



COMMONWEALTH
OF ISRAEL FOUNDATION

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COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL FOUNDATION



"THE BLOOD OF YOUR COVENANT"

It's time for some theological clarity, commentary and devotional. There are few Messianic Scriptures from the Hebrew text which are alluded to and/or directly quoted in all four gospels — so, the passages from Zechariah 9:9-10 are altogether poignant, laced with overt prophetic fulfillment and found in Matthew 21:5; Mark 11:7, 9; Luke 19:38; John 12:15, to wit:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9)



Doug
Krieger
Chair - COIF

Allow me to pause here for Messiah's First Coming wrought us so great a SALVATION—yes, His Triumphal Entry on Nissan 10 (so-called "Palm Sunday"—which will occur this year on April 18, 2024 with Passover on April 22—contrariwise, Easter will occur on March 31, 2024 with Palm Sunday on March 24, 2024). Nisan 10 matches the same date on the Hebrew Sacred Calendar as the choosing of the spotless lamb on that first Passover—4 days before it was slain (Exodus 12:1-11). Moreover, it was on Nissan 10 the very day the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River into the Good Land (Joshua 4:19) — and the day when Ezekiel saw the vision of the Holy City, the Holy District as found in Ezekiel 40:1-2—viz. "... at the beginning of the year [religious Rosh Hashanah], on the tenth day of the month . . ."



Nissan 10—The Lamb is Chosen for Passover —

Nissan 10—The Children of Israel cross the Jordan River into the Good Land —

Nissan 10—Ezekiel sees "in the visions of God" the Holy City – Holy District

Nissan 10—Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as the "Lamb-King" of God Who takes away the sin of the world whereby "... that he (Caiaphas the High Priest) prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one." (John 11:51-52 NIV). Salvation AND Unity in Messiah!

But we have left off Zechariah 9:10 where Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah:

"Shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be from the sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth."

This speaks of His Second Coming—for Messiah's two-fold accomplishment initially wrought SALVATION but His "coming again in glory" will manifest in fullness His Kingdom here on earth. Furthermore, we have been far too dismissive with Zech. 9:10's "dominion peace" Messiah brings where He declares:

"I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off—He shall speak peace to the nations;"

I don't know if we have ever seen this: Ephraim's chariot and Jerusalem/Judah's horse will be cut off—the carnal weapons of warfare now so blatantly manifest upon the earth with "wars and rumors of wars" shall be confounded—

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Vol. 2 - Issue 1

Editor: Doug Krieger

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Chris W. Steinle

Ephraim and Judah will dispense with WAR as Messiah implements His PEACE PLAN! But there is abundantly more to this amazing prophecy in Zechariah 9 . . . for we read:

*"As for you **ALSO** (you see this **ALSO** tells us the preceding Messianic text continues) because of the **BLOOD OF YOUR COVENANT** I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope" (vs. 11-12a).*

You see, this reference to the *"blood of your covenant"* is directly connected to Messiah—He is the antecedent of YOUR—it is His blood, not ours! We did not make this "covenant of blood"—He made it for us. You ask: How can that be? Because only He, through His own blood, the very *"blood of the everlasting covenant"* (Heb. 13:20) could ever *"set your prisoners free from the waterless pit"* and make them *"prisoners of hope."* In context there is only One Whose blood is sufficient to set the prisoners free and make them His prisoners of Hope! Moreover, not only will He restore double to His People—but *"His People"* is clarified when we read:

"For I have bent Judah, My bow, fitted the bow with Ephraim (vs. 13) and raised up your sons, O Zion, against your sons, O Greece, and made you like the sword of a mighty man."

Those familiar with *"Commonwealth Theology"* immediately recognize this prophetic fulfillment as the bringing together of both Judah (the Jewish natural branch of the One Olive Tree) and the *"wild branch"* (those called out from among the nations—aka, Ephraim/Gentiles) in the latter days. The *"Jerusalem Council"* (Acts 15:6-29) concluded by the summation of the Apostle James that what they were witnessing by the incursion of the *"nations/Gentiles"* into the Assembly/Congregation (aka, Ekklesia) was the raising up of the United Kingdom of David in the here and now (not future but NOW) whereby Amos 9:11-12 was being fulfilled:

"On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom (i.e., the "rest of mankind") and all the Gentiles who are called by My name," says the LORD who does this thing."

Yes, the *"fullness"* of *"all Israel's restoration"* will culminate the present age—and even now this is accelerating, for the day of His visitation is upon us! Christ said He would build His Ekklesia—and that is precisely what He is about doing!

Zechariah's prophecy persists:

"Then the LORD will be seen over them. And His arrow will go forth like lightning. The Lord God will blow the trumpet, and go with whirlwinds from the south. The LORD of hosts will defend them; they shall devour and subdue with slingstones. They shall drink and roar as if with wine; they shall be filled with blood like basins, like the corners of the altar. The LORD their God will save them in that day, as the flock of His people. For they shall be like the jewels of a crown, lifted like a banner over His land—" (vss. 14-16).

These prophetic adumbrations are awesome. Brethren—*"the battle is the Lord's!"* Judah's the bow and Ephraim the arrow—*"His arrow will go forth like lightning!"* He, the Lord God will *"blow the trumpet!"* Is this the *"Last Trump?"* It very well could be—but it is most definitely the sound of His triumphant victory over those who would assail God's people at the close of this age. His people are being measured at the Altar (Rev. 11:1-2)—and those worshipers so measured will be saved by the Lord their God in that day for they are the *"one flock"* of His pasture. Amazing, the crown of Messiah is fitted with those who have built His Kingdom with *"gold, silver, and precious stones."* It is this crown which will be lifted up on high as a banner to be displayed—no doubt to principalities and powers—how great is His

mercy and love for all them who have suffered with Him for they shall reign with Him!

Brethren, let us come wholly under His Kingship—His Crown—His Authority—"return to our stronghold" as His *"prisoners of hope"* and aspire to be doubly restored . . .



"Oh Lord, we put down our carnal weaponry to become Your bow, your arrow—yes, Judah and Ephraim . . . raise us up as the sons of Zion to be as Your mighty man as a sword in Your hand . . . send us forth as Your arrows like lightning for it is Your Trumpet that blows . . . we rest on Your promise to defend us, save us in that day as the flock of Your people . . . THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S . . . may we be the jewels in Your crown which are lifted up as a banner to be displayed before principalities and powers—how great is Your inheritance in the saints, how beautiful it is—the victory is Yours!"

The summation of Zechariah's glorious prophecy declares the *"body and blood"* of His Covenant with all them who call on the Name of the Lord: *"Grain (the bread/body) shall make the young men thrive, and new wine (the cup/blood) the young women"* (vs. 17) – both young men and women shall thrive because they have been nourished by the body and blood of Messiah.

And all this takes place at the end of this present age:

"Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone" (Zech. 10:1).

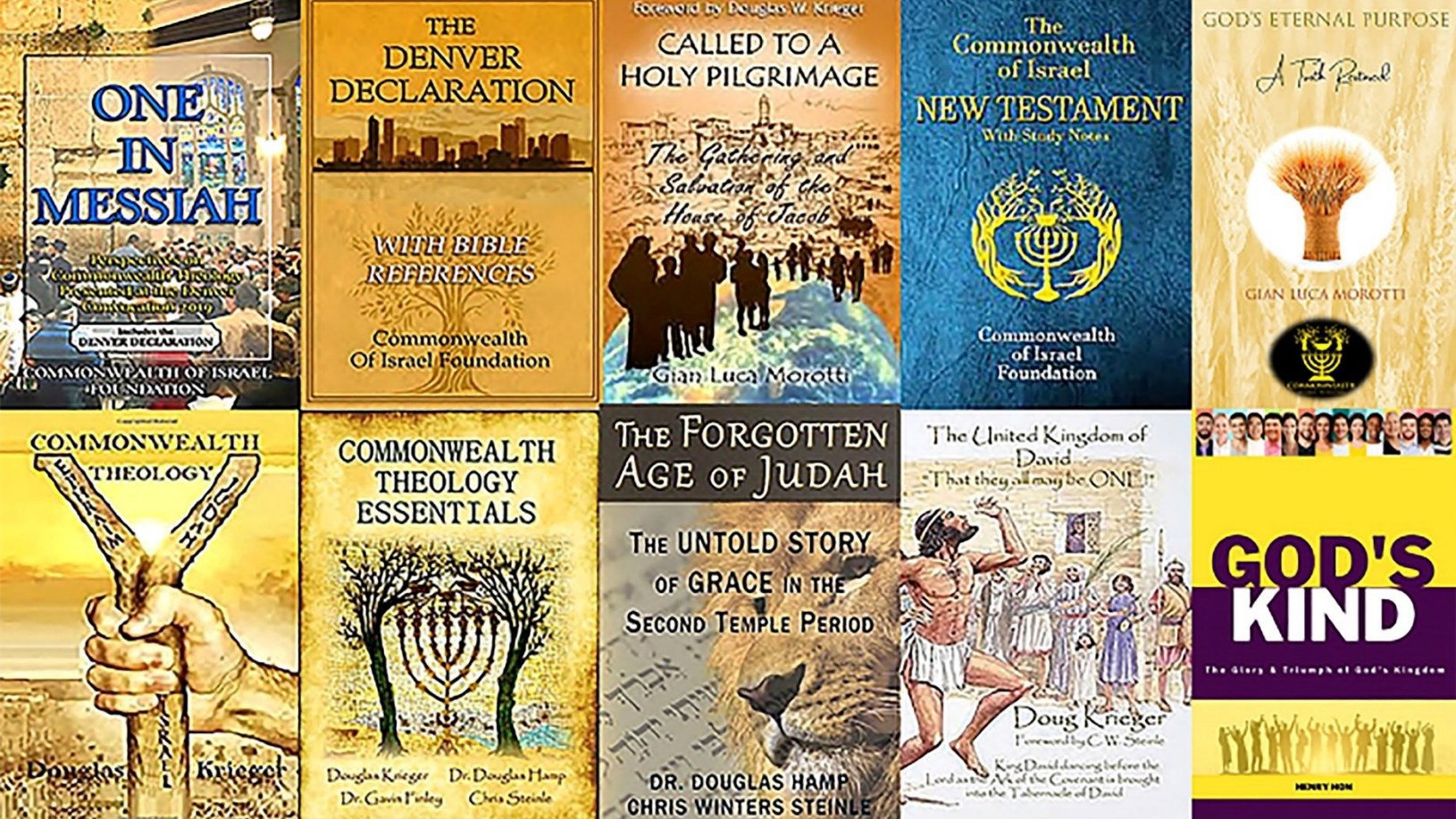
Is this the final end-times' harvest that He shall reap—the *"grass in the field for everyone?"* On that day:

"I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped'" (Rev. 14:14-16).

Far too long we have truncated Zechariah's prophecy and have stopped at His entry into Jerusalem cir. 33 AD—but we must go on to the rest of Zechariah's all-inclusive prophecy of what the King of kings is about doing both in bringing His people together as One and how He shall come to judge the nations with righteousness and justice for *"another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle"* which shall reap the ungodly harvest—there will be no *"middle ground"* for the worthy Lamb of God will pour out His wrath on that day.

But we, *"the flock of His people"* will together declare: *"How great is its goodness – and how great its beauty!"* (Zech. 9:17) This is the LAND—the Good Land—our REST—our Sabbath—our Deliverer! The King of kings and Lord of lords has given us such an inheritance—He has sealed it with the *"blood of Your covenant"* whereby *"the LORD will be seen over them!"*





WHAT IN THE WORLD TO COME



Chris Winters Steinle
Is the lead editor of COIF's New Testament w/Study Notes and a Prolific Author And Co-author

Peter gives us, as it were, the view from 20,000 ft. But by the end of our study, we'll be focusing, literally, down at "street level." 2nd Peter 3:10-14:

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

To summarize. The day of the Lord refers to Jesus' second coming. Most scholars agree that the heat will dissolve the material elements that make up this present physical universe. And, it is in Isaiah where we find the promise of the new heavens and earth—that according to Peter—we are looking for.

To establish the link to the Second-Peter passage, let's go to Isaiah 66 verses 15 and 16:

15 For behold, the Lord will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For by fire and by His sword
The Lord will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the Lord shall be many.

This is also what we see in Revelation 19:11, 12, and 15:

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire... 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.

We're going to see the first reference to that new heavens and new earth that was promised back in the book of Isaiah. And we're going to see evidence in Isaiah and in Revelation of a two-phase transformation.

Let's look at Isaiah 65 verse 17-25:

17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

So far, we see we're beholding the new heavens and new earth. And in verse 18, we find a call to action that we need to remember is true in this present age and also in the age to come.

We should be glad and rejoice forever in what God creates!
We also see that the New Jerusalem is an element of the new earth.

Continuing in verse 20:

20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old,
But the sinner, being one hundred years old, shall be accursed.
21 They shall build houses and inhabit them;
They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and another eat;
For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people,
And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain,
Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord,
And their offspring with them.
24 "It shall come to pass
That before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,"
Says the Lord.

You may have caught some unexpected features in this passage. It's talking about the new heavens and earth, yet it mentions sinners, children being born—thus, procreation. And even though the lifespan is extended to life near the time of Adam, (almost a thousand years), we still see death. (It also just so happens that without fire or drought, olive trees can live between 5 and 15 hundred years.)

This first phase of the new heavens and earth relates to the end of Revelation 19 and the first part of Chapter 20; what is traditionally referred to as the millennial reign of Christ. We'll look at that in a minute; but first, Isaiah has already spoken of the "winding up" of this present age in Isaiah Chapter 24:

1 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface... verse 4 The earth mourns and fades away... 19 and 20: The earth is violently broken, The earth is split open, The earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, And shall totter like a hut; Its transgression shall be heavy upon it, And it will fall, and not rise again.

Thus the need for a new earth. But it's the next verses of Isaiah 24 that foreshadow the interim period—the Millennium we see in Revelation. Reading verses 21 through 23:

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth the kings of the earth.
22 They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.

23 Then the moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the Lord of hosts will reign
On Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

It is in the phrase, "after many days," that we see the need for some interval of time. The evil angels in heaven (in particular, Satan) and the evil forces on earth are apprehended at first; and later they receive their judgment. Please refer in your Bibles to Revelation 19:20:

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Notice that first, they were captured and then they were punished, with no reference to the period of time in between. But Revelation expounds on Satan's capture and punishment in detail.

Look at the opening verses of Revelation Chapter 20:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things, he must be released for a little while.

Later, we see Satan's judgment in verse 10:

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

This interval in Chapter 24 of Isaiah helps explain why he would include a "phase-one" of the new heaven and earth in Isaiah 65. But this scenario also explains why this first phase will still include death. We find the key in Hebrews 2:14, where we read that Jesus took on flesh and blood "that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Death is finally defeated when Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire.

This order of "execution" agrees perfectly with what Paul says in 1st Corinthians Chapter 15, where he tells us "the last enemy that will be destroyed is death." So the enemies of the Beast and the False Prophet must be dealt with before the last enemy, Satan—who has the power of death.

We're going to finish up our study in the book of Revelation, but first let's go back to Isaiah's second mention of the new heavens and earth found in Isaiah 66 beginning in verse 22:

22 "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the Lord, "So shall your descendants and your name remain."

(Notice that here in phase-two we're looking at the "forever" state of things; where death is no more . . .) Continuing in verse 23:

23 And it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the Lord.
24 "And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Some of you may be surprised that the new heavens also have a "new moon." Revelation merely says that the glory of God and His Son so outshines the sun and moon that they are not necessary for light—they are "disgraced."

The new earth will also have seasons that will logically be caused by the earth and the moon's rotations. Furthermore, we see that Jesus will be on the new earth because that's where we will gather to worship Him. In fact, the book of Ezekiel ends by stating "the name of the city from that day shall be: THE LORD IS THERE."

Also of interest in verse 24 is the fact that we will be in our glorified bodies and those who fought against God will also have bodies that do not die—even their worms don't die. Jesus quoted this punishment for the wicked three times in the gospel of Mark. In Matthew, it is metaphorically called Gehenna, the valley of fires and corpses just outside of Old Jerusalem.

Now let's return to Revelation, Chapter 21, to make some further observations about the new heavens and the new earth. Starting in verse 1:

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband...3 ... And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Why there is no more sea is off our topic; but other than that, you can see that these verses reiterate the facts that we just read in Isaiah.

In studying what the Bible has to say about the new heavens and new earth, we get a clearer understanding of our ultimate state—"what we shall be." We want to stir our hope in His appearing; looking for the day of the Lord—as we read in 2nd Peter. Toward this end, please consider the first three verses of Revelation Chapter 22.

1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.

We see that in the New Jerusalem—which will have been merged with the new earth—that God and His Son are there. We will spend eternity on the new "heavenly" earth, because that's where Jesus will be.

We see a street. (I told you we'd get down to the street view); and nations outside and beyond the New Jerusalem. Objects with form will exist in some type of media by which objects and people can be distinguished. In other words, we will not exist as some spiritual blur, or merely as thoughts in the mind of God. It is a new creation.

Furthermore, there is action. A flowing river; and, His servants are serving. For activity to occur, something must move or change over some interval of time. The month is still mentioned as a measure of time. Some recognition of time over which change can be observed is necessary to realize that something has "happened." To recognize that there has been activity... To recognize what we call life!

Paul said in 1st Corinthians 15, "There is a physical body, and there is a spiritual body." Then, in Philippians 3:21 he is very specific; that Jesus "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body."

Considering—not only the dissolution of this age, but also "what God has prepared for those who love him," "what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?"

Just to be clear, before Jesus returns, our souls go to heaven where Jesus is now; and our bodies go to the grave. But in the Day of the Lord, our bodies are resurrected, the living and the resurrected are "changed"/transformed into glorious bodies; Jesus descends; and we spend eternity with Jesus on the new earth.

In conclusion, the new heavens and earth will have time, spacial dimensions of some kind, and life. Jesus said He would give us "life more abundantly." There will be action; and, there will be interaction between other people; and of course, interaction with God.

Just think of the miracle of this age: that God has made a body to contain our spirit and soul. In this present-atomic media, souls are able to interact just as they will in the new, eternal media. So now in this present age, every time we interact, let's remember this miracle made possible by God. And, that we are privileged to interact with others souls, made in God's image and likeness. Oh, "be glad and rejoice forever in what God creates."

We should expect the new heavens and earth to be even more robust than this present age. In this age, scientists estimated there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals. And astronomers think there are approximately 200-billion trillion stars in our heavens. It is no wonder that God said of this creation, "It was very good." Would the new heavens and new earth be any less majestic?

We have every reason to look forward to the promised new heavens and new earth that Peter anticipated. As Isaiah exclaimed: "be glad and rejoice forever in what God creates"!




THE WASHINGTON DECLARATION (TWD)

NOVEMBER, 1982

In the fall of 1982 a large assembly of both Evangelical Christians and Jewish leaders gathered together in Washington, D.C. at the behest of TAV Evangelical Ministries (the late Pastor Douglas R. Shearer of New Hope Christian Fellowship, Sacramento, CA) and a wide assortment of leading evangelical leaders from the USA and virtually every major branch of Judaism—including Reform, Conservative, and major branches of Orthodox Judaism. The gatherings took place in our Nation’s Capital because the participants wanted there to be a counterweight to what became known as the “Chicago Declaration” which was likewise given credibility because of its composition of Christian and Jewish denominations and organizations. The difference between the two declarations was striking in that the “Chicago Declaration” excoriated Israel’s behavior and reality; whereas, the “Washington Declaration” celebrated Israel’s prophetic fulfillment and place among the nations. The Rev. Dr. Donald E. Wagner organized the 1982 event in Chicago—perhaps the first of many events and declarations ultimately sponsored by “Friends of Sabeel” in support of Palestinian Rights and trumpeted by Liberation Theologians adverse to present-day Israel. The TWD was unanimously passed and signed by over 100 of those in attendance at the Washington Hebrew Congregation (the late Rabbi Joshua Haberman presiding).

THE WASHINGTON DECLARATION OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

1. As Evangelical Christians and Jews we are either descendants or spiritual descendants of Abraham.
2. We affirm together faith in God, the Creator and Lord of history.
3. We believe that God’s covenant with His people is in full force.
4. We see ourselves chosen under the terms of the Covenant as revealed in the Bible.
5. The election of the people of the Covenant is an election of responsibility for the salvation of mankind and indispensable to the Kingdom of God.
6. We reject the cynical view that history is the mere play of chance. The events of history reveal God’s will and purpose and confirm the revelations in Scriptures.
7. In the light of our faith, we see in the restoration of Israel to its Biblical homeland the further unfolding of God’s plan, the fulfillment of promises not only for the benefit of Israel, but for the nations as well.
8. The establishment of modern Israel is the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, the herald of the Coming Messiah. The rebirth of Israel points to God’s faithfulness and to the sustaining might which undergirds all of His promises.
9. We believe that Jerusalem is the eternal and indivisible capital of Israel.
10. We can understand a reasoned and morally sound criticism of the policies of any government, including Israel. But we are opposed to a blind, irrational hatred of Zion—a hatred which demands that Israel be judged by an impossible standard of righteousness; a hatred which halls her before the Court of World Opinion for conduct which cannot be condemned by any measure of fairness and equity.
11. We urge Arab leaders to unequivocally renounce the use of terror and embrace the legitimacy of the State of Israel.
12. We have met in our Nation’s Capital in the spirit of prophetic challenge “will two walk together unless they have agreed?” We are prepared to walk together as God’s Covenanted people because we are agreed on important fundamentals of our faiths. We rejoice that new doors of mutual understanding and respect are opening. We call on the faithful to thank God for this opportunity of spiritual comradeship for the blessing of our beloved land of America and for the good of the promised land of Israel. 

A Place of Refuge in the Latter Days



Dr. Gavin Finley
Author/Blogger
Rtd. Medical
Doctor

These are fearful and dangerous times. And yes, fearful people can become angry. Then they often rise up to do unwise dangerous things. So there is a great need for the saints to be properly informed, encouraged, and prepared.

And should we need to prepare to face the Harlot of Revelation 17, (who seems to be hidden in her nice Coexist garb of compromised New Age religion), then a “heads up” would be good.

Yes, the 1700 year Constantinian Accord of “God and Country”, “God + western, white horse riding king, or prince, or black horse riding merchantman ruler” seems to be faltering. This is a matter of grave concern for nationalist and traditionalist Christians. Daniel 9:27 is in their musings, and among the elites, the World Economic Forum is all talk of a “Great Reset”.

So the nations are raging, just as King David prophesied in his song. (See Psalm 2). But God is not phased by that. He knows precisely where His called out covenant people are right now. He knows all about our worries and the political concerns we have over the deep polarization going on in all the countries of the West. He wants us to draw near to Him. He also wants us to know that He has positive and constructive things for us to do, even in times of trial.

God has us pegged. He knows just where we are. He even has a Holy Day, Yom Teruah, the Feast of Trumpets, set aside. It looks to be the opener for the future 70th Week of Daniel. It may be the starting gun for His saints to run that last leg of the relay race of Hebrews 12:1.

<http://EndTimePilgrim.org/Trumpets.htm>

God’s Holy purposes are unfolding as planned. His Truth goes marching on.

His Holy Spirit is our Comforter and our Guide. There is a Highway of Holiness. (Isaiah 35:8) And the pilgrim pathway leads onwards, and upwards, towards the gates of glory.

So, none of the untoward things happening in our politics and in Coexist religion catches our sovereign God by surprise.

We can also take some comfort in this fact. As Job came to find out, the Holy One of Israel sets the LIMITS on what goes on here below.

Job 38

1 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 “Who is this who darkens counsel
By words without knowledge?

3 “PREPARE YOURSELF LIKE A MAN;
I will question you,
and you shall answer Me.

4 “Where were you when I laid
the foundations of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding.

5 “Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the line upon it?

6 “To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,

7 “When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 “Or who shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth
and issued from the womb;

9 “. . . when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness,

10 “. . . when I FIXED My LIMIT for it,
(limits to the raging seas of nations.)
And set bars and doors;

11 “. . . when I said,
‘THIS FAR YOU MAY COME,
BUT NO FURTHER!
HERE YOUR PROUD WAVES
MUST STOP!’”

So, we need not live in terror of any talk of impending nuclear annihilation. The Holy One of Israel is a God of Mercy as well as Justice. He is calling us to a level of responsibility most of us have yet to accept.

Then too, in the End-Time Revival, with that responsibility also comes an authority. There is indeed an empowerment in the Spirit of God. This is a privilege and a joy that we, His ekklesia, —His Congregation, and His Commonwealth, have yet to experience.

<http://EndTimePilgrim.org/end-timerev.htm>

Along that line, I do believe a biblical conversation on the end-time refuge is apropos. It is good medicine for us right now. This biblical truth is comforting for us, as well as informative.

<http://EndTimePilgrim.org/refuge.htm>

And should we decide to open our hearts to the plans and purposes of our coming Messiah, and search His Holy Scriptures, He will surely give us the broad layout of His big picture.

As we investigate His unfolding agenda it seems that even as we see the growing apostasy of 2Thes. 2, a big Latter Rain Holy Spirit outpouring is in store for God's Elect. And even though it be a remnant, there will be a massive end-time Harvest from every nation, race, and tribe. (See Revelation 7) The Shepherd of Israel is going out in search of His lost sheep, even on a dark and stormy day, He is fully intent on saving as many as He can.

We are part of that unfolding saga.

Our names are written down,

—in The Book.

So yes, there is a God who is sovereign over unfolding world history. Even now, He is beginning to unveil the hidden mysteries. He presides as executive over His legislature, His angelic Heavenly Court. From His throne up in the third heaven, He is overseeing the unfolding of His-Story.

We are His servants in Messiah. So, He wants to make His end-time agenda PLAIN to us, even written down on our TABLETS and smartphones! He brings us

His teachings and His real-time guidance to us very personally in the New Covenant. His plans and His purposes are being written on tablets of flesh, and cherished in human hearts.

Habakkuk 2 (NKJV)

The Just Shall Live by Faith

1 I will stand MY WATCH.

And set myself on the rampart,

And watch to see what He will say to me,

And what I will answer when I am corrected.

The Just Live by Faith

2Then the Lord answered me
and said:

“Write the vision

And MAKE IT PLAIN on TABLETS,

That he may run who reads it.

3 For the vision is yet

for an appointed time;

But AT THE END IT WILL SPEAK,
and it will not lie.

Though it tarries, wait for it;

Because it will surely come,

It will not tarry.

4 “Behold, the proud,

His soul is not upright in him;

BUT THE JUST SHALL LIVE


by his FAITH.”

Yes, there are those in Dominion Theology, who imagine a globalist Christian takeover, here on earth, forced in by earthly politics and compromised religion. They fancy the New Apostolic Reformation idea of a Last Crusade, in which today's supposed apostles and prophets can bring in the Kingdom Now, BEFORE Messiah returns as King. NO! That is NOT God's plan!

He declares that,

“THE JUST SHALL LIVE by his FAITH.”

Nothing less will do.

This IS our High Calling. 

LIVING ON THE ROOF MAKES YOU AN INCOMPLETE CHRISTIAN



Gian Luca Morotti
He serves both on
the International
Board of Ebenezer
Operation Exodus
and on the board
of COIF – His
latest release:
*God's Eternal
Purpose* is available
at COIF

American pastor A.W. Tozer once said, "The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian."¹

Increasingly more people around the world are perceiving a clarion call to go back to the complete Bible. They are unsatisfied of the status quo and unwilling to remain in the quagmire of that belief system's legitimate brand of Christendom which has never come up with any answers to the plights of the present, especially with regard to the current duress that sees the church/ekklesia being challenged by principalities and powers that aim at

blocking her advancement and consequent victory over their pernicious plans to get away with it. The remnant of the Most-High God is seeking for more. In fact, the true disciples of Jesus know that there's more than they can actually realize, and have come to understand that the freedom to possess the whole inheritance in Christ in the rediscovering of the old/ancient paths.

"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.' But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" (Jeremiah 6:16)

They are asking for the old paths, where the good way is and want to walk in it. In so doing, they embark in a process of recovery and restoration that brings them to a well-balanced biblical worldview. Dr. Looper expressed it well by writing that, in fact, "The Bible is the LORD God's Worldview"²

Despite that, countless Christians believe otherwise. They boast to call themselves New Testament believers, yet thus doing, they unwittingly pronounce to be living on the roof of the house, when they could very well be living inside. Let me explain.

Think of owning a beautiful, architecturally perfect, well-designed mansion with fine finishes, inside and out, equipped with numerous tastefully furnished rooms. Imagine stepping into a space that exudes timeless charm, where each element has been carefully curated to enhance the aura of your prized possession. The lighting within the house is carefully calibrated to showcase the furniture. Soft, warm illumination casts a gentle glow, accentuating the intricate details and evoking a sense of reverence for the craftsmanship and history contained within, thus becoming a testament to your passion, a sanctuary where the true authenticity of your values shines through.

You, the rightful owner, can enjoy its splendor, live comfortably, and appreciate the various floors. There you have a spacious living room. The room where you can relax when you are tired, entertain friends and any other guests. It's designed in such a way that windows are facing the hills.

These hills offer extraordinarily beautiful scenery, and one can just look at them the whole day without noticing how time flies by.

And in the gorgeous and large kitchen, you could spend hours and hours with your family members. In it, you could make use of every possible appliance capable of helping in preparing succulent dishes for the joy of your friends. You are also the owner of a special cellar located in the basement where you keep the most excellent wines for special moments.

Also, at any time you could enjoy the blessing of being alone in your beautiful and cozy private study, your place of refuge, the inner chamber where you could retire to meditate. The library in there is bewitching with towering shelves, dim lighting, and the musty scent of your books that seems to transport you to a different time and place (The biographies of the Christian heroes of the past, the Classics of the Evangelical Literature, the Reformers, the Puritans, the Methodists, the Commentaries, the Lexicons, the dozens of Bibles in various languages, Hebrew texts, Greek texts, the knowledge from our Hebraic Heritage, and many other timeless resources).

You lack nothing and feel safe because you dwell within this fortress where neither rain nor wind can ever scratch its plaster. Yet, you have decided to abide on the roof. You, the owner of the house, have taken your residency on the roof. And spiritually speaking, we could say that dwelling on the roof of the house is tantamount to not enjoying the blessings of God's whole plan as elucidated in His Word. So, are those who believe that clinging to their preferred doctrine or parts of the Word of God equal to having a corner on the truth. Thinking they have everything, yet they are poor. It's like that fiddler of the famous movie: *Fiddler on the Roof*. This amazing film begins with a fiddler playing the traditional theme, and Tevye, the protagonist, explaining to the audience that what keeps the Jews of Anatevka going is the balance they achieve through obedience to their ancient traditions, using the analogy of a fiddler on the roof. It also explains that the lot of the Jews in Russia is as precarious as a fiddler on a roof: trying to eke out a pleasant tune while not breaking their necks. The fiddler appears throughout the film as a metaphoric reminder of the Jews' ever-present fears and danger³.

There is no way here to juxtapose the plight of the Jewish communities living in the diaspora with those who, while owning a large house, prefer to live on the rooftop, nor room for casting bad light over the protagonists of this superb and marvelous film. But while the Fiddler symbolizes the resilience of the Jewish community in the face of oppression and displacement, it can as well represent the struggle of those who maintain cultural and religious tradition in a rapidly changing world, being the poetic expression of that reality that all of us face at some point in our lives.

From the life of Tevye (the main character) we get that those who are forced to deal with unforeseen changes in their culture, family, and community, echo his deepest heartfelt emotions as he struggles to accept or deny those changes which sometimes contradict tradition and other times simply having to struggle with unjust persecution, or even when he has to reassert his place

in this life, reaffirming what and who he is. It's always difficult to let go of those things that define who we are or to accept that who we are and what we stand for must sometimes be redefined.

But the most fitting part taken from the film for the concept I would like to convey is found when Tevye, turning to the heavens, he exclaims: "Well, I'm not really complaining, after all, with Your help I'm starving to death! Oh dear Lord, You made many, many poor people. I realize of course, it's not shame to be poor, but it's not great honor either, so what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?" To me this is a wonderful expression depicting those who find themselves spiritually bankrupt, poor and starving because of a famine of the Word of God, because they're happy to live on the rooftop of their spiritual house, God's household, never wondering if by entering the house, he could by chance partake of a better life. Sadly, the scarcity of sound teaching in the Body of Messiah has caused many to leave her shores to embark upon a journey which has brought them to places where they still hunger for more.

A personal note. God called me in the early '90s while living in London (England). I grew up in Italy and as a believer, primarily within a denomination where the motto was: "The whole Gospel!" This conveyed the idea of holding all the truth. It did not take me long to find out that this claim was spurious, to say the least. As years went by, it became evident that essential pieces of God's mosaic were missing to give credibility to the claim put at the forefront. This was one of the reasons why I was inspired to pursue the missing components of the faith once delivered to the saints and to become a seeker of what I felt was to be the need for apprehending the whole truth. Thus, if I were to somehow recover the old paths where the good way is and walk in it (Jeremiah 6:16), a need for a paradigm shift in the way things were learnt and taught was needed, with a great dose of unlearning first, and in some cases an override from God Himself regarding the erroneous views on Bible interpretation.

We all should need to take heed to what A.W. Tozer had said: "Any tinkering with the truth, any liberties taken with the Scriptures, and we throw ourselves out of symmetry and invite stiff discipline and severe chastisement from that loving Father who wills for us nothing less than full restoration to the image of God in Christ."⁴

With this regard, it's imperative to make our own the example of the apostle Paul, who, addressing the elders of Ephesus, wanted to remind them that one of the main features of his preaching was to declare the whole counsel of God, to wit, "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Ellicott's Bible Commentary explains that "The words point to a greater degree of receptivity for Divine truth than had been found elsewhere. So, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which, even on the assumption that it was an encyclical letter, was addressed to them principally. In 'I have not shunned' we have the same word and image as in the 'kept back' of Acts 20:20." Yes, the whole counsel of God is what makes a man whole, and what moves man from an unnatural position, that of living on the rooftop, to position him in his true environment, the home environment. For, *Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints*

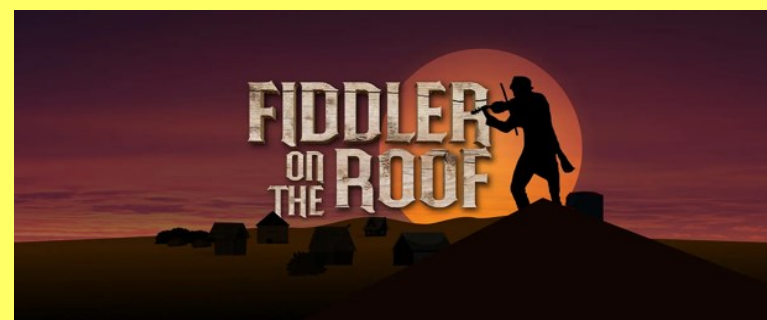
and members of the HOUSEHOLD OF GOD" (Ephesians 2:19). So, not keeping back any part of the Scriptures, nor shunning to declare the whole counsel of God is what I'm doing here and it is applicable to the discovering of the truth pertaining to our **inclusion** in the citizenship called 'Israel' ("Therefore remember that you, once Gentile in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by that is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were *without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*" (Ephesians 2:11-12).

Therefore, in dealing with this apostolic declaration, it's imperative that we are cognizant of the fact that the meaning of a text is the authors intended meaning and that we forget the "What does this mean to me?" And ask instead "What did these mean to the original author?"—who in this case, is conveying the idea that ALL born again believers, at the moment they are in Christ, they draw near the whole body of believers (both sides of the cross – before and afterwards) who comprise the ISRAEL of God.

Moreover, the approach of the subject of Commonwealth Theology, demands that we understand that what becomes apparent is that interpretation cannot take place within a theological vacuum. Because we must take first a preliminary position before we ever attempt to interpret anything. Yet many today seem to cling to a different worldview, that is not a biblically-balanced one—to the detriment of the whole.

For instance, **Two Covenant Theology** or **Dual Covenant Theology**, proposes a view that holds the Church and Israel moving on parallel but separate tracks to each other.

Dispensational Theology, on the other hand, sees the Two Testaments without having much continuity as their proponents teach that Christians dwell on a New Testament Dispensation alone, or the Grace Dispensation. Some within their ranks insist that salvation history is primarily discontinuous because of the neat segmentation between various dispensations. **This belief system has brought scores of believers to permanently move to the rooftop of their house.** Lewis Sperry Chafer, for example, believed that only the book of Acts and the church epistles possessed primary relevance to contemporary believers.



Henry A. Vierkler rightly asserts that "... since the epistles comprise only 10% of the Bible, the issue of whether the remaining 90% possesses primary relevance to contemporary believers is of paramount importance. Many significant theological issues are affected by the way one resolves this question."⁵

As John Looper further explains, "Without any reservation, because the facts are in, neither Christ or the apostles saw the New Testament community of Jews and Gentiles are moving on two separate or parallel covenant tracks. Christ and the Apostles both established and taught **ONE COVENANT THEOLOGY**."⁶

I couldn't agree more with this affirmation.

But keeping the Jews outside of the equation, that is to say, in a theological ghetto, equals to taking them into custody outside their own Commonwealth of Israel, *de facto* ghettoizing them, wherefore maintaining a strict separation between Israel and the Church has always produced a belief system that sees the Church inhabiting the spiritual benefits of the household of God as the true Israel of God.

In light of this, we need to ask why this obvious departure from the counsel of the whole Bible when it comes to our collocation into the household of God, the Commonwealth of Israel? Dr. Looper clearly explains that "In the New Testament writings, and among the scholars of Christian and Jewish persuasion [throughout the last two millennia] is the question of paramount importance – 'Who is the Israel of God?'"⁷

To my view, it is precisely around the idea of who is the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) wherein lies the problem of one's residency, whether atop the roof or inside of the house.

Moreover, they who exegete Galatians 6:16 wherein they lay emphasis upon a Greek conjunction (*kai* – KJV: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy [exclusively this "peace and mercy" is upon the uncircumcised Gentile believer **AND** upon the Israel of God" – the claim is made that this **AND** separates out the Jews as the only Israel of God, while excluding the Gentile believer from the Israel of God]).⁸

In ascribing "Peace and mercy" to the uncircumcised Gentile believers in the province of Galatia, and then the same to the Jews, as the "Israel of God" they have butchered the entire intent of Paul's writing to the Galatians! The NIV captures the essence of Paul's determination for both Jew (circumcised) and Gentile (uncircumcised) to live by the Truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:5, 14) as His New Creation which alone avails (Gal. 6:15-16):

"Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow (lit. "walk in step as in a military march") this rule (standard) – even to the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16 NIV), or "they are the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16 God's Word Translation).

So, what do we do to help those brethren who have decided to stay on the rooftop? One of the main things that we are called to do is to work with God in restoring the truth of His eternal purpose for the Ekklesia by presenting, on the starting blocks, a balanced view of the engrafting/inclusion into the family tree of salvation (Romans 11), which would open the way to further knowledge of our spiritual positioning in the great and general congregation of Israel via the new birth.

The key to understanding the root and the branches metaphor in Romans 11 lies in looking at the Jews, the natural branches, because they boast a lineage derived from both paternities: they are the children of Abraham and the children of Abraham by faith (when they believe in Yeshua). Whereas, those believers called out from the nations, on the other hand,

are called the wild branches because they are children of Abraham only by faith, not by birth. So, it is faith in the end that determines our inclusion, not ethnicity (Galatians 3:1-18).⁹

By teaching the supreme truth of our **engrafting** into the family tree of salvation, we champion God's eternal purpose and become restorers of "streets to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:12). To that end, looking back at **Abraham** is paramount in understanding our **inclusion** and in helping in the task of getting back our **lost status as citizens** in the **Commonwealth of Israel**.

It is through the new birth that all of us—Jews and Gentiles—take on our new identity in the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11-13).

Therefore, when Gentiles are saved by Israel's Messiah, God brings them into His eternal covenant. They get a change of status whereby they no longer are considered Gentiles or pagans, but full-fledged citizens of ISRAEL.

Therefore, let's join with Him in His liberation campaign that "the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified" (II Thessalonians 3:1) in all its excellence, proclaiming with boldness that God's great purpose for the Congregation of Israel was never for separation, but for unity. And for those who still live on the roof of the house, we pray that the Lord will give them eyes to see that full entrance into the great house is theirs for the taking.



Footnotes:

- (1) A. W. Tozer, *Of God and Men: Cultivating the Divine/Human Relationship* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2015), p. 77
- (2) Dr. John A. Looper, *Finding Our Way Back Home. Rediscovering a Biblical Worldview*. (John Looper Ministries), p. 75.
- (3) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiddler_on_the_Roof_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiddler_on_the_Roof_(film))
- (4) A. W. Tozer, *ibid*
- (5) Henrt A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics* (Baker Books 1981), p. 12
- (6) D. John A. Looper, *ibid*, p. 176
- (7) D. John A. Looper, *ibid*, p. 173
- (8) Gian Luca Morotti, *God's Eternal Purpose. A Truth Restored* (The Commonwealth of Israel Foundation, 2023)
- (9) Douglas R. Shearer, *Calvin on the Ropes*, 2009



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Looking Deeper into the True Meaning of "The Church"

Part 2 of a 4-Part Series

God's Covenants are Irrevocable

The Promised Blessing Summarized

- Abraham was to be the father of "many nations"
- Abraham was to be very fruitful and kings would come from him
- His descendants would possess the land God promised him
- His posterity was to be as "sand" and "stars" for number
- His posterity was to "possess the gates" of their enemies
- His posterity was to expand as "a company of nations"
- These nations would expand to the south, east, north & west
- These nations were promised a bountiful inheritance materially
- A blessing on those blessing them; curses on those cursing them
- Blessings are conditional; covenant is unconditional and eternal

GUEST

Article

Russell Smith
Poteau, OK

To my knowledge, there is no indication in scripture that God ever "took back" any of the promised blessings to Abraham and his descendants, there is no record that God changed. If this is true that

the covenant stands "forever", then we should be able to see this covenant being worked out in real people in real history, as Roger Rusk states in Part 1 of this series. I believe many of us haven't seen it because we've been looking in the wrong place. But I'm getting ahead of myself; let's continue the story the Bible is telling, summarized in the chart below.

Jacob becomes Israel: 12 sons, 12 tribes

- Genesis 28 - Jacob is sent east to find a wife
- Genesis 29 - Jacob goes to Haran, meets / marries Rachel and Leah
- Genesis 30 - Jacob struggles and prospers, 11 sons are born
- Genesis 31 - Jacob flees from Laban, returns to Canaan
- Genesis 32 - Jacob wrestles with YHWH, he is named "Israel"
- Genesis 33 - Jacob meets Esau peacefully, settles in Shechem
- Genesis 34 - Simeon and Levi cause trouble in Shechem
- Genesis 35 - Jacob/Israel moves to Beth-el
- Genesis 35 - Benjamin is born, Rachel dies; 12 sons, 12 tribes

12 sons, 12 tribes - but the story focuses on two!

If you tend to highlight or underline important information, you should probably grab your pencil or highlighter now. The importance and significance of two specific tribes will be prophesied, stated and demonstrated in the chapters and years that follow Genesis 35. Those two tribes are Judah and Joseph, neither of which is the firstborn of Jacob and so would not be expected to carry significant roles. But YHWH has His plans, and He had plans for these two tribes. We likely understand a bit more about Judah since, as the Ruler carrying the scepter, Judah brought forth our Messiah King. But Joseph also played a very important and meaningful role, which, I believe, is much less understood by most believers. Read what the Chronicler had to say about these two tribes:

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he profaned his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he (Reuben) is not recorded in the genealogy according to the birthright. Though Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came the ruler, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph. (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)

Again, highlighters needed! The birthright was given to the sons of Joseph! That means that Manasseh and Ephraim received the birthright. www.commonwealthofisrael.com or www.commonwealthofisrael.org

right blessing of their grandfather Jacob, also called Israel. And, in one of those twists that YHWH seems to delight in, Ephraim was selected to receive the firstborn portion, even though Manasseh was born first. And if you are asking about the significance of the birthright, be assured it was important. The birthright child received a double portion or share of property, as well as their father's authority and responsibilities. So, the covenant blessings that YHWH had promised Abraham flowed down to Isaac, then to Jacob/Israel, then to Joseph and Ephraim. What did or does that mean? That is one of the things we hope to find out!

A Short Story About Joseph

Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, and so they hated him and could not speak to him in peace. Then Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; so they hated him even more. They plotted against him to put him to death. But Reuben heard this and delivered him out of their hands and said, "Let us not strike down his life. Cast him into this pit in the wilderness."

Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt. The Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard. And Yahweh was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. Now Pharaoh had a dream and his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh recounted to them his dream, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; yet I have heard it said about you, that you hear a dream and that you can interpret it." Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will answer concerning the welfare of Pharaoh." Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same; God has declared to Pharaoh what He is about to do. So now let Pharaoh look for a man understanding and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

(Genesis 37:3-5, 18, 21-22, 28, 36; 39:2, 41:1, 8, 14-16, 25, 33, 41)

As Joseph later told his brothers, God often uses for good the evil that people do. And in this case, YHWH used the evil intention of Joseph's brothers to bring deliverance from famine to them and their families! More importantly, He used Egypt as the location to grow Israel from a large family into a nation of peoples. And remember, this is the same people group that YHWH chose when He picked Abraham. God is working toward a purpose, and Joseph has a major role to play, as we will continue to see.

Joseph's Tribe Becomes Two: Ephraim and Manasseh

By the time of the Egyptian famine, Joseph had been in Egypt about 20 years. He had married an Egyptian princess and had in practice and appearance become an Egyptian. By the time that Jacob and his family, including Joseph's brothers, escape the famine and join Joseph in Egypt, two sons have been born to Joseph. In Genesis 48, we learn that Jacob effectively "adopts" Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, as his own children. Why? Was he "replacing" Joseph, whom he had lost as a son? I don't believe we know the exact reasoning, other than it was the plan and purpose of God. Here is the account from Genesis:

Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, 'Behold, I will

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make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. (Genesis 48:3-6)

Jacob not only takes the boys as his own, he also gives them a blessing. The real importance of this blessing may be indicated not only by the words he uses, but also by the fact that scripture switches, in this encounter, from using "Jacob" to the God-given name of "Israel", to refer to the father of the 12 tribes. As scripture verifies, this giving of blessing was a divinely-directed and prophetic act. Here is that blessing:

Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him. But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.

He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; And may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (Genesis 48:13-16)

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one (Manasseh) is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." (Genesis 48:17-19)

There is so much of significance in these words, and also in the actions! Notice that Joseph purposely put Manasseh on his left as he brought the boys to his father, so that Manasseh would be at Israel's right hand. Manasseh was firstborn, so Joseph placed him in the position to receive the firstborn blessing. But Israel crossed his hands, then pronounced this part of his blessing on the boys. The wording indicates he is giving them the birthright blessing: "May my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers". Not only that, but he prophesied that the tribe of Joseph, through these two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, will "grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth". And he's not finished! For now, notice that Joseph is not happy with his father crossing his hands, and he lets him know.

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one (Manasseh) is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." (Genesis 48:17-19)

Do you remember that back in Genesis 17 God promised to Abraham that he would become a "multitude of nations". Not only that, but that "all nations" or "all peoples" would be blessed through him? We have just seen that specific blessing passed on to Ephraim and his descendants. Do you remember being taught this importance and significance of the tribe of Ephraim? Probably not! But not only is that prophetic promise significant in itself, it is significant that this exact language is quoted in the New Testament.

The Hebrew word translated as "multitude" is the word *me-lo* (pronounced may-lo). It can mean multitude, but it literally means "full" or "fullness". Your Bible probably has a footnote indicating that. So, Ephraim and his descendants will become a multitude or "the fullness" of nations. If you are familiar with Romans 11, bells should be ringing. Here is what Paul wrote there:

For I do not want you, brothers, to be uninformed of this mystery . . . that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the nations has come in; and so all Israel will be saved. (Romans 11:25-26)

Now I know that some of you are going to say, "it should say Gentiles, not nations!" I'll save a discussion of the useless and deceptive word "Gentile" for another time, but know for certain that what Paul wrote was "the fullness of the *ethnos*". "*Ethnos*" is the Greek word that translates the Hebrew word *goy* or *goyim* (plural), and both the Greek and the Hebrew translate correctly as "nation" or "nations". Please remember that Paul was a Pharisee and a Torah scholar, so he could probably quote large portions of Genesis, and he knew Genesis 48 in detail, as it was the story of the history and prophetic future of his people! When he wrote "fullness of the nations", he wasn't making things up out of his mind, he was quoting scripture! He knew what he was saying and, if you keep reading, you will find out, too!

Two Tribes Marked As Leaders; Their Prophetic Destinies Announced

As we saw above, the tribes of Judah and Joseph were selected, by YHWH, for leadership of the tribes and for the two kingdoms that they will eventually become. Recall 1 Chronicles 5: Judah held the scepter, but the birthright belonged to Joseph. This had been prophesied earlier by both Jacob/Israel and Moses and was attested to by the Psalmist. Here are the relevant scriptures:


Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, "Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come (the end of the days). "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. He washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes." (Genesis 49:1, 10-11)

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall." "From the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father (Jacob) have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers." (Genesis 49:22, 25-26)

These are the prophetic blessings pronounced over Judah and Joseph by Jacob/Israel as he was nearing the end of his life. It is clear that rulership will remain with Judah until Shiloh (Messiah) comes. The reference to his garment and robes may be an allusion to Messiah's return as conquering King. For Joseph, the blessings will surpass even the blessings on Jacob and his ancestors, Isaac and Abraham! These blessings of fruitfulness will include abundance of provision (breasts) and myriads of descendants (womb). And, in addition to Jacob, Moses also recognized the birthright blessing on the tribes of Joseph, and he also commented on their role in bringing the promised blessing to all the peoples of the earth:

Of Joseph he said, "As the firstborn of his ox, majesty is his, and his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he will push the peoples, all at once, to the ends of the earth. And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and those are the thousands of Manasseh." (Deut. 33:13,17)

As noted earlier, the Psalmist recognized the prophetic blessing and roles of Judah and Joseph (Israel), and that this was YHWH's own doing.

When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became His sanctuary, Israel, His dominion. (Psalm 114:1-2) 

(NOTE: This is PART 2 of a 4 PART SERIES)

The Return of Jesus, the Splitting of the Mt. of Olives, and Armageddon

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However, as soon as possible, Pharaoh greedily led his army into the parted waters to capture his prey, and fell into God’s trap.

“And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen” (Exod. 14:23).

So too, the Beast and company will follow suit. The hail eventually stops, and we know that it has not killed Gog and the upgraded hybrid hordes because Revelation says that after the hail: “Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great” (Rev 16:21). Once the hail has stopped, then the Beast / Gog will hungrily pursue the Jerusalemites into the newly created Arema-Gei-Don, the Valley of Judgment of the Sheaves, and will fall like sheaves. They will do this because God is the one who put a hook in their jaws to lead them to Jerusalem to bring them into his valley of judgment, and they do not understand his thoughts:

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, ‘Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.’ But they **do not know the thoughts** of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like **sheaves** to the threshing floor” (Micah 4:11–12).

In the Exodus, “the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians” (Exod. 14:24). That is, God was present in the midst of the pillar of fire and cloud. He was personally overseeing Israel’s rescue. The text says, “He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty” (Exod. 14:25). It quickly became apparent to the Egyptians that they were fighting a force far greater than themselves; and Pharaoh, the one they believed to be a god, was outmatched.

The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the **LORD fights** for them against the Egyptians” (Exod. 14:25).

This time, however, God will not be looking through a pillar of fire and cloud, but will be there, face to face with his adversary. Jesus will jump down about four hundred feet (yes, He can do that) and will interpose himself between his people who are fleeing behind him and the Beast and his hybrid hordes in front of him.

When they see Jesus, they will realize they are in trouble and will seek to go in reverse, but unfortunately for them, another wave of hybrids is pushing them toward Jesus, whose “face is like the sun” (Rev 1:16) and whose “brightness was like the light” (Hab 3:4). The brilliance of his visage “will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness ... and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness” (Zech 12:4). All the while, He will decimate the Beast and attackers with the “rays flashing from His hand,” where “His power was hidden” (Hab 3:4). John also tells us, “out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations” (Rev 19:15).

When they want to get away from him and go back, they cannot; then what God said through the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah will come to pass:

- “I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains,” says the Lord GOD. “**Every man’s sword will be against his brother**” (Ezek. 38:21).

- “It shall come to pass in that day that a great panic from the LORD will be among them. Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor, and **raise his hand against his neighbor’s hand**” (Zech 14:13).

In the Exodus, the trap also became the Egyptians tomb:

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen” (Exod. 14:26).

So too, Gog and his horde will meet their doom in the Arema-Gei-Don.

THEY MELT

Unable to retreat they will literally melt before the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who has come to fight on behalf of his people, just as He promised.

“And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem: their **flesh** shall **dissolve** while they stand on their feet, their **eyes** shall **dissolve** in their sockets, and their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths” (Zech 14:12).

Scripture is replete with passages stating how the mountains will melt at God’s coming:

- The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will **melt** with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up (2 Pet 3:10).

- The mountains **melt** like wax at the presence of the LORD, At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth (Ps 97:5).

- The mountains will **melt** under Him, and the valleys will split Like wax before the fire, Like waters poured down a steep place (Mic 1:4).

- The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it **melts**, and all who dwell there mourn. (Amos 9:5).

- I will send **fire** on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands,⁶ and they shall know that I am the LORD (Ezek. 39:6).

If the mountains and elements will melt, how much more will the Beast’s / Gog’s horde melt when confronted with the King? We should keep in mind that just as the entire earth did not melt when God came on Sinai, neither will the entire planet melt into goo when Jesus comes. The melting seems to be localized on the surface of the planet. God put Moses in the cleft of the rock as He passed by, because the rocks offered some protection against His fiery presence. It is like passing your hand through a flame will not harm you, but leaving your hand on the flame, even for a few seconds, burns. It is God’s fiery presence remaining in one place that does the damage. It will do so because creation is degenerate due to the Fall and has further degraded over time; but “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom 8:21).



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God set the trap, and Satan / the Beast and company fell into it. They had been exposed to God's fiery-lightning presence and were melted like wax. Paul corroborates this destruction caused by God's presence:

"These shall be punished with everlasting destruction **from** [apo απο – because of, by virtue of] the presence of the Lord and **from** [apo απο] the glory of His power" (2 Thess 1:9).

BDAG explains how *apo* can be used "to indicate cause, means, or outcome; gener., to show the reason for something. because of, as a result of, for (numerous ref.)" Hence, they are not punished *away from his presence* but *because of, by virtue of Jesus' presence*. They are exposed to Jesus, who will consume them "with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess 2:8).

"Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"; we see this in the parallel passage of Isaiah 66:

"For behold, the LORD will come with fire and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword the LORD will judge all flesh; and the slain of the LORD shall be many" (Isa 66:15–16).

Isaiah tells us the reason for God's wrath: "For the **indignation** of the LORD is against all nations, and His **fury** against all their armies" (Isa 34:2).

JESUS TREADS

The fury on Jesus' face will endure for some time; for even after Gog and his horde have been hit by the consuming fire of Jesus' presence and have begun melting before him, He will then execute judgment by treading them underfoot to the point that his garments are stained with their blood:

"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood" (Rev 19:13), "He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev 19:15).

Jesus will cut down the wicked like sheaves with his sickle and then trample them in the "great winepress of the **wrath** of God" (Rev 14:19). He even states in Isaiah:

"I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth" (Isa 63:2, 3, 6).

Jesus will trample like grapes the Beast⁸ who "even **exalted** himself as high as the Prince of the host" (Daniel 8:10–11), who decided to "**exalt** himself in his heart ... (Dan 8:25), the one "who opposes and **exalts** himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, (2 Thess 2:3–4), and the one who "was given a mouth **speaking** great things and **blasphemies** ... against God, to blaspheme His name (Rev 13:5–6). When Jesus returns to redeem His people, which God had long warned of through the prophets, that will be the Day of the Lord. Isaiah 2 tells us plainly, "the **LORD alone will be exalted in that day**" (Isa 2:17). The Day of the Lord is not the entirety of Daniel's seventieth week or even the three and a half year years of the great tribulation for the simple reason that the Beast / Gog / Antichrist is ostentatiously exalting himself and blaspheming God and those who dwell in heaven. Gog's humiliation will continue as wave after wave of attackers flow into Jesus' winepress of God's wrath. In Revelation, John writes:

"The winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, [for one thousand six hundred furlongs]" (Rev 14:20).

That is a lot of blood. If we are imagining that place up in the Megiddo Valley, up in the north, and if we are thinking about 4 and a half or 5 feet of blood, it seems nearly impossible. But if we imagine a narrow valley with steep canyon walls on the sides, while not a pretty picture, it at least makes more sense.

Thus Gog, the son of Perdition, Satan's avatar, the one who deceived the world into believing the delusion and boasted he and his army could defeat Jesus, has fallen and his reign of terror has ended just as God stated: "he shall be broken without human means" (Dan 8:25). He will fall in the Valley of YHWH Judges, Jehoshaphat, next door to Gehenna which God declared: "this place shall no more be called **Tophet** or the **Valley of the Son of Hinnom**, but the Valley of Slaughter" (Jer 19:6). Following his fall, God declared Gog's further humiliation:

"You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured" (Ezek. 39:4).

God further says in Ezekiel 39:

"... speak to the **birds** of every sort and to all beasts of the field, 'Assemble and come, **gather** from all around to the sacrificial **feast** that I am preparing for you, a great sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel, and you shall eat flesh and drink blood (Ezek. 39:17). You shall eat the **flesh** of the **mighty**, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth—of rams, of lambs, and of he-goats, of bulls, all of them fat beasts of Bashan (Ezek. 39:18). And you shall eat fat till you are filled, and drink blood till you are drunk, at the sacrificial feast that I am preparing for you (Ezek. 39:19). You shall be filled at My table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war,' says the Lord GOD (Ezek. 39:20)."

Jesus likewise spoke of the birds of prey that would follow: "So also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Matt 24:27, 28).



Figure 1 - Blood up to the Horse's Bridle

The Greek word *aetos*, is a general word for carrion birds, such as the crow, eagle or vulture. It makes sense that carrion birds, birds that eat decaying flesh, will survive the longest after the waters have turned to "blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died" (Rev 16:3). Vegetation has burned up as well. Many land animals and many birds will have died, so the carrion birds will be quite busy. Because the carrion birds are the last ones around, they are invited to feast on all the dead in both Ezekiel and Revelation:



Figure 2 - Migration of birds over Israel <https://spanishnature.blogspot.com/2011/12/tale-that-knows-no-boundaries-big-blog.html>

"An angel ... cried with a loud voice, saying to all the **birds** that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather together for the **supper** of the great God (Rev 19:17), that you may eat the flesh of kings, the **flesh** of captains, the flesh of **mighty** men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great' (Rev 19:18)."

The time of the battle of Armageddon will be at the *Fall Feasts*. The return of Jesus is most likely on *Yom Teruah* (the *Feast of Trumpets*), the day that no one knows the day or the hour because it falls on the first of the seventh month [Rosh Chodesh].

In the Spring and Fall there is a massive migration of millions of birds, from Europe and Asia to Africa. Incredibly, the vast majority of birds fly over Israel. They do not fly over anywhere else primarily, but just almost completely over Israel. The angel will say to these birds, "Come on down, we've got this great feast, because the Lord has just trodden his enemies underfoot."

The Beast has now been thoroughly vanquished and humiliated. However, because he is a hybrid, he will sustain a lot of punishment until ultimately, the text says: "Then the beast was captured and with him the false prophet" (Rev 19:20).

After Jesus has vanquished all foes, He says:

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matt 25:31).

Similar to the previous two texts, Daniel says fire comes from the Judge, court is in session, and the Beast is given to the fire:

"His throne was a fiery flame, his wheels a burning fire, a fiery stream, issued and came forth from before Him (Dan 7:9). Thousands, thousands ministered to Him, ten

thousand times ten thousand stood before Him, the court was seated in the books were opened (Dan 7:10). I watched until the **beast** was **slain** and his body destroyed and given to the burning **flame**" (Dan 7:11).

John finishes with the same description of the end concerning the Beast and False Prophet . . .

"These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone (Rev 19:20). And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev 19:21)."

Following their judgment, a mighty angel will lead Satan bound in chains to the smoking and pitch-black abyss . . .

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain (Rev 20:1). And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years (Rev 20:2), and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while (Rev 20:3)."

Satan and the fallen will be put into the abyss, Sheol, the very prison they opened in order to fight Jesus. They will have their ultimate judgment deferred until one thousand years later, which we will explore [in my text] in great detail in *Corrupting the Image 4*.



OLD TESTAMENT WRATH NEW TESTAMENT GRACE?

Ed Doss



Ed's 30-year ministry has been as an Evangelist, Campus Missionary, Church Planter, and founder of the on-line Biblical teaching group: "Digging Deeper" in Dallas, TX. Ed's desire is "making Torah observant disciples of Jesus."

It saddens me to say that I have heard many seasoned Christians, and not a few tenured Pastors and Elders, confess that they struggle to understand the perceived dichotomy of what appears to be an angry, wrathful Old Testament God and a merciful and just New Testament Christ. Yeshua Himself tells us that if we have seen Him, we have seen the Father (John 14:9). So there must be more to this perception than we realize. And maybe it is what we do not see that is the problem.

There are two things that I would like to share here. First, we need to understand that many things in the Old Testament scriptures can be understood as a Type. Yehovah demonstrated in explicit detail in physical realities the utter depth and importance of spiritual truths.

The horror of Leprosy is depicted so that the reader cannot imagine being inflicted with such a horrible disease. Yet, the spiritual truth is that you are inflicted with such a condition, sin.

The lengths to which ancient Israel was required to go in order to prevent themselves from being in an unclean state was a physical reality to show us the importance of our need to be spiritually cleansed of our sin.

- The seemingly harsh physical reality of the death penalty for intentional and continual acts of disobedience to the Law shows us the very real spiritual truth that sin brings death (Gen 2:17, Rom 6:23).
- The Altar was the most bloody part of Israel's community. A place where countless bulls, cows, sheep, and doves were sacrificed. The physical reality of this constant scene shows us the spiritual truth that One died similarly for our sin.
- The flood that killed all humanity on Earth minus eight is a seemingly harsh physical reality that shows us the spiritual truth that Yeshua will again start over with the New Earth and the New Jerusalem upon His return.

The physical harshness reveals the hard spiritual truth. If we can see such stories through this prism, then we can realize the purposes of our loving King in opening the eyes of our hearts. And it is ALWAYS about His love.

Is it difficult for you to see Yehovah's love in the Hebrew Scriptures? Was it difficult for you to see your parents' love as a child when disciplining you? Of course, it was.

For many, it is easier to see and feel the pain when reading stories of human tragedy in the Bible than to perceive the love behind the hand of discipline that brought it about. Discipline, whether soft, harsh, or terminal, always comes from love.

Hebrews 12:7 ESV – *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

Secondly, as Christians, we must admit that we have all largely ignored the Old Testament. We have all been taught that the back of the book was not authoritative for our Christian faith, so if we are honest, we can admit that we have not read enough of it to see the love within its pages. And it is there. Everywhere you look.

Nehemiah 9:17 – *But You are God, Ready to pardon, Gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, Abundant in kindness...*

Isaiah 54:10 – *For the mountains shall depart And the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the Lord, who has mercy on you.*

Exodus 34:6-7 – *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,*

Psalms 145:14-18 – *The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

Psalms 146:7-9 – *who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners*

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free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless,

I could go on. A great study for anyone wanting to see this on a broader scale needs only search words like “mercy,” “love,” and “forgiveness” in their Old Testament. That last passage in Psalm 146 reminds me of the fact that within the Law itself, Yehovah shows His love and concern for the disadvantaged with laws expressly written for the widows, orphaned, and foreigners (Deuteronomy 24:10-22).

The truth is, Yehovah expressed His love over and over again in His dealings with Israel, but they did not understand it in their hearts. The world around them was filled with gods, and none of them was known for their love. I have already shown you how Israel confused Yehovah with Ba'al in their worship so it makes sense that they would also believe that He was no different than any other pagan god. It was this lack of understanding that was at the heart of their constant rebellion.

Yehovah As *Father*

In our contemporary Christian world, addressing God as Father is normal and customary. It is a term of endearment, love, and respect. I have heard many Christians use words like Abba, Dad, and even Daddy a time or two. We do this in hopes that it will draw us nearer to Him or Him to us, but this was not the case for early Israel. Yeshua was the first Rabbi ever to call Yehovah “*Father*” and it was a massive departure from tradition for His listeners. In all but one of Yeshua’s prayers, He used the term *Father* instead of the traditional “HaShem” or “Adonai.” This, of course, enraged the Pharisees because they had never truly enjoyed that level of familiarity with their God (John 5:18).

The formal and stoic forms of addressing God like HaShem or Adonai were not in any way the desire of Yehovah, as we have many examples in the Hebrew Scriptures of the more endearing address of “Father” being expected.

Jeremiah 31:9 - *I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a **Father** to Israel,*

Jeremiah 3:19 - *“And I said: ‘You shall call Me,*

*“My **Father**,” And not turn away from Me.’*

Deuteronomy 32:6 - *Do you thus deal with the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your **Father**, who bought you?*

Nevertheless, despite this, the people of Israel did not see it, did not accept it, or did not believe it. This is not to say that all of Israel’s prophets and leaders were blind to Yehovah’s love, as the Psalms are more than proof enough to show that they were not. However, it is a sad fact that most did not understand this nature of God, and it would take the greatest act of love on the part of Yehovah Himself to show His deep and profound love.

John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

In John’s first letter, we see a very curious passage.

1 John 4:16 ESV - *So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

Even John recognizes that their history was not one of intimacy with the Father. It was only after Yeshua modeled love on a daily basis and ultimately made the greatest sacrifice in love that they fully understood.

How much are we like them today? We forget that the loving, merciful Christ in the New Covenant is the same loving, merciful God of the Old Covenant. Everything that Yeshua did during His ministry comes from love, just as everything Yehovah did and commanded for Israel was from love.

Always remember that every command and every teaching given to the children of Israel reflects Yehovah’s love for His chosen people. They each demonstrate and reveal His values, principles, and ethics and collectively reveal His heart and what it means to be set apart.

Leviticus 20:26 - *And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.*





Gianluca Morotti with Dr. Gavin Finley

Gianluca Morotti and Dr. Gavin Finley during the following 12 video podcasts provide extensive dialogue on elements found within Commonwealth Theology. Gianluca's two books—*Called to a Holy Pilgrimage* and *God's Eternal Purpose*—as well as other topics will give the viewer ample resources in these prophetic days of fulfillment!

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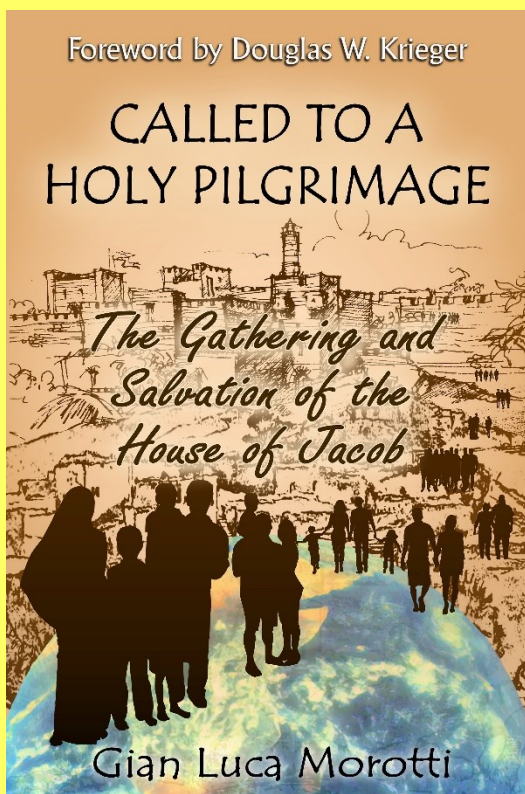
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COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL SUMMARIES

By Dr. Douglas Hamp

COIF TAGLINE:

COI Theology teaches the good news that we former Gentiles can be full citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel and that Israel and Judah will be restored into one nation.

Commonwealth of Israel Theology Brief Intro.

Commonwealth of Israel Theology teaches that God married Israel at Sinai (Old Covenant). Israel was unfaithful, divided into two kingdoms, and then God divorced the northern kingdom (though Judah deserved it too). He then promised to betroth Israel again, but the curse of the law (due to adultery) prevented that. Only through the death of the husband, Jesus, could the curse be removed and could Israel (scattered and assimilated into the nations) come back to God. The good news is they/we can be full members (citizens) of the Commonwealth of Israel; and God will restore the two houses into one.

Commonwealth of Israel Theology Summary

God elected Israel (Deut. 7:6) and entered into a marriage contract with her at Mt Sinai (Exo. 24:7-8



Jer. 31:31), COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE Old Covenant. Sadly, instead of being faithful, Israel repeatedly went after other gods (Jer. 3) which lead to the split of the United Kingdom into the southern Kingdom of Judah (house of Judah under Rehoboam) and the northern Kingdom of Israel (House of Israel/Ephraim under Jeroboam) (1 Kings 11:31-32). Finally, after seven hundred years of adultery since Sinai, God gave the northern kingdom a certificate of divorce and sent her away (Jer. 3:8, Hos. 2:2), calling her No-Mercy (*Lo-Ruchama*) and Not-My-People (*Lo-Ammi*) (Hos. 1:8-9) and she (the ten northern tribes) assimilated into pagan gentiles (nations) (Hos. 7:8,

Hos. 8:8, 9:17; 2 Kings 17:23-24). Judah likewise deserved divorce but God would not because of his promise to David (Hos. 1:7, 1 Kings 11:32).

God then promised to betroth the house of Israel to Himself in righteousness (Hos. 2:19) and to restore the two kingdoms into one (two sticks per Ezek. 37:16-23). That promise created a divine dilemma because God's instructions (law) did not permit a woman to come back to her first husband after she had been married to others (Deut. 24:1-4) (that was the curse of the law) (Gal. 3:13).

This divine dilemma was resolved by Jesus' (the husband's) death which canceled the Old (Marriage) Covenant and canceled the curse of the law (due to her adultery) (Rom. 7:1-4). Now those who were not his people (Rom. 9:24-26) and who had not obtained mercy (1 Pet. 2:10) could come into the Commonwealth of Israel as full members and citizens (Eph. 2:11-19) which was also in fulfillment of Ephraim becoming the multitude of nations (Gen. 48:19; Rom. 11:25).



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No Longer Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel - A final Word from our Associate Editor of the COIF Newsletter, Chris Winters Steinle:

It is imperative, if we are to understand the fullness of the message undergirding Commonwealth Theology - simply but profoundly clarified we find the following to be its foundation truths (primarily from the NT book of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians):

1. We all must be adopted into the household and inheritance of God through faith in Jesus—this is true for the Jew as well as the Gentile as expressed by Jesus in John 8.
2. God planned before the foundations of the world to include the Nations—the rest of mankind—in His great salvation (Gen. 12:2; Amos 9:11-12; John 11:51-52; Acts 15:16-18).
3. This plan, which has now been revealed, remained shrouded in mystery until the work of Christ; and Paul was made administrator of this revelation (Eph. 3:6).
4. The Commonwealth of Israel includes those adopted from among the Nations and the "natural branches,"—the Jews, Paul's fellow countrymen, "to whom pertain the adoption..." (Rom. 9:4);
5. Even those of Judah (the Jewish people) who, until the present time, remain disobedient to the gospel, that in the future, they may become obedient: "Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy" (Rom. 11:28-32).
6. Thus, the Commonwealth of Israel requires a distinction between:
 - a. The irrevocable gift of election, and
 - b. Unmerited Messianic salvation, which is freely given through faith (as in Abraham was justified by faith, not works) in the finished work of Christ.