

**“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus,  
Come to Set Thy People Free:  
The Hope of Old Testament People of God”**

We have entered a very sacred season of our calendar year wherein we celebrate the wonder of the advent of our Savior. The apostle stated it most succinctly, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory... (John 1:14).” We believe that the greatest of events on the stage of human history took place when the promise of God to give a redeemer to mankind was fulfilled in the incarnation of the Son of God, Jesus who is the Christ, the Messiah, a prelude to the culmination of time when “King Jesus” will be enthroned and the redeemed from all the earth will worship Him forever.

Perhaps there is no greater musical piece that captures the meaning of Christmas than George Frederick Handel’s “Messiah.” It found its way into the public arena in April 1742 in Dublin, Ireland, through an event to raise money for three charities, two for debtors released from prison and Mercer’s Hospital. The present three-part structure of the piece (the prophetic promise of a redeemer, the passion of the redeemer and the triumph of the redeemer (ending with “Hallelujah Chorus”), debuted in London the following year. Handel begins to tell the story of the Messiah, where we also begin this short series, with selections based on Old Testament passages alerting the listeners that Jesus was promised centuries before He came among us. Scene one of Part I is based on Isa. 40:1-5 and scene three on Isa. 7:14. Handel grasped what we all have come to realize: the Old Testament is a “Book of Anticipation,” “Book of Hope.” Someone is coming to deliver us!

The goal today is to focus on the promises that a Savior would come for us. The saints before He came could easily have sung, “Come thou long expected Jesus,” just as we can as well. They pined for His first coming, but we His final coming when we shall gather with all the redeemed to sing the great “Hallelujah Chorus” forever!!

Parenthesis: What is the grand storyline of the Bible?

1. The Bible reveals to us that God’s creative activities were to reveal His glorious character and garner worship and adoration. “All things are of Him, through Him, and to Him. To God be the glory forever. Amen (Rom.11:36).”

2. The Bible begins with God's activity creating a habitant suitable for a couple to experience His presence in adoration and praise.
3. The Bible states that God's purpose for creation was ruined, a blight resulting in expulsion from the habitant. Sin marred the capacity of the couple to reflect God's glory. The purposes of God appear to have been lost through human dereliction. However, the Bible unfolds for us an unimageable truth that will take many centuries to fully reveal.
4. The Bible tells us, to the end of time God is gathering a new people, not two but myriads, from the nations of the earth to dwell with Him forever.
5. The means of the restoration will come through a ruler reigning over a new habitant and the removal of the blight upon humanity resulting in the eternal reign of the King of Kings.
6. The Bible begins and ends with God dwelling among His people, a creation and a recreation ("the new heavens and earth").

**The Meaning of Universal History:  
God's Glory Revealed, Redemption Accomplished**

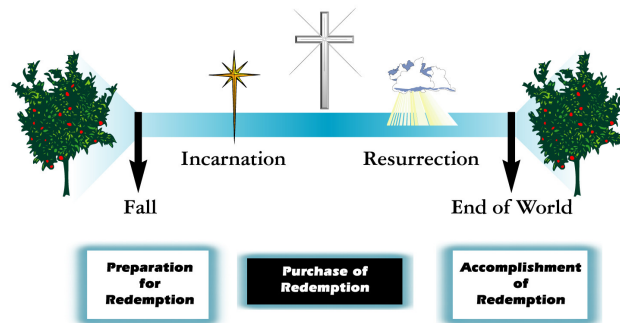


Chart 2

**A Panoramic View of Christian History**

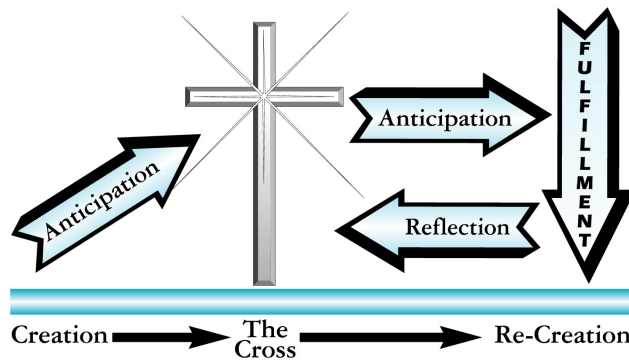


Chart 1

7. The storyline of the Bible, the purchase of creation and recreation is to create a people that will recognize His worth and praise Him forever.

In the great “Book of Anticipations,” there are two interconnected themes: the fact of a coming redeemer and the way He will redeem His people. We turn to a few of these passages this morning that hint to the coming of one who will reverse the Great Fall of mankind with a progressively restored habitation that will culminate in the eternal abode of myriads and myriads with Him forever.

1. A struggle will exist between the forces of good and evil until victory over evil comes through the “seed of the Woman.”

And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel (Gen. 3:15).

The place to begin is with the need for such an anticipated one, the profound and durative quest suggestive of the dire importance of such a one. The promise, deeply obscure, is given in the context of the fall of Adam and Eve. We are told two things: the fact of a conflict through the centuries and the eventual triumph of a male child.

What is envisioned here is a constant struggle between good and evil, the woman’s seed and the serpent’s seed, throughout human history, that is, as long as judgment exists there will be conflict. The consequence will be brutal at times through the centuries. (Strikes on the head and on the heel can be fatal.) While we know that the seed of the woman will prevail over the “serpent,” the forces arrayed against God are not the specific point of this passage. The point is the consequences of judgment in the temporal sphere, not final outcomes.

- While this world exists, there will be constant conflict.
- The Fall explains the conflict.
- One born of the “seed of the woman” will triumph, but not without affliction.
- All that is evil will be crushed someday.
- The note that God made a covering for Adam and Eve through the death might suggest what Jesus would accomplish in His death.

2. The descendants of Adam possessed a hope of deliverances from their turmoil.

“Now he called his name Noah, saying,  
which the Lord has cursed (Gen. 5:29).”

This chapter traces the genealogy from Adam to Noah, the son of Lamech. What is most interesting for our purposes is that Noah's name means “rest.” Lamech viewed his son as one who would reverse the effects of the curse! This suggests that the earliest OT saints lived in hope and anticipation.

- Hope characterized the ten generations from Adam to Noah.
  - The nature of the hope is vague, rest from the curse on the earth.
3. The Abrahamic Covenant, the declaration of the divine promise of restoration of humanity.

And I will make you a great nation,  
And I will bless you,  
And make your name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;  
And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.

And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 1:3, see also  
15:1-6, 17:1-8)

Here is the greatest covenant in the Holy Scriptures. God promises a semite, a son of Noah's son Shem (5:32, 11:10) a land, a seed, and a blessing. From this promise, all the other covenants spring! Out of this one covenant (the Abrahamic) the message of the Bible is unfolded.

The promise of blessing to Adam and Eve (Ch.1) is now carried forward to the patriarch; the parallels connect the two events. God promised Adam a place, fertility, and rulership. Here the promise to Abram is a place (a land), fertility (a great nation), and kingship. This promise of a ruling son is fulfilled in Christ according to Paul. “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ (Gal. 3:16).”

- Abraham, a semite, is promised a land, a seed and a blessing. Again, it is shadowy. We know the seed in the Christ, land is a

heavenly habitat ultimately, and blessing is true life that has no death.

- The promises to Adam parallel those to Abraham.
4. The miraculous conception of Issac is the continuation of the promise to Abraham.

He said, "I will surely return to you at this time next year: and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing (Gen. 18:10-11).

But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named (Gen. 21:12)."

- Is there not a cryptic clue to the miraculous birth of Issac's seed, Jesus.
5. The Abrahamic blessing came to Jacob, the second of his twins.

"May peoples serve you,  
And nations bow down to you;  
Be master of your brothers,  
And may your mother's sons bow down to you.  
Cursed be those who curse you and blessed be those who bless you  
(Gen. 27:27-29)."

Isaac granted the blessing to Jacob. The deliverer would be an Abrahamic Semite via Isaac and Jacob. Later Balaam blesses a son of Jacob without naming him, "A star shall come forth from Jacob and a scepter shall rise from Israel (Num. 24:17)."

- Jacob's "son" will be worshiped by the nations.
  - He will be a sovereign monarch; He will be the "King."
  - He will exact judgment on those who curse, who reject Him.
6. The promised deliverer-son will come through Jacob's fourth son, Judah.

"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  
(Gen 49:10)."

Jacob, nearing death, blesses his sons. His prophecies over his fourth born son, Judah, uniquely. From Judah will come a kingly deliverer; the Messiah will be a Semite: a son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and a Judah.

“Until Shiloh comes” is a difficult phrase to understand. Most are agreed that it refers to David and the establishment of the Israelite empire. Old Testament writers drew on this passage to envision David’s greater royal Son (Ps. 45; 72; 89; 110; 132; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11– 15; Isa. 9:6–7; 11:1). New Testament writers see David as a shadow that prefigures the reign of the Messiah, “the lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5). Shiloh means “bearer of rest,” an apt prefigure for Jesus (He will be a Noah figure!). “Between his feet” was a reference to his reproductive organs; here it means his descendants.

Genesis 49:11-12 must be read from a poetic perspective, not with a strictly literal mindset. It seems that when “Shiloh comes,” nature will be tamed, no longer rebellious. Wine, the symbol of blessing and prosperity, will be abundant; and His character (v. 12) will be that strength and power.

- A son of Judah will be king, a king that will rule over those who obey Him.
- This Judahite/king will bring the rest that Lamech hoped his son, Noah, would.
- This son will reverse the effects of the fall, ending the curse! Again, we are not told how he will accomplish it.
- Why does the Bible alert us to the character faults of so many prominent men in the Scripture, many in our Lord’s genealogy? To show that the true “leader” rises above them. The promise of a deliverer can only be fulfilled in one who is not like them, but where do you find one untouched by Adam’s first sin. The elimination caused by character flaws, and hope remaining, point to the one who is our savior!