattle, and that God would take from them “*all*” sickness (Dt 7:14-15). God also said they would eat bread without scarceness and they would “*not lack any thing,*” (Dt 8:9). Now these are things that cannot happen on an earth that simultaneously has the curse of sin enforced against it. Indeed, such things cannot even happen in the 1000-year earthly reign imagined by most premillennialists. They can only happen on a newly formed earth that is void of sin.

No doubt many Bible readers have taken these statements as being somewhat exaggerated, but this is plainly a precarious way to interpret scripture. If the Bible exaggerated here, then why not elsewhere, including in places that all Christians hope to be literal? This dubious method of interpretation is the common hermeneutic of preterists. The habit of the Bible is to use earthly things to represent heavenly things and small things to represent big things, but the preterist does the opposite, arguing that big things in the Bible, expressed in language suggesting the momentous, are in fact exaggerations, and intend no more than obscure events that we find documented (sometimes dubiously) in a few uninspired history books.

Others will dismiss these promises on the claim that they were part of a broken covenant that has been nullified. While the Old Covenant was indeed broken by the Israelites and done away by God, the promises considered above were clearly given in support of earlier promises that had been made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all of whom were long prior to the law. When we say the Old Covenant was done away, we do not mean that the promises to the patriarchs were done away, or that God’s reward for righteousness is any less than before; rather, the meaning is that the moral law has been done away as a hypothesized means of salvation, and that the ceremonial law has terminated in its Grand Antitype.

If Israel is turned by God to Christ, then its sins are remitted and His righteousness is theirs, and most importantly, the end-objective of salvation will be met in that Jesus Christ will be given glory for it. When these conditions are met, the promises to their fathers will come to bear. The old sin-contaminated, sin-debilitated world must end and a blessed new heavens and earth be put in its place. As Paul said, “*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*” (Rom 11:15). These facts probably explain why God has allowed Israel to sink into infidelity and be cast away for over two millennia. God is not done with this earth and He is not ready for it to end. He must first finish His harvest of a multitude of Gentiles (Rom 11:25-29). But when this is done, and Israel is brought to Christ, particularly the city of Jerusalem, the days of this planet will be very few. Satan knows this, and this is why he absolutely must extinguish this fire ignited in the latter-day Jewish remnant lest it burn down his entire kingdom.

Jezebel of old, who also rode the back of a beastly king and who also was drunk with the blood of God’s prophets, was hell-bent on the destruction of Elijah for exactly the same reason. Jezebel obviously portended the Babylonian Harlot, and from this we can infer who Elijah portended as well. In the last act of the great drama of his ministry, he will represent the Israelite remnant of the last days, alternately symbolized by the woman in Revelation 12 and the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14.

43) In her rage against Elijah for destroying her prophets, Jezebel swore, “*So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time,*” (1Ki 19:2). In this careless statement, Jezebel passed sentence on herself and prophesied her own demise, and also of the Babylonian Harlot she portended. The beast that the harlot will seek to manipulate will eventually secure the allegiance of the very devils that Jezebel called “gods.” This beast may submit to the harlot in the beginning, but he has his own agenda to exalt himself above all that is called god or that is worshipped (2Thes 2:4). This would include even the false gods and religions that preceded him and that would presume to rival him (Dn 11:36-37). The beast and harlot are therefore on a collision course, and in the end, he will destroy her with fire (Rev 17:16-18). These times are “*the day of vengeance of our God*” (Isa 61:1-3), and the Lord will do to the harlot as she had purposed to do to the other woman of Revelation 12. The harlot intended to destroy this woman by the beast, but she will instead be destroyed herself by the beast. As for the Jezebel of old, she would soon be destroyed by Jehu, who convincingly feigned himself as a worshipper of the Lord but was in fact a friend of devils (2Ki 10:29-33, Hos 1:4).

44) Elijah fled from Jezebel, though not so much in fear as in being distraught that Israel would not repent even after the spectacular wonders they had seen at his hand. Jews and Christians today are in awe of what Elijah did at Mount Carmel, but he viewed himself as a failure there. He had wanted to turn the hearts of Israel to his beloved Lord. Instead, he had very little effect. This was indeed an ominous portent of things to come. Israel then had been presented with powerful pictures of Jesus Christ and had been unaffected. The prophetic potency of this fact

should be clear. In the perspective of Elijah, there had never been a more defiling moment in their history, or one where their case seemed more hopeless.

Elijah was possibly also somewhat confused. The prophecy of Malachi predicted that Elijah would be the great reformer of Israel. While this of course had not yet been written, Elijah possibly had premonitions of it. He seemed to know well in advance that God intended to rapture him out of the world (1Ki 19:4), and indeed, later text will suggest that God had revealed this fact to every true prophet on the planet (2Ki 2). But Elijah may have thought that Mount Carmel would be the magical moment of reform. Instead, it proved a monumental failure. Being despondent and disillusioned, Elijah fled from Jezebel, and sadly, the great raven went into retreat.

Both Jews and Christians have been puzzled that a prophet so powerful, who boldly confronted kings and called down fire from heaven, would flee from this wicked woman. Anyone would have assumed that he had power to incinerate her. But as already explained, Elijah was now foreshadowing the latter-day remnant. He will play her part even if out of character with himself. Now Daniel said of this remnant and of the antichrist:

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. – Dn 7:25

John said essentially the same thing:

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. – Rev 13:5-7

So these prophecies plainly state that God will temporarily permit this wicked beast to prevail against the saints. Of course, all Christians are anxious to know the extent to which this will be done and the extent to which it will happen outside of Israel. These questions may not have clear answers, but it surely appears that Jewish saints will at least be forced to retreat from him.

45) In his own retreat, Elijah first traveled south to Judah, where he left his servant, and he then traveled into the wilderness across Jordan to the southeast. This was the same wilderness in which the children of Israel had wandered before entering Canaan. In all this, Elijah was again foreshadowing the Israelite remnant of the last days. Several scriptures had said or suggested that God would grant her refuge in this wilderness (Hos 2:14-15, Ps 74:14, Jer 31:1-2, Ezek 20:33-38, Ps 55:6-11, Zech 14:4-5). The clearest of these verses were in Revelation 12 where it spoke of the woman with the crown, stars, etc.:

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. – Rev 12:6

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. – Rev 12:14

46) When Elijah reached the wilderness, he wished to die, saying, “*It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers,*” (1Ki 19:4). This statement strongly suggests that Elijah had a premonition that God intended to rapture him out of the world without dying. Considering himself to be a failure, and unworthy of such an honor, he requested to die in the manner of his fathers. His request was denied because Elijah prefigured the remnant, and these in fact will never die but will be raptured by Jesus Christ.

47) The two scriptures from Revelation 12 quoted above stated that the remnant would be miraculously fed or nourished in the wilderness. Accordingly, an angel met Elijah and gave him food and water.

48) Notwithstanding her hateful oath, Elijah was saved from the wrath of Jezebel, even as the remnant will be saved in the last days (Mt 24:44-47, Lk 21:36, Rev 3:10).

After being fed of the angel, Elijah journeyed forty days and nights to Mount Horeb (better known as Sinai) where the law had been given to Moses. Elijah ate nothing during this time, being sustained by what the angel had given him. The journey to Horeb could have been made in only a few days, so he did a considerable amount of meandering as he went, even as the children of Israel did in their wanderings of forty years. He climbed to near the top of the mount and there spoke with God. This conversation ended with his wrapping his face in his mantle. Now these things were in imitation of Exodus 34:27-35, where Moses spent forty days and nights on Horeb, also without food, also speaking with God and also ending with a covering over his face. However, there was one enormous difference: Moses had gone up the mount to intercede *for* Israel after they transgressed with the calf, but Elijah went up to intercede *against* Israel (Rom 11:2). Accordingly, God appeared to be the adversary to Israel in the earlier case, but He would be its advocate in the dialogue with Elijah. This huge difference was owing to the fact that, in Elijah’s great offering back at Mount Carmel, Israel had symbolically obtained a *heavenly* advocate. The New Testament reveals Him:

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. – Rom 8:34

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. – 1Jn 2:1-2

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus... – 1Tim 2:5

The conversation between God and Elijah commenced with God asking, “*What doest thou here, Elijah?*” (1Ki 19:9). When God asks men questions, He does it for rhetorical purposes only, to challenge them to consider more deeply the issue embraced by the question. Elijah was in the wrong place, and Mount Horeb is no place for any sensible man to seek refuge. Nonetheless, even the elect of God will attempt it early in their experience, trying to earn heaven with their own obedience to the law. However, this will end in failure and contrition, and with their wrapping their face in a mantle. Now Elijah famously replied:

I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. – 1Ki 19:14

Elijah loved his nation, but loved Jesus Christ even more. He was incensed that they would disregard and dishonor Him after He had been displayed in such spectacular and touching ways. In his list of complaints, Elijah first named the fact that Israel had forsaken the covenant, which had of course been given from this very mount. Elijah was there to argue the case against Israel on such account. The question God asked of Elijah indicated there was something amiss in the prophet’s thinking. First, it was not his appointed role to be a fleeing refugee in the wilderness. While this would be suitable for the remnant he was portending, it was not for Elijah himself. He was God’s great raven, ordained to confront and oppose wickedness, especially in Israel. He had been empowered by God against even the likes of Jezebel, and will be empowered against the Babylonian Harlot and the beast. Accordingly, when this conversation was done, God sent him back to Israel with mighty power to resume and perpetuate his war against their errors. Second, it was not for him to argue the case against the *entire* nation. Throughout history, God had often spared many on account of a few, and in some cases for even one, and the changeless God would continue to do so. The third error God would correct in a most dramatic way:

God ordered the prophet to go stand upon the mount. God then caused spectacular wonders to transpire before the prophet’s eyes. In particular, He caused a miraculous wind, a miraculous earthquake and then a miraculous fire, but curiously, the Bible said the Lord was in none of these. Obviously, the Lord was in them in the sense of being their cause, but there was no communication or communion with God in them. By this the Lord was showing that Israel had never been converted by displays of signs and wonders, nor would it ever be. They had neither been converted by the wonders done in Egypt, nor by the parting of the Red Sea, nor by the heavenly manna in the wilderness, and so forth, nor even by the spectacular signs recently performed by Elijah himself.

However, the Bible says that God then spoke to Elijah with “*a still small voice.*” The prophet instantly reacted by wrapping his face in his mantle. Moses had come from the mount with a

veil over his face to cover his glory, but Elijah wrapped his face in contrition for his severe oversight. The still, small voice of God, speaking directly to the hearts and souls of men, had been, and would continue to be, the cause of love in man's heart, even when unreciprocated. It had caused men to sacrifice themselves for one another. It had brought men joy in times of sorrow. It had brought them peace, longsuffering, gentleness and goodness. It had caused them to believe in times of despair. All beauty that could be found in man had been caused – not by wind, earthquake or fire, but – by the voice of God speaking silently to their souls. This voice of God would do vastly more to affect the history of the world than wind, earthquake and fire, and most importantly, it would produce the conversion in Israel that signs and wonders had not.

49) Many years later, the conversation between Elijah and the Lord would be replicated and fulfilled in the most famous religious dialogue in the history of Christianity. A Jewish ruler named Nicodemus came to Jesus saying, “*Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,*” (Jn 3:2). This was an errant statement, and anyone familiar with the history of Israel should have known better. Neither Nicodemus nor anyone else could truly know the Lord Jesus Christ merely on the basis of miracles, and the entirety of their history so said. Jesus then began to teach Nicodemus the necessity of being born again or of being born from above. Jesus said, “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,*” (Jn 3:3). This was to say that a man could not perceive the kingdom, and therefore neither the King, unless the still, small voice of God had spoken to his heart and changed it. In absence of this, a man will not believe even if one were to rise from the dead (Lk 16:31). Unfortunately, most modern Christians reverse the cause and effect in John 3:3. They say that by seeing the kingdom or its King, a man can be born again. This idea was refuted over and over again by the Old Testament, especially on Mount Horeb. Jesus said that being born again is *prerequisite* to perceiving the kingdom, and therefore *prerequisite* to perceiving the King.

Jesus would also speak of the still, small voice in:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. – Jn 5:25-29

Hence, it is the voice of Jesus Christ that raises men from spiritual death, even as it will raise them from bodily death. The first voice is still and small; the latter will be a shout that shakes the earth (1Thes 4:16).

50) In testifying against Israel, and in being jealous for his God, Elijah was continuing to foreshadow things to come, but in a strange twist, he became a prophecy of himself.

Many years later, Jesus took His closest disciples to the top of a mountain, and there they saw Him transfigured in glory with Moses and Elijah standing at His side. Moses and Elijah then became the two olive trees standing by the Lord of the whole earth, as prophesied by Zechariah and later cited by John (Zech 4, Rev 11:4). When Peter witnessed this glorious scene, he hastily proposed that tabernacles be built to all three, but a voice from heaven corrected him, saying, “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,*” (Mt 17:5). Now these disciples had been raised up as dutiful members of a Jewish religious system whose ongoing leaders claimed to honor Moses and Elijah, but these same leaders had no honor for Jesus Christ. If this conflict had left any doubts in the minds of these disciples, those doubts were demolished on this particular day. The Christ-denying religious system of the Jews is instantly and permanently destroyed upon showing that Moses and Elijah are themselves Christians. These two men were objects of supreme honor to the Jews. Moses was the icon of their law. Elijah was the icon of their prophets. So on this Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah did once again effectively testify against Israel in jealousy for his Lord.

But the most spectacular instance of this is yet to come. In the last book of the Bible, John said:

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. – Rev 11:1

To measure a thing in the Bible commonly meant to judge it (2Ki 21:13, Job 31:6, Isa 65:7, Dn 5:27, Hab 3:6, Mt 7:2). Such is the case here. The temple and altar are symbols denoting the deranged Jewish religious system, and the prophecy is describing God’s final judgment against it. With this judgment He will forever end it. Now the very next thing John said was:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. – Rev 11:3-6

These two witnesses; who had power to devour their adversaries with fire, to stop the heavens from raining, to turn water into blood, and to smite the earth with plagues at will; are the same two men who stood with Jesus on the mount. They will also serve the same purpose as they did then. By showing themselves to be followers of Christ, they will produce the final collapse of Judaism, and turn Israel to Jesus Christ. After these two men appeared with Jesus on the mount, He commanded His disciples not to divulge what they had seen (Mt 17:9) because it was then His purpose to hide Himself from Israel, but the latter-day appearance of these two will be seen

by the whole world (Rev 11:9-10). Then the intriguing prophecy of Malachi will be fulfilled: *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse,”* (Mal 4:5-6). However, there is much more to tell, and the saga will continue for purposes of providing further detail.

Elijah was near the end of his career when on Mount Horeb. After being admonished, God gave him some final instructions that included provision for his replacement:

Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him. – 1Ki 19:15-18

This statement was almost definitely a symbolic prophecy of things in the distant future because there is no record of Elijah anointing either Hazael or Jehu, nor is there record of Elisha slaying anyone, and even the chronological ordering in the statement seems to be reversed from actual occurrence. Elijah did in fact appoint Elisha, and there was also a literal faithful remnant of 7000 at that time; however, even these had symbolic meanings. The main idea in the prophecy was that Israel would be thoroughly purged, yet leaving a large number who would be dedicated to the Lord. Recall that Amos 9:1-10 described God as thoroughly filtering that nation, even as corn is sifted in a sieve, and God said not a single grain would fall to the ground. The earthquake of Revelation 11:13 is likely symbolic of the last shake of this sieve. We can speculate that Hazael symbolized foreign oppressors over the ages and that Jehu represented the beast, but the purge will end with Elisha, and his symbolic meaning is clearer and of greater importance.

Elijah will shortly be raptured out of the world, leaving Elisha on the ground watching him depart. In all this, Elijah will be a symbol of the raptured remnant, whereas Elisha will primarily symbolize the elect Jews who will then be left behind. These latter Jews will begin in such a deplorable spiritual condition that John described them as *“Sodom and Egypt”* (Rev 11:8), and indeed, all the elect of God before regeneration *“were by nature the children of wrath, even as others,”* (Eph 2:3). However, the power of God’s grace is such that some of the most zealous Christians in history have been taken from the worst of infidels. Paul is the most famous instance of this. Paul identified himself as properly belonging with latter-day Jews who will be graciously turned to Christ; however, he said that he was *“born out of due time”* (1Cor 15:8), meaning that he was born early (as implied by the Greek). This was done that he might serve as a pattern of what was to follow (1Tim 1:15-16). These claims should surely capture the astute attention of anyone familiar with the zeal of Paul after being converted.

51) When Elijah went to appoint the young Elisha per God's commandment, Elisha was found plowing in a field wherein were twelve yoke of oxen, and the Bible said Elisha was plowing with the twelfth (1Ki 19:19). So there were twelve men plowing in this field with their respective yokes of oxen. These facts introduce yet another strange sequence of events in the Bible that serve as a red flag to the astute reader. Now to plow with the twelfth was not a good thing. There were also twelve apostles, and in all places where they were fully named, Judas Iscariot was listed as the twelfth (Mt 10:2-4, Mk 3:14-19, Lk 6:13-16). Since the times of Jesus until now, unconverted Jews have traduced the faithful eleven apostles as being ignorant and unlearned men, and the same revilers have joined with Judas in betraying their Messiah. However, as Elijah walked past Elisha in the field, he cast upon him his mantle. Now this mantle of Elijah was one of the most potent symbols of the Old Testament. Symbolically, it was as charged as a lightning bolt with the Holy Spirit of God. The young man became electrified with the Holy Spirit, and so will those that he portends.

52) Elisha then ran after Elijah and asked whether he could kiss his father and mother before continuing with him. Elijah replied, "*Go back again: for what have I done to thee?*" (1Ki 19:20). The answer suggested that something had been done that was momentous, irreversible and enduring. The young man would therefore bid farewell to the beloved Old Covenant and embark upon a new one.

53) When Elisha returned, he slew his yoke of oxen, cooked them with fire fueled by the plow and gear, and then fed them to the other workers. This symbolized the repentance of latter-day Jews of their former condition wherein they had ploughed with Judas in betraying their Messiah (Zech 12:10). Judas was fed to the other eleven in the sense that God would overrule his wicked intents to fulfill and corroborate what the eleven would later preach (e.g. Ps 74:13-14).

54) The purge that will end with Elisha likely derives from the great zeal and conviction of the Jews after the Holy Spirit is poured upon them in the final days of earth. The same Jews that had dishonored Jesus for so long will not tolerate any denial or dishonor to Him whatsoever. They will expel the man of sin from their city, and I think all other Christ-rejecters as well, thrusting them all away to be destroyed when Christ returns (Amos 9:1-10, Zech 13:1-5, Rev 11:13).

The final days of Elijah were recorded in the first two chapters of 2Kings. In these he continued to portend events of the second coming. In particular:

55) In these days, he twice called down fire from heaven on hostile military forces that were sent to abduct him. In this He foreshadowed himself in his latter-day appearance. It was said of the two witnesses, "*And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed,*" (Rev 11:5). This plainly divulges the great power that Elijah will have against the man of sin and his military.

56) The scriptures then relate how Elijah was raptured out of the world. Being then accompanied by Elisha, he crossed over Jordan, miraculously parting its waters as he went,

which he did by smiting them with his mantle. He journeyed a short distance into the wilderness region east of Jordan where the Jewish remnant will be protected in the last days. As already explained, Elijah will be a part of this remnant, and God used him in this last episode of his life to foreshadow it. This remnant will be raptured out of the world, as is explained in Revelation 14:1-5, and it will become the first-fruits of the resurrection and rapture to follow. Even so, Elijah was famously and gloriously caught up to heaven to prefigure this event.

57) Revelation explicitly speaks of two raptures that will occur prior to the destructive return of Jesus Christ. The first was of the two witnesses (Rev 11:11). The second was of the 144,000 first-fruits (Rev 14:1-4), who are the same as the remnant symbolized by the woman in the wilderness. Revelation describes no pre-destruction raptures apart from these. Popular theories about pre-tribulation and mid-tribulation raptures have no real evidence and are based on conjecture and wishful thinking. Now the two raptures that are actually named will occur *at the same time*. The proof of this is simple: The two witnesses will be raised after 1260 days and the woman will abide in the wilderness for the same period, thus both will make their exodus at the same time. This fact divulges yet other wonders in the word of God. It means that the order in the resurrection and rapture will be: a) Christ at His first coming, then b) the two witnesses, who are instantly followed by c) the rapture of the remnant in the wilderness, then d) the resurrection and rapture of the entire remainder of the elect family of God. This provides further explanation for why Moses will be one of the two witnesses. One of the harshest actions God ever took against one of His own servants was in denying Moses the privilege of leading the children of Israel into Canaan; however, it now appears that Moses will have the far greater honor of leading the entire elect family of God into the True Promised Land in the glorious resurrection.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,” (1Cor 15:58).

58) When the two witnesses are killed by the beast, the entire wicked world will rejoice, and the beast, who had been frustrated by these prophets for 3.5 years, will appear to have finally secured a victory. However, their perverted celebration will prove very short, and indeed, Daniel said the celebrated event will etch their undoing in stone (Dn 12:7). The reason is that when the Elijah of old was raptured out of the world, his mantle fell back to earth, conferring upon Elisha a doubling of his power. The rapture of Elijah foreshadowed the rapture of the first-fruits remnant, and Elisha foreshadowed those elect who will be left behind. This will include many then living, especially in Jerusalem, and multiplied millions in graves all over the world. The beast and his wicked worshippers had barely survived the spiritual whirlwind of Elijah, but now they will be confronted by a spiritual hurricane. The Spirit of God will be poured out on Jerusalem in degrees never surpassed in history, and surely not since the Day of Pentecost (Joel 2:27-32, Zech 12:9-10, Isa 45:8).

In fact, the Day of Pentecost prefigured this outpouring, and this is why Peter, when explaining what was then happening, quoted from a scripture in Joel that *clearly* pertains to the second coming. The Day of Pentecost was an important event in its own right, but as shown all over this

book, God uses important events to portend yet other important events. Consider also that the last question asked of Jesus before leaving the earth was whether He would then restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). He replied saying, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...."* His answer might appear to have changed the subject but it did not. He implied that when they experienced the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they would receive a partial answer to the question they had just asked. Now on the Day of Pentecost, a small remnant of 120 exploded into thousands after the Holy Spirit was mightily poured down upon them all. The same pattern will hold at His second coming.

Add to this that the church was empowered on the Day of Pentecost with a remnant of 120, primarily taken from the tribe of Judah. The latter-day remnant was represented as 144,000. The motivation for the larger number might be thus: In His famous parable of the sower, Jesus put maximum yield on the word of God at a hundredfold (Mt 13:1-9). Applying this to the 120 seeds with which the church was planted, we would have 12,000 per tribe, and application to all tribes would produce 144,000. The idea would then be that, notwithstanding all the failings and disappointments of Israel, God's word to them will take full effect in the end.

59) Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah and went back to Jordan River and smote the waters with it as Elijah had done. The waters miraculously parted and Elisha crossed over to the other side. Accordingly, the entire elect family of God will cross over to the other side to the True Promised Land only days or weeks after the first-fruits are taken.

60) After Elijah was caught up to heaven, 50 lesser prophets spent three days searching for him in the mountains and valleys. They did this even though Elisha urged them not to go. The possible reason was that they were unwittingly acting the part of some very wicked antitypes.

Revelation 17:3 represented the Babylonian Harlot as riding on the back of the beast in the wilderness, and, as already explained, they were bent on murdering the good woman in the same wilderness. This would likely be done by military forces under their command. If the remnant were being protected there, one must wonder why the harlot and beast would even be allowed access to the region, particularly after Daniel said the beast would be unable to conquer it (Dn 11:41). One possible explanation is that the harlot and beast will be searching for a woman who is *already gone*, having been taken by God, thus eliminating all reason for Him to shield the region from invasion. The military forces of the beast might therefore pour into the region in a vain search of the remnant, even as the 50 prophets went on a vain search for Elijah. Those forces will have then stepped into a trap. The Bible says the sword of God will come down on that same region and go from there to the entire world (Isa 34:1-10, 63:1-6, Hab 3:1-5).

In conclusion of this lengthy chapter, there is little doubt that Elijah would have been deified and worshipped as a god in the pagan, Gentile cultures of his times. He surely would have abhorred this. He even objected to the greatness God gave him. This would be understandable if the

divine plan were for Israel to be converted by the Holy Ghost under Elijah's ministry and resurrection when it had not done this under Jesus Christ. God would not honor anyone this way unless that person could truly say, "*I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.*"

Joshua

It is a well-known fact that “Joshua” and “Jesus” are the same name, though in different languages. The equivalence of the names is perhaps more than coincidental because Joshua was a powerful type of Jesus as He will be at His second coming, and the fall of Jericho and the conquest of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua were orchestrated by God to portend important events that will occur at the end of the world. Indeed, the book of Joshua tells much the same story as the book of Revelation, though in brilliantly constructed types.

Nowhere are these claims more evident than in the procedure ordered by God for the taking of Jericho (Josh 6). The Jews were commanded to march about the city once each day for a period of six days. This was to be done carrying and blowing seven trumpets. But on the seventh day, the city was to be encircled seven times, and on the seventh circuit, the seven trumpets were to be blown. On the final blast of these trumpets, all the people were ordered to shout, upon which God promised that the walls of the city would fall. The people were commanded to be in absolute silence until the order to shout.

All of this has undeniable correlation to the book of Revelation. In chapters 6-10 of that book, there is the breaking of seven seals of a scroll. The scroll had been partially wrapped and then sealed, then wrapped more and sealed again, and so forth, until sealed seven times. As the seals are broken, the scroll is unwound, disclosing its contents. In similar manner, as the children of Israel marched about Jericho seven times, they were effectively “unwinding” the city. With the breaking of the seventh seal in Revelation, seven trumpets were dispensed, which were blown individually in series, but upon the sound of the seventh trump, the following will occur:

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. – Rev 10:5-7

That is, the earth will fall on the seventh trump even as did the walls of Jericho. As for the shout of the people, this too portended things to come, as can be seen in this passage:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. – 1Thes 4:15-17

Even the silence commanded of the people prior to the shout was prophetic. John said, “*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour,*” (Rev 8:1).

Both events will also be accompanied by the appearance of the archangel. In the case of Joshua, such angel commanded that he remove his shoe because he stood on holy ground (Josh 5:13-15). This was enigmatic at the time. No explanation was then given for why the ground was to be counted holy, but all would be manifest over a millennium later when John the Baptist began to baptize there (see Jn 1:28 where “Bethabara” means “the house of the crossing”). Also, Jesus from there initiated His journey to the cross (Jn 10:40), resurrecting Lazarus as He went, and I think it likely He will traverse the same location from the air upon His return as He enters Israel from the southeast, resurrecting as He goes (coming from Edom per Isa 63 & Hab 3).

Prior to taking the city, Joshua sent two spies to evaluate it (ch 2). Even so, God will send his two witnesses into the world before destroying it (Rev 11:3). Finally, and most importantly, as the city of Jericho was destroyed, none were spared except those under the protection of a scarlet thread, and none will be spared in the fall of the world except those under the blood of Christ.

Parallels to Revelation continue thereafter. In the 10th chapter, Joshua is described as destroying ten Canaanite kings, even as there will be ten horns of the beast, all representing latter day kings (Rev 17:12-17). When the first five were routed by Joshua, they fled and took refuge in a cave, but Joshua sealed the entrance of it, leaving them there for a time and thereafter releasing and destroying them. In like manner, God will seal Satan and various kings in the bottomless pit for 1000 years (Isa 24:21-22, Rev 20:1-3) with the intent of releasing them later and casting them into the lake of fire (Isa 26:10-11, Rev 20:7-10). Then in the 11th chapter of Joshua, the desperate Canaanites assembled their largest force ever, whose numbers were described “*even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude*” (11:4), which is exactly the same description applied to Gog and Magog in Revelation 20. Gog and Magog are presented in Revelation as launching the final, desperate campaign of evil against the kingdom of God. In both the former and latter conflicts, Joshua utterly destroyed all, even as Christ will do when He returns.

These parallels with Revelation 20 offer suggestions that would debunk every major theory concerning the millennium of Revelation 20:1-9. This is one of the most difficult subjects in the Bible. It requires more explanation than I am able to provide, and I do not intend to provide even what I am able, but will offer a few paragraphs for the consideration of astute readers.

As shown all over this book, Old Testament miracles nearly always foreshadowed things concerning Jesus Christ. One of the most astounding miracles of the Bible occurred during the events of Joshua 10 and 11. While the Canaanite kings were in desperate retreat (Josh 10), Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still in order to give the Israelites sufficient time to destroy them. The Bible says these heavenly bodies obeyed, remaining stationary for almost a full day. The magnitude of this miracle is surprising even to Bible believers, and the Bible itself

puts emphasis on it by saying, “*And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel,*” (Josh 10:14).

The Bible appears to say this astronomical anomaly occurred while the five wicked kings were incarcerated in the cave. This would have some highly unexpected effects. In particular, if those kings had been wearing luminous wristwatches while in the cave, they would have perceived the passage of a full day, whereas time outside the cave had actually stopped altogether, or at least when measuring by the sun and moon. These are of course the most important timing criteria used by the world over its history. If there is prophetic significance to this, then it likely means that the 1000-year incarceration in the bottomless pit will not be matched by an equal span of time on earth, and indeed, the span on the latter might be near-nil.

Since the millennial reign with Christ is concurrent with this incarceration, it might be subject to the same time anomaly, though this would mean that the reign will not occur on earth but will happen in heaven instead. This would be a major departure from all major theories on the millennium because, notwithstanding all their differences, they are alike in that all of them put the millennium on earth. Some argue it will happen in the future. Some say it has already happened or is presently happening. Some argue it will literally happen, whereas others say it will happen only in a spiritual sense. But all of them have it happening on earth, or at least they all measure it in terms of earthly time.

However, the eschatological applicability of the time anomaly in the days of Joshua is indicated by the fact that Habakkuk said the sun and moon would also stand “*still in their habitation*” at the destructive return of Christ (Hab 3:11). Isaiah added that these astronomical bodies would then become “*confounded*” or confused, and that such would continue through the glorious reign of Christ thereafter (Isa 24:23). Accordingly, the angel declaring the defeat of the beast and his armies was seen “*standing in the sun*” (Rev 19:17), as though something momentous would then happen to that heavenly body, and the very next angel marked the commencement of the millennium (Rev 20:1-2). Finally, recall the earlier declaration that with the seventh and last trump “*there should be time no longer,*” (Rev 10:6). All these things are suggesting that, as in the days of Joshua, strange things will be happening to time when Christ returns, and that our usual assumptions about it will not then pertain.

Consider also that when Peter described the last days, he spoke of the earth being destroyed and replaced with a new earth, but he said nothing of the intervening millennium described by John (2Pet 3:7-13, Rev 20:1-9). This is a significant difference that has proven highly problematic for Bible interpreters. The difference is especially surprising after considering that these two scriptural writers were not only inspired by the same Spirit but were also close personal friends. However, if the millennium is to be in heaven, then we are presented with a potential solution, namely, that Peter described the last days as they will appear to an earthly observer, whereas John described them from a heavenly perspective. An earthly observer would not see the millennium because the millennium does not occur on earth.

Add to this that the accounts of these two New Testament writers are curiously alike in that both make strange references to a period of 1000 years. John spoke of the enigmatic 1000-year incarceration and reign, but Peter, in context of the same general subject, warned that 1000 years in heaven could translate to a single day on earth, and vice versa. So these New Testament writers presented us with a time anomaly that matches what we find in the parallel, allegorical depiction of Joshua. Allowance for such an anomaly would reconcile John's long interval between the two resurrections with other scriptures wherein they are presented as being near-concurrent (Dn 12:2, Jn 5:28-29, 2Tim 4:1, Mt 13:40-43) and with both occurring at the end of the world (Job 14:12-15, Mt 13:37-43, 13:47-50, Jn 11:24).

This leaves the problem of explaining the attack of Gog and Magog at the end of the millennium (Rev 20:7-9). Now the common assumption is that these wicked hordes are people who had lived a subdued existence during the millennium but will openly rebel at its end. The better explanation is that these are people who will be *dead* during the millennium and be resurrected at its end. When John said these people "*went up on the breadth of the earth*," his meaning was that they were seen as coming up out of the ground.

Indeed, this was his likely motivation for selecting the terms "*Gog*" and "*Magog*" to describe them. All know that John was here borrowing these terms from Ezekiel. John's intent was to capture the mystique with which these wicked entities were presented in that book. Now Ezekiel described Gog as a prince who will rule over Magog, Meshech and Tubal in the last days. These will attempt an attack against Israel but be foiled by the power of God. This attack will happen at least seven years before the second coming of Christ (Ezek 39:9). The antichrist will likely be part of this attack, but he will not yet have ascended to his ultimate degree of power. The three attackers could possibly be the three displaced horns on Daniel's beast (Dn 7:20), and these three horns could all be situated on the same wounded head of the beast seen by John (Rev 13:3). As is commonly the case in the Bible, this important event will foreshadow yet more, namely, the post-resurrection attack seen by John. The Ezekiel account is very mysterious in that he had portrayed these attackers as *already* being in hell back in his 32nd chapter (32:25-28). How did they get out of hell to attack? Further, the nation they will attack per chapters 38 and 39 had been portrayed as already *resurrected* in chapter 37. So the general idea being foreshadowed was that the wicked will be taken from hell and resurrected, and these will vainly presume to attack the resurrected righteous. The divine intent in this will be to show the utter incorrigibility of the wicked and the justice of their eternal damnation (see Isa 26:10-11).

The deluded intent of these wicked attackers will be to seize what John called "*the beloved city*," (Rev 20:9). Many assume this city will be a blissful Jerusalem that will exist on the present earth during its alleged millennium. The problem is that such a Jerusalem is nowhere to be found in the New Testament, not even in Revelation itself. Rather, the New Testament only speaks of a blissful Jerusalem that is presently in heaven, and it says this city will be relocated to the new earth when the millennium is done (Gal 4:21-31, Heb 11:10-16, 12:22-24, 13:14, Rev 3:12, 14:1-5, 21:1-2, 21:10-27, 22:14-21). Now the Old Testament had numerous depictions of a glorious

Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Those who contend that such will be located on the present earth invariably point to these passages as proof. However, these texts hurt their theory more than help it. The reason is they are so numerous that it becomes unthinkable that a divinely inspired New Testament could have neglected them (Ps 2:6, 9:11, 48:1-2, 50:2-3, 87:1-3, 125:1, 128:4-5, 132:11-14, 134, 135:21, Isa 2:3, 8:18, 12:6, 24:20-23, 33:20, 52:1-2, 65:17-19, Jer 8:19, Joel 3:16-21, Zech 14:8-9, Mic 4:1-8). The better theory is that when the New Testament spoke of a heavenly Jerusalem and Mount Zion, and when it claimed these would be relocated to the new earth, it was intentionally presenting us a divinely inspired solution to the many Old Testament passages at issue. The “*beloved city*” is therefore nothing other than the New Jerusalem.

This raises the question of whether the wicked will be resurrected on the old earth or the new one. A possible reason the Bible is not clear about this is that both ideas could be partially true. The new earth might be constructed from the ruins of the old one. This would happen in what Peter called “*the times of restitution of all things*” (Acts 3:21) and what Christ called “*the regeneration*,” (Mt 19:28). This would explain why certain passages describe the earth as standing forever (Ps 78:69, 104:5, Eccl 1:4). The Lord’s specific promise is: “*Behold, I make all things new*,” (Rev 21:5). The promise is not that He will make “all new things” but that He will make “*all things new*.” This is the hope for all the righteous in the grave, and I think for the earth itself. The resurrection of the wicked and the removal of their condemned bodies to the lake of fire would be part of this cleansing transformation. It should be viewed as occurring in the transition from the old earth to the new one. On such account, when John described the resurrected wicked as encompassing the camp of the saints and the beloved city, this may have been descriptive only of their intents, which were connived in anticipation of a city that would eventually descend or was already descending.

The ultimate purpose in all this will be to demonstrate God’s justice in destroying the wicked. Indeed, great numbers of the Gog/Magog horde, and maybe all of them, might have been killed while besieging the earthly Jerusalem; notwithstanding, when they will be resurrected, they will attempt to immediately resume their wicked siege. Not even death and resurrection, nor even 1000-year incarceration, will rehabilitate them from their incorrigible wickedness. Given this and many other scriptural lessons to the same effect, it is a bewildering wonder that most professing Christians deny the doctrine of total depravity. They are so lost in an ideological fantasyland that they are near blind to clear teachings of the word of God on this point.

Returning to the times of Joshua, the parallels between the second coming and the taking of Canaan were also explicitly declared by Zechariah. After describing how God would gather all nations against Jerusalem in the last days, the prophet said, “*Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle*,” (Zech 14:3). By “*day of battle*” is meant the conquest of Canaan, when God did spectacular things such as parting Jordan, demolishing the walls of Jericho, raining down hailstones from heaven on the Canaanites and causing the sun and moon to stand still in the sky (Josh 10:11-14). Zechariah claimed those

times would parallel the end times, and as I have already shown, the points of similarity are numerous. To these we may add several more.

Joshua became the supreme leader of Israel after the death of Moses, who typified the law, and whose death marked the end of the law in the typology of the story. *“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,”* (Rom 10:4). Joshua then led the children of Israel from the wilderness into the Promised Land in a period of three days whereas Moses was unable to do it in 40 years. Accordingly, Christ did in three days what the law could not do in any period of time. Also, upon being made leader of the Jews, God made a promise to Joshua that would scarcely pertain to any man who has ever lived:

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. – Josh 1:5

The reason for this promise was that Joshua would serve to represent Him to whom *“every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,”* (Phil 2:10). Another interesting distinction of Joshua was that the Jews, who habitually rebelled against nearly all divinely appointed authorities, absolutely and heartily obeyed Joshua all the days of his life (Josh 1:16-18). In this he depicted Him of whom it was said, *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power”* (Ps 110:3) and *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”* (Jn 10:27) and *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,”* (Jn 6:37). Then when God said, *“I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,”* Joshua represented Him who said, *“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always,”* (Jn 11:41-42).

Next, God charged Joshua saying, *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success,”* (Josh 1:8). Accordingly, Christ said, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,”* (Mt 5:17-18). There has also never been a more successful man than He of whom it was said, *“...the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,”* (Isa 53:10).

Joshua ensured that all Israelites were circumcised before the siege of Jericho. Even so, all elect of God will be circumcised in heart before God destroys the world (Rom 2:28, Col 2:11, 2Pet 3:9). The place where this was done was named *“Gilgal,”* which means “rolling,” because God declared that He had then rolled away the reproaches of Egypt from His people, even as all His elect will be absolved of their sins in Christ before entering Heaven.

When God confirmed His covenant to Abraham by passing through the animal pieces, He first passed as a smoking furnace and then as a burning lamp (Gn 15:17). The furnace represented the trials they would endure in Egypt (Dt 4:20), but the burning lamp indicated that, after these trials

were done, God would use the Jewish people to enlighten the world. It was for this reason that all inspired books came from them, and all of those books, except possibly Job, were written after Egypt. God is also one who declares the end from the beginning and from ancient time things that are not yet done (Isa 46:10). So we see that from the beginning of the inspired books, God was declaring what His Son would do in the end. Some of the most vivid pictures of Christ were painted by God in the exodus from Egypt and in the taking of Canaan, but it is important to understand that these portraits were not only of His first coming but also of His second. With respect to the latter, there was never a more detailed picture than the one painted in Joshua.

Gideon

One of the greatest types of Christ at His second coming was Gideon and his militia in their epic destruction of the Midianites (Judges 6-7). The 83rd Psalm prophesies of a future time when the enemies of Israel will be united in a conspiracy to seize the land for themselves; however, the psalm says they will be destroyed in manner similar to the Midianites. Accordingly, in the famous prophecy of Isaiah 9:6, the prophet portrayed Jesus Christ as a promised child who would destroy the Assyrian, a symbol of the antichrist and his army. But the prophet had said earlier that such destruction would be as in the days of Midian (vs 4). So we have it on scriptural authority that the destruction of the Midianites portended greater things to come.

The story of Gideon began at a time when Israel had been occupied and decimated by Midianite invaders. These wicked hordes were described as being like “*grasshoppers*” (or “locusts”) and as the “*sand of the sea*” for multitude. Both characterizations were used in Revelation to describe multitudinous forces of evil in the last days (Rev 9:1-3, 20:8).

When Israel had no recourse but to cry unto the Lord for deliverance from this oppression, God sent them an unnamed prophet to witness against them. This mysterious prophet declared that their hardship was owing to their worshipping strange gods and forsaking the Lord, even after He had delivered them from Egypt and given them the land with mighty displays of wonders. The book of Revelation also presents God as sending unnamed prophets to Israel in the last days to do the same thing. These are the two witnesses of Revelation 11, who will prophesy for 3.5 years to Israel. I addressed these at length in the chapter on Elijah.

An angel then appeared to Gideon to declare that he had been chosen to save Israel from the Midianites. Remarkably, this declaration was made while Gideon was threshing near a winepress. This was a dire omen to the Midianites because the Book of Revelation describes Jesus at His destructive return as threshing the wicked and casting them into a winepress (Rev 14:15-20). Of course, Gideon could not have been sensible of the ominous nature of his actions, so he was skeptical of the angel’s claim. He protested that God had forsaken them and that He no longer did the sorts of miracles done under Moses in delivering Israel from Egypt. This situation is very apt to be descriptive of the world in the last days, especially among the Jews. Paul claimed that in such times there would be many “*having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,*” (2Tim 3:5). The Greek word for “*power*” commonly meant *miracle-working* power. So the idea was that people in the last days would have a religiosity about them but mixed with a strong dose of rationalism. Of course, this is a perfect description of millions in our own times, even among so-called Christians, but especially among the Jews, whose protracted trials and tribulations have moved many to question all miracles recorded in the very book they wrote.

Add to this what Paul famously said, “*For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom,*” (1Cor 1:22). Accordingly, in His ancient dealings with the Jews, God gave many signs, but those signs subsided when He redirected His word to the Gentiles. Of course, Gentiles delight in signs too, but it is more important to them that things make sense. Religious Jews can be commended for their rigorous adherence to the letter of the law even though they could not make sense of it. The Gentiles would not have done this. Now in the last days, God will work mightily among the Jews to convert them to Christ, and true to form, His signs will resume.

These Jewish tendencies can be seen in Gideon, who would not be convinced without an unreasonably protracted sequence of signs, but God was then disposed to grant them all, because He was orchestrating events to foreshadow a future point where the times of the Gentiles would be fulfilled and the times of the Jews would resume (Lk 21:24, Rom 11:25). This latter period will be very short, and concluded by the second coming of Christ, who accordingly said to the city of Jerusalem, “*Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,*” (Mt 23:39).

Gideon was then given a sequence of signs that were not only miraculous but also prophetic. In the first of these, he had brought an offering to the angel, but was commanded to place the offering on a rock. When the angel extended his staff to the rock and offering, fire came out of the rock and consumed the offering. This miracle was strikingly similar to what Moses had done in the wilderness, but this time fire came from the rock instead of water. All this was likely done to negate Gideon’s complaint that Israel could no longer depend on the types of miracles done by Moses in the deliverance from Egypt. The reason for fire instead of water was that the same Christ who is refreshing water to His people will be a consuming fire upon the wicked in the last days (2Thes 1:7-11). The annihilation of the offering denoted that it was accepted, and perhaps also denoted that Christ would terminate such offerings with His first coming.

Gideon wanted yet more assurance, so he took fleece and set it on a floor, and requested that, in the following morning, dew would be upon the fleece but not on the floor. The next morning, he found as he requested, and the fleece was so wet that a whole bowl of water could be wrung from it. Still wanting more assurance, Gideon requested for the opposite to occur the next morning, or that the fleece be dry but the floor be wet with dew. Once again, he found as he requested. Now it is a reliable rule of interpretation that where the Bible would seem ridiculous, the reader had best be on high alert. Such things are done by God to amuse the foolish and to amaze the wise. What happened to the fleece and floor was remarkably descriptive of the evolution of the spiritual state of the Jews and Gentiles over history. The watery dew, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, was initially on nothing but the fleece, which represented the sheep of Israel, who once had the Holy Spirit in such abundance that they wrote the entire Bible, but the dew was thereafter on the Gentiles all about Israel while Israel itself was completely dry. This latter state will remain until the final days of this earth.

God then gave Gideon yet another prophetic sign. He told Gideon to approach stealthily the camp of the Midianites and overhear their conversation. The Midianites were encamped in a nearby valley. Upon doing as commanded, Gideon heard one Midianite tell another that he had a dream wherein a barley cake tumbled down a mountain into the camp of the Midianites and overturned a tent. This tent was very likely the tent of their leader. The other Midianite replied that the dream was a prophecy of how they would be overthrown by the sword of Gideon. Hence, in accordance with the prior sign, the dew was upon the floor inasmuch as the Holy Spirit inspired the Gentiles to tell the dry, doubting Jews of things to come. This too will be true of the last days when Gentile Christians will help unbelieving Jews to understand their own book. Such Gentiles will tell, and have already told, what would seem to be a very unlikely story from them, namely, that multitudes of their own kind will be destroyed in the last days in the valleys of Israel in a foiled attempt to besiege Jerusalem (Ezek 39:11-15, Joel 3:2-14, Rev 16:16).

This then led to the glorious conclusion of the signs to Gideon, namely of the destructive barley cake. Barley has a higher yield than wheat and is therefore more suitable to poor people having limited land. This barley cake was therefore bread of the meanest kind, yet it overthrew the seemingly indestructible Midianites. Accordingly, the Jews, in following preconceived notions and in disregard to the word of God, expected a Messiah who would be a glorious worldly king. Instead, they got a barley cake. They failed to recognize Him notwithstanding the fact that God had repeatedly represented Him to them with the symbol of bread. This was done with Melchizedek, the manna in the wilderness, the showbread in the tabernacle, the meat offerings under the law and the communion bread of the Christian church. Yet this same barley cake will gloriously return, descending from on high, and deliver them from the Gentiles by destroying the antichrist with all his Gentile hordes.

Gideon assembled an army of 32,000 men to confront 135,000 Midianites. However, the law required that whenever Israel arrived at a battlefield and was nigh to the enemy, the soldiers were to be ordered that all who were fearful were to return promptly to their homes (Dt 20:1-9). When Gideon did the commanded test, 22,000 defected in fear, leaving him with only 10,000. Shockingly, God objected that even these were far too numerous, so He commanded that Gideon put the militia through yet another filter. In particular, they were to be taken to a body of water and allowed to drink. The ones that drank like dogs, lapping from their hands, were to be retained, but all others were to be dismissed. This then left Gideon with a mere 300 men.

There was profound prophecy in these 300 “dogs.” The Jews of old contemptuously viewed Gentiles, literally calling them dogs, and took the same low view of their Christian Jewish brethren who consorted with Gentiles in the church, yet that nation has been preserved, and will be saved in the end, on account of these very dogs. As Isaiah said, “*Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah,*” (Isa 1:9). So Gideon’s small militia was representative of the Jewish Christian remnant, partly as it was in the times of the apostles, but especially as it will be in the last days.

Further, anyone who has observed dogs will know that it is their nature to be watchful while they drink. Accordingly, Jesus commanded the Jewish remnant and others to watch (Mk 13:35-37).

Next, all 300 were given trumpets and clay pitchers with burning lamps inside. They divided into three companies and situated themselves on the hills so as to surround the Midianites in the valley below. At midnight, they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers so that the lamps appeared. Upon so doing, the Midianites were put in confused terror, both fleeing and fighting each other. The 300 promptly pursued them and commenced to destroy, and at this point, the other Israelites joined the fray. Now one would think that being so greatly outnumbered, the Israelites would have been content to merely drive the Midianites from their land, but this was not to be. When the battle was done, the Midianites were completely and utterly destroyed.

These events become replete with prophecy once understood in the light of Jesus Christ. In fact, the lights within the pitchers were none other than He. He is “*the light of the world*” (Jn 8:12) and “*the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,*” (Jn 1:9). The earthen pitchers were symbolic of our mortal bodies. These things were explained by Paul:

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. – 2 Cor 4:5-11

The trumpets were symbolic of the famous “last trump” that will mark the second coming and the end of the world (Mt 24:31, 1Cor 15:51-55, 1Thes 4:16-18, Rev 10:5-7).

For over 2000 years, the light within each pitcher had not been visible to the natural eye but had been hidden within the hearts of men (1Pet 3:1-4). On account of this protracted period, many will have become weary in waiting, even as Gideon was reduced to a state of doubt. But God had left the light inside these fragile vessels for a purpose. It was to show that the vessels themselves could have nothing to do with the glory to come. Hence, any man who denies salvation by grace also denies the very reason for his own natural existence. A time will come when a great heavenly trumpet will sound, but it will be a time of great darkness on the earth, even as Gideon’s men blew their trumpets at midnight. The Light of the World will visibly and gloriously appear in the sky, and at that time, the clay vessels will all be broken so that the elect of God will be burdened with mortal bodies no more. Most remarkably, each and every one of

them will be transformed to become a light in the image of the Great Light in the sky above them. As John said:

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. – 1Jn 3:1-3

These wonders will begin with a remnant, as in the case of Gideon, but will then extend to the entire family of God. At the sight of such wonders, the wicked of the world will be smitten with terror and confusion, and, as with the Midianites of old, they will be utterly destroyed.

At the conclusion of the battle, Gideon captured the two Midianite kings, Zalmunna and Zebah. Gideon asked them, “*What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?*” The kings gave a peculiar reply: “*As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king,*” (Jdg 8:18-19). With these words, the two kings sealed their doom because they had killed the siblings of Gideon. However, Gideon was no king, and we had been told at the outset of the story that his family was of no social significance in Israel. Gideon was a mere “*barley cake*.” In all this we have yet another prophecy. The Book of Revelation presents two great persecutors of the church: the Babylonian Harlot and the beast. These both will be judged by God even as the two Midianite kings were judged by Gideon. They will be convicted of killing people who were followers of Jesus Christ and who therefore resembled Him. In this crime, these wicked entities had also killed the chosen children of a divine King. As Christ Himself said, “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you,*” (Jn 15:18).

The Assyrian Invasion

Of all invaders of Israel, the worst was likely the first. The Assyrians dispersed the 10 northern tribes so severely that they never returned in any significant number. There is little doubt that the Assyrians would have taken the whole country had it not been for the extraordinary and spectacular intervention of God. The southern region of the country, known as Judah, was spared because of God's intent to raise Christ from its midst. The mighty hand of God also orchestrated those events to portend even greater things to come. The Assyrian invasion foreshadowed the second coming of Christ and of the end of the world. Prophecies leading into this invasion commented on His first coming also.

Indeed, most prophecies about the birth of Christ were given in the context of the Assyrian invasion. These are very familiar prophecies because they are a common part of the Christmas season. In these prophecies, Christ was portrayed as the promised child who would deliver from the Assyrian. Now Assyria was actually a thing of the distant past when Jesus was born, so Assyria was obviously used in these prophecies as a type of something future. It foreshadowed the final world empire, and the Assyrian king foreshadowed the man of sin or antichrist.

The first of these prophecies is legendary:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. – Isa 7:14

The context of this prophecy was that Judah was then in fear of being invaded by Samaria and Syria (not "Assyria"), who were then in alliance with each other. God revealed to Ahaz, the Judean king, that no such invasion would ever occur, and that the hostile kings of both these countries would soon be dead. God then revealed that the real threat to Judah would instead be Assyria, who would mow down the land like a razor to the beard (Isa 7:20), and said that its invading armies would be as a flood rising to the neck (Isa 8:8), which is to say that it would bring Judah to the very brink of ruin. After these prophecies, God then offered to give Ahaz a sign confirming them. When Ahaz declined, God said He would give him a sign anyway, upon which the above verse was given. The sign would become sensible later when the promised child was represented as being the savior from the Assyrian. Consider the following verses:

For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. – Isa 9:5-6

So battles are typically struggles with gains and losses being experienced on both sides, but this battle will be with victorious annihilation because the promised child will prove an unequalled

champion. This should be as expected since the given child, according to the prophet, is mysteriously none other than the “*Mighty God*” and equal to the “*everlasting Father*.” Such facts give sensibility to Isaiah’s former claim that the child would be born of a virgin. These are astounding prophecies, even if from one of the most amazing prophets in world history. The mysteries of these prophecies can only be reconciled in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah continued His prophecy of the promised child:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. – Isa 11:1-5

In the previous chapter, starting with the 28th verse, the prophet described the extensive conquests of the Assyrians, but said these would end with their siege against Jerusalem. Though their army was compared to a formidable forest, the prophet said the Lord would fell them as a woodsman with an axe (Isa 10:34). Then in the verses quoted above, the Lord’s axe was alternately described as a “*Branch*,” expressing the humble beginnings of Jesus Christ, who was in stark contrast to the formidable forest. The “*Branch*” would spell the ruin of the Assyrian and would destroy them “*with the breath of his lips*” – a statement that Paul applied to the destruction of the antichrist in 2Thessalonians 2:8. Observe also that this child of humble beginnings would arise from Jesse, who was the father of David.

Such types would continue in Micah with yet another legendary prophecy of Christ’s birth:

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. – Mic 5:1-2

So the Assyrians would initially humiliate Israel, showing contempt even for its leadership, yet an Israelite born in Bethlehem would defeat them. This mysterious Israelite was to be one whose existence had extended into eternity past. The Bible nowhere teaches anything remotely resembling reincarnation, nor does it ever teach of ordinary humans having any form of preexistence outside of the foreknowledge of God. This promised child, though truly a human, is by no means an ordinary one. He is God manifest in the flesh, even as Isaiah had implied before.

His power to destroy the Assyrians was expressed a few verses later:

And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. – Mic 5:5-6

By “*principal men*” is meant men who are princes. The identity of these shepherds and princes is not altogether clear, but it is likely no coincidence that the New Testament was written by seven men who were shepherds (i.e. preachers), all of whom, along with an eighth, have been made princes by Christ. The seven shepherds were: Matthew, Mark, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude, all of whom were preachers, and the eighth was Luke, who was never presented by the Bible as being a preacher but was definitely a “principal man.” This interpretation corroborates Paul’s claim that Christ will destroy the son of perdition by “*the spirit of his mouth*” (2Thes 2:8). There is possibly also significance to the fact that Revelation 16 presents the man of sin and his kingdom as being buffeted by seven angels pouring out seven vials, and all of these as acting under the command of an eighth.

Now observe that the destruction of the Assyrian described in this text carries beyond the borders of Israel into the land of Assyria itself. This did not happen in old times when the Assyrians were thwarted in their siege against Jerusalem. The prophecy applies to events that are yet future, but it used the old Assyrian as a type. When Jesus returns, the wicked nations gathered against Jerusalem will be destroyed both there and elsewhere. Accordingly, the prophecy said the Assyrian “*shall tread in our palaces.*” This did not happen in the old siege against Jerusalem either, because the Assyrian did not then enter the city, or even so much as shoot an arrow against it. However, the Bible says in several places that the antichrist will make the temple of God in Jerusalem his palace (Dn 11:45, Isa 14:13, 2Thes 2:4).

Micah follows this with details that I think corroborate claims made elsewhere in this book:

And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots... And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. – Mic 5:7-15

As explained in former chapters, especially the one on Elijah, I think these things will happen when the Spirit is poured out on the Jews (Zech 12:9-14, Joel 2:28-3:2, Ezek 39:28-29), upon which they will be mightily turned to Christ, bringing an end to the indignation against them, and

they will therefore be blessed and empowered to drive out the heathen forces then occupying Jerusalem. These converted Jews will be in a spiritual sense as dew from heaven upon drought-stricken ground ready to die, but in a natural sense they will be as a terrible lion in the midst of the forest. When it is made known that a lion is in the forest, all creatures, whether rabbits, squirrels, possums, deer or men, will have their attention and concern fixed upon the same thing, namely, the presence of the lion. Even so, these converts will become the focus, worry and burden of the entire wicked world (Zech 12:3). This should serve as admonition to all Christians disposed to doubt and fear. God put us here to worry the world, not to worry *about* the world. After these Spirit-empowered acts of valor by the Jews, Micah then described what must be the second coming of Christ, who “*will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.*”

Isaiah actually lived to witness the fulfillment of his own prophecies against the Assyrians, and he recorded it in his 36th and 37th chapters. The Assyrian army, having destroyed much of the land, surrounded the city of Jerusalem, and would have surely destroyed it also without the opposition of God. There would be other occasions in the history of Jerusalem when armies would be gathered against it, but in this case the invader would be spectacularly destroyed, whereas in the others, it was Jerusalem that took destruction.

The Assyrian emissary, in boastfully speaking to the people up on the walls, attempted to intimidate them into surrender. His speech contained the worst blasphemies against God recorded in all the Bible (Isa 36:16-20, 37:10-12), thus foreshadowing him who “*shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods*” (Dn 11:36) and who will open “*his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven*” (Rev 13:6) and who “*opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,*” (2Thes 2:4).

However, God said that the Assyrians would not so much as shoot an arrow against the city (Isa 37:33). God then sent a destroying angel into their midst, who killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (37:36), sparing only a small handful (10:19), likely for the purpose of leaving witnesses to the event. The king of Assyria was thereafter assassinated (37:38). All these things, at least 3000 years before the fact, foreshadowed the final siege against Jerusalem, when the antichrist, in an attempt to retake the city, will gather the armies of the world against it, but will be spectacularly destroyed by the second coming of Jesus Christ. As Zechariah said:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. – Zech 12:2-3

The Resurrection of Lazarus

This chapter considers a New Testament event and might therefore seem out of character with this book; however, the Old Covenant was actually still of force when the New Testament began, and it is the New Testament that records the final years of its history. This history would arrive at its final chapter when Jesus commenced His journey to the cross, and it concluded with His crucifixion and resurrection. In the closing days of the Old Covenant, we will see the familiar Invisible Hand still ordering events to communicate the story of Jesus Christ, but the story will now be about His victorious second coming. This story of triumph will be told in what superficially appears as defeat. As Jesus journeyed to the cross in humble, submissive obedience, and enduring great reproach, shadows of His glorious second coming were being cast. Central to this story was the spectacular resurrection of a man named Lazarus.

1) The story of Lazarus began with Jesus and His disciples being east of Jordan in the wilderness where they had retreated to escape the persecution of the Jews. They were at the place where John began to baptize (Jn 10:40). This was a very special location throughout Bible history. It was here that an angel appeared to Joshua 1500 years before and demanded that he remove his shoe on account of it being holy ground (Josh 5:15). No explanation was then given for why this ground was holy, but it would become manifest in due time. The children of Israel had crossed over Jordan at this place when entering Canaan's land. Indeed, the place was called "Bethabara," which means "house of the crossing" or "place of the crossing." It was also near to where Elijah was caught up to heaven and where his mantle had descended upon Elisha. Of much greater importance was the fact that it was the place where John began to baptize and where Jesus was Himself baptized (Jn 1:28). It would here become the place where Jesus commenced His journey to the cross. Now these reasons are more than sufficient to account for the ground being holy. But we can add to this some good evidence that it will also be the place where Jesus will enter Israel upon His triumphant return. He Himself claimed that He would come from the east (Mt 24:27). Isaiah saw Him as coming from Bozrah of Edom (Isa 63:1), and Habakkuk saw Him as coming from Teman of Edom and Mount Paran of the wilderness (Hab 3:3). All these prophecies would have Him coming from the east in the wilderness and crossing over Jordan at or near this location.

2) While abiding in this refuge, a message came from Bethany near Jerusalem that a friend of Jesus named Lazarus was seriously sick. Jesus declared that the sickness was not unto death but that it was for the purpose of glorifying the Son of God. It surely did this even when considered by itself, but also did it by portending His powerful return.

3) Jesus tarried two days before departing, and it will become apparent afterward that He delayed so that Lazarus would have time to die. Accordingly, Jesus will seem to delay His second coming while waiting on saints to be born and to die. The wait will be so long that even the redeemed in heaven will have their patience tested by it. This is revealed in:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. – Rev 6:10-11

4) When Jesus was determined to cross over Jordan to resurrect Lazarus and to commence His journey to the cross, the disciples objected, complaining that Judea was too dangerous for them to enter. The disciples were not then aware that Lazarus had succumbed to his illness. Now Judea and Jerusalem will also be very dangerous places when Christ returns. The armies of the world will then be gathered there, and as Zechariah said:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. – Zech 12:2-3

5) Jesus had at former times hidden Himself from would-be persecutors, but this time He insisted upon facing them openly. While this was done that He might face the wicked leadership of the Jews and Romans, it was also done to foreshadow a time when “*every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him,*” (Rev 1:7).

6) When the disciples had seen that He was determined to go, they seem to have suggested that He do it by night to escape the detection of persecutors. Jesus then warned them of walking in the night because it put them at risk of stumbling. All sensible minds know He did not mean to stumble in a physical sense; rather, He was doing what He commonly did in using the natural circumstances at hand to teach spiritual lessons. Accordingly, the saints of the last days are elsewhere warned of walking in the extreme darkness of those times:

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. – 1Thes 5:4-6

All this meant that God’s people must be careful to avoid the thinking and behavior of the world in the last days. This is always true, but especially of then.

7) Jesus then spoke of the necessity of walking in the day, saying, “*Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world,*” (Jn 11:9). Jesus is Himself the “*light of this world*” (Jn 8:12, 9:5). His warning was therefore of the importance that people study His word and follow Him in the darkened times of the last days. This should be done at all times, but failures then will have greater consequences.

8) The disciple Thomas then said, “*Let us also go, that we may die with him,*” (Jn 11:16). Therefore, when Jesus then crossed over Jordan, He was accompanied by His disciples, even as He will be accompanied by the raptured Jewish remnant from the wilderness in the last days (Rev 14:4, Jude 14-15, Dt 33:1-2). Contrary to Thomas’ intent, none of the disciples died in following Jesus to the cross, and none of the remnant will die in following Him at His glorious return. Notwithstanding, all of these saints did die with Him virtually when He died on the cross.

9) When Jesus came to the bereaved family, the sister of Lazarus named Martha said, “*Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,*” (Jn 11:21). Another sister named Mary would repeat this statement shortly thereafter. These were correct assertions. The Bible never recorded anyone dying in the presence of Jesus, and even in the cataclysmic destruction of the Universe itself, not one of the elect will be lost. Jesus replied to Martha:

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? – Jn 11:25-26

This was a famous statement of the Lord, and Paul alluded to it in an even more famous statement in 1Thessalonians 4:13-18. Jesus was here describing what circumstances will be at His triumphant return. Believers who then will be physically dead will live again, and believers who then will be alive will never die.

10) As Jesus journeyed to the tomb, the observing Jews said, “*Behold how he loved him!*” (Jn 11:36). The love of God for His people does at times seem doubtful, but it will be unmistakably displayed at His second coming.

11) As the Jews followed Him, they entertained an important question expressed in:

And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? – Jn 11:37

Over the ages, Christ has been opening the eyes of the blind in a spiritual sense. This work was depicted in the healing of the blind man in John 9. The Jews were here recollecting that event and questioning its implications. This work of spiritual quickening is truly of equal magnitude to a resurrection, and is even compared to a resurrection (Jn 5:25-29); however, it is done invisibly, and its visible effects are unimpressive to the carnal eye of man. Now the pressing question when Jesus returns will be whether a power that can do this will also be sufficient to raise the dead in body. With the resurrection of Lazarus, this question will be answered in a most emphatic way. These principles were also covered by Paul in:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his

mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places... – Eph 1:18-20

Thus, the quickening power whereby our spiritual eyes were opened, and whereby we were enabled to believe, is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, and will therefore be sufficient to raise the bodies of all others.

Upon arriving at the tomb, Jesus prayed for the resurrection of Lazarus, but His prayer contained an acknowledgment that prayer was not truly necessary, and that He was praying only for the benefit of the people who were observing. Though Jesus had a strong habit of prayer, He had not prayed in prior resurrections that He had done. This was because God had ordained Him from eternity to be the very resurrection itself (Jn 11:25). Notwithstanding, that the people might unmistakably know and glorify the authority of the power that was about to be displayed, He prayed to God the Father.

12) John then wrote, “*And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth,*” (Jn 11:43). His use of a “loud” voice was significant, and may have been somewhat out of character with Himself (Isa 42:2), but it was done to foreshadow an important event to come:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. – 1Thes 4:15-17

13) Lazarus therefore arose from the dead. This was a joyous thing of itself, but the greater joy is that it was done as a prediction of what would happen to millions more hereafter.

Though the Bible had recorded five resurrections before Lazarus, and two by Jesus Himself, this one was different in that none of those raised previously had been dead for so long a time. Also, this one was witnessed by a large group of people. Now the Gospel of John was written later than the other gospels. Its purpose was to add details that would prove important to Christians whose thirst for knowledge had been piqued by the prior accounts. John was the only gospel writer to document this resurrection, but He presented it as playing a strong, underlying role in the sequence of events leading to the crucifixion. These details were given by the greatest of eschatological prophets because they cast shadows of what is to come.

Though Jesus had done multitudes of miracles, His adversaries among the Jewish leadership were unusually provoked by this one, and in their frustration, they even said to each other: “*Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him,*” (Jn 12:19). The fear of these adversaries had been expressed earlier:

Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. – Jn 11:47-48

Thus, the threat they perceived in Jesus was the loss of their own power, which fear was carried to its apex by the resurrection of Lazarus.

14) Lazarus was resurrected after being dead for approximately four days, which is very near to the 3.5 days of death for the resurrected witnesses in Revelation 11. The numbers might have been exactly equal had it not been for rounding. The resurrection of the two witnesses will be the death knell of Satan's kingdom, even as the wicked Jews of old feared they would be deposed by the resurrection of Lazarus.

15) These events happened as the Passover drew nigh. While the Passover is commonly viewed as a type of the first coming of Christ, it is upon further reflection very obviously a type of His second coming also. In the original story told in Exodus, God traversed Egypt in conclusive destruction while passing over those who had a bloody cross on their doors. This is clearly a depiction of Christ at His second coming. The Passover therefore brilliantly tells both stories simultaneously, and the crucifixion story does much of the same.

16) John put great emphasis on how Jerusalem was abuzz with the news concerning Lazarus, and John told about how great numbers of Jews believed on account of it. The following quotes are sufficient to demonstrate his emphasis:

Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” – Jn 11:45-48

And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? – Jn 11:55-56

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. – Jn 12:9-11

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that

they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him. And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. – Jn 12:17-21

So great numbers of Jews were moved to believe on Jesus by the resurrection of Lazarus, and the city of Jerusalem was put in an anxious state of anticipation of His coming. Even so, the resurrection of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 will be the point where the Spirit is poured out on Jerusalem and turn it to Christ at the end (Rev 11:11-13).

17) Shortly we will read something quite unexpected, and even baffling, to anyone knowing that the crucifixion will be only days later:

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord,” – Jn 12:12-13

This joyous greeting contained the *exact* words He had earlier presented as the terms of His triumphant return:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. – Mt 23:37-39

This was clearly a case where the Invisible Hand that had been writing His story since Adam was still at work, and moving oblivious actors to play it out. Satan was then allowed to quench this fire within only a few days, but the next time it will burn down his entire kingdom.

18) Accordingly, as the crucifixion drew nigh, Jesus said, “*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out,*” (Jn 12:31). There is a critical sense in which Satan was cast out at the crucifixion, but it is remarkable that Revelation also describes him as being cast out after the resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev 12:9). Evidently, he was cast out of the celestial heaven with the first eviction, and will be cast out of the astronomical heaven with the second. Revelation 12 may have both cases in view. Much of that chapter is forward-looking prophecy but part of it is a flashback to the past for purposes of setting the background for the story being told.

19) Immediately prior to this, Jesus said, “*Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it*

again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him,” (Jn 12:27-29). The word “*again*” in God’s reply clearly shows intent to glorify His Son twice, one by resurrecting Him and the other by sending Him in victorious return to this earth.

20) This sequence of events will lead to Christ having a famous supper with His disciples that commemorated His suffering and death. His second coming will also lead to a supper, but it will be the victorious marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven with all of His redeemed (Rev 19:6-9).

This is a story of victory in defeat, and indeed, such is the pervading theme of the Bible. The Old Covenant ended in defeat, but this is what it was intended to do, so it actually secured victory in its defeat. The New Covenant appeared to be defeated when Christ died on the cross, but this was truly where victory was secured, and the victory was actually being foreshadowed even while defeat was in the eye.

The Bible is an unequalled book of brilliant symbolism, but all this symbolism culminates and climaxes in the rite of baptism. In baptism, when properly done, the subject goes down into the water in defeat, but is then raised again in victory. This is a summarizing symbol of the whole word of God.

This truth is also attested by the very soul of man. Men of all cultures are charged with inspiration at the story wherein a seemingly hopeless underdog, through determination and spirit, secures a last-minute victory over an undefeated brute. When this story is played out in a sporting event on television, and as the underdog unrelentingly battles to narrow the losing score, the observers will be increasingly electrified, and all humans, including otherwise disinterested women and children, will gather around the television to watch. Then when the underdog scores and takes the lead at the last second on the clock, the room will thunder with exultation, even in those who do not truly understand the game being watched. Why do humans have this nature? Why do they love this story? Obviously, it is because they were designed by their Creator to love this story. Why would He do this? There is only one plausible answer to this question: He did it because the story is true. The game ends with the sound of a trumpet, and the ball will cross the goal immediately before. Then the heavenly stadium will erupt.

Literal Messianic Prophecies

Every prior chapter of this book has dealt with allegorical depictions of Jesus Christ that are scattered over the Old Testament. This final chapter will deal with prophecies of a more literal sort. Even these might make use of symbolism, but it is typically simple symbolism that even Bible novices readily see. Indeed, the prophecies considered here are some of the most commonly known and understood parts of the Bible. They have served toward the conversion of millions to Christianity. However, it is a marvel and a tragedy that they did not serve to the conversion of all. These verses leave no doubt whatsoever as to who is God, who is His Son and what is His inspired word.

Indeed, even believers do not appreciate the mathematical mountain that these prophecies had to climb in order to be fulfilled. The primary purpose of this chapter is to impress upon the reader the fact that no sound mind with any sense of science could dismiss the fulfillment of all these prophecies to chance. They are conclusive evidence attesting to the inspiration of the scriptures and to the fact that Jesus Christ is both the Messiah of the Old Testament and the Son of God.

In proof of this, I will present 40 different prophecies concerning the Messiah that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. I will include a few New Testament prophecies in this list, but the bulk will still be from the Old. Next, I will assign subjective probabilities to each of these events, attempting to condition these probabilities on all prior assumptions, and then I will compute the probability that all these prophecies could come to pass in one man. The subjective probabilities are placed in () after descriptions and comments on the 40 individual prophecies below.

Use of subjective probabilities may be judged as pseudoscience by some, but such methods are sometimes used by statisticians in other areas, and some branches of statistical theory are actually designed to accommodate them. The reader will doubtlessly disagree with some of the subjective probabilities I will assign, but hopefully will not judge me as being biased toward setting them to favor my conclusion. To the contrary, I have attempted to be conservative, and anticipate that some Christians will actually be offended at how conservative I have been. The reader is welcome to replace my estimates with their own. In fact, I will challenge the reader to do this. I am confident that under any remotely reasonable set of numbers, the implications will be so clear that only a fool would deny them.

When computing the probability of multiple events happening at once, the analyst must make use of the *multiplicative law of probabilities*. If we have two independent events, the probability of them both happening at once is the probability of the first times the probability of the second. Consider a man tossing a die and a coin at the same time. What is the probability of getting a three on the die and a head on the coin? The die has six sides with only one having three dots; hence, odds are only 1 in 6 for the first event. Odds are obviously 1 in 2 for the coin. So odds for both events at once are $(1/6) \times (1/2)$ or 1 in 12. Similarly, if we had “n” independent events,

then the probability of all them happening at once would be their “n” individual probabilities multiplied. One consequence of the multiplicative law is that probabilities very rapidly approach nil (i.e. impossibility) as the list of independent events grows.

However, events are not always independent because the occurrence of one event might affect the likelihood of the other. For example, the odds that a man possesses a Bible might be 1 in 3, and the odds that a man is a Christian might be 1 in 4, but this does not then mean the odds of both is 1 in 12. These events are not independent. The fact that the man is a Christian considerably raises the probability that he also possesses a Bible. When events are not independent, the multiplicative law still pertains, but the probability of the second event must be conditioned on the fact that the first is assumed to have occurred. The odds that a man possesses a Bible *given that he is a Christian* are near 1 in 1, so the odds that a man is both a Christian and possesses a Bible are $(1/4) \times (1/1) = 1$ in 4. The second probability must be conditioned on the first. As a second example, suppose there are 10 balls in a box with 2 being red and 8 being white. What are chances that a blinded man would get the 2 red balls on his first 2 draws? Chances of getting a red ball on his first draw are obviously 2 in 10. Chances of getting one on the second draw, *given that he got one on his first*, are 1 in 9. So, applying the multiplicative law, chances of the event in question are 2 in 90 (or 1 in 45). Now I acknowledge that the 40 prophecies considered below are not all independent, but in assigning probabilities to them, I have attempted to allow for this fact by using conditional probabilities.

The 40 Messianic prophecies to be considered are:

1) Scriptures promised that the Christ would descend from the lineage of: *Abraham* (Gn 12:3, 18:18, 22:18), *Isaac* (Gn 17:19, 21:12, 26:4), *Jacob* (Gn 28:4, 28:14), *Judah* (Gn 49:10), *Jesse* (Isa 11:1-5), *David* (1Chr 17:11-15, 2Sam 7:12-17, Ps 89:36, Jer 23:5-6, 30:7-9, 33:15-26, Ezek 34:23-24, 37:24-25, Isa 9:6-7, Hos 3:5, Zech 12:8) and *Solomon* (1Chr 22:7-10). We here have nested events. If a man were a descendent of Solomon, then he would automatically be a descendent of all other men named. However, it must be considered that the prophecies were made at each level of the family tree when the remainder of the tree could not have been known. So the odds of any of these prophecies becoming true must be measured in terms of what was known, and what was not known, at the time the prophecies were made. For example, suppose Abraham were one of 10 men in his world, but that, because of highly adverse circumstances, the population was reduced to only two men as of the times of Christ, with only Christ Himself being a descendent of Abraham. Now a prophecy made *as of the time* of Abraham that Christ would descend from him has odds of one in 10, not one in two, and certainly not one in one.

To illustrate the math further, suppose you were presented with the challenge of picking the lineage of a specific American president of the future, and that only his great-grandfather is presently alive. You must prophesy his great-grandfather, grandfather and father. Now if there are 100 million men in America today, then you have odds of 1 in 100,000,000 of picking the right great-grandfather. Suppose this man has four sons, then your odds of correctly picking the

grandfather, given that you correctly picked the great-grandfather, are one in four. Next suppose the grandfather has two sons, then you have odds of one in two of picking the correct father, given that your former picks were true. The odds of correctly prophesying the entire lineage are the odds of correctly picking the great-grandfather (1 in 100,000,000) times the odds of picking the grandfather given that you have correctly picked the great grandfather (1 in 4) times the odds of picking the father given that your two previous picks were correct (1 in 2). This means you are up against odds of 1 in 800,000,000.

One consequence of this math is that the final odds are critically dependent on the growth rate within the family being considered, and they can explode if that growth rate is large or can stall if it is small. Using my preceding example, suppose each father had only one son, then your only challenge would be to pick the right great-grandfather. You would automatically be right on all other generations. Odds of picking the future president would therefore be 1 in 100,000,000. But if each father had 10 sons apiece, then the odds would become 100 times more adverse. This would be true even if the general population in the two examples ended the same.

To begin computation of our estimate for Christ, the first question will be: How many men lived in the world during the time of Abraham? We can have radically different estimates of this depending upon whether we choose the computations of Bible believers or of Bible skeptics. If Bible believers, then the number will be vastly smaller, because they assume the human population had been reduced by the flood to four men and four women only eight generations before Abraham. But since the Bible is itself on trial in this analysis, I think it fair to hold Bible skeptics to their own numbers, which, according to various estimates made by them, would have world population in the times of Abraham (approximately 2000 BC) at around 30 million. Approximately half of these were male, so we will put odds on the prophecy concerning Abraham at one in 15 million. Isaac was one of eight sons (counting the sons by Keturah). Jacob was one of two sons. Judah was one of 12 sons. Because of the census taken by David in 2Samuel 24, we know there were in those times 500,000 men in Judah, which would have included David and Solomon. Multiplying all these, we have 1.44 quadrillion. I have left out Jesse, and I believe it would be fair to say the Bible also correctly prophesied that Christ would descend from Zerubbabel (Hag 2:21-23, Zech 4:6-10), in which event this huge number should be considerably larger, but I will be conservative and merely round the number up to an even two quadrillion. (1 in 2,000,000,000,000,000).

As already explained, this huge number is owing to the rapid growth rate within the Jewish family. For example, in only 11 generations (Ruth 4:18-22), the tribe of Judah went from 1 man (Judah) to 500,000. This would mean that each man had an average of about 3.3 sons or 6.6 children. I will not account for the fact this had been prophesied too. God told Abraham He would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven (Gn 15:5, 22:17). While I will not weary the reader with the math, had the Jews continued to reproduce at their early rate, their numbers would have surpassed the estimated number of stars in the Universe long ago. Their rate of multiplication radically dropped when they rebelled against God.

2) Scriptures prophesied that there would be an unbroken lineage of Judean kings until Christ came (Gn 49:10). There were in fact 22 consecutive kings from the tribe of Judah ranging from David to Zedekiah. These were all documented in the Bible. This was followed by the Hasmonean Dynasty, which ruled past the range of Old Testament history (though foreseen by O.T. prophecy). However, as of the times of Christ, the Judean lineage of rulers had ceased, even as the prophecy had affirmed, and the Jews were instead under an Edomite named Herod (a Roman puppet). Of course, any Judean king would tend to be followed by another Judean king because of the habit of kings to appoint their own sons as successors. But even if we put the probability of one Judean king being followed by another at 90%, the probability of 21 consecutive Judean kings after the first would still be only around 10%, and we are not even considering the Judean succession outside the purview of Old Testament history. (1 in 10)

3) Daniel said the ministry of Christ would begin 483 years after the Persian decree to rebuild Jerusalem (Dn 9:24-27). This is one of the most amazing prophecies of the Bible and is of itself sufficient to prove that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. Approximately 2500 years have elapsed since this prophecy was made. Since some still look for the Messiah even today, all these years must be put into play. (1 in 2500)

4) Both Isaiah and Malachi said the Christ would be preceded by another prophet (John the Baptist) who would herald his coming (Isa 40:3-17, Mal 3:1-3). This must be considered a rare thing as it did not occur with any other prophet, priest or preacher in the Bible. (1 in 100)

5) The heralding prophet would preach in the country as opposed to the cities (Isa 40:3). (1 in 2)

6) The heralding prophet was to fade into relative obscurity, being vastly eclipsed by the one he preceded (Mk 1:7-8, Jn 3:27-32). Here it must be considered that John the Baptist was a highly acknowledged and respected prophet in his own times, to the extent that Jewish leaders dared not malign him for fear of being stoned by their own people (Lk 20:4-6). John found it necessary to convince the Jews that he was not the Messiah, claiming rather that he was not even worthy to remove the shoes of the Messiah, though even Christ Himself said that not a greater man had ever lived than John (Mt 11:11). Even the contemporary historian, Flavius Josephus, while mentioning both John and Jesus, gave a more detailed account of John. Yet today, it is sad but true that many professed Christians cannot even distinguish John the Baptist from John the Apostle. On the other hand, Jesus is famous among both Christians and non-Christians. So what are odds that a highly respected prophet would be immediately and vastly eclipsed by another? (1 in 4)

7) The Christ was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Mic 5:2). Some have estimated the Jewish population in the times of Christ at approximately three million, though none can truly know. The same uncertainty pertains to Bethlehem, which is known to have been a small town, but no definite figure can be put on its population. I will assume 3000, and assume the descendants of David were geographically distributed the same as other Jews. (1 in 1000)

8) He was to be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14, Jer 31:22, Gn 3:15). The probability of this is obviously nil under natural law. Skeptics will therefore object to it even being included in my list. However, it is reasonable that I at least consider the probability that such a *claim* would be made of Jesus by billions of people, including even Muslims. While claims of virgin births were sometimes made in ancient religions, they were rare in comparison to the number of acknowledged ordinary births. It would probably be safe to say that not one in a billion people born in this world were claimed to have been born of a virgin. Nonetheless, we will accommodate the skeptics, who will complain that the prophecy was too disposed toward self-fulfillment in that it provided a convenient means for any illegitimately pregnant woman to exonerate herself or her child. This concession is made notwithstanding the fact there is nothing in the Bible suggesting that Mary ever made use of this prophecy, or even that she had knowledge of it. (1 in 1000)

9) He was to spend a significant part of his life in Galilee and bring the people of that region to great light (Isa 9:1-7). This event was more unlikely than may seem. The Jews living in the times of Jesus had such a low opinion of Galilee that they attempted to discredit Him on this very account. The Pharisees considered it impossible that the Messiah could come out of Galilee (Jn 7:52), and even the disciple Nathaniel initially had doubts about Jesus because of His connections to that region (Jn 1:46). (1 in 10)

10) He was to have distinguishing similarities to Moses (Dt 18:15-19, Acts 3:22-23, 7:37). Objectors will complain that similarities can be seen between almost any two men by those who wish to see them. This is a valid complaint. However, before hastily dismissing the prophecy on this account, first consider what some of these similarities happen to be: a) Evil men sought to destroy both while in their infancy, and many infants died in both attempts. b) Both were distinguished by being drawn out from water. Moses literally means “drawn out,” as he was drawn from the water as an infant, whereas the most distinguishing ritual of Christianity is baptism, to which Christ Himself submitted, His ministry beginning with immersion by John. c) Both relinquished royalty to deliver their impoverished people. d) Both were initially rejected by their people. e) Both found approval with the Gentiles after being rejected of their own, and indeed, from the biblical point of view, both took Gentile brides. f) Both were unsurpassed workers of miracles. g) Both were transfigured in a mountain. h) Both had authority far surpassing that of ordinary prophets, as may be seen in the fact that both initiated orders of worship that all other prophets, priests, preachers, etc. were obliged to follow. i) The Bible claims the bodies of neither were ever found. In nearly all these points, Moses and Christ possessed similarities not commonly shared with other prophets. Now in light of all these points, the relevant question then becomes: What are the odds that Jesus would have exceptional similarities to Moses that even skeptics would be compelled to concede? (1 in 10)

11) He was to have extraordinary ability to read the minds and hearts of others (Lk 2:35). This degree of this ability was without precedent in the Bible. The enemies of Israel were paranoid that Elisha was privy to their strategies (2Ki 6:12), but this hardly compares with the feats of

Christ. Gospel writers covered different miracles performed by Christ with very few miracles being related in every account, but none failed to emphasize His ability to know the minds of both friend and foe. (1 in 1,000,000)

12) He was to be a harmless man having nothing to do with war or violence (Isa 42:3). This surely would have seemed unlikely to the Jews of those times, who expected the Messiah to be a destructive force against their Gentile oppressors. (1 in 2)

13) He was to be a worker of great wonders (Isa 9:6). While being a worker of wonders would be an expected claim of anyone fitting the prior criteria, consideration must be given to the fact that the prophecy anticipated one who would be unsurpassed even among other miracle-workers in the Bible. (1 in 10)

14) He was to be joyously acclaimed while humbly riding into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass (Zech 9:9). This would be highly improbable in our own times, and it must be considered that the Jews are still looking for the Messiah today. However, because I have already taken as given the prophecy of Daniel concerning the timing of His life, I will assume that such an event, though improbable even then, would not be as improbable as today. I must also make allowance for the fact that the prophecy not only called for an ass, but for a colt, the foal of an ass, which in fact proved to be an unbroken animal that had never been ridden (Mk 11:2). I will set odds on all this at one in one hundred, but am being generous to the skeptics, because I am making no allowance for the fact that Jesus gave a detailed prophecy to his disciples as to where this animal would be found (Mt 21:2, Mk 11:2). These sorts of short-term prophecies, though effortlessly made by Jesus, are far more difficult than might seem. Any man can prophesy that the stock market will go up, that it will rain, that there will be earthquakes, etc., but can he prophesy these things when they are going to happen *tomorrow*? (1 in 100)

15) He was to be rejected of the Jews (Ps 2:1-3, Ps 69:20-26, Isa 53:1-6, Zech 11, etc.). Though the Jews commonly rejected prophets, the relevant question here is the probability of their rejecting this particular prophet notwithstanding the multitude of reasons they should have accepted Him. (1 in 10)

16) He was to be betrayed by a friend who ate of his own bread (Ps 41:7-9). This was fulfilled in Judas, who literally betrayed Him immediately after eating bread with Him (Jn 13:18-30). (1 in 100)

17) He was to be sold in betrayal for exactly 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12-13). I will put odds on Him being sold at one in one hundred, and consider all possible prices to be in a range from one to one hundred, and will consider each of these prices to be equally likely. (1 in 10,000)

18) This silver was to be disdained and cast into the house of the Lord. This happened when Judas attempted to return his ill-gotten gain, but when those who paid him refused to take the

money, Judas cast it into the temple (Mt 27:3-8). The specifics of this prophecy seem to call for a very unlikely scenario. (1 in 1000)

19) This silver was to be used in such a way that would involve a potter. (1 in 1000)

20) His betrayer was to be replaced by another (Ps 109:8). This was fulfilled with the appointment of Matthias (Acts 1:15-26). (1 in 2)

21) He was to be deserted by all others and face His persecutors alone (Ps 22:11, 69:20, Isa 63:5, Zech 13:6-7, Mt 26:31, Mk 14:50). Jesus was deserted by His disciples notwithstanding their initial willingness to fight (Lk 22:49, Jn 18:36). (1 in 5)

22) He was to be tried and punished (Isa 53:7-12). I have already taken as given that the Jews would reject Him, but here I must consider that they will go well beyond this in fabricating charges against Him, and that they will prevail against Him notwithstanding His innocence and notwithstanding the fact that final judgment was rendered by a Roman official who was not under their same prejudices. (1 in 100)

23) Though innocent, He was to offer no defense for Himself in trial (Isa 53:7). Pontius Pilate famously commented on His silence (Jn 19:10). (1 in 20)

24) He was to be crucified by nailing. Though Old Testament prophecy does not actually use the word “crucified,” it is strongly implied throughout, beginning with the placement of blood on the doorposts during the Passover (Ex 12:7), then including details of prophecies that would follow, such as His hands, feet and side being pierced (Ps 22:16, Zech 12:10); His dying in such a way that His bones (ribs) could be counted (Ps 22:17), and His dying as a spectacle before mocking observers. Jesus specifically prophesied that the Gentiles would “*crucify*” him (Mt 20:19). Jesus also spoke of taking up the “*cross*” long before ever being put on it Himself (Mt 10:38, 16:24, etc.). Crucifixion was a Roman method of execution. The Jews used stoning. So this prophecy carries the implicit prediction that circumstances would then be such that the Jews would be constrained to resort to an execution methodology never used by them before. This came to pass when the Romans subdued the Jews and then denied them the right to administer capital punishment (Jn 18:31). Assessment of this prophecy must also consider that the Romans did not always use nails in crucifixions. (1 in 1000)

25) He was to be mocked in a specific way (Ps 22:8). While being generally mocked does not seem improbable given that He was to be tried, condemned and punished, I must consider that the prophecy had specific accuracy about what the mockery would be (Mt 27:43). (1 in 10)

26) He was to be beaten with stripes (Isa 53:5), spit upon (Isa 50:6) and otherwise abused such that His face would be extremely marred (Isa 52:14). The odds of these things must be tempered by the fact I have already assumed He was to be crucified. However, these specific things do not automatically follow from that fact. Jesus was actually beaten by Pilate under hopes the Jews

would be pacified by it and not demand His crucifixion (Lk 23:13-22, Jn 19:1-18). The marring of His face derived from the crown of thorns placed on His head, a thing not ordinarily done in crucifixions. (1 in 10)

27) Notwithstanding this abuse, none of his bones were to be broken. This prophecy might be inferred from Psalm 34:20, but perhaps an even stronger statement of it is in the specifications of the Passover lamb (Ex 12:46). The Roman soldiers were intent upon breaking His bones to hasten His death until they were surprised to find Him already dead (Jn 19:31- 37). (1 in 2)

28) His garments were to be parted among his crucifiers (Ps 22:18, Jn 19:23-24). (1 in 2)

29) They were to cast lots for His garments (Ps 22:18). (1 in 20)

30) He was to thirst (Ps 69:21, Ps 22:15). While thirsting may seem inevitable to anyone being crucified, the prophecy implies that not only would He thirst, but would actually complain of thirst, which Christ in fact did. (1 in 2)

31) He was to be given vinegar to drink (Ps 69:21, Jn 19:28-29). (1 in 5)

32) The vinegar was to be given in combination with gall (Ps 69:21, Mt 27:34). There is much debate over the intent of this concoction, with some claiming it was commonly given to alleviate pain (which might explain why Jesus refused it). Though this explanation is far from certain, I will assign a conservative probability on account of it. (1 in 2)

33) He was to be numbered with other transgressors (Isa 53:12). This was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified along with two thieves (Mt 27:38, Mk 15:28-29). (1 in 2)

34) Yet, He was to be buried in the tomb of a rich man who was a part of the very wicked counsel that condemned Him (Isa 53:9, Mt 27:57, Lk 23:50-56). After being condemned by the high court of the Jews, a dissenting member, named Joseph of Arimathea, took the body of Jesus from the cross, prepared it, and placed it in a tomb that Joseph had intended for himself. (1 in 1000)

35) He was to rise from the dead (Ps 16:10, Ps 41:8-10, Isa 53:10). As with His virgin birth, I will not measure the probability of this actually happening (which is nil) but only the probability of people *claiming* it to have happened, with such claims being made by over 500 alleged witnesses (1Cor 15:1-8). This is, of course, a very rare thing. While skeptics will complain that His disciples invented this claim on account of being inspired by the prophecy itself, I will not be generous to accommodate them here given that we have multiple witnesses attesting that His resurrection took everyone by surprise. Also, none of His apostles ever recanted their testimony, but tenaciously and energetically preached it to the world, and all but John died in martyrdom because they would not relinquish their claim. (1 in 1,000,000)

36) Though rejected of the Jews, He was to thereafter be of worldwide fame and honor among others. As for the likelihood of this, I must consider that I have already taken it as given that men will claim He rose from the dead. Yet I must also consider that worldwide fame entails that this highly improbable claim will be widely believed, which is itself an improbable thing. (1 in 5)

37) The path along which this news was to be accepted was to begin with Jerusalem, then through Judea, then to Samaria, then to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). There is nothing unlikely about what is here said of Jerusalem and Judea, and I have already accounted for the gospel ultimately spreading throughout the earth, but it was an unlikely claim that the Samaritans would be the first non-Jews to whom the gospel would be preached. This was because of the contempt that the Jews had for them (Jn 4:9). (1 in 5)

38) The Jews were to be scattered thereafter and have an extreme and protracted period of darkness and suffering (Ps 69:22-28, Dn 9:26-27, Zech 11:9-17, Lk 21:24, Rom 11:25, etc). Indeed, God has denied the Jews the very vain glories they demanded in Christ, and has imposed upon them the humiliation and suffering for which they rejected Christ. (1 in 100)

39) During this protracted period, the Jews were to be without a king or prince, without a sacrifice, etc. (Hos 3:4-5). Though most nations of the world continued under monarchy for another two thousand years, the Jews have not had a single king since Jesus, nor have they had sacrifices since their dispersal by the Romans. (1 in 100)

40) Finally, the teachings of the Messiah are repeatedly represented as infallible and pure (Ps 45:1-2, Isa 11:1-5, Zech 3:8-10, etc). Unbelievers will object to the inclusion of this criterion to the list, yet they themselves serve as witness to it. All of them want to be treated exactly as Jesus said men should be treated. They approve of His bold stand against racism and His teaching that all men should be considered as neighbors. They approve of His kindness and regard to women and children. They approve His rejection of monarchy and totalitarianism. They approve His principle that leaders should be those that serve the people rather than those that serve themselves of the people. They agree with His high standards of forgiveness, forbearance and peace. They agree with His opposition to violence, and with His claim that those who take the sword will perish by it. Verily, they even find common ground with Him in their contempt for religion, because no man ever scathed humanly contrived, superstitious, vain, inconsistent and impractical religion more than Jesus Christ. In all these points, advancing societies have moved from former views toward positions taught by Jesus Christ. Not a man will be found expressing regret for living as Jesus commanded men to live. Multitudes will be found expressing regret for living otherwise. In all these respects, even unbelievers will find not a single fault with His teachings, but find them in every respect to be practical, consistent and in accordance with conscience. The complaints of such unbelievers are more commonly against hypocritical Christianity than against these teachings of Christ. Contrast this to the teachings of multitudes of philosophers, religious teachers, political leaders, etc., who have left behind them a trail of regretful followers, and these oftentimes accompanied by numerous of their victims, and even in

the best cases, at least some degree of fault could be found in what was taught. What are the odds that a man could attain to this unsurpassed standard even in the view of those who otherwise reject Him and His book? I will put odds on this at one in one hundred and be ashamed for not making them higher. (1 in 100)

What then are the odds of all these things happening together given the subjective probabilities assigned to each? It is 1.28 times 10 to the 82nd. This number is so massive that there is no comprehensible way to illustrate it. It exceeds the estimated number of atoms in the entire Universe (commonly set at 10^{80}). Contrast this to the 4.5 billion years that evolutionists vainly suppose as being sufficient time for their theory to work. This number is meaningless in comparison to the number of atoms in the Universe. Indeed, were one to take a sharp pencil and put a tiny dot on a sheet of paper, that dot is apt to contain more than 4.5 billion atoms. But suppose that some will complain that my subjective odds were biased so as to exaggerate the case, then let me concede to this complaint by saying that each subjective probability should have been a mere 1 in 2, then the final odds still would have been 1 in 1.1 trillion.

Anyone who would persist in rejecting the Bible or Jesus Christ in the face of such evidence has no ability to distinguish between sophistry and science. Anyone who would persist in worshipping other gods, even when opposed by evidence that would fill the Universe itself, obviously prefers the petty pablum of devils to eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conclusions

Though spread over four millennia, the numerous actors of the Old Testament were moved by an Invisible Hand to enact or tell different parts of what would become the same story.

Remarkably, none were even aware of what they were being moved to enact, and those who wrote about them seemed to have limited understanding of what was transpiring under their own pen. However, all their stories miraculously merged and became reality in the life of one man, Jesus Christ. The allegorical and literal prophecies of these Old Testament characters all came to pass. Their literal prophecies were fulfilled against odds outnumbering the very atoms of the Universe, and yet, the fulfillment of their allegorical prophecies did at least as much to astound.

The clear implications of these facts are that both the Old Testament and its actors were brilliantly orchestrated by God, and that God considers Jesus Christ to be so important that He spent four millennia repeatedly telling His story even before it happened. Almost everywhere this story was communicated by God in the Old Testament, certain crucial truths were conveyed. One was that the Central Character of the story is actually the Son of God Himself, the very Creator of man. Another was that the Son of God would become incarnate and die for the sins of those who believe in Him. The effect of this would be to deliver them from condemnation and death to righteousness and eternal life. These facts explain why God considered the story to be so important, and why He insisted that the Central Character of the story be revered.

As for those who do not believe the story, the mountain of evidence they defy serves as witness to their sickened state of mind. A deranged mind is most commonly detected by it believing the unbelievable or denying the undeniable. The denial here is egregious because the reality of what the unbeliever denies is so certain that chances would be far greater that his own present reality is in fact a mere hallucination. Ironically, chances would also be vastly greater that the unbeliever is himself an unwitting actor in some invisibly directed drama that reinforces the very thing he denies. If so, then he should be very trepid about the role that the Invisible Director intends for him to play. If the denial of Jesus Christ is accurate, then the very existence of an Invisible Director should unnerve us all, because, laying all wishful thinking aside, our science surely says that none of us could be much more than pieces of debris in His great Universe.

However, this sickened state of mind is not much worse than one that professes to believe the story but obviously has no passion for it. It is like a man who professes to believe that carrots cure cancer, and he is dying of cancer, but is not eating carrots. It is like a man who professes to believe that a volcano is on the verge of erupting yet he is building his house at the base of the same volcano. His profession is obviously hypocrisy, and it happens that hypocrisy is something that Jesus Christ hates. Even His foes know this about Him. He once said to a dispassionate group of Christians, *"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth,"* (Rev 3:15-16). This truth was repeatedly reinforced by the story that God was telling all

over the Old Testament. The message was that the death of His Son would have power to cover manifold and multitudinous sins, but disregard or desecration of the Son was to be met with the severest consequences.

Unfortunately, this lukewarm state is almost everywhere in the world today, especially in the Western World where it is becoming worse with every passing year. The Western World is therefore on the verge of being spewed from the mouth of God. The rise of the Western World began with the Greeks, and not coincidentally, it occurred when a spark of interest was ignited among Greek-speaking people in the very Old Testament this book has considered. This interest grew to the point that one of the most famous translations of the Old Testament was made for their benefit. This was the Greek Septuagint. Now one might complain that the ancient Greeks were also permeated with immorality and religious abomination. This was certainly true. It would also be true of every great western nation that would follow. However, Jesus Christ once said, *“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you,”* (Mt 17:20). True to His promise, western cultures, with no more than a grain of faith, began to move mountains and make intellectual and technological achievements that would have seemed as miracles to men who preceded them.

Shortly after Jesus made this statement, one of His Apostle’s declared to the idolatrous intellectuals on Mars Hill:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. – Acts 17:30-31

This was a declaration that the world had been forever changed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the ancient world, great empires had emerged among idolaters and polytheists, but the apostle declared that God would overlook their ignorance no longer. In fulfillment of his word, societies of this sort have sunk into the depths of ignorance and poverty among the nations of the modern world.

Now when we see in the Western World that churches are mostly empty, and that even full ones would rather frolic in frivolity than teach and learn the word of God, and when multitudes profess to be Christian but are manifestly lovers of pleasures more than lovers of Jesus Christ, and when we see that the word of God is increasingly questioned and challenged, and when it is corrupted by demon-possessed ministers aspiring to appease and vindicate sinners, thereby taking from those sinners the only enduring hope they have, then we must wonder how much more God will endure this disregard and desecration of His Son and His word. It is a very common thing in our society to find professing Christians who will point to the perversion of modern society and declare that it will lead to our ruin. This is potentially true, but our society

will be ruined by complacent and apathetic Christians long before the other can take effect. Jesus Christ died to save sinners, even the worst of them, but the man who knows about Jesus Christ and disregards Him is in a very dangerous place.

However, this is a dangerous place that poses no threat to any sensible mind. God has called upon us to believe a story that is actually impossible to disbelieve. We have been called to show honor, but it is honor for the most honorable man who ever lived. If we have any capacity for honor whatsoever, then surely we can honor Jesus Christ. We have been called to love Him, but He is Himself the very definition of love. If we have any capacity for love whatsoever, then surely we can love Jesus Christ. In serving Him we actually maximize our own joy. No man has ever regretted doing it. Millions have regretted they did not.

Finally, in honoring Him and serving Him in His church, we are ourselves honored to an inconceivable degree. Jesus said a greater man had never lived than John the Baptist, but then added that even the least in His kingdom was greater than John (Mt 11:11). Accordingly, in speaking of the trials of Israel recorded in the Old Testament, Paul said:

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. – 1Cor 10:11

This sentence ends with a prepositional phrase that is mind-boggling. It says that the very objectives of the creation itself are being fulfilled in the church of Jesus Christ. This might appear to be a most grandiose claim, but what other conclusion could one plausibly draw after considering what I have presented in this book? May God bless the readers to faithfully and zealously attend to their insuperable calling.