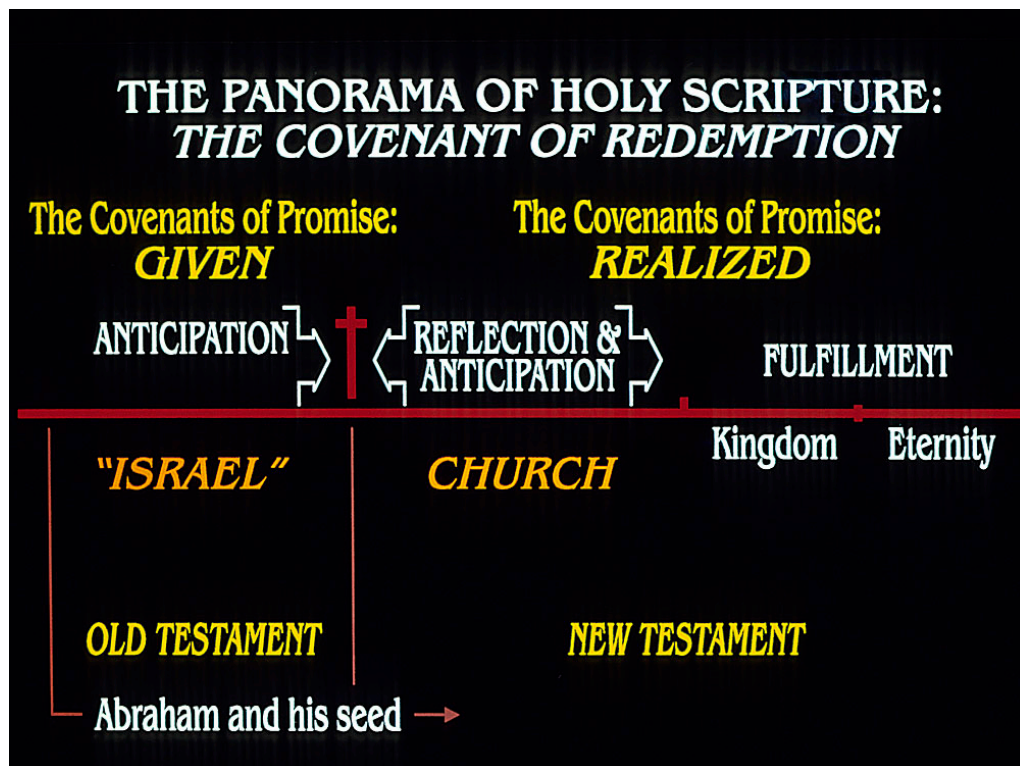


**“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus,
Come to Set Thy People Free:’
The Hope of the Old Testament People of God”**

The Bible tells us that God alone will triumph in human history from the perspective that, being an intertrinitarian God, He is not alone but a triunity of persons, the majestic three in one, one in character and three in existences. The great disclosure is that God desires the multiplicity of relationships seeking the manifold display and recognition of His glory. This is why He created all that we see. The fall blighted that intent and only suspended its fulfillment, not for a couple but for myriads of myriads.

The storyline of the Bible is that just that: Anticipation in the Old Testament, Accomplishment in the Gospels, and fulfillment in the Acts until eternity. How this is to be accomplished is gradually revealed.



- It requires the removal of the blight on creation.
- It requires a redeemer.

- It requires the acceptance by God of a payment by the redeemer to satisfy the justice.

The Old Testament progressively unfolds who will accomplish this but only in shadowed, cryptic form.

- He will fulfill the promises to Abraham of a land, a blessing, and in a person.
- He will be a Semite.
- He will be a son of Abraham, Issac, Jacob, and Judah.
- He will be a redeemer-king.

Yet there is much more!

1. Deuteronomy 18:15

“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him”

- God promised to send a prophet to His people (though not Levitical, he will be the ultimate priest in offering Him. He will also be a king, the final and eternal successor of David [II Sam. 7:13]. He will combine the offices of prophet, priest, and king in one person: truth, advocate/redeemer, and monarch!!
- Thus far few have listened to Him, so we know that it is not the final day.
- He will be an Israelite.

2. Isaiah 7:14

This is a rather amazing passage in that it is set in the reign of the godless Ahaz, King of Judah. Though at a terrible time of foreign invasion by the Syrians, God offers comfort, but the king will not listen. God promises within a year, despite Ahaz's lack of faith, deliverance. Before a young woman can become pregnant and deliver a child (Hezekiah), the Syrians will no longer menace the nation.

The other option, since Isaiah impregnates his wife in chapter 8:1-3, is that it refers to his son, Mashedalahashbaz. The point in either case would be the same; before a child can be conceived and birthed deliverance will come from the Syrians and Assyrians.

Matthew quotes this passage (1:23) as prophetically fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. Ahaz's son, Hezekiah, was a symbol of a greater deliverance to come. Ahaz's maiden figure is fulfilled in Mary's virgin birth. While Hezekiah

or Mashershalahashbaz was evidence of the presence of God to deliver, Immanuel (God with us), Jesus is its ultimate fulfillment!

- A virgin will birth a son.
- He will be a God-figure among us.

3. Isaiah 9:1-6

This passage is quoted in part by Matthew (4:13-17) at the beginning of our Lord's ministry in the Galilee and is a fulfillment of Isaiah's words.

Unfortunately, as in Isaiah's day, the people of Galilee rejected the "greater prophet" to experience judgment once more, but not all of them.

a. The promise of an end to gloom and the coming of light, vv. 1-2

The introductory verse (actually, 8:23 in the Hebrew text) is perhaps better translated, "There will be no more gloom for the land which was anxious." This makes the line positive, fitting the context better.

The reference to the humiliation of Zebulun and Naphtali refers to the Galilee that Tiglath-pileser III conquered in 734-733, making it a vassal state to Assyria. "Way to the sea" refers to the region of Dor on the Mediterranean coast south of Mt. Carmel, "beyond the Jordan" to the Golan Heights east of the Sea of Galilee; and "Galilee of the Gentiles" refers to the area east and south of the sea of Galilee.

The "darkness" refers to judgment, the "light" to a coming Davidic king.
- the end of oppression

b. The promise of joy and gladness, vv. 3-5

Abundance will replace loss, and joy will replace despair. This was partially fulfilled in the first coming of the Child-King but will be fully manifest when He reigns over all the peoples on the earth forever. That day will be characterized by the abolition of war, as the instruments of battle are destroyed in fire.

c. The promise of a King, vv. 6-7

The reason "for" joy is the coming of a special Child.

1) His function, v. 6a

This Child will be royalty; He will bear the signet of rule. "Child" suggests His ancestry, "Son" His maleness.

2) His character, v. 6b

Three couplets describe the character of this Child-Governor. The list begins and ends with the idea of rule. The initial couplets tell us of His person, the latter His rule.

"Wonderful Counselor" means an extraordinary strategist.

“Mighty God” can mean a warrior, but kings were referred to in this manner because they represented God to their subjects (Ps. 45:6) and this fits with v. 7.

“Everlasting Father” suggests parental compassion and care.

“Prince of Peace” means that in His coming He will bring everlasting peace and blessing.

3) His reign, v. 7

The intense devotion of the Lord for His people will be the cause of this dominion of everlasting peace. It will be uniquely in the sovereign power of God to accomplish.

Matthew 4:12-16

- Light came when Jesus settled in Capernaum.

4. Isaiah 52:13-53:12

This is one of the amazing passages in the Bible. It is the longest of the so-called servant songs, descriptions of the Lord’s Servant, and the most quoted passage in the Greek Scriptures of the New Testament. Remember that Isaiah wrote these things 700 years before the advent of the Servant.

- a. Exalted, 52:13
- b. Humiliated, v. 14
- c. Triumphant, v.15
- d. The despised and rejected servant, 53:1-3
- e. The vicariously suffering Servant, vv. 4-6
- f. The obedient and innocent Servant, vv. 7-9
- g. The crushed, redeeming servant, vv. 10-12

5. Micah 5:2-5

This remarkable passage told the OT saint that the Messiah would be born in an obscure village, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, 700 years before his coming. So small was the village that Micah had to use a hyphenated term. Of his character and position, it is stated:

- a. He will be a king, a ruler (the House of David, Judahite), v. 2b.
- b. He will be from eternity, v. 2c-d
- c. He will be a shepherd to His people, v. 4
- d. He will bring peace, v. 5.

Applications:

1. I do not know how a person can read the Bible seriously and not be amazed at its combination of profundity and simplicity. The Bible has one central message and that is redemption through the Christ: Promised in the Hebrew Scriptures, given in the Gospel accounts, gathering His people in the

Epistles, and returning to dwell among them forever in the Revelation. It contains numerous books and literary genres (history, poetry, prophecy, letters) written over a span of 2000 years by many authors, yet one message. This is a book like no other in all human history; it deserves our serious attention!

2. God's ways are unperceivable to us except in retrospect. It reminds me of the lines of a wonderful Welsh hymn. "Immortal, Invisible God only wise. In light inaccessible, hid from our eyes. Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light, nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might..." Simply because we cannot see God at work at times, does not suggest that He is idle, uncaring, or inept. God is silently orchestrating a brilliant master plan for the ages. You and I not infrequently find ourselves confused because, in our pain and frustration, we cannot see the hand of God. We must all remind ourselves that there is a realm of reality more real and enduring beyond our ability to grasp.
3. The purpose of the centuries from the divine perspective is to gather a people to glorify Him now and forever. The "real" story behind human events is a divine drama; human history from a divine perspective is about redemption. You and I are a tiny part of the scarlet thread that is weaving its way down the years that began in Genesis and will end in Revelation 21-22. God is gathering a family. Just think, He has determined to make all of us members through Christ of that family! When we get sad or feel lonely this will lift your spirits.
4. Though it often seems that wrong prevails over right, error over truth, and wickedness over righteous, that will never be the outcome. Since Genesis 3 a cosmic conflict is being waged between the "seed of the serpent" and the "seed of the woman." The child of the woman, ultimately Jesus, will prevail. While evil often seems to prevail, it will not and cannot ultimately. Bad and difficult things happen to us because we are part of this cosmic struggle, but the Lord will have the final and victorious word. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote a poem in 1863 (shortly after his wife's death and his son was severely wounded in the Civil War) that subsequently became a well-known Christmas carol. "And in despair I bowed my head: 'There is no peace on earth,' I said. "For hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men." Then pealed the bells louder and deeper: "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to men."
5. The picture presented in the OT of the coming of the redeemer is rather beautiful. Though they might have grasped the Messiah figure only vaguely, the portrait is still rather comforting. When He comes, they thought of Him as a shepherd leading His people, a "father" comforting them, a wise counselor directing them surrounding them in peace. Well, He has come! Is

that portrait of the savior how you experience Him? Is He not worthy of listening to? Has He not brought you comfort? Is He not the one who has brought us peace?

6. The image of the Messiah in the Jewish mind was a ruler-deliverer-king. What the OT saint could not grasp is how He would also be a suffering servant. How could the savior suffer and die, yet rule over a kingdom? You and I have that figured out through a perspective that they could not grasp. What binds the OT and NT saint in a common faith is not so much the content of faith as it is the object of faith. They like that we trusted in the promises of God, and so do we though we have a clearer apprehension of His promises through the incarnation and the testimony of the apostles.
7. I think at Christmas time we should ponder the wonder that we have a God who has made us promises and those promises are sure even though we must wait for their fulfillment. Like the OT saint, we live in hope awaiting the fulfillment of God's promises. After centuries of anticipation, Christ came to provide for us salvation. Now, it has been many subsequent centuries and He has still not returned to grant us our final and complete deliverance from sin and death. As the OT saint waited patiently in hope and trust, so should we. The fact of His first coming is the assurance of His second.