

The Spiritual Symbols of Jesus Christ:

Bridging the Old to the New
Testament

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All Scripture citations are from the King James Version

This book represents the author's interpretations and research. It is not intended to replace the study of Scripture itself.

Recognition:

First, my endless gratitude and affection to my love Natalie, and her beautiful doggie Kiki. They have been pivotal in the completion of this project.

Next, my respect and admiration go to my brother, Jason, and my parents, Joe and Peggy, for standing with me.

I also extend my sincere thanks to my friends Jay and Patty Beck, who taught me American Sign Language (ASL). Their teaching was truly inspirational.

Last but not least, my sincere appreciation goes to my friends Tony and Robin Gray, who were instrumental in my spiritual transformation.

And thanks to everyone else who contributed along the way.

With love,

Joseph Susoreny Jr.

And to the Heavenly Father, and the
Lord Jesus Christ, who this book is a
testament for.

Introduction:

This book has been a long time in the making. It started many years ago with multiple attempts to write other books. As John 15 says, “the branch that abides in the vine bears much fruit.” Nonetheless, those efforts fizzled out and became distant memories and talking points.

Finally, after years of frustration trying to understand God’s plan for my writing, a combination of the right experiences and the Lord’s blessing brought me to this point.

People say “the Lord works in mysterious ways.” For me, this has taken the form of exposure to American Sign Language (ASL), a language founded by the Deaf community. It is a visual and kinesthetic language that incorporates hand gestures and body language.

The word *Deaf* is capitalized because not all deaf people communicate in sign language. To be considered *Deaf* means not only being physically deaf, but also utilizing ASL.

Learning ASL was challenging, but it was instrumental in shaping this book. It requires a unique approach, because most people are accustomed to communicating with their voice. While many people were involved in my learning process, it was ultimately the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit that made learning ASL possible.

One thing about sign language is that it is very visual. It is often difficult to relate sign language to spoken language, because sign language predominantly uses hand gestures. Spoken language is entirely auditory and relies on combining sounds to form words. Sign language, in contrast, incorporates hand gestures, body language, and facial expressions. These all work together to communicate meaning.

Below is a picture of the word *mother* being signed.



In ASL, hand gestures take on visual representations that may or may not obviously reflect what they are meant to portray. For instance, the sign for smoking visually resembles what one would expect. In contrast, the sign for mother, as seen above, does not have an obvious visual association with the concept of mother or father. We may say that this sign is arbitrary.

What does ASL have to do with this book? One thing that ASL teaches you is how to think visually. Scripture contains many symbols and motifs. Since learning ASL, these symbolic and figurative elements of Scripture have become much more apparent.

This book explores ten symbolic representations of Jesus Christ, with primary emphasis on His epithets. The goal is to deepen the reader's understanding of spiritual symbols that point to Christ and are rooted in the Old Testament.

It is the Old Testament that sets the precedent for the New Testament, and one of the primary goals of this book is to communicate characteristics of Jesus that begin in the Old Testament but were fulfilled in the New Testament. These spiritual truths will become clearer throughout this book.

Understanding Christ and these symbols is like studying a gemstone. Every time it is examined, a new facet is revealed. It is

my hope that this book will reveal some of those facets and deepen our understanding of Christ.

These symbols, fulfilled in Christ, reveal what He has done for us and who He is to us. Through examining these symbols, we gain a deeper understanding of Him. As this book progresses, each chapter explores one symbolic representation of Christ. The first chapter is titled *The Bread of Life*.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

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The Bread of Life



And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

Food is a prominent means of fellowship in society. Restaurants and coffee shops are common meetings places for people. When a guy asks a girl on a date, it is often to a restaurant. This was no different in Old Testament times.

There are multiple instances of individuals in the Old Testament gathering over food. Relationships are established and solidified behind the dinner table.

At many restaurants, the first thing served is bread. When people gather for a shared meal, they break bread.

When the Israelites were stranded in the wilderness, for forty years, they had limited access to food. God provided them with an enigmatic substance called manna, which they baked into cakes.

While the exact nature of this substance is not revealed in Scripture, it is termed the “bread from heaven,” which was a foreshadowing of the True Bread.

The symbolic representation of bread begins in the Old Testament, forming a recurring pattern throughout Scripture.

Not only did the early Israelites fellowship over bread, but specific priestly practices involving bread were instituted during Moses’ time.

This motif finds its fulfillment through Christ, who offered His flesh for us at the Last Supper.

In the New Testament, Jesus refers to Himself as the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48), a statement best understood in light of the Old Testament.

By reviewing Old Testament Scriptures and accounts, insight is gained into the symbolic significance of bread. This allows us to create a portrait of Jesus as the Bread of Life, while adding depth to the meaning of this epithet.

Fellowship of Bread:

Breaking bread is fellowship, and is representative of such. There are strong accounts in the Old Testament which illustrate this pattern.

We see an account early in the Old Testament, which is a somewhat mysterious account of an enigmatic figure named Melchizedek. He is the king of Salem and the priest of the “most high God.” This figure appears effectively out of nowhere and blesses Abram.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. (Gen. 14:18)

In this verse a priest of God brings bread and wine to Abram. The Scripture does not say if Abram partook in the bread and wine, but this author assumes so.

The figure Melchizedek will be important in this book, particularly in this chapter and *The High Priest*. This story does not specifically mention fellowship, but it is important to see that bread was already thought of as a priestly offering at the time of Abram. This will only strengthen the arguments of this chapter.

It may be assumed that Abram partook in this offering from the Priest and King of Salem, thereby fellowshiping with him.

This story is only 14 chapters into Genesis, and we already see a significance to bread in priestly practices. The bread was offered to Abram as perhaps a means of fellowship.

Consider that Jesus offered His disciples bread and wine at the Last Supper. There are parallels between the figure of Melchizedek and Jesus. We will pick up on this account of Melchizedek and Abram later in this chapter. For now, let’s talk about a story of Jacob and Laban, which illustrates bread being utilized during fellowship and worship.

Jacob, after separating from his father-in-law Laban, was pursued by him. Jacob felt that he was cheated a number of times by Laban. In the beginning of their relationship, he promised Jacob his daughter Rachel, if he would work for him for seven years. After the seven years he went back on his promise, and instead of Rachel he gave Jacob his daughter Leah. He had to work another 7 years for Rachel.

Jacob finally decided that enough was enough, and he fled from Laban with his daughters and grandchildren. Laban chased after them, but finally conceded and made a covenant with Jacob. This is in a large part because God came to Laban and commanded him not to harm Jacob.

Following this, Jacob set up a pillar in a place called Gilead. He offered a sacrifice and then called his brothers to eat. The verse specifies that Jacob called his brothers to eat bread. Some Bible translations say that they ate bread, although the NIV says “food.”

People do not break food, they break bread. Not only did Jacob and his brothers break bread, but Scripture says they tarried all night. This was fellowship.

Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. (Gen. 31:54)

After Moses and the Israelites escape from the pharaoh in Exodus, Moses’ father-in-law Jethro came to visit Moses. He arrived with Moses’ wife Zipporah, and his children. This was while Moses and the Israelites were encamped in the wilderness. Jethro blessed the Lord, who rescued “the people from under the hand of the Egyptians” (Exod. 18:10).

Just like in the story with Jacob and his brothers, they made a sacrifice to God. Then Moses, Jethro and the elders of Israel broke bread.

*And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, **to eat bread with Moses'** father in law before God. (Exod. 18:12, emphasis mine)*

This breaking of bread occurred parallel to spiritual sacrifices, implying that breaking bread is a form of worship. In the Old Testament, bread depicted fellowship, worship and sacrifice.

This pattern reaches its fulfillment in the New Testament, as the culmination of this is the Last Supper, where Christ offered His flesh as bread.

At the time of Jacob, bread was not a part of ritualistic priestly practices, as it was after the establishment of the Tabernacle. The ritualistic use of bread for offerings became traditionalized during the time of Moses, after the construction of the Tabernacle.

Levitical Practices Dealing with Bread:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread:

The story of the exodus took place during the time of Moses. Israel, having been in Egypt for four hundred years, following Joseph, had thrived and prospered. They grew so large that the pharaoh during the time of Moses grew fearful. He believed they would grow too large to control.

For that reason, the pharaoh became fixated on oppressing the Israelite people. God, seeing the oppression of His people, utilized Moses as an instrument of their liberation.

When he led the Israelites out of Egypt, he placed ten plagues upon Egypt. This was in order to chastise pharaoh into releasing the Israelites from Egyptian suppression. The tenth plague was horrific, because it was a killing of Egypt's firstborns; not one

firstborn was spared, not even pharaoh's. This event was later memorialized as the Festival of Passover.

It was called Passover, because in this plague the Israelite firstborns were passed over. As a means to protect them, the Lord commanded the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb, and then place the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. This was to protect them from the destroyer that would come over Egypt to kill all of the firstborns.

Following the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, the Israelites spent seven days eating unleavened bread, which was the start of what eventually would become The Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. (Exod. 12:14)

Unleavened bread was used because of the haste in which the Lord brought the Israelites out of Egypt. The idea is that it was so quick that the bread did not have time to rise.

Leaven is the yeast added to bread which initiates a fermentation process whose gasses cause the bread to rise. The fermentation process creates gasses which cause tiny pockets throughout the bread. The increase in internal volume causes the bread to rise.

Because this takes time, someone who is hasty in their preparation of bread would not let it rise. Since God brought the Israelites out of Egypt in haste, the bread did not have time to rise. The practice of preparing unleavened bread symbolizes the hastiness of their exodus.

Bread represents fellowship, worship and remembrance in the Old Testament. The Festival of Unleavened Bread gathers

people together in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt. For the Israelites, this was a pivotal point in history. At that time, the yoke of their bondage to Egypt was shattered, and they would begin their entry into the land promised to Abraham (Gen. 17:8).

Forever after, they would gather in fellowship and remembrance of their exodus, as Jews practice even today. This is commemoration of a time in history when God rescued His chosen people, reminding us that God has authority over the principalities of this world.

Contrasting Grain Offerings from Burnt Offerings:

Shortly after the exodus from Egypt, the Lord commanded Moses to supervise the construction of a tabernacle. This would serve as the headquarters of priestly practices.

It was an extensive construction project, as there were many parts to the Tabernacle. One of these parts was the “altar of burnt offering” (Exod. 38:1). Numerous offerings and sacrifices were made at the Tabernacle, and one of these was the burnt offering.

In this practice the flesh of an animal would be burnt on an altar (Exod. 29:41, Lev. 2:1-3). Sometimes grain would be included in this sacrifice, alongside the animal flesh.

The grain offering is just as it sounds, an offering of grain. The KJV calls this a meat offering, while some other translations designate this as a grain offering. The *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* says of a grain offering: “Grain offering (minchah; ‘meat offering,’ KJV) Offering from the harvest of the land; the only type that required no bloodshed. It was composed of fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense.” These terms may be used interchangeably.

There are many instances of offerings throughout the Old Testament, with the books of Exodus and Leviticus reading like instruction manuals. These two books provide a plethora of information regarding priestly practices.

These practices were instituted following the exodus and inception of the Festival of Passover. Of the many types of offerings, one of these was a burnt offering of two lambs; one lamb was sacrificed in the morning and the other at twilight.

And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. (Exod. 29:41)

Grain offerings could be made separate from burnt offerings. The grain offering was similar to a burnt offering, because it involved the burning of the food. These sacrifices and offerings were the responsibility of the Tabernacle priests, which at the time of this passage were Aaron (Moses' brother) and his sons.

Leviticus 2 offers specific instructions for the grain offerings. In the passage below, flour is mixed with oil and incense, and these were consumed in fire, as in a burnt offering. Keep in mind that the KJV refers to food offerings as meat offerings. This passage provides information about the specifics of making a meat offering.

*And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the **flour thereof, and of the oil thereof**, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a*

thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire. (Lev. 2:1–3, emphasis mine)

This meat offering was in the form of unleavened bread or flour, and it was always to be unleavened. A “complete offering” included the burning of an animal with some combination of grain and wine.

The following passage exemplifies a combination of an animal offering, grain (i.e. flour) and a drink (i.e. wine) offering. This passage is instruction for the Feast of Firstfruits, one of the main pilgrimage feasts; the other feasts included Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*).

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savour: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of an hin. (Lev. 23:10–13)

This combined offering is seen, for instance, in the ritual of releasing a Nazirite from his vow. Numbers 6:2 says this was a special vow to separate the Nazirite to the Lord.

The book of Judges recounts the story of Samson, who was to be a Nazirite from the womb. Paul in Acts 21:26 makes an offering for four men which are under a Nazirite vow. He did this to prove that he was not undermining the Law.

The guidelines of a Nazarite offering are laid out in the following passage:

And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings, And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings. (Num. 6:13–15)

Numerous routine practices presented in the Torah (i.e. the first five books of the Bible), including grain offerings, were the responsibility of Levitical priests. These practices were a result of commands handed down from Moses.

Grain offerings often accompanied requirements of the Law, such as burnt offerings, but were also given voluntarily and separately from burnt offerings. They were a special type of offering involving food.

Since these were often standalone offerings, it is wise to consider another practice that involved a standalone offering of bread, which took place at the Table of the Shewbread.

The Table of the Shewbread:

Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height

*thereof... And thou shalt set upon the table
shewbread before me alway. (Exod. 25:23, 30)*

What was offered at the table of shewbread is distinguished from a meat offering (i.e. grain offering). The table of shewbread allowed for an offering of bread in a standalone fashion. The KJV calls this the “table of shewbread.” Other Bible translations may have a different designation for this table.

When Moses was commanded to build the Tabernacle, he was given instructions to build the table of shewbread; that was a place where bread would be offered to the Lord.

In Leviticus 24 we gain more insight into the practice. Similar to the grain offering, this is an “an offering made by fire.” The bread was burnt, in a similar fashion to what was done at the altar, where the animal and grain offerings were burnt. Much of the bread was burned, while the remainder was to be eaten by Aaron and his sons; in this way the priests received their portion.

*And thou shalt take fine flour, and **bake twelve cakes** thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake.
And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row,
upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt
put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be
on the bread for a memorial, even **an offering
made by fire** unto the LORD. (Lev. 24:5–7, emphasis
mine)*

Unlike burnt offerings and meat offerings, the table of shewbread did not require an animal sacrifice. As in burnt offerings and meat offerings, there was a burning of the offering at the table of shewbread. The offerings of bread and grain carried symbolic significance. This significance will become clearer as the chapter progresses.

The Bread from Heaven:

Jesus uses the phrase “bread from heaven, and it is a phrase that comes from the Old Testament.

After the exodus from Egypt the Israelites ended up in the wilderness. This was about the time when the priestly practices, such as the grain offering, were instituted.

This was a very trying time for the Israelites, because they were banished to the wilderness for forty years, enough time to make an end to the generation which came out of Egypt.

The Lord did not completely abandon them. He was there for them, and he often utilized supernatural means of provision.

One of the ways they were provided for was by “manna.” For forty years the Lord provided them with a flakey substance, called manna, which seemed to be a grain-like substance. Manna could have been baked into loaves.

Moses recounted this time in the wilderness when God provided for the Israelites through supernatural means. When speaking of the manna, Moses revealed a lesson behind this supernatural provision. He made the following statement:

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. (Deut. 8:3)

When the Lord provided the manna for the Israelites, they called it “manna,” which is the Hebrew equivalent of saying “what is it.”

*And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, **It is manna: for they wist not what it was.** And Moses said unto them, This is the bread*

which the LORD hath given you to eat. (Exod. 16:15, emphasis mine)

This continued throughout their stay in the wilderness.

And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah. (Exod. 16:35)

The people were hungry, but God utilized their time in the wilderness to teach them a lesson. Sometimes, in order to learn a lesson, suffering is involved. God allowed the people to suffer through this difficult time, but concurrently shed His grace upon them.

The Temptation in the Desert:

Jesus entered the wilderness almost immediately following His baptism. The Gospels say that He was carried away by the Spirit into the wilderness, where He fell under temptation. The KJV says He was “tempted of the devil.”

At that time, Jesus was fasting a very long time, so He was extremely hungry. The devil knew Jesus was hungry, so He had the perfect temptation for Jesus. Scripture makes it clear there were stones nearby, and it is just right for tempting Jesus.

The devil tempts Jesus by questioning His deity. The devil knew that if Jesus was the Son of God, then He had the power to command the stones to be turned to bread. For any normal person, this would be extremely tempting. Nevertheless, Jesus had the perfect reply.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:3–4, emphasis mine)

Now, it is curious that Jesus says “man shall not live by bread alone,” because it is the same thing that Moses says to the Israelites about manna. He even makes mention of the fact that this saying has already been written. Jesus knew Scripture, and he knew that this had been written by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy.

This should be a lesson to us. When we are being tempted by a devil, the first place to go is Scripture. That was Jesus’ method, so that should be ours.

The True Bread from Heaven:

We saw that in the account of the Israelites in the Old Testament; the manna was a flakey substance which appeared to come down from heaven.

How does this relate to Jesus? One of the most famous stories from the Gospels is the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Let us dig into this story, which will help tie the Old Testament stories into this symbolic representation of Christ.

In the Gospels, Jesus miraculously feeds multitudes of people. In these stories, called the Feeding of the Four Thousand and the Five Thousand, Jesus miraculously multiplies loaves of bread and fish, which allows Him to provide for thousands.

In this chapter we will focus on the Feeding of the Five Thousand, because shortly after this event in John 6, Jesus gives us insight into this miracle. This story also occurs in Matthew 14, which is what is quoted here.

And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled:

and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children. (Matt. 14:19–21)

First, Jesus looked up to heaven. Second, He “had given thanks” to the Father. Third, Jesus broke the bread, and finally He distributed it.

And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. (John 6:10–11)

The Gospel of John is where we receive clarification about the symbolism of the bread. This is where Jesus ties this story together with the account of the Israelites and the manna. Let the reader consider how Jesus frames His actions.

Shortly after feeding the multitudes, Jesus goes on to talk about *bread from heaven*. This is where we tie back into the story of manna in the wilderness. Jesus is referencing this story. This lecture is prompted when the disciples come to Jesus the day following the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus accuses them of seeking after Him because of the miracle He performed. He proceeds to say the following regarding the manna in the wilderness:

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:

and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:45–49)

Jesus referred to the manna as *bread from heaven*. However, manna is not the true bread from heaven. The true bread from heaven is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Jesus is the one who came down from heaven to give life to the world. He is the True Bread from Heaven. This Bread from Heaven is that which “endures to everlasting life” (John 6:27).

This is My Body:

Once we have all this information, we may visit the Last Supper. During this event, Jesus offered His disciples bread and wine, which represented His Body and Blood. This meal, commonly called the Eucharist or Communion, is still participated in today. At the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread and then offered it as His Body.

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. (Mark 14:22)

At the Last Supper, the setting is at the dinner table, where fellowship is central. Recall that the Patriarchs shared bread as a form of worship.

Like the Patriarchs, Jesus shares bread with His Church in Communion. As in the feeding of the multitudes, He breaks and blesses the bread as our High Priest, a pattern demonstrated at the Last Supper with His disciples.

Jesus is the True Bread from Heaven. As Christians, we should fellowship by sharing His bread. Whether this is understood as participation in Communion is at the reader’s discretion, but Jesus provides a spiritually grounded means of fellowship.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (John 6:55)

Is He merely symbolizing the bread as His body? There is much debate as to whether the bread actually becomes His body.

Catholics, for instance, believe that the bread literally becomes the Body of Christ, which is called transubstantiation. Alternatively, Lutherans believe His body is superimposed over the bread; in this way there is not a literal conversion (i.e. transmutation).

Regardless of these distinctions, the bread represents His body.

Jesus tells His disciples to make a practice of breaking bread in remembrance of Him. In this offering of Communion or the Eucharist, the bread represents His body. At this time, we are reminded of the covenant Jesus made for us, and how He sacrificed His body and shed His blood.

Jesus provided us with a tradition to remind us of these sacraments, the sacraments of His flesh and blood. If we abide in these sacraments, we may have the life which comes from Him.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John 6:53)

Conclusion:

In the Last Supper, Jesus offered His disciples bread and wine, which resembled the actions of Melchizedek in Genesis. Like Melchizedek, Jesus is a priest, because He offers bread and wine.

His flesh is offered to us as the True Bread from Heaven. Just as we receive nourishment for our bodies, from the bread we eat, Christ's flesh is nourishment for our souls.

As Jesus says in John 15, He is the vine and we are the branches. The branch receives nourishment from the vine, in order to bear fruit.

His flesh offering is a fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, which called for many traditions involving bread.

Through His death and sacrifice, Christ became a greater Tabernacle. Hebrews says Jesus became the eternal High Priest of a Tabernacle "not made with hands."

*But Christ **being come an high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (Heb. 9:11, emphasis mine)*

The Tabernacle, which later became part of the Temple, was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. This event was prophesied by Christ in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24.

Today, there is no longer a Jewish Temple in Israel. Christ fulfilled Temple practices, such as the Temple offerings of grain, through His body. Our Tabernacle today resides in Christ and is "eternal in the heavens."

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

*God, an house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens.** (2 Cor. 5:1, emphasis mine)*

Jesus states in Matthew 5:17 that He came to fulfill the Law. Through His death Christ bore the curse of the Law, thus fulfilling it. Paul writes in Galatians 3 that Christ restored us from the Law by becoming a curse. This was necessary, because whoever did not keep the Law completely was under a curse.

Jesus fulfilled the demands of the Law within Himself. While on the cross, Jesus said “it is finished” (John 19:30), then He gave up His spirit.

The King of the Jews



And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. (John 19:19)

Israel today does not have a king; it has a prime minister. The roles of prime ministers and kings vary from country to country, but they are always involved in governance. In some respects, a prime minister may have the powers of a king, but a king in ancient times likely had more power than a prime minister.

Many know the story of David and Goliath. In that story, little David defeats the giant Goliath with a stone and sling. Most people love this story because it is an underdog story, with David as the underdog. The true meaning of this story is one about faith.

David was a king of Israel, but he was not the first king; instead, the first king was a Benjamite named Saul. However, Saul's reign was short lived on account of his disobedience towards God. David's reign followed shortly after, and eventually Saul's reign lived in the shadows of David's.

David was a man after God's heart. God specifically chose David because He had a heart for Him. God had such a special relationship with David that He established a continual throne for David within the house of Israel.

Throughout Scripture, David's throne is called "the throne of David." Even after the kingdom of Israel split, this throne remained. Regardless of what happened to Israel, this throne was always there waiting for someone to sit on it. While this throne was not always occupied, it was never destroyed.

Throughout Scripture, God the Father and God the Son are depicted as rulers, but the throne of David specifically refers to God the Son. This throne of David was established in the Old Testament under king David and carried on to the time of Christ. The history of Israel's rulership is a long one, which essentially begins with David.

Studying his rise to kingship will require a deep dive into the Old Testament, with emphasis on his beginnings as a young

shepherd boy. Since this throne originated with David, it is wise to start there.

Once the origin and history of the throne has been established, the reader will be exposed to prophecies regarding the throne. God always had a plan for the throne of David, which will become clearer when considering prophecies related to the throne. Every throne requires a ruler, and this one is no different.

There was always someone intended to occupy this throne, which the prophecies make clear; and that person is Jesus. This is a story about God preparing a throne for His Son Jesus, which began during the time of David.

Establishing the Throne of David:

The Bible is broken up into sections. One of these sections includes historical books which recount the history of Israel. This series of books effectively begins with Joshua and ends with Esther, although we may consider Daniel a historical book also.

The first 5 books of the Bible are considered the Torah, which is synonymous with “the Law” (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*). The Israelite laws are presented in these books, who were given by Moses.

These historical books account for centuries of time. The history of the Torah extends back to the creation account, which some suggest was around six thousand years ago. In contrast, the book of Joshua, the first “historical book,” begins about three thousand years ago.

Throughout the early history of Israel, they did not have a king. This time extends from the days of Jacob until the days of Samuel, a time span of approximately eight hundred years.

Even though Moses led the people in their exodus from Egypt, he was not considered their king. Neither was Joshua considered a king, even though he led them after Moses.

In the time following Joshua, there were periods of leadership, which God raises up as Israel falls into their enemies hand's. These periods of leadership were under "judges" (i.e. avengers). Just like Joshua and Moses, they were not considered kings. This begs the question, what does it mean to be king?

The book of 1 Samuel immediately follows the book of Judges, where the enemies of the Israelites were judged according to *avengers* God raised up.

In the days of Judges, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). At the beginning of 1 Samuel, the prophet Samuel was the closest thing to a king. He provided a level of leadership for the people, which they lacked for many years; Samuel's job was not to lord over the people, but to guide them.

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. (Judg. 21:25)

Because Samuel was aging, and his sons did not follow in his footsteps, there was nobody to lead the people after him. The people were no longer satisfied with the leadership of Samuel. Instead, they wanted a king to rule them like the surrounding nations.

The people were becoming weary of the leadership of Samuel's family, so it was time for a change. God wanted the people to seek Him directly, but people often strive to be like their neighbor. Instead of seeking the Lord as their King, they wanted a human king. The surrounding nations had kings, and they wanted one too.

*Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: **now make us a king to judge us like***

all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (1 Sam. 8:4–7, emphasis mine)

God warns the Israelites through Samuel about the nature of a human king (1 Sam. 8:11–17). The moral of the story is this: be careful what you ask for. In spite of this warning, the people were still adamant about having a king.

Saul became the first king for the people, but he represented the people's choice. His attributes were more in line with what the people tended to admire, like physical stature. Even though God seemingly selected Saul, he was not a man after God's heart.

And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. (1 Sam. 9:2, emphasis mine)

The KJV brings out the superficiality of this verse by using the word "choice." This word usage brings to mind a butcher assessing a piece of meat. Saul was a fine choice for the people, because he possessed an admirable stature.

Generally, however, people's outer appearance fails to reflect their inner nature. Saul's true inner nature would ultimately shine through, especially when he was under pressure.

For a time, the people were pleased with Saul because of his appearance and showmanship. Saul would play the part of the "people's king," but time would reveal his inner nature. God would find a king after His heart.

Saul's Failed Kingship:

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? (1 Sam. 10:1)

From an outside perspective, Saul started out on the right foot; however, it was a brief time before Saul displeased the Lord. God tells Samuel of Saul: “thy kingdom shall not continue” (1 Sam. 13:14)

Saul was instructed to devote the Amalekites to destruction (1 Sam. 15:3). God instructed Saul to destroy and completely wipe out the Amalekites and all of their possessions. His army was to keep nothing and nobody for themselves. Instead, Saul disobeyed God by taking of Amalekite possessions, and offered them as sacrifices.

Josephus states in *Antiquities of the Jews* that God was “grieved that the king of the Amalekites was preserved alive,” and 1 Samuel 15:21 points out that Saul “took of the spoil” and offered it as a “sacrifice unto the Lord” (*Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews*). Saul disobeyed a direct order from God.

*And Samuel said to Saul, **Thou hast done foolishly:** thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. **But now thy kingdom shall not continue:** the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. (1 Sam. 13:13–14, emphasis mine)*

Saul was disobedient to the Lord. The result was the loss of his kingdom. Shortly after Saul's transgression, Samuel seeks out

a new king. This king would be different from Saul, because he would be a king “after his own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14).

Under this new king, the kingdom of Israel would be united. First, they would have to go through growing pains, as a change of flag usually precludes political tensions.

A Man after God’s Heart:

In search of a new king, the Lord sent Samuel to Jesse, the Bethlehemite. He was to seek a king from the sons of Jesse.

When Eliab appeared, the firstborn son of Jesse, Samuel thought he was the one. This was because of Eliab’s exceptional physical appearance. However, God reminded Samuel that He does not consider appearance.

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, **but the LORD looketh on the heart.** (1 Sam. 16:7, emphasis mine)*

Because the Lord looks at the heart, He is looking for something different than what man is looking for. Man is looking for outward presentation, stature and a fine countenance.

Samuel went through each of the brothers, but none of them met up to the Lord’s expectations. When Samuel finally went through every brother, he inquired of Jesse if he had any more sons. Jesse confirmed that he indeed had one more son, whose name is David.

At the time of this inquiry David was tending sheep, and he was the youngest of his brothers.

And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to

look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. (1 Sam. 16:12)

Concurrently, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David and departed from Saul; furthermore, a distressing spirit came upon Saul. This is an affirmation that the kingdom was stripped from Saul and given to David. Saul lost the Spirit of God and his kingship.

Although, it took a long time before the people's allegiance to Saul was broken. He was king for many years, so he had acquired a large following.

Initially there was no strife between David and Saul, because of Saul's ignorance. Samuel clandestinely sought out David as king. His anointing was discrete. Saul likely knew nothing of the matter.

On account of Saul's ignorance, the first encounter between them is a peaceful one. Due to the evil spirit plaguing Saul, he calls a harp player. Music can be soothing, so Saul sought comforting melodies, and David played them. Every time David played for Saul, the distressing spirit departed.

*And it came to pass, **when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand:** so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him. (1 Sam. 16:23, emphasis mine)*

Shortly after his anointing, David conquered Goliath the Philistine. In this story, David states in this conflict that the armies of God are behind him.

After defeating Goliath, he gained reputation and a place in Saul's army. His time as a warrior for Saul were progressive, and David became an accomplished soldier. Through his success as a warrior, he gained further fame. As his reputation soared, women came out from the cities of Israel to sing about him.

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. (1 Sam. 18:7–9)

This commences the contention between Saul and David, a story which lasts for several chapters.

At the latter part of this story, David finds himself in a position where he could have killed Saul. Instead, he choose mercy over violence, and him.

Owing to David's mercy, Saul finally acknowledges David's superior leadership.

*And he said to David, **Thou art more righteous than I:** for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil... And now, behold, I know well that **thou shalt surely be king**, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. (1 Sam. 24:17, 20; emphasis mine)*

Despite Saul's acknowledgement, their struggle proceeds in the following chapters. Saul was unable to let go of his resentment towards David.

This strife finally concludes with Saul's death in 1 Samuel 31. David laments over Saul's death, despite Saul's eagerness to kill him (2 Sam. 1:17).

It is not until 2 Samuel 2 that David is anointed king over Judah. However, he does not yet reign over all of Israel; this does not happen until 2 Samuel 5:3. When David takes Judah's throne in 2 Samuel 2, Israel is a divided kingdom.

*And the men of Judah came, and there **they** **anointed David king over the house of Judah**. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul. (2 Sam. 2:4, emphasis mine)*

Before David has a chance to become king over Israel, Saul's son Ishbosheth takes up the reins over Israel. The Scripture says: "the house of Judah followed David" (2 Sam. 2:10). All of Israel, except for Judah, is following after Ishbosheth at this point. There was a long war between the houses of Saul and David.

***Now there was long war** between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. (2 Sam. 3:1, emphasis mine)*

Abner, who was the chief military officer for King Saul, had a stronghold on the house of Saul. Having become upset with Ishbosheth over a personal matter, he plotted against him.

Because of his anger towards Ishbosheth, Abner strived to make a covenant with David, so he may lead Israel. This would be the ultimate downfall for the house of Saul.

And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee. (2 Sam. 3:12)

Finally, in 2 Samuel 5:3, David is made king over all of Israel. At this point, the division between the tribes of Israel had been mended. There was nothing standing in the way of David governing all of Israel.

So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron

before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. (2 Sam. 5:3)

The Splitting of the Kingdom:

The kingdom remained in unity under David. After his death, the throne transferred to his son Solomon, who was favored in the Lord's eyes. Solomon would also reign over a united kingdom like his father David.

The anointing of Solomon, which was an anointing of oil, was completed by a priest named Zadok. This anointing represented the continuation of the throne of David, because Solomon would sit on that throne.

And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. (1 Kings 1:39)

Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly. (1 Kings 2:12, emphasis mine)

Unfortunately, Solomon would fall into idolatry. He strayed away because he chased after the gods of his wives. Solomon's wives and concubines were great in number, and many of those wives came from cultures who were worshipping false gods

Instead of staying true to God, Solomon gave way to the gods of his wives. The major sin in Solomon's case was idolatry, which means setting up idols in place of God.

Solomon fell away from the Lord, because he worshipped after other gods, and the Lord was displeased with him. As a consequence, the Lord could have stripped the kingdom directly from Solomon, but He decided to revoke the throne during his son's reign.

The reason for this delay was for the sake of Solomon's father David, as He held David in high regard.

When the kingdom was finally split, it never fully recovered.

Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen. (1 Kings 11:11-13)

Rehoboam took the reins after Solomon, but the kingdom would never be the same. In 2 Chronicles 10, it appears the kingdom could be restored, but Rehoboam further divided the kingdom.

Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to Rehoboam. The remaining kingdoms rebelled against him (2 Chron. 10:18). Jeroboam, who was an enemy of Solomon, took control of the remaining tribes.

For a large portion of the Old Testament, there are two kingdoms, the Northern and the Southern. The Southern Kingdom, also known as the Kingdom of Judah, consisted of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, and possibly Levi. The Northern Kingdom consisted of the remaining tribes; it is called Israel.

Throughout the Old Testament, the kingdom never recovers. Eventually the Northern Kingdom of Israel is taken by the Assyrians, and the Southern Kingdom of Judah is taken by the Babylonians.

In spite of Solomon's son losing the kingdom, the Lord promises the throne a lineage (1 Kings 11:32). Jeroboam was to receive ten tribes, but Rehoboam would receive the tribe of Judah for the "sake of my servant David."

A Prophesied King:

The throne of David was established in Judah, which followed from the reign of Solomon. Despite Solomon's falling away from the Lord, a tribe would remain faithful to David's line. A descendent of David would sit on "the throne of David."

The throne of David is a line of succession extending from king David, who was the second king of Israel. God promised Solomon that a throne would remain in the tribe of Judah, owed to Solomon's father David.

The throne of David is a recurring theme in the prophetic books, particularly the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied about one who would sit "upon the throne of David" indefinitely.

This prophecy remained unfulfilled during Isaiah's life. Centuries would pass before this would become reality.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:6-7, emphasis mine)

This verse states a righteous branch will be raised to David. The implication here is a king will be raised from the lineage of David. Since the throne of David remained in the tribe of Judah, and this king would be from the tribe of Judah,

The tribe of Judah is the tribe of David and his father Jesse. Jeremiah is prophesying about a king of Israel in the distant future, who would sit on the throne of David; He would reign over a unified nation of Israel like his father David.

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, **and a King shall reign and prosper**, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 23:5–6, emphasis mine)*

Scripture point to a future king would sit on this throne. The godlike quality of this king is illustrated by Jeremiah when he says “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:5). The NIV translates this title as “The Lord Our Righteous Savior.”

The divinity of this king should be apparent. This king is unique. At the height of Israel’s kingdom, kings like David demonstrated strong faith in the Lord, but they were still only men. This King is one who is as the Lord. The translators of the KJV knew this verse expressed divinity.

According to the minor prophet Zechariah, a day will come when Jerusalem will be attacked by all nations. The city will be plundered; however, the Lord will come to the aid of Jerusalem and fight for them. At this time the Lord will establish His throne.

*Then the **Lord will go out and fight** against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle... And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day the Lord will be one and his name one... Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep*

the Feast of Booths. (Zechariah 14:3, 9, 16; emphasis mine)

A few passages have been cited that refer to a coming king. We may make some assumptions about this king. For one, this king will “sit on the throne of David” (Isa. 9:6–7). He will be called “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS” (Jer. 23:5), and “King, the LORD of hosts” (Zech. 14:16). Micah offers even further insight into this king who will sit on the throne of David. These will give us more attributes of this coming king, so we may compile a list.

*But thou, **Bethlehem** Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands **of Judah**, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be **ruler in Israel**; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. (Mic. 5:2, emphasis mine)*

In this verse we see that the king will be from Bethlehem. This town in Judah will give forth to a ruler that will be everlasting, and he will have been from old. This type of language speaks of a deity, someone with godlike attributes. The eternal character of this king is apparent in the language here, because He is called “everlasting.” God is everlasting, not men.

We may also make the assessment that this king will come from Judah, which was the tribe of David. This verse says that Bethlehem is of the tribe of Judah. This was the tribe through which the throne of David continued. Isaiah 11 supports this by saying that “there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse.” The stem of Jesse supports that the king will come out of Judah, because Jesse was the father of David and of the tribe of Judah.

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel

and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; (Isa. 11:1-2)

At this point we have enough information and insight from the Prophets and previous passages to complete a list of attributes of this coming king. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but will serve the purposes of this chapter. In the numbered list below, each number gives one aspect or characteristic of this coming king. Next to the characteristic is the verse number from where it was taken.

- 1) From the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1)
- 2) Comes out of Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2)
- 3) From the tribe of Judah (Mic. 5:2)
- 4) The Spirit of the Lord is upon him (Isa. 11:2)
- 5) Sits on the throne of David (Isa. 9:7)
- 6) His kingdom will have no end. (Isa. 9:7)
- 7) He is Called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 23:6)

Jesus Fulfills the Old Testament Prophecies:

When the wise men came to king Herod, seeking the King of the Jews, Herod gathered his chief priest and scribes together. Herod was inquiring about the birthplace of Jesus. Here is what they said:

And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. (Matt. 2:5-6)

This verse is a reference to Micah 5, where it is said that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem. Let the reader consider the lists of attributes which were given to the prophesied king. One of these attributes would be that he would come from Bethlehem.

When the wise men are questioned by Herod, they are referring to Micah 5. They must have been aware of this prophecy. Matthew 2:1 confirms that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (Matt. 2:1)

In Luke 1, Mary the mother of Jesus is visited by an angel before she conceives. This is the angel Gabriel, the same angel who appeared to the prophet Daniel. Gabriel is a messenger who was responsible for bringing good news to Mary. The news is that she would conceive a son through the Holy Spirit, whom would be named Jesus. The angel provided Mary with several attributes of her son. One of these attributes is that He would be given “the throne of his father David,” which is a fulfillment of Isaiah 9:7. This phrase *throne of David* was introduced in the previous section, because the prophesied king would sit on the *throne of David*.

*He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him **the throne of his father David**: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. (Luke 1:32, emphasis mine)*

In the previous verse are listed several attributes that are unique to Christ. A careful study of this passage will reveal similarities to the prophecies covered in the previous section. Christ’s attributes mentioned in this verse line up closely with those of the prophesied king.

- 1) He shall be great.
- 2) He will be called the Son of the Highest.
- 3) The throne of David will be given to him.
- 4) He will reign over the house of Jacob.

5) His kingdom will have no end.

Isaiah 11:2 said that the Spirit of the Lord would be on Him. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist says the one who is baptized and on whom the Spirit remains will be the one that baptizes in the Holy Spirit. A proper exegesis of this verse would validate that it is speaking of Jesus, whom is baptized by John. When speaking of Jesus, John gives us another attribute of him. He says that the Spirit will remain upon Him. When Jesus was baptized by John, this was exactly what happened. Scripture says that the Spirit descended on Him like a dove.

And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (John 1:33)

The genealogy of Jesus is important because the Prophets prophesied that Christ would be from the tribe of Judah (Mic. 5:2) and the stem of Jesse (Isa. 11:1). The Gospel of Matthew gives us insight into Jesus' genealogy. From the first chapter of Matthew it is clear that the genealogy of Jesus extended from Jacob and through David, who was from the tribe of Judah. David is considered the "father" of Jesus because He is a distant ancestor.

The New Testament verses presented thus far point to Jesus as the prophesied king. Those verses have highlighted attributes of Jesus which were prophesied in the Old Testament. Below are itemized New Testament attributes of Jesus which have been encountered so far. Each one of these attributes was a fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy.

- 1) The Spirit remains upon him. (John 1:33) - Isa. 11:2
- 2) Reigns over the house of Jacob (Luke 1:32)
- 3) Inherits the throne of David (Luke 1:32) - Isa. 9:7

- 4) His kingdom will have no end. (Luke 1:32) - *Isa. 9:7*
- 5) Born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1) - *Mic. 5:2*
- 6) A descendent of David (Matt. 1:2–16) - *Isa. 11:1*

The above list of attributes is by no means an exhaustive list; it is merely to point out that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. There are people who believe that Jesus is not the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, but let them consult more robust arguments and writings on the matter, as I am sure there are many. For the general layperson, it is important to see these connections, because they gain a better understanding of who Christ is.

The King Riding on a Donkey:

This chapter has investigated several attributes from both testaments which affirm that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies of a Davidic king. One question that may stand out: Is Jesus already sitting on that throne? While this is not a simple matter, there are a few passages from Scripture which provide insight into this inquiry.

Five days before the Passover Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. He did this to fulfill an Old Testament prophecy from Zechariah 9:9, which says “Behold, your king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass...” Zion’s king was to come riding on a donkey. Jesus riding on a donkey prior to Passover is another affirmation of His kingship.

*On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: **Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.** And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, fear not, daughter of Sion:*

*behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.
(John 12:12–15, emphasis mine)*

In ancient times, when a king rode into a town or city, this could be on a donkey or a horse. The king riding in on a donkey would indicate the king was coming in peace, but when he rode in on a horse, that was to declare war. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was confirmation of His kingship.

Clearly the kingship of Jesus was affirmed at that time, but what of the throne of David? During the life of Jesus, no person was on the throne of David. Even though Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee and Perea during the time of Jesus (Matt. 2:2), he was not from the line of Judah. It is not clear from which tribe Herod descended, but his rulership was part of the Herodian dynasty. Prior to the inception of the Herodian dynasty was governance of the Hasmonean dynasty (*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*).

Even though Herod was the ruler of Galilee at that time, he did not have authority to crucify Christ. Instead, it was Pontius Pilate who had that authority (Matt. 27:11).

The Lexham Bible Dictionary refers to him as a “prefect.” This was a relatively powerful position. When referring to Pilate, the ESV uses the word “governor,” but his official rank was prefect. This was the rank of a Roman leader who was governing an area. Pilate’s responsibility was governing Judaea at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. It was Pilate who had the authority to crucify Jesus.

It was Pontius Pilate who gave the Jews authority to crucify Jesus. The Jewish leadership wanted Him crucified on account of His radical teachings and essentially claiming to be God. Pilate thought Jesus was innocent and did not want His blood on his hands. Nevertheless, with great power comes great responsibility. Under pressure from the Jewish leadership, and perhaps out of fear of an uprising, Pilate allows Jesus to be given over to the Jews for crucifixion.

When Jesus was crucified, Pontius had a plaque inscribed and affixed it to the top of the cross. In three languages it declared “JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Whether this was on account of Pontius’ sense of humor, or because he knew the Jewish leadership would detest this declaration, I suppose we will never know. Nevertheless, this was a slap on the face for the Jews. They were not ready to accept Jesus as their king.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. (John 19:19–20)

It is significant that this inscription was in three languages. These were the languages of the land. The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews. Greek was not just the language of the Greeks, but it was the lingua franca of that part of the world. Latin was the language of the Roman empire. These were powerful languages at that time. They represented not only Judaism, but the known world. If you were going to make a statement, you would do it in these three languages.

Why is this important? David in his time was the king of the Jews, and now we have Christ being depicted as King. Pontius declares that Jesus is the King of the Jews, whether it was out of mockery or not. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, it was confirmation enough.

These two stories alone give us substantial evidence that Jesus is already King, but the throne has not been established in the literal sense. Today there is no temple, and there is no kingship. Israel today is a political system; they have a prime minister, but they do not have a king.

Finally, this verse in Matthew gives evidence for Jesus' authority today. In this verse in Matthew 28, Jesus declares his authority over all things in heaven and on earth. The KJV uses the word *power*, while the ESV uses the word *authority*. Power and authority are somewhat synonymous, but we could make an argument for their differences. Either way, a king has power and authority. In this verse Jesus declares his power and authority. Perhaps He is confirming that He is already King.

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
(Matt. 28:18)*

Did Christ have that authority prior to His death? Jesus is King, but we may consider that we have only witnessed a partial fulfillment. While He came once riding on a donkey, Revelation 19 says he will come again riding on a horse. Following that, Revelation 20 says He will reign 1000 years with the Saints on earth. He came once, but He will come again.

As we saw in the previous section in Revelation, Jesus will come again. This is picked up by Luke in Acts 1. After Jesus' ascension, the apostles were wondering where Jesus went and when he would come back. Almost immediately after he ascends, angels visit the "men of Galilee." These are Jesus' disciples, who are wondering where their master went. The angels give them assurance that Jesus would return.

Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like

manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)

The King Riding on a Horse:

Christians call this the second coming of Christ. He ascended into heaven, but He will return. This is what the book of Revelation is prophesying in Revelation 19 and 20. The manner which He left is the manner in which He will come again. When Jesus left the first time he went up into the clouds. When He comes again it will be in the clouds, such as in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:13, Matt. 26:64).

Earlier in this chapter, prophecies of a coming king were considered. The prophet Zechariah was cited for his prophecies of a coming king. Zechariah also prophesied about Christ's second coming in Zechariah 14:4. He writes that the Lord will "stand on the Mount of Olives," which is where he ascended 40 days after His resurrection.

*On that day his feet shall **stand on the Mount of Olives** that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. (Zech. 14:4, emphasis mine)*

After the disciples were visited by the two angels, the book of Acts says the disciples returned from the Mount of Olives. This is the same place where Zechariah prophesied the Lord would return. The prophet Zecharia and the angels confirmed that Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, exactly where He left.

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. (Acts 1:12,)

Interestingly enough, the Mount of Olives is the same place Jesus gave His lecture on the end times. This lecture is recounted in three out of the four Gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark and Luke). Much of what we know about the end times comes from this lecture at the Mount of Olives. Is it coincidence that His return will be to the setting of this end time lecture?

Conclusion:

Christ is King. He is the prophesied king, and He fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies regarding this matter. No other person could do the job.

The Bible tells us that salvation is contingent on believing that Jesus is Lord. In the case of Jesus, to be Lord means to be King. He is not merely our Lord in the sense of servitude, such as a servant serves his master, but He is our king. His kingship gives Him dominion over this earth, as the second Adam. While we are awaiting the final fulfillment of His kingship, we know He reigns from heaven.

In the end times Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives. This time He will be riding on a horse. In John 12, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Revelation 19 says He will come again riding on a white horse. In contrast to riding on a donkey, riding on a horse is a declaration of war. Christ came the first time to declare peace, but He will come a 2nd time to declare war.

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse;
and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and
True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make
war. (Rev. 19:11)*

Even though Jesus is already king in a metaphysical sense, He will come again to establish His kingdom on earth in a very physical sense. According to Scripture, Jesus already has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). While Jesus already has all authority, His kingship is not firmly established on earth in the physical sense. Are we to think that Jesus is currently sitting on the throne of David, or does that happen at His second coming? He already rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, thus establishing His kingship, but He was not reigning and ruling on earth in the physical sense. Despite the ambiguity of this matter, Jesus is already King in the sense of having total authority;

however, not everyone acknowledges His authority. Believers in Christ accept Him as Lord, but unbelievers either deny this authority or they are unwilling to accept it. At this moment, we have a choice to accept Him as King, which is what makes us true believers.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 11:15)

As Christians, we should be mindful of Christ as our King. When we accepted Jesus, we accepted His lordship. Nevertheless, we should take consolation in this fact, because Jesus will return again as our King. The Bible says that true believers in Christ will reign and rule with Him for 1,000 years, and they will not experience the final throne judgement. Aside from that, He will return to take control of this earth. No longer will this earth experience the abuses of the powers that be. Amen!

The Light of the World



*I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will
never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.
(John 8:12)*

We often take for granted that the light bulb is a recent invention in history. Prior to the industrial revolution, there was no electricity. In fact, the mainstream use of electricity is a recent development. For many years people lived more or less in darkness: light was given only by candles, lanterns, torches and fires.

In many places, the Bible talks about differences between light and darkness, but not only in a physical sense. In this sense, we think about the light emitted from a campfire in a dark forest. Photons are emitted from the campfire and strike the light receptors in our eyes. Because of the physiology of our eyes, we are able to perceive this light. Many times, in Scripture, the ideas of light and darkness are used metaphorically

A deeper understanding of Christ and His church may be gained through investigating the metaphorical uses of light and darkness. Christ's is represented as a source of light in the Bible. In being like the Father, Jesus shares characteristics with the Father. Often in the Old Testament we see God portrayed as an illuminator, something that gives off light. In John 1 Jesus is described as the light of the world and the light of men, while the Father is portrayed in a similar fashion in the Old Testament (Psalm 36:9).

The Spiritual Symbols of Light and Darkness:

In Genesis, God created and divided the light from the darkness. There is a connection between God and light in the first chapter of Genesis. This is generally taken to be physical light which is produced by the sun. In the following passage from Genesis, the light which was created was called day and the darkness was called night.

*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good: and God*

divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
(Gen. 1:3–5)

The creation account recounts the creation of light, and it recounts the separation between light and darkness. Consider this to be physical light and darkness, such as we see with our own two eyes (e.g. that which comes from the sun).

However, in Scripture there is a deeper meaning to light and darkness than we see with our physical eyes. There is a meaning to light and darkness that rests on the moral plane. We may think of light and darkness as metaphors of good and evil. We will investigate scriptures that affirm this.

When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: And when I waited for light, there came darkness. (Job 30:26)

Job is talking about the situation he is in, having lost everything by Satan tempting him. He is struggling with why God is allowing him to suffer. He says that even though he looked for good, evil came to him. By analogy, though he waited for light (good), darkness (evil) came to him.

Isaiah, when bringing judgment upon people who are living in excess, uses light and darkness as an analogy for good and evil. He does this by saying that just as they put darkness in place of light, they put evil in place of good. This is a warning to those people to be careful which one they choose.

*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;
That put darkness for light, and light for darkness;*

That put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isa. 5:20)

The Parable of the Lighted Lamp in Luke is written in a way to connect light to good and dark to bad. The connecting point here is the eye which can be either bad or good. The bad eye brings in darkness and the good eye brings in light. The eye here is the portal to the body, which allows in either darkness or light, good or bad. To reiterate, this parable connects bad to darkness and good to light.

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. (Luke 11:33–36)

John 3 also offers us a direct connection between darkness and evil. The verse says men whose deeds were evil loved the darkness rather than the light. It goes on to say that those practicing evil hate the light, because they are afraid that their deeds will be exposed. Light has its association with good, and darkness has its association with evil. The writers that penned the Scripture gravitated toward this analogy.

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the

light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (John 3:19–20)

Darkness is again contrasted with light in Acts 26, where Jesus is speaking with Paul about his ministry. Paul's mission is to the Gentiles, in order to deliver them from darkness to light. Jesus astutely presents two additional analogies; they are darkness to the power of Satan and light to the power of God. The moral undertone of Satan is evil, while the moral undertone of God is good. The vicissitudes of morality, on one end Satan and the other end God, are illustrated through analogies of light and darkness.

Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:17–18)

In 2 Corinthians 6 we see Paul talking about being unequally yoked with unbelievers. These are people who are not following the Word of God, but are given over instead to lawlessness. This verse sufficiently contrasts the spiritual symbols of light and darkness. Here they are analogous to righteousness as light and lawlessness as darkness.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14, emphasis mine)

We have illustrated that light and darkness are portrayed as good and evil in the scriptures, light being good and darkness being evil. One aspect of light and darkness we see in Scripture is

as good and evil. This appears to be the most prominent representation of light and darkness. However, this is not the only one.

To further illustrate the symbolism of light in Scripture, consider Matthew 5. This passage talks about how good works act as a light unto others. These good works appear as light, a light that is manifested in good works. The light here acts something like a beacon. We might say that the beacon itself is constructed on good works, and the light that it gives off guides the way for non-believers.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:14–16)

This next passage hints illustrates the ability of light to reveal. In the previous passage, light behaved like a beacon shining for all men to see. Allowing our light to shine means putting our good works on display. The following verse illustrates light's ability to "make manifest." This light is unique because it reveals the "hidden things of darkness." Apart from light being a metaphor for good, it reveals the hidden things of darkness, which means it "makes manifest" that which is evil (Eph. 5:13).

*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until **the Lord** come, who both **will bring to light the hidden things** of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (1 Cor. 4:5, emphasis mine)*

Bringing to light the hidden things can also mean to make manifest. To make something manifest is to reveal it. This is

synonymous with revelation. Scripture goes on to say in Ephesians that “for whatever makes manifest is light,” thus implying that an attribute of light is the ability to make manifest. A flashlight has the ability to allow us to see things that would otherwise be difficult to see. The light from the flashlight reveals that which was previously hidden.

But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Eph. 5:13–14)

In this last section there were identified two additional attributes of light in Scripture. The first was light acting as a beacon. What does a beacon do? A beacon is set up to put out light in order to guide ships. The beacon acts as a sort of compass. To a non-believer, good works may appear as a beacon to the Gospel. To a believer, good works may act as evidence of faith. The second attribute we encountered is the ability of light to manifest things hidden in darkness, “bring to light the hidden things of darkness.” Since it reveals, light that is shone in the darkness reveals what is in the darkness.

The Light of God:

Light is many times connected to the Lord in Scripture. Oftentimes in the Old Testament this is phrased as “the light of his countenance.” Countenance can refer to a facial expression or general appearance. It seems more often to be used in relation to facial expression. The following verses refer to either the countenance or face of the Lord, depending on the translation. This light is apparently something outwardly. It proceeds from the Lord.

The Light of Your Countenance:

The dictionary defines countenance as “the appearance or expression of someone’s face.”

Countenance is appearance, and appearance is surface level. To look at someone’s face is to look upon their appearance, but remain ignorant of their inner being. We could not tell by someone’s face that they have internal organs which govern the body. The inner workings of the body are not revealed through the face. To speak of countenance is to speak of what is seen on the surface, but does not reveal a person’s inner workings.

For the sake of the reader, it is important to clarify that the KJV uses the word *countenance*, but the NIV and ESV have the word *face* in the place of *countenance*.

David writes of this countenance in Psalm 4, where he is exhorting those who have fallen away from the Lord.

*There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?
Lord, Lift thou up the **light of thy countenance**
upon us. (Ps. 4:6, emphasis mine)*

While writing about the Lord’s characteristics, David is viewing this superficially, as a projection. Considering that other version translate *countenance* as *face*, we may consider this verse to be referring to the Lord’s face.

Psalm 90 further illustrates being in the presence of the Lord, because judgement comes upon those who stand in the light of His countenance.

In the following verse, the ESV and NIV use the word *presence*, instead of *countenance*. This expands the idea of light merely emanating from the Lord’s face to perhaps emanating from his whole being.

In the previous verses, it is the countenance, or face, which is the source of light. In the following verses, KJV uses the word *countenance* while ESV uses the word *presence*. This provides the

reader a slightly different visual of the light emanating from the Lord. Instead of strictly emanating from the Lord's face, the ESV implies the light is emanating from His entire being.

*Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, Our secret sins in the **light of thy countenance**. (Ps. 90:8, emphasis mine)*

Psalms 104 says the Lord "coverest thyself with light." This may be similar to countenance, but this verse utilizes different wording. Instead, it says that the Lord covers Himself in light. Thus, this is still a surface level characteristic.

The following verse uses a simile to compare the Lord's light to a garment. Again, this is something on the outside. The light is being considered as an external feature; in this case the sense is apparel. A garment is something that is worn.

*Who **coverest thyself with light** as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: (Ps. 104:2, emphasis mine)*

Clearly, light is a defining characteristic of the Lord's appearance. What is unclear is the source of this light. Does the light have an internal source, or is it merely appearing at the surface?

At this point, the light of the Lord is considered a surface level feature. The Old Testament remains silent in regards to this light's source. This will be revealed in the New Testament.

A Fire by Night to be a Light:

In the historical account in Exodus, the Lord appears to Israel as a fire. This occurs very near the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The Lord, serving to guide the Israelites through the wilderness, appears as a fire by night and a cloud by day. The fire which is by night provides the necessary light for the Israelites to see where they are going.

*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and **by night in a pillar of fire**, to give them light; to go by day and night: (Exod. 13:21, emphasis mine)*

This was significant enough of an event to be recounted in Nehemiah 9. It gives further clarification and support for the previous passage by affirming that the fire was to light the road they traveled. When things are repeated in scripture, they are significant. By retelling the account of God appearing as a fire by night, Nehemiah is reminding the listener of the significance of this event. The Israelites would have passed on stories of events such as this.

*Moreover thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and **in the night by a pillar of fire**, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. (Neh. 9:12, emphasis mine)*

Furthermore, given its significance, Psalm 78 & 105 recount this event. The fact that this event is recounted three times means it was highly significant to the Israelite people. It must have made a lasting impression on their memories. Can you imagine a pillar of fire appearing in front of you?

In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. (Ps. 78:14, emphasis mine)

He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. (Ps. 105:39, emphasis mine)

These verses give further support to the significance of the event in the mind of the Israelites. There is no telling how many other times the Israelites shared stories, perhaps by an evening fire, recounting how the pillar of fire guided them by night. They must have had fond memories of this experience.

The Light of the Lord:

In the previous section, the countenance of the Lord was brought to the reader's attention. Scripture provides us with a description of the Lord's countenance. It revealed that the countenance of the Lord is like light. This, as it was pointed out, was a superficial characteristic (i.e. something surface level). In this section, attributes of light will further be considered in relation to the Lord. The verses in this section provide a possessive aspect of the light. Instead of merely being a superficial aspect emanating from the Lord, the light is now considered as something the Lord possesses. This is not a minor detail, because this light is more than a surface level characteristic. There is depth to this light, which will be revealed throughout this chapter.

When something is possessed, that means you own it. When you possess a bicycle, odds are you own that bicycle. It may seem obvious, but whenever we see words such as *my* or *ours* or *yours*, we are looking at the possessive case. This grammatical case implies ownership. Such as is used in the following verses. This first verse is not speaking of the light of the Lord directly, but implies the Lord is a light. The psalmist possesses that light for whatever reason.

*The LORD is **my light** and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps. 27:1, emphasis mine)*

Finally, in this verse we see the light being directly and possessively applied to the Lord. The verse says "in your light," thus implying it is something the Lord possesses. Again, it is not clear if this is an intrinsic aspect of the Lord or something extrinsic. We are only told the Lord has light, but not if His very being is light. None of these verses indicate if this light is merely emanating from the Lord, or if the Lord is light. Does the light

proceed from the inner essence of the Lord, or is His very being light?

For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. (Ps. 36:9)

*O send out **thy light** and thy truth: let them lead me; Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. (Ps. 43:3, emphasis mine)*

The following verses reveal that the Lord gives off light. The Lord is evidently a provider of light to light the way for people to see. It is still unclear from where the light derives. At this point, the light appears superficial, and not deriving from the Lord's inner being. For some reason the Old Testament never provides a full revelation of this attribute.

*O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us **walk in the light of the LORD**. (Isa. 2:5, emphasis mine)*

Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. (Isa. 60:20)

In Daniel we come a little closer to uncovering what comprises God's essence. The Prophet Daniel has us believe that the light is possessed, because he says "light dwells in him." At this point, it is clear that the light is something the Lord possesses at an inner level. We can conclude now that it is not only superficial, but it derives from the inner being of the Lord. We are left wondering though if the essence of the Lord is comprised of light, or if it is merely something the Lord possesses. You can hold a baseball, but that does not make you a baseball. You can eat a steak, but that does not make you a steak. Even though the Lord has the light, does that mean He is the

light? So, we have gone a little deeper this time, but have not arrived at a full revelation.

*“He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, And **the light dwelleth with him.** (Dan. 2:22, emphasis mine)*

We first come to the idea of God being light in 1 John 1:5. This is the first time we see that the Lord’s very essence is light. Prior to this we could only see that the Lord carried light, or emanated light. The verse says “God is light.” There is no more ambiguity. Furthermore, the light is not simply a superficial characteristic, or something only possessed, which is about as much information as we receive in the Old Testament.

*This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, **that God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5, emphasis mine)*

The verse says this is a message they “heard of him,” likely indicating this was something they heard from Jesus. The complete revelation of this essence of God came through the Son of God. The Messiah himself had to reveal it, not even the Prophets could testify to this truth. All the Old Testament revealed was that God possessed light or emanated light. Those who witnessed this light never understood that God’s very essence is light. The Old Testament authors fell short of a complete revelation of this symbol in connection to the Lord.

The Light of Christ:

The Great Light:

This spiritual symbol of light, which represents God the Father, we could expect to apply to Jesus, who says in John 10:30 that “I and my Father are one.” If they are one, then they likely share a

connection to this symbol. A quality or aspect of God the Father must be exhibited by God the Son. As with most, if not all, of the attributes of God the Father, Christ exhibits those attributes in His own way. Light was connected to God the Father many times in the Old Testament. A person may expect to see this pattern in the New Testament with Jesus, since He is God the Son. There is one symbolic connection in Psalm 119:130 between Christ and light.

*Thy **word** is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. (Ps. 119:105. emphasis mine)*

*The entrance of thy **words** giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. (Ps. 119:130, emphasis mine)*

In John 1 Jesus is called the Word of God. Since Jesus is the Word made flesh, and God's words give light, this suggests that Jesus' essence is light. The Gospel of John says that John the Baptist came to bear witness of the Light. John the Baptist was a prominent New Testament prophet who paved the way for Christ. There are two Johns in the New Testament: the prophet John and the writer of the Gospel of John. In this chapter, the writer and disciple John is speaking of the prophet John (i.e. John the Baptist). The writer is illustrating a point, that John the Baptist was not the Light, but came to bear witness of the light. That Light is Christ.

The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (John 1:7-9)

Jesus is the Light mentioned in the previous verse. In Matthew 4:16, Jesus reveals Himself as a great light. He is citing

an Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah which is foreshadowing his coming.

*The people which sat in darkness saw **great light**;
and to them which sat in the region and shadow of
death light is sprung up. (Matt. 4:16, emphasis mine)*

During His ministry he took Peter, James and John up a high mountain. At that time was what many call the transfiguration of Jesus. A transfiguration is like a transformation or a change in appearance. The transfiguration of Christ was an outward manifestation of His inner glory. Scripture illustrates the brilliance of Christ's glory by saying "his face did shine as the sun." Light was emanating from Jesus.

*And was transfigured before them: and his face did
shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the
light. (Matt. 17:2)*

Before Paul's ministry he was a persecutor of Christians, but not for long. On his way to Damascus to consult with Jewish leadership, Paul encounters Jesus. There was a light from heaven which flashed around Paul, then Jesus was heard inquiring of Paul's persecution of the Church. This must have been a bright light, because Scripture says that Paul was blinded for three days. Was this a result of the light or something else?

*And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and
suddenly there shined round about him a light from
heaven: (Acts 9:3)*

The Light of the World:

In the previous section Jesus was depicted as a great light. Christ was revealed as light in the first chapter of John. When Christ was transfigured, the brilliance of that inner light was revealed. It showed through His face and even His clothing. We could

imagine that His disciples were in shock at seeing the brilliance of His transfiguration.

There are slight nuances in Christ's symbolic connection to light. In the previous section Christ was referred to as a Great light. There are many scriptures that refer to Christ as the Light of the World.

Let the reader consider that Christ is truth. Oftentimes when people see the truth, they "see the light." Truth has a characteristic of illumination. That is why many who seek to do evil avoid the truth. It is in the nature of truth to make apparent the deeds of evil. John 1:3 says that Jesus was "the light of men."

The following verse is speaking on creation, because everything that was made was made through Christ. Let the reader consider that a part of Christ's essence was imparted to men. If Christ is light, then perhaps that light was imparted to us. Nevertheless, Scripture makes it clear that the world plunged into darkness on account of sin.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:3)

Even if men at one time had the light of Christ, they most likely lost it. Jesus on multiple accounts implies that He is the way to the light. When Jesus was in the world, He was *the light of the world*. He came into the world as a light, so we may believe in Him and become children of light (John 12:36). Christ offers the opportunity to become children of light by believing in Him. By coming into the world Christ became a light to the world, but by believing in Him followers may inherit that light. This characteristic of light, which may have been possessed by early men such as Adam and Abel, is now able to be gained by believing in Christ.

Darkness was everywhere at the time Christ walked the earth. In the following verse Jesus implies that anyone who follows Him will have the light of life. If there was a time at which mankind had the light, it seems to have been lost. On the bright side, Christ offers that light to anyone who believes in and follows Him. By believing in Christ, we may become children of light. The *Light of the World* gives us an opportunity to become lights in the world. We just need to believe in Him.

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:12)

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:5)

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them. (John 12:35-36)

So, we see that Jesus in these verses is described as the “light of the world” and the “light of men.” Jesus and the Father are one, and because the Father is light, the Son is light. That light is imparted to the world on account of believers. Part of Christ’s mission was to allow His light to enter the world through His followers. Christ knew that He would not always be in the world, but He knew His mission would carry on through His believers. The light that was shone through Him during His transfiguration is that same light any true believer manifests.

A Light to the Gentiles:

The prophet Isaiah prophesied about a light to the Gentiles. That light was who Isaiah refers to as “mine elect.” Jesus was selected for a very specific mission, to be a light to the Gentiles. God’s elect was Jesus, who would bring light to the world. Jesus was not only to bring light to the Jews, who were his people, but he was to bring light to the Gentiles, who were not traditionally His people.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles...I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (Isa. 42:1, 6)

God is speaking to Isaiah about His elect whom His Spirit will be placed upon. His elect Jesus would have God’s Spirit placed upon Him. Jesus was born of the Spirit, so it would seem Jesus always had the Spirit; nevertheless, His baptism brings into full effect the prophecy in Isaiah. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan river, the Spirit of God descended on Him and remained.

*And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, **Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending**, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. (John 1:33, emphasis mine)*

The same Jesus whom the Spirit descended and remained upon is the Jesus who will baptize with the Spirit. Jesus made multiple promises to His followers that He would send them the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth). The Spirit of Truth would guide His followers to all truths. If you are a true follower of Jesus, then you have His Spirit.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (John 15:26)

This Spirit was poured out on the believing Jews on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, but it would not only be poured out on the Jews. The Gentiles would also receive the Spirit as a promise to all believers. In Christ it does not matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, all true believers of Christ are promised the Spirit. The Gentiles are an extension of Christ's ministry, because the word of God had never come to them before. The Gentiles were truly living in darkness, but Christ's light would extend to them also.

The Gentiles were in the darkness with respect to knowledge of the one true God. That revelation came to the Jewish patriarchs such as Abraham, but God would make a path to salvation for all through Jesus. Jesus' ministry was initially centered around the Jews, but would ultimately affect the entire world. Apostles such as Paul would carry Christ's words and His light to the Gentiles. Christ is the way to salvation for all who believe. This salvation is offered to both Jews and Gentiles.

Simeon knew Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles when he administered the sacred rights on Him. Simeon tarried in Jerusalem just to perform these sacred rights, because the Spirit had given him a vision. The vision revealed that Simeon would see "the Lord's Christ" before his passing. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem with his parents, and upon their arrival Simeon was led by the Spirit into the Temple. Scripture says that Simeon did for Jesus according to the custom of the Law.

*"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart In peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; **A light to lighten the Gentiles,** and*

the glory of thy people Israel. (Luke 2:32, emphasis mine)

Not only is Christ a light to the Gentiles, but the glory of Israel. Jesus was a Jew, but he offers salvation to all. The Gentiles who were once separated from God's inheritance are now brought into the fold. Prior to Jesus' ministry the Gentiles were in darkness with respect to knowledge of God. Even though Christ's ministry started with the Jews, His ministry would overthrow with the Gentiles through His followers. Paul for instance, was pivotal in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. Christ is a light for both Jew and Gentile.

Conclusion:

One thing is clear, Jesus is light. He is the “the light of the world,” “the light of men,” and a “light unto the Gentiles.” That light is carried on through His believers who become children of light. The New Testament authors pick up on this idea in many places, and a few examples are listed here. For example, Luke states in Acts that they were to be a light of the gentiles. The role which started in Christ would be carried by His disciples after His death.

*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as **children of light**: (Eph. 5:8, emphasis mine)*

*For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be **a light of the Gentiles**, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. (Acts 13:47, emphasis mine)*

Through His light the Lord empowers His church to be a light to all people. True believers in Christ receive His light and His Spirit. Through these gifts they are empowered to be beacons of light. Believers are called to be conformed to the image of Christ, which is one that emanates light. Christ is calling His believers to emanate their light. Projecting light means putting faith on display.

The High Priest



Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (Hebrews 4:14)

In the Old Testament we see an enigmatic figure named Melchisedec, or Melchizedek depending on which translation the reader prefers. For the purposes of consistency, the author will stick to the more modern spelling of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek was called the king of Salem, and a priest of the most high God. He is the first mention of a priest in the Old Testament. Levites were ordained as priests in Exodus, but the account of Melchizedek was long before the Levitical priesthood. He was a type of priest that occurred long before the Levites took up this role under Moses.

Jesus is considered as a type of priest in the New Testament. However, He is unlike the Levitical priests established under Moses. They had to be descendants of the tribe of Levi, while Jesus was a descendent of the tribe of Judah. His role as High Priest factored heavily into His life and death, and it is rooted in the character of this figure Melchizedek. Just how Jesus connects to Melchizedek will be further explored in this chapter.

The Character of Priests in the Old Testament:

Melchizedek and the Offering of Bread and Wine:

Priesthood was a prominent theme in the Old and New Testament. While it finds its start in the Old Testament, it finds its fulfillment in the New Testament. This fulfillment is found in the Messiah Jesus.

The beginnings of a biblical priesthood starting during the time of Abram, who was to become Abraham.

In Abraham's story is the first mention of a priest, an enigmatic figure who will become a main topic of discussion in Letter to the Hebrews. Abraham encountered an enigmatic figure named Melchizedek. This figure, who was the king of Salem, is the priest of the most high God.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. (Gen. 14:18)

We are given a small amount of information about the origin of this enigmatic figure Melchizedek.

Genesis provides the following attributes for Melchizedek:

- 1) The King of Salem,
- 2) A bringer of bread and wine
- 3) A priest of the most high God.

These may seem like obscure points at this time, but they will bear fruit as this chapter continues. An exegesis of the spiritual meaning of this encounter is offered in the Letter to the Hebrews, which will be covered more in depth as this chapter progresses.

The Levitical Priesthood and Tabernacle Practices:

Consider the time of Moses, following the exodus, to review the institution of priestly practices. It will benefit the reader to follow the development of the priestly system. This will provide the reader the necessary insight moving forward, as these practices are fulfilled through Christ in the New Testament.

First, let us cover a couple of topics. The first is that Moses is a Levite. The Levites were one of the tribes of Israel descended from Jacob. We can see this early on in Exodus at the time of his conception. It says that a man of the house of Levi took to wife a daughter of Levi. They bore a son, whose name was Moses. So, we have established that Moses was the offspring of two people from the tribe of Levi. Thus, Moses was a Levite.

*And there went **a man of the house of Levi**, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him*

*that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.
(Exod. 2:1-2, emphasis mine)*

Aaron was the brother of Moses, and Aaron was also a Levite. As the first high priest, he is a very significant figure throughout the Torah. The priestly practices were instituted throughout the Torah, which were the responsibility of the Levites. The Levites had the special privilege of being priests in the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple.

*And the anger of the Lord was kindled against
Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy
brother (Exod. 4:14)*

In the beginning of the Exodus story Aaron and Moses were side by side. Aaron accompanied Moses while he challenged the pharaoh to release the Hebrews. They both went against the pharaoh in the name of the Lord. These brothers joined in rallying against the pharaoh, in order that the Israelites may be released from captivity (Exodus 5:1). Throughout the time of the plagues Moses and Aaron were closely connected.

*And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told
Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my
people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the
wilderness. (Exod. 5:1)*

At this time, it is not important to go through all the stages of the Exodus. We are mainly focused on the traditions and priestly practices which follow the Exodus, while the Israelites are in the wilderness.

Sometime after the Israelites are freed from the Egyptians, we begin to see the institution of the Mosaic Law, which includes priestly practices. These laws and ordinances are directed at regulating the affairs of the Jewish people. In some sense they were like a modern day legal system.

If a Hebrew transgressed the Law, they would be punished accordingly. The Mosaic Law was intended to regulate religious affairs, such as offering sacrifices and worship to the One True God.

Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. (Exod. 21:1)

The establishment of the Tabernacle allowed for orderly and consistent sacrifices or offerings to the Lord, and to do so in a common place.

This Tabernacle would later become part of the Temple built during the reign of Solomon, the son of David and King of Israel.

Tabernacle sacrifices and offerings were carried out in a variety of styles, meaning they could take on multiple forms. The specifics of these are scattered throughout the Old Testament, particularly in Exodus and Leviticus. For instance, there were four primary offerings to the Lord: burnt offerings, grain offerings, peace offerings and wave offerings. Each one of these was highly ordered and carried very specific regulations.

The person carrying out these procedures would need to be trained; that person was called a priest and was traditionally from the tribe of Levi.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (Exod. 25:8-9)

It seems that the first place we see the establishment of Israelite priests is in Exodus 28. In the preceding chapters were instructions for building the Tabernacle. Prior to this there was nowhere for the priests to operate. They needed a base of operations.

There are several chapters on building the Tabernacle. The brother of Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons are to be taken from "among the children of Israel, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office" (Exodus 28:1). They are to be the priests for Israel. They are specifically set apart to fulfill this office.

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. (Exod. 28:1, 2)

And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. (Exod. 29:44)

Ultimately, Aaron and his sons are to oversee the priestly practices in the Tabernacle. This includes things like being responsible for grain offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings and wave offerings. They are responsible for accepting and processing the offerings.

May the reader recall that Aaron is a Levite. This next verse is confirmation that the Levites played a pivotal role in the Tabernacle. They shall not only bear (i.e. carry) the Tabernacle, but they should be ministers unto it, even so far as to camp around it.

***But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle** of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp*

round about the tabernacle. (Num. 1:50, emphasis mine)

At first it was Aaron and his sons that were appointed as priests. Later the Lord places the entire tribe of Levi over the Tabernacle. In Numbers 1:49, a census is taken on “the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel.” However, the Levites are kept from being accounted for in this census. This tribe will instead be set apart for service of the Tabernacle. We see this again in Numbers 3:5, where the tribe of Levi is brought before Aaron the priest, in order that they may keep his charge (i.e. attend the needs of) and do the service of the Tabernacle.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. (Num. 3:5–8)

The reason that the Levites were chosen had to do with an exchange with the firstborn of Israel. Following the exodus from Egypt, the Lord commanded to consecrate their firstborn as a reminder of the time when they came out of Egypt and the final plague against Egypt. That was the death of the firstborn of Egypt, the plague that ultimately broke pharaoh into releasing the Hebrews.

*Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever
openeth the womb among the children of Israel,
both of man and of beast: it is mine. (Exod. 13:2)*

The Lord still expected the firstborn of Israel to be consecrated to Him. For some reason, which is not clear, the Lord instead chose to consecrate the Levites. The firstborns would be ransomed, and instead the Levites would be set apart for the Lord. They would be set apart to serve in the Tabernacle.

*Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among
the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites
instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine:
I am the Lord. (Num. 3:45)*

We see that the Levites were taken instead of the firstborn children of Israel. The Levites are to belong to the Lord, and to serve his purposes. We may consider that they are a tribe of priests. If they are to be over the Tabernacle, they are to be responsible for the offerings, which were priestly practices. Deuteronomy has referred to them as “the priests the Levites.”

*And thou shalt come unto **the priests the Levites**,
and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and
inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of
judgment: (Deut. 17:9, emphasis mine)*

At this point, we have established that the Levites were set apart by the Lord to serve as priests for the Tabernacle. They were responsible for carrying the Tabernacle and executing the responsibilities of the Tabernacle such as the grain and meat offerings.

This priestly office carries on throughout the Old Testament and the rebuilding of the Temple. It also carries into the New Testament, into the time of Herod the Great, who was responsible for restructuring the Temple. According to tradition,

today there is still a remnant of the wall from Herod's Temple, even though it was mostly destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

A Greater High Priest:

In the book of Hebrews, Jesus is referred to as a High Priest. We have seen that the priests of the Old Testament carried out practices such as grain offerings and burnt offerings. These were part of the ordinances of the Law, or the Torah, which was handed down from Moses. These were practices that the Israelites were commanded to keep.

In the New Testament, and predominantly in Hebrews, Jesus is referred to as the High Priest. The high priest had the greatest responsibility among priests, which was to offer blood in the inner Temple for the atonement of the people.

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and **High Priest** of our profession, **Christ Jesus**; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. (Heb. 3:1, emphasis mine)*

The book of Hebrews goes on to say that Jesus is a priest after the Order of Melchisedek. The following verse effectively says that the priesthood of Melchizedek is carried on through the Son of God, who is a priest “continually.” Melchisedek was an enigmatic priest who Abram encountered in Genesis. Not only was he referred to as the king of Salem, but he was a priest of the *most high God*.

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

*Without father, without mother, without descent,
having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but
made like unto the Son of God; abideth **a priest**
continually. (Heb. 7:1–3, emphasis mine)*

There is a comparison made here between the Son of God and Melchizedek. There may be a number of reasons for this. For instance, the previous verse says that Melchizedek had no “beginning of days,” meaning he is eternal. The point here is that Scripture compares Jesus to Melchizedek. He is a type of Melchizedek, and more specifically He is “after the order of Melchizedek.”

Some postulate that Melchizedek was an appearance of pre-incarnate Jesus. Nevertheless, let the reader consider that Melchizedek was foreshadowing of a greater Priest to come.

*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both
sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that
within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us
entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever
after the order of Melchisedec. (Heb. 6:19–20,
emphasis mine)*

The Preeminence of Christ:

As you may have noticed, Jesus was not a Levite. Jesus was instead from the tribe of Judah. We may ask why Jesus is able to be High Priest while being from the tribe of Judah. In the Old Testament, it was contrary to the Law for non Levites to perform priestly functions.

So, why is Jesus able to be High Priest and not be a Levite? One reason may be that he is of the Order of Melchizedek. Some consider that Psalm 110 is a prophesy about Jesus, and there is a reference to it in Hebrews.

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Ps. 110:4)

Jesus is the “firstborn of every creature” (Colossians 1:15). To be firstborn over all creation means to be first over. That being said, Jesus predates all of creation. If all things were created through him, then He holds the highest office.

Christ is the King. All authority has been given to him by the Father. Furthermore, all things were created through Him. As the co-creator of the universe, He holds preeminence over creation.

*Who is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn of every creature**: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (Col. 1:15–16, emphasis mine)*

The Order of Melchizedek is an everlasting order. There is no end to this order, thus Hebrews references Psalms when it says that Jesus is a priest forever. There is no end to this priesthood. This would make sense for someone who is eternal and preeminent over all creation.

*So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever **after the order of Melchisedec**. (Heb. 5:5–6, emphasis mine)*

The brief story of Melchizedek offers another point of interest for this discussion. When Abram encountered Melchizedek, he offered him tithes. After Moses handed down the Law, the Levites accepted tithes from the people. Scripture says that Abram

offered Melchizedek 1/10th of his goods. In a similar fashion, the Levites collected tithes. Like Melchizedek, the Levites were priests, but Scripture never states that the Levites are after the Order of Melchizedek. If Jesus is after the Order of Melchizedek, then He has the authority to accept tithes like the Levites.

Christ is after the Order of Melchizedek. His priesthood is not derived simply from His ancestry, but from His spiritual lineage and preeminence over all creation. Christ is a spiritual descendent of Melchizedek, so His priesthood originates from this line. Simply put, Jesus is a greater version of Melchizedek. As the King of Peace, Jesus offers us peace (Rom. 5:1; John 14:27).

A Greater Covenant:

Once a year the high priest, who was essentially the head priest, would enter the Holy of Holies. He would do this in order to make atonement, through blood, for himself and the people of Israel (Hebrews 9:7). In the same manner, Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross, in order to fulfill that Law, thus making atonement for our sins through his blood. Christ was the Lamb who shed His blood for our sins.

*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the **precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (1 Pet. 1:18-19, emphasis mine)*

The New Testament presents a greater covenant. A covenant is like an agreement or promise. This covenant stands in stark contrast to the covenant in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the Israelites carried out Temple practices. That covenant may be considered as a reward based system. Essentially it says “Do this and you will be rewarded with that,” sort of like *tit for tat*. Paul elaborates on this in Galatians.

In his letter he writes of an old and new covenant, since he strived to contrast them. The purpose of his writing was to emphasize reveal the new covenant through Christ. Paul states that the origin of the first covenant was on Mount Sanai (Galatians 4:24). That was the location Moses went to receive revelation of the Law. The old covenant was one which was based on the expectations of the Mosaic Law.

Freedom from the Law is given to us through Christ, who represents a new covenant (Gal. 5:1); and it centers around Christ's blood (Heb. 10:29).

Under the old covenant, a high priest would offer blood in the Holy of Holies once per year, to atone for the sins of the people.

*Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone **once every year, not without blood**, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (Heb. 9:6–7, emphasis mine)*

Jesus became the High Priest, because He offered His blood for atonement of our sins. Christ is our high priest on account of His self-sacrifice. As the Lamb of God, Jesus offered His blood for a priestly sacrifice.

Unlike the offerings of priests under the old covenant, His offering was once and for all. There is no further need for offering the blood of animals, because this has been completed in Christ. The fulfillment of the offering of blood by the high priest is found in Christ.

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the

*people's: **for this he did once, when he offered up himself.** (Heb. 7:27, emphasis mine)*

The Letter to the Hebrews is making a point: Jesus is our new High Priest. As the new High Priest, Jesus, once and for all, offered His blood for our sins. Previously, that was done once per year, but under Christ it was completed indefinitely. Never again will a high priest offer blood in the Holy of Holies, as Christ completed this sacrifice for good.

What then is the new covenant? The new covenant is under the blood of Jesus. It is the offering of His blood for our sins. Under the old covenant, the high priest atoned for the sins of the people, but now Christ has atoned for our sins. Jesus offered a final and complete atonement for our sins. We are now called to faith in Christ.

The new covenant is now based on faith. Our faith in the shedding of Christ's blood clears us from sin. The agreement goes like this: If you have faith in me, then have confidence that your sins are atoned for. This is that new covenant, the covenant which is greater than the former.

A New Tabernacle:

Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abraham. On the same token, Abraham offered tithes to Melchizedek. It may be, that in exchange for Abraham's tithes, he received the bread and wine. This offering of bread and wine was a foreshadowing of Christ's offering at the Last Supper.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks about His flesh and blood of Jesus. He offers insight into their symbolic significance. In the following verse Jesus refers to His flesh as meat, which is a common King James designation for food.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (John 6:55)

In the previous passage the flesh and blood of Jesus are compared to food and drink respectively. This may cause us to seriously consider how flesh and blood of a person could be thought of as food and drink. The whole idea is foreign and taboo.

Shortly before John 5:55, Jesus says He is the True Bread, the Bread from Heaven (John 6:32). This bread has the unique property of giving life.

There is a metaphor in which Jesus is being compared to bread. This is not just any bread, but it is bread which comes down from heaven. Jesus himself came down from heaven, and He is that Bread.

*This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: **if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever:** and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (John 6:50–51, emphasis mine)*

Why is Jesus telling us to consume His flesh and his blood, and what does this have to do with priesthood? The following verse comes to mind. Here there is an analogy between Jesus and a vine. In this analogy we are the branches that abide in the vine. What does the branch get from the vine? It gets nutrients.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. (John 15:2)

The Last Supper is a demonstration of Jesus offering His flesh and blood for spiritual nutrition. As the branch abides in the vine

for its nutrients, so shall Christians abide in the vine that is Christ for spiritual nutrition. At the Last Supper Jesus offered His disciples these nutrients, which are now offered to every true believer in Jesus. His flesh and blood are represented by the bread and wine we receive during the Eucharist or Communion.

*And as they were eating, Jesus took **bread**, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my **body**. And he took the **cup**, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my **blood** of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. 26:26–27, emphasis mine)*

Here we have Jesus offering his disciples His flesh and His blood in the form of bread and wine. If we remember back to the story of Abraham and Melchisedek, Melchisedek was a priest who brought bread and wine. Like Melchizedek, Christ also offers us bread and wine, which are representative of his flesh and blood. He is offering His flesh and blood so that we may have life.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John 6:53)

There seems to be a dual role for blood. One is to offer life; the other is to offer atonement.

Jesus' offering of His blood has life giving results. Scripture says that in the blood is the life of the flesh. At the Last Supper Jesus offered his blood in the form of wine, so that His followers may have new life. The power of blood rests in life and atonement.

The offering of blood for the sins was a common practice of the high priest. Christ completes this sacrifice once and for all. By becoming the sacrificial lamb, Christ offered His blood for a final atonement.

Despite the many times the high priest offered blood for the sins of the people, only the blood of the Lamb of God could take away sins. John the Baptist confirmed that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and only He can “take away the sins of the world.”

Jesus, like Melchizedek, offered bread and wine to His disciples. This extends to us Christians today. The same sacrament Jesus offered to His followers belongs to every Christian.

Every Christian should partake in the sacrament of the flesh and blood, which was prefigured by Melchizedek. The story of Melchizedek was simply a way for the Old Testament to point us to Christ. It was to bring to attention the necessity of partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ, which Jesus offered at the Last Supper.

There are two ways in which His blood is offered to Christians, one is for atonement, and the other is for life. When Jesus offers His blood at the Last Supper, it is for life.

We drink of His blood, because we are partaking in the Vine. Christ is the Vine and we are the branches. Scripture says in John 15 that the “branch which abides in the vine bears fruit.” Unless we abide in the vine, through the blood of Christ, we will not bear fruit.

The other way His blood is offered is as an atonement for our sins. It is only His blood that can truly atone for sins. Much blood was spilled in the Temple as an offering of sins, but none of this blood could truly atone for sins. It did not matter which animal was sacrificed, it was all falling short of true atonement. A greater sacrifice was needed.

Priestly practices were a way to carry out the ordinances handed down by Moses. They served very specific purposes. At the time of Moses, these practices were carried out in the Tabernacle.

Later during the time of Solomon, a temple was built in order to carry out these practices. At the time of Jesus, a version of the Temple was still in existence, although it was destroyed and rebuilt since the original Temple.

We could think of the Tabernacle or Temple as the spiritual heart of Jerusalem. It was there that the heartbeat of the spiritual life of the Jews could be felt. At this place there were many offerings. This set of offerings included burnt offerings, grain offerings (i.e. meat offerings) and drink offerings.

*The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a **drink offering**. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the **meat offering** of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. (Exod. 29:39–41, emphasis mine)*

There is deep meaning in the crucifixion of Jesus. A careful look will reveal elements present which carry back to Temple practices.

The ancient Temple consisted of many practices. A careful analysis of these will reveal connections between these practices and Christ's crucifixion. How do we connect the crucifixion to practices like grain offerings? The key is understanding the symbolic significance of the body of Christ.

Jesus compared His flesh to bread. The offering of Christ's flesh is an offering of bread; that is the True Bread. This is portrayed by Temple practices involving grains, which foreshadowed a final offering. The bread at the Last Supper was that final offering. This was a fulfillment of those grain offerings.

What else did Christ offer in regards to His body? After Jesus gave up the Spirit, the centurion pierced His side with a spear. At that time blood and water poured from His wound.

Not only was blood offered in the Holy of Holies when the high priest would make atonement for sins, but blood was poured out during animal sacrifices.

A symbolic element in Christ's crucifixion is His blood. This symbolic representation of blood connects strongly to Old Testament practices.

On the cross the bread (i.e. the flesh) and the wine (i.e. the blood) were present. Extrapolating, or taking this back to the Old Testament, His crucifixion represents a fulfillment of the Old Testament Levitical practices.

No longer do we offer bread at the Temple, because Christ offered His flesh for bread. No longer do we offer blood, because Christ offered His own blood. This is the blood of the vine, which is *true drink*.

His offering of flesh and blood was a fulfillment of the Temple practices.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.
(Matt. 5:17)*

The Letter to the Hebrews is a great place to find scriptures pertaining to this subject matter. Hebrews paints a picture of a new High Priest, who offers His own blood for atonement. The literal bodily fulfillment of Temple practices in Christ becomes more apparent in Hebrews.

This letter tells of a new Tabernacle, which was not made with hands. That means it is not a physical tabernacle, but a spiritual tabernacle. The blood of goats and calves will not satisfy this Tabernacle, only the Blood of Christ.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. (Heb. 9:11–12)

Therefore, Christ came to provide a “more perfect tabernacle.” The Tabernacle is now the Body of Christ. Jesus makes this plain in John 2 when He refers to His body as a temple.

This verse uses the word “temple” instead of “tabernacle,” but we may consider them to be synonymous. The Tabernacle was an early version of the Temple.

At the time of Solomon’s reign, the Tabernacle was effectively moved inside of the Temple. All of the Tabernacle practices were then carried out in the Temple.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up... But he spake of the temple of his body. (John 2:19, 21)

Conclusion:

In ancient times, Abram encountered a figure who was a foreshadowing of Christ, would be after the order of Melchizedek, and is a Priest forever.

Melchizedek appeared long before the Levites, who became priests under Moses. Like the Levites, Melchizedek accepted tithes from Abram, just as the Levites accepted tithes from the Israelites.

Christ, being on the order of Melchizedek, was a forerunner and predecessor of the Levites. He was before them, and He is after them a priest continually.

Jesus is not just any priest, but He is our High Priest. This is because he offered His blood as a sacrifice for us. Similar to the high priest under the old covenant,

Christ offered blood in the Holy of Holies, and this was once and for all. The expectation of blood for atonement was fulfilled in the work of Christ on the cross. By shedding His blood for our sins, He became our High Priest.

Jesus' status as High Priest is eternal. Never again will there be a high priest as was under the old covenant. Christ's sacrifice is eternal. When Jesus was ready to give up His spirit, He said "it is finished." The atonement for our sins was complete. This is a greater covenant.

The body of Christ is the new tabernacle. Like the offering of blood by the high priest, this was completed in Christ's Body. As the greater tabernacle, priestly practices find their fulfillment in Him. As such, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law. Even though He does not abolish the Law, He bore the curse of it.

The Good Shepherd



*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth
his life for the sheep" (John 10:11)*

What is the job of a shepherd? The shepherd herds his sheep. One thing we know about shepherds is that their sheep heed their voice. Another thing we know is that the shepherd keeps their sheep on the right path. If one sheep goes astray, the shepherd will seek out that lost sheep.

This profession of a shepherd is portrayed throughout the Bible. This profession extends back to the time of the Patriarchs such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and David. The book of Genesis portrays Joseph and his brothers as shepherds by trade. We also see that the Israelites were shepherds while in the wilderness. Prophets like Jeremiah were referred to as shepherds, guiding the people of Israel.

This shepherding office is extended to Jesus. The Gospel of John chapter 10 is a center point of this discussion, because Jesus brings to attention the symbol of the shepherd, which He utilizes to represent Himself. While the office of a shepherd is depicted throughout Scripture, it was fulfillment in Christ.

Shepherding is a prominent symbol in Scripture. The idea of shepherding begins in the Old Testament and is fulfilled in the New Testament.

To fully appreciate the significance of this shepherding motif, a careful study of the Old Testament is necessary. Ideally, a study of this symbol will begin in Genesis, because that is where we gain an understanding of that occupation.

This exegesis will begin during the time of Joseph, who was the great grandson of Abraham, and an exalted brother who brought the Israelites into Egypt.

Shepherds in the Old Testament

The Israelites as the Shepherds:

Joseph was one of the Old Testament patriarchs, and one of the most famous at that. Most people have heard of the story of

Moses, who led the Israelite people out of the land of Egypt, but they had to get into Egypt in the first place. Joseph was responsible for bringing them into Egypt. However, this was under relatively peaceful terms.

During the time of Moses, the pharaoh was an enemy to the Hebrews. At the time of Joseph, it was different. On account of Joseph's gifts from God, he is able to win over the pharaoh.

Joseph becomes second only to the pharaoh, and is put over all the land of Egypt. This is quite amazing since he came into Egypt as a hopeless case, being abandoned by his brothers.

Shortly after Joseph arrived in Egypt, he was sent to prison under the false accusation of adultery with the wife of a high Egyptian official. Things were not going well for Joseph. However, God had plans to turn this around.

God gave a dream to the pharaoh about a famine that was to come over the land. During Joseph's time in prison there were two men who also had dreams, of which Joseph was able to interpret. His skills as a dream interpreter were shared with the pharaoh, and the pharaoh called Joseph to interpret his dream.

Joseph tells the pharaoh of a coming famine. This famine will be a great famine, but first there will come a season of plenty for seven years. During this time the pharaoh is to put as much food as possible into storage. Then Egypt will have what it needs during the famine.

On account of his skills of dream interpretation, pharaoh makes Joseph second only to him, and he puts him over all of Egypt. This puts Joseph in a power position to be able to bring his family into Egypt, which is how the Hebrews got into Egypt in the first place.

When Joseph brings his brothers into Egypt, the pharaoh interrogates the brothers by asking them their profession. They respond by saying that they and their fathers are shepherds.

*And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, **Thy servants are shepherds**, both we, and also our fathers. (Gen. 47:3, emphasis mine)*

Israel stayed in Egypt for four hundred years, growing and prospering, until a time where they were persecuted by a pharaoh. This is where the famous story of Moses, who was saved from the wrath of the pharaoh, picks up. Moses was placed in a wicker basket, interestingly enough called an “ark” in some translations, because Pharaoh sought to kill the Hebrew children.

Many years later, Moses is called by God to Mount Sinai, where Moses sees the Lord in a burning bush. The story of Moses is one about salvation. Moses, having been saved via the wicker basket, becomes the instrument of salvation for God’s people. Through plagues and miracles Moses breaks the arms of pharaoh, who is persecuting the Hebrew people.

It is clear from pharaohs’ encounter with Joseph, that the shepherding occupation is built into the Hebrew people. The shepherd is an archetype, a symbol and a motif that underpins Scripture. This occupation was rooted into the Jewish culture, and carried a spiritual significance. For instance, the spiritual significance of this shepherding motif is partly illustrated by the life of King David, the first true King of Israel.

The Patriarchs as Shepherds:

The word *patriarch* refers to the fathers of the Israelite people, or Hebrew people. One of the earliest patriarchs we can consider is Abraham, who was called out of his homeland to make a covenant with God. Other patriarchs are Isaac, Jacob (who becomes Israel), Joseph and Moses. The term is relative, because it is referenced from the time of use. For instance, during the time of David, he would not be considered a patriarch. However,

during the time of Jesus, David would be considered a patriarch. The time of Jesus was centuries after David.

Throughout Scripture the Patriarchs are called shepherds. Many times, this is in hindsight, because the prophet or author is looking back in time. A prophet may speak of a patriarch, and he may refer to that patriarch as a shepherd. From the standpoint of the prophet, this is a historical figure. In the following verse, Isaiah speaks of Moses, who at the time of Isaiah has long passed away. The “shepherd of the flock” is referring to Moses.

*Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the **shepherd of his flock**? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? (Isa. 63:11, emphasis mine)*

In a previous chapter the figure David was established. He is the “father” of Jesus, because Jesus is in the line of David. Even though Saul was technically king before David, we may consider David as the first true king of Israel, because he was after God’s heart.

David was a shepherd by trade, as was his occupation when he was chosen by God to be king. At the time Samuel comes to Jesse, David’s father, David is shepherding a flock. He was a shepherd by occupation. David was a shepherd in the literal sense, not merely in the figurative sense. Later he will be referred to as a shepherd in the figurative sense. In 2 Samuel 5:1–2 the tribes of Israel approach David to remind him that the Lord made him shepherd of his people Israel.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee,

Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. (2 Sam. 5:1–2)

Psalms 78:71 is another verse speaking in hindsight. This verse confirms that David was a shepherd by trade, not merely in the figurative sense. The previous verse refers to David as a shepherd in the figurative sense. At the time of God's selection of David as king, David was tending his sheep. We may consider David an archetype for a shepherd. He is a shepherd in the literal and figurative senses. In the literal sense David shepherded sheep before his ascension to the throne, and in the figurative sense because he shepherds the people of Israel (i.e. he guides them as a flock).

From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands. (Ps. 78:71–72)

Moses and David were both shepherds in the figurative sense, for they were shepherds of their people. Since David's early life was as a shepherd in the literal sense, he already knew what it meant to be a shepherd. The fact that David was a shepherd from youth makes him a stronger archetype for what it means to be a shepherd. The shepherd is to protect his sheep, just as David protected his sheep from the lion and the bear. He would guide and protect his sheep as the King of Israel. Albeit, David erred as king; not even he was perfect.

The office of a shepherd is more than merely tending livestock. In the literal sense that is correct, but there is a figurative sense. The figurative sense extends to guiding and leading people. Moses was called to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and in the wilderness. David was called to lead the people as the second king of Israel. It is because they are leaders,

they are also shepherds. Perhaps this pattern is teaching us that good leaders act like shepherds; they protect their flock.

The Prophets as Shepherds:

Not only the Patriarchs were called shepherds, but the Prophets also. Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekial had a unique purpose. They were to call the people of Israel into repentance. This meant turning away from sin and returning to God. Jeremiah called the tribe of Judah to turn away from their sin; less they would be destroyed by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. In a sense, Jeremiah was trying to lead them in the right direction. What does a shepherd do with his sheep? He leads them in the right direction.

The word of the Lord came to prophets. They received their directions directly from God. Their directions did not come out of their own free will; it was divine will that motivated the prophets. The Prophets were to lead the people of Israel with the word of the Lord: their compass. Divine direction was manifested in the word of the Lord.

*Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus
saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy
youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest
after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not
sown. (Jer. 2:1-2)*

In this passage, what stands out is that God tells Jeremiah to “go to the ears of Jerusalem.” This statement sums up the office of a prophet. The Prophets were to direct the people through the word of the Lord; they were to be the voice of God to the people of Israel. Isaiah prophesied to Judah, which was the Southern Kingdom, following the split under Rehoboam.

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. (Isa. 28:14)

Similar to the Patriarchs Moses and David, Scripture also considers the Prophets as shepherds. Moses, like the Prophets, spoke to the people on the Lord's behalf. When Moses encounters the Lord on Mount Sinai, the Lord speaks to Moses. The Lord commands Moses to speak to the people on his behalf. A prophet relays God's words to his people.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. (Exod. 20:22)

Jeremiah is not considered a patriarch, but speaks to the people on the Lord's behalf as a prophet. This prophet refers to himself as a shepherd. In this verse Jeremiah is speaking to the Lord. He is reminding the Lord of his dedication as a prophet. A dedicated prophet does not run away from being a shepherd.

*As for me, **I have not hastened from being a pastor** to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee. (Jer. 17:16, emphasis mine)*

A shepherd is a motif for leadership in Israel. Jeremiah, like David, was an archetype of a shepherd. He embodied what it meant to be a shepherd. A shepherd guides the flock (i.e. leads the people). The Prophets, like the Patriarchs, were shepherds. The Prophets and patriarchs were leaders. As leaders they were appointed by God to shepherd their people, Israel.

A Failed Leadership:

There are characteristics of being a shepherd: it means shepherding the flock and guiding the people. Patriarchs such as Moses and David embodied this leadership characteristic. The Prophets also embodied this characteristic. The leaders of Israel, who were called to be shepherds, were not always good shepherds; they were human. Even David, whose heart was after God, made a mistake. The same went for David's son Solomon, who lost the kingdom on account of leading the people astray. Being a shepherd was a high calling, as leadership is. Even the wisest of leaders can fall astray.

Recall that Israel was split into two kingdoms, the Southern and Northern Kingdoms. 'Israel' may refer to the Northern Kingdom, or it may refer to the people of Israel. This distinction is important when studying the Prophets. Their offices as prophets typically involved prophesying to either the Northern or Southern Kingdom. In the following verse this distinction is apparent, as the Lord refers to Israel and Judah in the same passage. They are considered as sisters, because Israel and Judah descended from the same ancestral line.

The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. (Jer. 3:6–7)

In the following verse Jeremiah is speaking to "the house of Israel." This is an ancient designation for the people of Israel first mentioned in Exodus (Exod. 16:31). The *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* says this: "The common designations 'house of Jacob' (Exod. 19:3; Amos 3:13), 'house of Israel' (Exod. 40:38), and the

unusual designation ‘house of Isaac’ (Amos 7:16) all refer to the nation of Israel in terms of a father’s house.” Therefore, it is likely this is in the more general sense. Jeremiah lived after the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria. He also lived after the first invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: king of Babylon. He was prophesying to those who remained in Judah following the first invasion. In this verse he may be speaking to Judah, which is the Southern Kingdom. The alternative is Jeremiah is speaking to people that share a common ancestry. This would refer to Israel in the general sense being of the lineage of Jacob.

For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered. (Jer. 10:21, emphasis mine)

At the time of Jeremiah, Israel was a mess. The “house of Israel,” which we may consider as consisting of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, was scattered about. Assyria had already taken into captivity the Northern Kingdom, and then Babylon was chipping away at the Southern Kingdom. Jeremiah blamed this fall on the shepherds, who were senseless. In this next verse Jeremiah prophesied to Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. (Jer. 23:1, emphasis mine)

The book of Ezekiel is generally broken down into four parts. “The book’s outline according to subject matter divides into four parts: Ezekiel’s call (1:1–3:21); prophecies of judgment against Israel (3:22–24:27); oracles against the nations (25:1–32:32); and proclamation of hope (33:1–48:35) (*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*). Ezekiel lived during a transitional period, which was during the time that Judah was taken into Babylon. “Ezekiel saw a glimpse of what the nation could be, but would later live

through its destruction at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar II (587/6 bc) (*The Lexham Bible Dictionary*). Ezekiel ministers to those who are in exile in Babylon, who he refers to as Israel. This corresponds to Jeremiah's "house of Israel," which represents Israel more generally in terms of patriarchal lineage.

*Son of man, **prophesy against the shepherds of Israel**, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? (Ezek. 34:2, emphasis mine)*

There is a pattern emerging here. When the leadership of the house of Israel is inadequate, the Prophets address this. Shepherds are called to guide the flock and lead the people. Jeremiah and Ezekiel called out the leadership of Israel, because they led the people astray. The final result of their lack of responsibility was a scattered Northern Kingdom and an exiled Southern Kingdom.

A New Shepherd:

God as the Shepherd:

Throughout the prophetic books, there is a pattern of falling away from God. Not only does this occur in the prophetic books, but throughout the entirety of the Old Testament. Time and time again the Hebrew people fell away from God.

The previous section of this book discussed how the Israelite leaders were rebuked for not guiding their people spiritually in moral matters. Throughout Scripture, the leaders are referred to as shepherds, because they were supposed to be leading and guiding the people.

They failed at this, which is why the kingdom split after Solomon, thereby leading to both a Northern and Southern

Kingdom. Eventually, the Northern Kingdom was taken captive by Assyria, followed by the Southern Kingdom being taken captive by Babylon. “The Northern Kingdom came to an end in 722 b.c. when the Assyrians destroyed the capital city, Samaria. The Southern Kingdom fell to the Babylonians in 587 b.c.” (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*). These consequences resulted from poor leadership.

It will become clearer that there is only one *Good Shepherd*, and He will guide the people the way they should be. The book of Genesis offers us a connection between the God of Jacob and the shepherding motif. For example, Genesis refers to “the Shepherd,” whom we may take to be the God of Jacob. In this verse Jacob is speaking of his son Joseph in a final address. Whoever wrote this verse, they thought of God as the shepherd.

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) (Gen. 49:24)

In a Psalm of David, we see the Lord referred to as a shepherd. David viewed the Lord as his shepherd. Earlier in this chapter we established David as a shepherd. He is a shepherd because he relies on the true shepherd, his Lord. The Patriarchs viewed the Lord as their shepherd. David was after the Lord’s heart, which is the heart of a shepherd.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (Ps. 23:1–2, emphasis mine)

Recall that during the time of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, the kingdom was split into two territories or kingdoms. These two parts are eventually conquered by Assyria and Babylon. Assyria first took the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Later Babylon took the

Southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity. A remnant of the people come back from Babylon into Jerusalem following the 70 year exile in Babylon.

In the book of Ezra, the rebuilding of the Temple is the central theme. Keep in mind that the people who were exiled into Babylon were of the Southern Kingdom. This was the remnant that was brought back into Jerusalem after the exile. At that time, the people of the Northern Kingdom were still scattered about.

The remnants of the Babylonian invasion appear to be from the tribes of Benjamin, Judah and Levi. It is unclear after the Babylonian exile if any members of the Northern tribes returned to Jerusalem. The understanding of the author is that only the Southern Kingdom Judah returned following the Babylonian exile; however, a time will come when all of Israel will be restored. It is the opinion of the author that the following verse refers to that time.

*Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, **as a shepherd doth his flock.** (Jer. 31:10, emphasis mine)*

Ezekiel 34:11–12 seems to read in a similar fashion to Jeremiah 31:10, because the Lord is referring to himself as the shepherd. Again, there is a seeking out of the lost sheep and a gathering of them together into one place. It is the author's opinion that this is a parallel prophecy to Jeremiah 31:10. These prophecies both speak of a time when Israel in its entirety will be gathered and shepherded by the Lord God. The split in the house of Israel was not restored following the Babylonian exile. Recall that God promised Solomon that he would keep one tribe for the sake of David, Solomon's father. This was necessary because

Jesus was to descend from David; he was to be of the tribe of Judah.

*For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. **As a shepherd seeketh out his flock** in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. (Ezek. 34:11–12, emphasis mine)*

Jeremiah and Ezekiel would have us understand that the Lord will be the shepherd. It was already made clear that the Patriarchs thought of the Lord as their shepherd. The preceding verse does not displace this fact. It merely illustrates that Jewish leadership failed their responsibilities as shepherds. The result of this was the complete fall of the house of Israel.

God no longer trusted the Jewish leadership to adequately shepherd. This may be the reason there are no more prophets during the intertestamental period, which is the time between the end of the Babylonian exile and Christ. Books like Ezra and Nehemiah depict the end of the Old Testament timeline. The major Prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel lived before the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple, which is the beginning of the intertestamental period.

The Israelite leadership had every chance to guide their people, but they failed time and time again. We may consider that the beginning of this downfall was the split of the kingdom under Rehoboam, son of Solomon. Despite God's attempts through his prophets to bring about repentance, the people continued to fall away and seek after other gods. Idolatry was at the helm of the ship, steering the ship. The conclusion of this apostasy was the Babylonian exile. Nevertheless, God promised a reconciliation.

The Last Shepherd:

Patriarchs, Prophets, and Jewish leaders were all referred to as shepherds. The leaders of Israel failed as shepherds, thus leading to the downfall of the house of Israel. The Lord had enough of the Israelite leaders. They could not fulfill their duties.

In the previous section, the Prophets pointed to a time where the Lord would shepherd His people. Recall that one of the Lord's offices is to shepherd, but this verse is referring to a very specific time. It is a time where the Lord will restore Israel. The house of Israel split under king Rehoboam, but the divide will be undone. At that time the Lord will gather His flock from the four corners of the earth, and He will be their shepherd indefinitely. The Prophet Isaiah also spoke of such a time when the Lord would gather His sheep. Each major prophet writes about a reconciliation of God's chosen people, at which time He will gather His flock once and for all.

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness,
Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in
the desert a highway for our God...Behold, the Lord
GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall
rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his
work before him. **He shall feed his flock like a
shepherd:** he shall gather the lambs with his arm,
and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead
those that are with young. (Isa. 40:3, 10-11,
emphasis mine)*

At this time, we are getting into New Testament territory. The words “prepare ye the way of the LORD” should stand out. These were essentially the words of John the Baptist, who was a prophet that prepared the way for the ministry of Christ. John the Baptist was a voice crying out in the wilderness, which is confirmed by the following verse. The verse in Isaiah is speaking

of a time when the Lord will shepherd his flock. The following verse contains the words of John the Baptist, who connects himself to the prophecy in Isaiah (spelled Esaias in this verse).

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. (John 1:23)

This passage from the Gospel of John affirms that the prophecy in Isaiah is connected to the ministry of John the Baptist. He was the voice of one “that crieth out in the wilderness.” It was the responsibility to make a way for the Lord by bringing the people to repentance.

In previous sections the prophecies of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Isaiah were explored. They revealed God’s plan to shepherd his people. In Ezekiel 34 it becomes clear that God will set up a shepherd over his flock. We have seen from previous prophecies that the Lord would establish himself as a shepherd. Let the reader consider the following passage from Ezekiel.

*Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up **one shepherd** over them, and he shall feed them, even **my servant David**; he shall feed them, and he shall be their **shepherd**. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. (Ezek. 34:22–24, emphasis mine)*

This is shortly following Ezekiel 34:11–12, which prophesied about a time when the Lord will gather his sheep. Let the reader notice that the Lord will “set up one shepherd over them.” This aligns with the other verses which affirm that the Lord will be their shepherd.

Let the reader also consider that this shepherd will be “my servant David.” Are we to believe that David arose from the

dead? Recall in a previous chapter that Jesus was to sit on the throne of David. Additionally, David was his father. The implications of “my servant David” is that this shepherd would be from the house of David. The house of David refers to David’s ancestral line, which is of the house of Judah.

When God rebuked Solomon and threatened to divide his kingdom, he said he would leave one tribe for the sake of his servant David. This was the tribe of Judah. Jesus is a descendent of David and from the tribe of Judah. If the Lord himself is to be shepherd, but a descendent of David is to also be shepherd, then we must find a compromise. This must be someone of the Lord, but also of the lineage of David.

The genealogy of Jesus is recounted in the Gospels, so we know that he comes from the line of David. For example, this is recounted in the Gospel of Matthew.

And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa... And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (Matt. 1:6–7, 16)

The prophet Micah speaks of a ruler who will come out of Bethlehem. “He will stand and shepherd his flock.” Christ was born in Bethlehem as is confirmed in Matthew 2. Micah is prophesying the lordship of Jesus Christ. The passage says that Christ will “stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,” and will operate in “the name of the Lord his God.”

There is a contrast between the shepherd and the Lord God. Although earlier passages depicted the shepherd as being the Lord God himself. The only solution to this is a shepherd who is from the line of David, but is one with God. There is only one character in the Bible that fits this description, Jesus Christ. He is

Emmanuel (i.e. God among us). Who else could this passage in Micah be speaking of? *The New King James Version* titles this section “The Coming Messiah,” thus referring to the Messiah, which is the Christ Jesus.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. (Mic. 5:2–4, emphasis mine)

The prophecy in Micah has the shepherd being born in Bethlehem. This following verse from Matthew confirms that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and recounts the time during the rule of Herod the Great. Herod tried to kill Jesus by calling for the extermination of the male children of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). Jesus would be born in Bethlehem according to Micah. Herod knew this on account of council from the “wise men.” He believed their council, which he uses in his attempt to kill Jesus.

*Now when **Jesus was born in Beth-lehem** of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, (Matt. 2:1, emphasis mine)*

There is a duality inherent in Micah, because the prophesied shepherd is on the level with God, and would be born of the line of David. From this, we see that this shepherd must be both God and man, but who fulfills this requirement?

The doctrine of the Trinity suggests there are multiple persons in the Godhead, which is made up of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. Scripture clearly reveals two aspects of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son.

The previous verses reveal that God would establish the second person of the Trinity as a shepherd over Israel, and this person would be as God.

So, where does this leave us? We are looking for a good shepherd, one that is both God and man. Since the Israelite people failed at shepherding, God would send His own shepherd, the Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd:

Up until now, Scripture has been pointing to a specific person, who God intended to shepherd His people. This shepherd would be different from previous shepherds, such as the Patriarchs and Prophets. This shepherd, who would be appointed by God, would be a ruler from the lineage of David. He would shepherd them “in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God” (Micah 5:4).

Throughout this chapter we have seen that the Israelite people had the occupation of shepherds. Their leaders were also considered shepherds. Shepherding is a motif that runs throughout the Old Testament. If Christ is to be a fulfillment of what came in the Old Testament, then we must consider that he will be a fulfillment of the line of shepherds. Being the King of the Jews, he must be the most Jewish of the Jews. We already saw that He took up the mantle of High Priest; now we will see that he takes up the mantle of a shepherd.

Jesus refers to himself in the sense of a shepherd. In this verse Jesus is referring to his coming in glory, where he will sit on his throne. At that time the Son of Man will act in the manner of a shepherd, separating the sheep from goats. This verse is

speaking of a coming judgement, where the righteous (i.e. the sheep) will be separated from the evil doers (i.e. the goats).

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. (Matt. 25:31–33)

In the previous verse Jesus referred to himself as the “the Son of Man,” a designation which originated in the Old Testament. It was generally used when referring to prophets such as Ezekiel or Daniel. The fact that Jesus adopts this designation puts Him on the level of a prophet, even though His office is greater than that of a prophet. There are multiple occurrences in which Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of man. The Old Testament Prophets never referred to themselves as the Son of man, but they were addressed as such.

*And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but **the Son of man** hath not where to lay his head. (Matt. 8:20, emphasis mine)*

*But that ye may know that **the Son of man** hath power on earth to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6, emphasis mine)*

For comparison, consider the following verse from Ezekiel in which the prophet is referred to as a Son of man. In this verse it is God that is addressing Ezekiel in what some theologians consider to be a prophecy regarding the rebuilding of the Temple prior to the millennial kingdom, which is the one thousand years during which Christ will reign with His Saints on earth. In this verse God addresses Ezekiel as “Son of man,” which is evident of the prophet being set apart for the Lord’s work.

And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. (Ezek. 47:6)

This was a title of honor bestowed upon the Prophets. They were set apart from the rest of Israel for doing the work of the Lord. This often meant being persecuted by their own people and suffering in deplorable conditions. Just like the Prophets, Jesus was set apart, although He was set apart to a greater degree than the Prophets. His mantles are that of Christ and Messiah.

Finally, we arrive at John 10, where this study has been heading. The chapter starts out with Jesus speaking on sheep who are following their shepherd. Jesus is leading up to something, which we will arrive at in a moment.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the **shepherd of the sheep**. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (John 10:1-3, emphasis mine)*

In this next verse we see Jesus refer to Himself as the door of the sheep. What we should notice is that there were people that came before Him, but the sheep did not hear them. In the previous passage Jesus says that the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd, so the thieves and robbers referred to could not have been shepherds.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep**. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be*

*saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
(John 10:8–9, emphasis mine)*

Finally, at verse eleven, we arrive at the main point of this section. That is that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the shepherd that the Prophets foretold. Jesus will call His sheep, and they will follow through the door. He will save His sheep and lead them out to find pasture.

*I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth
his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)*

Again, in verse fourteen, Jesus says that He is the Good Shepherd. He makes it clear that He knows his sheep, and they know him. He gives his life for the sheep, which according verses 10 and 11 is what the Good Shepherd does.

***I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and
am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even
so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the
sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of
this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear
my voice; and **there shall be one fold, and one
shepherd.** (John 10:14–16, emphasis mine)***

The two flocks in verse 16 may be confusing at first, but I will attempt to make sense of it. There were two main divisions in Old Testament theology, the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews were the people followed in the Old Testament, “God’s people.” The Gentiles were everyone else. Strictly speaking, they were the surrounding nations who were not being led by the Lord. No longer are there two distinct groups, because Jesus also died for the Gentiles also. There is now one group made up of Jews and Gentiles.

There is confirmation of Jesus being the Good Shepherd in the apostolic letters. These are the letters from the apostles following the decades after Christ’s death and resurrection. For

example, in Hebrews 13:20 Jesus is called the “great shepherd” who gave his blood for an everlasting covenant. Thus, he laid down His life for the sheep, as any good shepherd should.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (Heb. 13:20)

Peter adds dimension to this. He is encouraging Christians that are scattered throughout various provinces (1 Peter 1:1). He picks up on the idea of sheep going astray. When they go astray a shepherd seeks them out; otherwise, they may run into trouble. They may for example be snatched by a wolf, therefore, the shepherd must be diligent about monitoring his sheep. A good shepherd finds his sheep and brings them back into the fold.

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. (1 Pet. 2:25)

Our Role as the Church:

When Christ left His Church, He left it to the care of apostles such as Peter, Paul and John, but this was not the end of the line. They passed the torch of their leadership. Every generation has leaders in the Church. The role of a shepherd is one of leadership. Just like Christ was a shepherd, we are called to be shepherds. In essence, we are called to be righteous leaders. This is a call that is put out in Scripture. Peter calls on the leaders of the Church to be shepherds. A good shepherd cares for his flock and guides them accordingly.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as

being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (1 Pet. 5:2-4)

In this passage, Christ is referred to as the Chief Shepherd. At the top of the hierarchy is Christ. The people Peter is calling to be shepherds are the leaders of the Church. They are our Church elders, pastors, and anyone who claims discipleship in Christ.

The Church today should strive to resemble the Church established by the apostles and early disciples. Today, we have a Church structure which falls far away from what they imagined. Today, the Church has become highly fragmented. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of Church denominations.

Each denomination handles things differently. They adhere to differing titles base on your role in that church. Catholics have priests and popes, but Lutherans have pastors. There is not a total agreement in how the Church handles titles.

The leaders of the Church should be guiding us in the image of Christ, striving to emulate the Good Shepherd. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians my strive to embody Christ.

However, we have the burden of sinful flesh. Despite the promptings of the Spirit, our flesh compels us to evil thoughts and desires. The Letter to the Romans says we will be conformed to the image of Christ. The word conform means this is an ongoing process.

In Acts 20:28 Paul is speaking to and exhorting the elders of the Church in Ephesus. It is clear here that the Holy Spirit is central to the office as overseer. It is on account of the Holy Spirit that our leadership finds inspiration and power. A leader in the Church needs the Holy Spirit.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made

you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. (Acts 20:28, emphasis mine)

Conclusion:

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is a dividing line between the leadership of the Church and the Israelite leaders. It is true that some leaders had the Spirit, such as the Prophets and kings. However, the majority of the people did not have the Spirit.

Your average practitioner of Judaism did not have the Holy Spirit. We receive the Spirit on account of Christ, who promised to send it.

The baptism of the Spirit, which is likely a higher level of anointing of the Spirit, supercharges believers in order to carry out Christ's ministry over the Church.

To shepherd means to lead. Christian leaders have the responsibility to lead the Flock. Fortunately Jesus promises His disciples a helper, the Holy Spirit, who will teach them in all things.

This is the same Spirit that David possessed. With the power of this Spirit, we can be confident leaders and warriors for Christ. The Spirit empowers us to carry on with Christ's mission.

At this point, you may ask how someone receives the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 says a person is "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" when they believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and resurrected Son of God. In Ephesians 4:30, Paul writes to the believers in Ephesus that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom

also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13)

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30)

To reiterate, the Bible says a person is sealed with the Holy Spirit at the point which they believe. Paul says that we believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved, because it was necessary for the Son of God to save us.

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (Acts 15:11)

We believe in Jesus Christ as our justifier. It is our Faith in Him, which includes believing in Him as the Son of God and his resurrection from the dead. Most Christians believe He came so we may be justified, which was only possible as the Son of God.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal. 2:16)

When considering scriptures related to salvation, they reveal that salvation comes through the Holy Spirit, on account of what Christ did.

Christians must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, He died, was resurrected, and finally ascended into heaven as His Son. These are core beliefs of Christianity. Our belief in Jesus requires us to believe specific things about Him. Without the proper understanding of Christ and His ministry, our faith is incomplete and lacking robustness. It is the Holy Spirit that reminds us of these core spiritual truths.

The Gentiles in Acts 10 immediately received the gift of the Holy Spirit after they believed. Gentiles, again, were people that were not Jewish by birth, or they were not adopted into the Jewish traditions.

Many Jews thought it strange that they should receive such a gift from God. It is clear that Jesus came so all believers could be baptized in the Holy Spirit, rather than just baptized with water unto repentance, which was John's baptism (Matt. 3:11, Acts 19:4).

While receiving the Holy Spirit empowers us to live Christ centered lives, there is another fact to consider. Jesus said that in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven we need to be reborn. This is a spiritual rebirth, at which point we become a new creation in Christ. How and when exactly this spiritual rebirth occurs is a matter of debate, but nonetheless it is necessary. Regardless of how it occurs, all true believers will be reborn.

Let the reader consider that the spiritual rebirth is necessary for internal and external transformation of a believer. This is the dividing line between Israelite leadership and leadership in the Church today.

While many of the Israelite leaders possessed the Spirit, it is doubtful they were reborn in the New Testament sense of the word, as Jesus discusses with Nicodemus in John Chapter 3. The details of exactly how they were affected by the Spirit are biblically lacking.

It is written that believers in Christ experience spiritual rebirth, which makes us distinct from the Jewish leadership of His day.

Even if people are reborn, they are still living in corrupt bodies. We live in a sinful world and are surrounded by sinful beliefs, thoughts and actions. It is difficult, if not impossible, to completely separate yourself from the evil in this world.

The temptation to sin is real, as every devout Christian is fully aware. We should accept that we are sinners, and develop a mindset of repentance.

The Rock and Stone



*Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock
in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there
shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.
And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.
(Exodus 17:6)*

People who build their homes on rock fare better than those who build them on sand.

Aside from representing foundation, rocks also provide anchoring. Because they are heavy and difficult to move, a person may anchor to them. There is a great example of this: A ship anchoring ashore. Additionally, rocks or stones may be used in weaponry, because they are heavy and can cause damage. If you throw a rock at a window, it is likely to shatter. In ancient times trebuchets were weapons that launched gigantic rocks at enemy targets. Due to their weight and sturdiness, they are destructive. Hence, there are many characteristics represented by rocks.

There are nuances in Scripture when it comes to symbolic representations of rock. In Deuteronomy 32:4, for instance, God is referred to as “the Rock.” The sense is that of an anchor or foundation. However, in 1 Peter 2:7–8, Jesus is referred to as “a rock of offence.” In this case the sense is one of opposition. A rock of offence implies an offensive position, such as coming against an enemy. Finally, there is a story in Exodus 17 about Moses drawing water from a rock. There is a deeper spiritual significance here that Paul picks up on in 1 Corinthians 10:4. Each of these examples illuminates the rock and stone metaphors in a slightly different way.

God the Father and God the Son share characteristics; thus, they are both viewed in this sense throughout Scripture, but God the Son is uniquely defined by these motifs. The ways in which God the Father is represented as a rock is different from the ways God the Son (Jesus) is represented as a rock. Even though they share connection to this symbol, those connections are nuanced. This chapter will seek to present the nuances in which God the Father and God the Son are represented by rock and stone symbols.

As a notification to the reader, the words rock and stone are sometimes used interchangeably. In the Hebrew language the

word for rock and stone is generally the same. Depending on the verse, some translations may translate the Hebrew word as *rock*, while others use the word *stone*.

In Scripture, the word *rock* is used many times in relation to God the Father or God the Son. There are scriptures where this word references God the Father, and there are other places where it references God the Son.

Symbolically this word may represent distinct theological points, depending on the context for its use. Rock may serve as a metaphor for something which is grounding and provides spiritual stability. We see this allegorically in Matthew 7 with two houses, one built on rock and the other built on sand.

The word *rock* may be used in other senses. It is used in an offensive manner in 1 Peter 2 when Jesus is referred to as the “rock of offense.”

The rock motif is prominent throughout Scripture. This epithet of the Lord occurs in many places, and it is a favorite epithet of patriarchs such as Moses (Deut. 32:18) and David (2 Sam. 23:3). They loved calling the Lord their Rock.

Additionally, there are many occurrences of this epithet in Psalms. For example, Psalm 18:31 says “For who is God save the Lord? Or who is a **rock** save our God?” (emphasis mine). Many of the psalms are attributed to the Patriarch David.

The *Rock* was a favorite epithet of David’s, so it appears many times in the Psalms, for example, and other places where David speaks.

God the Rock:

Distinguishing between God the Father and God the Son is necessary, because we are contrasting references to both. Generally, you can look at the context of the verse. The Old Testament usually refers to God the Father as Elohim or Yahweh. Jesus does not officially appear until the New Testament.

In Moses' speech in Deuteronomy 32 he refers to God the Father as "the Rock." The capitalization of the word rock implies that it is a very specific rock. The "Rock" is serving as another name for God. This is shortly preceding his death on Mount Nebo, and is one of his final interactions with the people of Israel before they are put under the authority of Joshua.

***He is the Rock**, his work is perfect: for all his ways
are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity,
just and right is he. (Deut. 32:4, emphasis mine)*

In this second example below, Moses is referring to Jeshurun who "scornfully esteemed the Rock." Jeshurun is a name which refers poetically to Israel as a people.¹ Scornfully esteeming is the exact opposite of esteeming, because there is a negative disposition towards that which should be esteemed. The people's inadequate esteem for the Lord bordered on antagonization.

*But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen
fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with
fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and
lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. (Deut.
32:15)*

This symbolism of the Lord being a rock also occurs a few times in David's song in 2 Samuel 22. David, singing a song to his people after the Lord delivered him from his enemies, delivered these words. Lord here again is transliterated as Jehovah in the ASV, so this means it is referring to God the Father.

*And he said, **The LORD is my rock**, and my fortress,
and my deliverer; (2 Sam. 22:2, emphasis mine)*

Generally speaking, when someone is interacting with the Lord in the Old Testament, it is either referring to a translation of *Elohim* or *Yahweh*, both of which we may think of as God the Father. It is generally challenging to identify preincarnate Jesus

in the Hebrew scriptures. Again, the word Lord here in the Hebrew could be transliterated as Yahweh or Jehovah (i.e. depending on who you ask); He is considered to be God the Father.

*For who is God, save the LORD? **and who is a rock,**
save our God? (2 Sam. 22:32, emphasis mine)*

There is no shortage of verses which refer to the Lord as the Rock. Some examples are Psalm 28:1, Psalm 31:3 and Psalm 42:9. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Let the reader consider that these are referring to God the Father, because God the Son has not been introduced yet. We see more examples of this metaphorical language in the psalms. In the psalms there is a plethora of scriptures referring to the Lord as the Rock.

*Unto thee will I cry, **O LORD my rock;** be not silent
to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them
that go down into the pit. (Ps. 28:1, emphasis mine)*

There are plenty more verses which refer to the Lord as the Rock. This is just a sampling of those verses; but, how do the characteristics of a rock represent the Lord?

The Rock as a Foundation:

When considering metaphorical uses of the word rock, these could be as spiritual foundation. For example, in Matthew 7 and Luke 6, rock is representative of spiritual foundation. Something built on this stable foundation is able to withstand the elements. Jesus Himself uses this metaphor in Matthew 7.

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine,
and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man,
which built his house upon a rock: And the rain
descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew,
and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was*

founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (Matt. 7:24–27)

The man who built on sand did not build on a solid foundation. The first man built his house on rock, a solid foundation, but the second man built his house on sand, an unstable foundation. When the elements came in, the wind and the rain, the house that was built on rock stood. On the contrary, the house that was built on sand could not withstand the wind and the rain. It had a great fall, meaning the destruction of that house was complete. This is an allegory for those who build on a solid foundation vs. those who build on unstable foundations.

The psalms give us insight into this allegorical use of rock. In Psalm 27:1 the psalmist affirms that in a trying time the Lord will set him upon rock. Being set on rock means to be set on a stable foundation. This is a foundation not easily shaken.

For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. (Ps. 27:5)

Every instance of where the Lord is called the Rock is referring to the spiritual foundation of the Lord. Those who rely on the Lord build their house on rock. They build on a solid spiritual foundation. This is the meaning of the allegory in Matthew 7. God the Father shares attributes with rock, in due part because of His spiritual stability, but what about God the Son (i.e. Jesus)?

The Rock that Moses Struck:

Symbolically connecting the Father and Son to the rock motif is challenging, but a good place to start is the Old Testament. There are two stories in which Moses draws water from a rock. In these stories, in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 respectively, Moses strikes a rock which then gushes with water. This even takes place during the time when the Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years after their Exodus from Egypt.

In both of these stories the people are thirsty and ask Moses for water. In both instances Moses consults the Lord as to the solution for this problem. In one instance the Lord tells Moses to strike the rock. In the other instance the Lord instructs Moses to speak to the rock. Both times Moses strikes the rock, and both times the rock yields water.

This first excerpt is from Exodus 17, where the people come to Moses asking for something to drink. Moses consults the Lords about how to handle this. The Lord tells Moses to smite the rock, while other translations say to strike the rock.

And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. (Exod. 17:5-6)

A very similar situation occurs in Numbers 20, but is slightly different. This time Moses is instructed to speak to the rock instead of striking it. For whatever reason, either out of habit or frustration, Moses again strikes the rock. Nevertheless, the rock yields water as it did in Exodus 17. Moses did not exactly follow

the instructions of the Lord, which will have later repercussions, but that is outside the scope of this chapter.

Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink... And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. (Num. 20:8, 11)

This drawing water from the rock was a very significant event, so much so that we see this event mentioned later in Scripture. Moses himself recounts this event in Deuteronomy. This passage from Deuteronomy is recounting all the works the Lord performed for the Israelites. He is exhorting the people to remember what the Lord did.

Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; (Deut. 8:15)

Psalms 105:40–41, when referring to Moses, cites the opening of the rock by Moses. It is not clear if this is referring to the event in Exodus or in Numbers. The citations reference both accounts, so we may take it to be one or the other.

The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened

the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river. (Ps. 105:50–41)

Psalm 114:7–8 again references the bringing water from the rock in Exodus and Numbers. This passage credits the Lord for bringing water from the rock. Other verses give credit to Moses for bringing water forth from the rock. It is Moses who strikes the rock, but the power of the Lord is evident for some recounting the story.

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob; 8 Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. (Ps. 114:7–8)

Once again this is mentioned in the Psalms, specifically Psalm 78:15–16. We may be attempting to assume this is referring to Moses, but this Psalm is speaking on behalf of the Lord. This is clear because verse 14 says “In the daytime also he led them with a cloud.”

He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. (Ps. 78:15–16)

So, while it is clear that Moses had a part to play, it is also clear that Moses was acting as an instrument of the Lord. He may have been yielding the scepter, but the Lord was empowering that scepter. There is a reiteration of this incredible feat in Isaiah, when he speaks of a future time when Jacob will be restored.

And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock

for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out. (Isa. 48:21)

This was obviously a significant event, but how does this connect to Christ? There is a pretty clear connection in 1 Corinthians. Paul picks up on this event, and he gives us insight into its deeper spiritual meaning.

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

This is sort of a strange passage, because what seemed to be only a rock was in fact Christ. Is this to be taken in the literal or metaphorical sense? That may be a question for another time. For now, we will take this in a metaphorical sense. In that sense Christ was acting as a spiritual provider and sure foundation.

The Rock of Offense:

In the previous section Christ was prefigured in the Old Testament stories as a spiritual foundation and source of provision. The rock in the wilderness was a symbol of spiritual foundation. This rock also yielded water for provision, furthermore making it a symbol for spiritual provision. Paul explained that the rock represented Christ, who is a spiritual foundation and a source of spiritual provision.

Let the reader consider that there are multiple senses in which Christ is referred to as a rock. As has been covered, rock is often used figuratively to imply a strong foundation, but rock may also be used in an offensive sense. There are times in the

New Testament when Jesus is referred to as a ‘rock of offence.’ In Romans 9:32-33, when Paul is writing regarding righteousness through faith vs. the Law, he cites a verse from Isaiah.

Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Rom. 9:32–33, emphasis mine)

Peter picks up on this in 1 Peter 2:7–8, which is the final use of this epithet. Again, like Paul, he references Isaiah 8:14. Peter, instead of referring directly to the Israelites, says they are the ones who were disobedient. This is likely referring to Israelite leadership who rejected Christ, but it could refer to anyone.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Pet. 2:8)

What is meant by a “rock of offence”? There is a story in the book of Daniel which seems to exemplify what this means. It involves a dream of Nebuchadnezzar which Daniel successfully interprets. Nebuchadnezzar is the king of Babylon, which is where Daniel is taken after the siege of Jerusalem. He becomes a council to the king.

The account goes that Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, and he called upon his astrologers, magicians and sorcerers (Dan. 2:2), but he would not reveal the dream to them (Dan. 2:5). He instead chose to keep the dream a secret, none-the-less requiring that his council interpret the dream. Other than Daniel, these men were given over to false gods, and thereby were unable to interpret the dream. It was only Daniel who could interpret the dream.

*Thou sawest till that **a stone** was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and **the stone** that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream (Dan. 2:34–35, emphasis mine)*

The dream goes that there was a statue of a man. This statue was made up of different materials: gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. At the end of this dream a rock destroyed the image, thereby destroying the statue of man. The different materials represent successive empires in human history, the top as gold being the Babylonian empire. The entire statue as a whole represents the strength and powers of mankind. The final conclusion to this tale is the toppling of world powers by the rock or stone, Jesus.

Jesus is this Rock that will topple the empires of mankind. The book of Revelation says that he will come again and establish a one thousand year reign (Rev. 20:4). Jesus is the rock of offense because He will come again to stand against the powers of this world. In a sense, he has already done this on account of his word (Luke 12:49). The Lord challenges the status quo of mankind, thereby he is an offense to the powers of this world. His crucifixion was a scandal to the Jews and a folly to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:23).

The Stone:

Stone metaphors are as prominent as rock metaphors in Scripture. We may consider this a parallel motif, in that sometimes they are used interchangeably. They may be used in

similar senses, but the word *stone* may be used when trying to convey a particular meaning. Isaiah mentions a cornerstone which will be set in Zion.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (Isa. 28:16)

This verse, which is cited in 1 Peter 2:6, mentions another aspect of Christ which recurs throughout Scripture; that is an aspect of stone. There are discrete uses of the word *stone* in Scripture, thereby it serves as a metaphor that has multiple senses of use. Having more than one sense of use means the word may be used metaphorically in different ways, depending on the theological point the writer intended to make.

There is some ambiguity in Scripture when it comes to the Hebrew word *eben*, which may be translated as *rock* or *stone* depending on the Bible translation. In the story of Daniel there is a dream about a stone toppling the statue of a man. This is a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, while Daniel is serving in his court. Some translations translate the word *eben* as rock, while others translate it as stone. This nuance of translation generally is harmless, but it is worth mentioning here.

There are two stone related epithets for Christ which show up in Scripture. Epithets are words which serve as proper nouns, but they carry deeper meaning. They are a replacement for someone or something's name. For example, in a previous chapter Jesus is referred to as The Good Shepherd. This is an epithet for Christ because we could refer to Christ in that manner. If a Christian hears "The Good Shepherd," they may automatically think of Jesus.

The first epithet is the "stumbling stone." This is an epithet which represents the difficulty for people in accepting Christ as

their Messiah. The other is “the cornerstone.” This carries a different meaning than the stumbling stone, because it represents the aligning attribute of Christ with respect to the Church. The cornerstone is the structural lynch pin of the building. This is the most important architectural feature of the building.

The Law:

Before digging into these motifs, let’s review the Mosaic Law, because understanding the Law will help with unpacking these motifs. When Christians talk about the Law, they are talking about the set of laws and ordinances which were handed down to Moses from Mount Sinai. Precisely, there were six hundred and thirteen of these laws and ordinances. We may say the most significant were the Ten Commandments, which are usually distinguished from the other laws.

Many times, in the New Testament we see the word *law* used. An example of this is when Paul says “ye are not under the Law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14). What is this Law Paul is referring to? The Greek word which is used for law in this verse is *nomos*. According to *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, the Hebrew equivalent of this word is *torah*. In the Old Testament, references to the Law are translations of the word *torah*. This collection of books (i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) are called the Torah. Paul is talking about laws in the sense of the Mosaic Law. However, by the time of Jesus we have arrived at a warped version of their original intention.

In the Old Testament, there are specific practices to follow such as the burnt offering (Leviticus 6:9). There are also ordinances for how what we may call the legal system should handle public matters. There are laws for instance about how slaves should be treated, how to handle murder, and so on and so

forth. Many of the laws deal with the Tabernacle, such as burnt offerings and grain offerings. These were all of the commandments handed down in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament.

The Israelites never successfully kept the Law, because time and time again they fall away from God. Usually, it was idolatry that led them away from God. They ended up worshipping a foreign deity such as Baal or Molech. We may say that idolatry was one of their primary problems. They could not properly worship God, if they were busy worshiping other gods.

Faith Verses Work

There is something higher than the Law, and that is faith. Israel pursued righteousness through the Law, but they never attained it. Time and time again they failed at meeting all of the demands of the Law. In Romans 9:30–32, we see Paul pick up on this. The Gentiles, who were not God’s people, have attained righteousness. How is it the Gentiles who were foreign to the Law had attained righteousness?

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. (Rom. 9:30–32)

Paul here is speaking in regards to those who were seeking righteousness through the Law. The Israelites who were seeking righteousness through the Law could never achieve it. We see in Galatians 2:16 that “a person is not justified by works of the law.” Justified by the Law is the same thing that Romans 9 says: a person is not made righteous by the Law. The words *justification*

and *righteousness* are somewhat synonymous in Scripture. To be justified means to stand righteous.

Man is not justified by works of the Law, but is instead justified by faith in Jesus Christ. This is a justification of belief. Abraham would have understood this idea. Let the reader consider the following verse.

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6)

God made a promise to Abraham that his descendants would be many, because Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. James says his faith was completed when Abraham obeyed the order to sacrifice his son for God, although he doesn't go through with it. An angel stopped Abraham before he went through with sacrificing his son. Simultaneously this demonstrated Abraham's faith and God's mercy.

There is an entire chapter about faith in the Letter to the Hebrews. This chapter starts out by explaining what faith is, and it states that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). So, faith is based on hope in something that can't be seen, and it is a type of evidence of that thing which is hoped for. Hebrews 11:6 says "But without faith it is impossible to please him" (i.e. God). Our faith, for instance in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is pleasing to God. This chapter also gives many examples of faithful persons in Scripture. Abraham is given as an example of a faithful person. He left his home and traveled west in hopes of the fulfillment of a promise. Faith therefore, is hope which is rooted in the expectation of a promise.

Instead of through faith, the Israelites were seeking after righteousness through the Law of Moses; however, they were constantly falling short of achieving righteousness. This trend of falling short of righteousness appears throughout the Old

Testament. They would go back and forth with attempting to keep the Law. One generation would keep the Law, then the next generation would fall away.

This Law was considered a curse and an oath. It was an oath, because they were making a commitment to follow rules and commands, but it became a curse to anyone who did not keep the Law entirely.

Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deut. 27:26)

Leaving off on a hopeful tone, Christ bore this curse through his crucifixion.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: (Gal. 3:13, emphasis mine)

Jesus, having been hung on a tree, bore the curse. As the verse says, “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Through his crucifixion Jesus bore the curse of the Law. For this reason, we are no longer under the Law, but under grace. This is because righteousness does not come by works of the Law, but rather by faith in the one who bore the curse of the Law, Jesus Christ.

It is clear that righteousness was always based on faith since the time of Abraham. Perhaps the Israelites had forgotten this. May we remember that righteousness is not based on the works of the Law, but on saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The Stone of Stumbling:

This leads us to our next epithet of Christ, the *Stumblingstone*. We have seen that seeking after the Law does not lead to righteousness. True righteousness can only come through faith.

Jesus, by dying on the cross, bore the curse of the Law. We are only called now to have faith in the one who justifies.

Not everyone at the time of Jesus' death, even today, believes that He was the Messiah. The Jewish people knew of a prophesied Messiah, but they didn't picture a crucified Messiah. It was more likely they would have imagined the Messiah as a warrior in the likeness of His ancestral father David. He was well known for his military accomplishments. A messiah in the minds of many people was one who would throw off the yoke of Roman rule, but Jesus did not fit the bill; so, they crucified Him.

Crucifixion was the cruelest and lowest form of execution, reserved for the worst of the worst. The Jews of the day could not fathom a crucified Messiah. Paul touches on this in his letter to the Corinthians.

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (1 Cor. 1:23)

This is the reason Jesus is called a *stumbling stone*, or "stumblingblock." Paul uses this epithet in Romans 9, shortly after rebuking the Jewish leadership for pursuing righteousness through the Law. Paul says they should have pursued righteousness through faith, instead of through the Law. In the same section Paul uses the term "stumbling stone." The KJV has this as one word, but the NIV and ESV have this as two words. Romans 9:32 states: "they stumbled at that stumblingstone." Christ is that Stumblingstone.

The verse below is a reference to Isaiah 8:14 and Isaiah 28:16. Isaiah prophesied that one day a stone would be laid in Zion. This stone would not only be a "stone of stumbling," but it would be the cornerstone of the Church. This stone would set the foundation of the Church, which will be the topic of the next

section. Depending on the translation, this could read “stone of stumbling” or “stone of offence.”

*And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a **stone of stumbling** and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (Isa. 8:14, emphasis mine)*

Peter picks up on the stone of stumbling in his letter. Again, this verse may read slightly different depending on the translation, either way the verse is referring to Christ. He is the “chief corner stone” which the “builders disallowed” (1 Pet. 2:6, 7). Peter is referring to the Jewish leadership (i.e. builders) who rejected (i.e. disallowed) their Messiah. The Jewish leadership rejected Jesus by having Him killed.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Pet. 2:8)

Jesus is a stumbling stone for those who reject his crucifixion as a means to salvation. The Jewish leadership was particularly guilty of this, since they were responsible for his death. They denied that Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead. The one who believes in Him will not be “stricken with panic” as the NIV says and “will not be in haste” as the ESV says (Isa. 28:16). Either way the message is to believe in Christ, because it is something that we will never regret. It is a wise decision to believe in Christ, and the one who does will not be in error.

The Precious Cornerstone:

Christ is referred to as both the Cornerstone and the Stumbling-stone. These references are distinct and depend on context. Even

though they are both referring to a stone, they depict somewhat distinct aspects of Christ.

As a stumbling stone, Christ is an obstacle for many people who have trouble believing in Him. Contrarily, as a cornerstone He is an example for the Church, which is built on a foundation that begins with Him.

What is a cornerstone? It is an architectural component of a building that sets a precedent for its foundation. The cornerstone is the first stone set in a foundation. Any remaining foundation stones must align to the cornerstone.

*The stone which the builders refused is become the **head stone of the corner**. (Ps. 118:22, emphasis mine)*

The KJV uses the phrase “head stone of the corner” in the preceding verse. The “head stone of the corner” is synonymous with cornerstone. Alternatively, Isaiah 28:16 refers to the Messiah as a “corner stone.” Albeit the minor differences in terminology, they are referencing the same person, that is the Messiah. Isaiah 28:16 speaks of a “corner stone” which God will place in Zion, which is essentially God’s spiritual headquarters.

Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (Isa. 28:16)

The person that embodies the cornerstone is revealed in the New Testament as Christ Jesus. Matthew 21:42 references Psalm 118 which states “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner” (Psalm 118:22). Luke 20:17 parallels the following verse where Jesus also references the same verse from Psalm 118.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (Matt. 21:42–43, emphasis mine)

As was encountered in the previous section, Peter also wrote of a cornerstone. By the context of his writing, this is clearly referring to the Messiah Jesus. In his letter Peter referenced Psalm 118, which is the same reference Jesus used in Matthew 21:42. Peter states that the ones who were disobedient stumbled at the Word, which is Christ. Again, Peter is most likely referring to the Jewish leadership who rejected the Messiah. They are the ones who stumbled on the Stumblingstone.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Pet. 2:7–8)

Finally, Ephesians 2:20 brings this idea home, because it specifically refers to Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. Paul goes out of his way to illustrate the symbolic representation of the Church as a building, which is built on a foundation of “apostles and prophets.” Christ being the “chief corner stone” of the Church, because it is a building not made with hands. Instead, it is a metaphysical construct initiated by the apostles and prophets. Their works were the beginning and basis for the Church, with Christ as the first stone.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (Eph. 2:19-20)

The Church as a whole is built upon this cornerstone as the precedence for its foundation; the apostles and the Prophets are the foundation. "The unity and growth of the Church are coupled, and Jesus Christ is the secret of both." (*God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians*). That is to say, without Christ there would be no Church.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 3:11)

Conclusion:

Since God is our Rock, He is our foundation. He is a sure foundation.

When uncertainty in life gets the best of us, we may remind ourselves that God is our Rock. In being the Rock, God provides us with spiritual stability in times when the waves are tossing us back and forth.

The Old Testament patriarchs like David and Moses remind us consistently that God is our Rock. In the Psalms, David consistently speaks of God as His Rock, because He is our source of spiritual stability. David found comfort in realizing that no matter what was going on in his life, God was His Rock.

Jesus, in the manner of God the Father, is also referred to as a rock.

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Peter, 2:8)

This is not always in the sense of being a provider of spiritual stability. For instance, when Moses was in the wilderness with the Israelites, they came to him for water. Being the miracle-worker that Moses was, he drew water from a rock by merely striking it with his staff.

According to Paul in his letter to the Church in Corinth, this was a prefiguring of Christ. In the context of Paul's letter, the rock was representing Christ as a source of provision. The rock provides water for the Israelites, just as Christ provided living water for His believers.

The way in which Christ is represented as a rock is more dynamic than God the Father. For the Father, the symbol of the rock connects to spiritual stability, but for Jesus there are other senses illustrated in Scripture.

One of these senses is that of offence. The message of Christ is offensive to many for a variety of reasons. The Jewish leadership was offended by Christ, because, it was hard for them to accept a Messiah that was crucified. Such a death was reserved for the lowest of the lowest, which means the scum of the earth. Nevertheless, they failed to accept Christ during His ministry, despite the many miracles performed.

The two epithets being discussed, the *Rock of Offence* and the *Stone of Stumbling*, are in agreement. Both of these epithets are illustrating the offensiveness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Jesus is and was offensive because He stands against the powers of this world, which was demonstrated by Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which was interpreted by Daniel as Christ bringing judgement against this world.. Christ is "the stone that smote the image" (Dan. 2:35).

The fact that Christ is the Rock of Offence and the Stone of Stumbling for many today should not intimidate believers.

A more important designation for Christ in regards to our day-to-day affairs is that He is the *Cornerstone*. He sets the precedence for the Church.

Paul, in his letter, stated that Christ is the Cornerstone, and the Apostles and Prophets are the foundation. Jesus calls us to pick up our cross daily, but He was the first to pick up His cross. Jesus said of His baptism, that He did it in order to fulfill all righteousness, and set an example.

The Ark of Arks



And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. (Luke 17:26–27)

The story of Noah and the Ark is one of the most famous and recognizable stories in the Bible. This story sets a motif, or pattern, which occurs throughout Scripture. We can see this pattern for instance in the story of Joseph, where comes to power in Egypt, and then he brings his family, the Israelites, into Egypt with his new found power.

The word *ark*, is a word for something like a boat or a vessel. The most famous biblical example of a story is Noah's Ark. God commanded Noah to build this boat so the human race could be saved.

That was a physical and tangible ark, but the idea of the Ark takes the form of a symbol. This is for instance what is seen when Joseph brings the Israelite people into Egypt. The people stay there protected by Egypt for approximately four hundred years, until the time of a new pharaoh.

The symbol of the ark does not always appear literally, but often figuratively, as it does in this instance when Egypt assumes the role of an ark.

Like the other symbols and motifs which occur in Scripture, the ark motif is fulfilled in Christ. He is the fulfillment of many things, such as the Law.

Jesus fulfilled the Law because He fulfilled requirements, such as grain offerings. At the Last Supper, Jesus offered His flesh in the form of bread, so we may partake in it, whereby He raised us to everlasting life.

This ark motif provides an epithet for Jesus Christ (i.e. the *Ark of Arks*).

There are many instances of stories where the ark symbol is underlying that story. It would be beyond the scope of this book to offer an explanation of every example, but there are a few examples that this chapter will cover. Some of the main focuses are as follows:

1) The Ark of Noah and the Flood

- 2) The Ark of Joseph and Egypt
- 3) The Ark of Moses and the Wilderness
- 4) The Ark of the Covenant.

Like Noah, Joseph and Moses were destined for similar life stories, with each one illustrating God's divine grace. The lives of Moses and Joseph were similar in some ways to Noah's life, because they guided and protected their people.

Noah built an ark to save the human race and animal kind. Ultimately this allowed God to work through Noah in order to save a remnant of the human race.

The salvation of mankind, Israel and a remnant of Israel are depicted time and time again, all leading to Christ. Just like Noah, Joseph and Moses saved their people from destruction, Christ saves His people.

Like Noah, Joseph and Moses, Christ will save us from the destruction which will come upon this earth, as the Bible prophecies. These biblical characters were types of Christ.

The Ark of the Covenant is unique, because it was designed to house the presence of the Almighty. In a way it prefigured Christ, because Jesus is the presence of God which was born among us as Immanuel, and that name means *God among us*. Immanuel implies the sense of tabernacling. God tabernacled among us.

God's presence with his people was demonstrated by the building of a tabernacle, which contained the Ark of the Covenant. It was in this Tabernacle, and from the Ark of the Covenant, that God's presence and grace poured out toward mankind.

Like His Father, Jesus met us where we were, and was born into sinful flesh. He tabernacled among us.

The Ark of Noah:

The concept of a biblical ark originates in Genesis with the account of Noah. Being in Genesis, this is one of the oldest stories in the Bible.

This book recounts the beginnings of human history and tracks the beginning of a very special relationship between God and mankind. This relationship follows God's chosen people, the Israelites, throughout the Bible.

At the time of Noah, the Israelites were not yet a people.. It was through his seed that Jacob, who was renamed Israel, came about. In many respects Noah represents the beginning of the story of salvation, because He is the first of a type of savior in Scripture.

The history of Noah represents the strongest illustration of this ark motif as a representation of salvation. His story is one of salvation in the midst of cataclysmic destruction upon the earth.

God was weary of mankind and sinfulness that had overcome the earth, so He regretfully decided to cleanse it. The chosen weapon was a global flood which would wipe out all life on earth, except that which was brought aboard Noah's ark. This historical account of the Flood is not merely one of destruction, but it is about salvation.

Noah was six hundred years old at the time when the word of the Lord came to him regarding the fall of mankind. Mankind had become increasingly savage and sinful. This displeased the Lord to the point of regret for creating mankind. Because of this, the Lord decided to bring catastrophe on the earth.

It was Noah who God chose to be an instrument of salvation, for a remnant of the human race. Even though a flood would destroy most of the life on earth, Noah would provide a temporary safe haven for a remnant of that life. So, God instructed Noah to build the Ark.

Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. (Gen. 6:14)

This Ark of gopher wood was the vessel for which the animals and Noah's family escaped the effects of The Great Flood. It was specifically designed to protect Noah, his family, and animal kind from this global catastrophe.

In Genesis 6, God explains to Noah His plan for bringing a great flood upon the earth, and only what was carried on the ark would be saved.

And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Gen. 6:17-18)

Only Noah and his immediate family were allowed to enter the Ark. This included Noah's wife, his three sons and their wives. In Genesis 7:1 Noah and his family are commanded to enter the ark, then "the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days" (Gen. 7:23).

After the flood, Noah takes measures to ensure it is safe to leave the ark; this is before he allows his family to leave the ark. Noah sends birds to check the condition of the land and bring back any plant life which may be thriving. After a couple attempts, a bird returns with a freshly plucked olive leaf (symbolic of Israel), so Noah knew it was safe.

The Ark typifies salvation, because through the Ark Noah was able to save a remnant of human and animal kind. Like the account of Noah's Ark, there are many accounts of salvation, but that story is unique in that there was a literal Ark.

Many biblical stories are figurative, in that they do not involve a literal wooden ark. Instead, the ark symbol could be represented by a geographical location, such as Egypt in the stories of Joseph and Moses. In their accounts, they also act as saviors.

Like Noah, they were involved in saving a remnant of their people. In the story of Joseph, one may consider that the ark is Egypt, because that is where Joseph brings his people during another global catastrophe.

In these stories, the message is: God stands by His people. The Ark represents God being with His people, which culminates in His saving grace. He cares for His people, so He saves them.

The Ark of Joseph:

The biblical account of Joseph is a long one, covering several chapters in the book of Genesis. While there are many aspects to his story, there is one overarching theme. Like the story of Noah, the story of Joseph is about salvation.

Abraham was a descendent of Noah, and Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, was a descendent of Abraham. They represent an ancestral line which points to Christ.

The main body of Joseph's history deals with the consequences of his brothers' betrayal. It is through the events following Joseph's betrayal that God sets up another salvation story.

If a person carefully compares Joseph's story to Noah's, that person will see similarities. The history of Joseph tells of an account of a great famine, from which Joseph saves his people, and Noah's story tells of a Flood from which Moses saves his people.

In Joseph's story, he was deeply despised by his brothers, because Joseph's father Jacob (i.e. Israel) "loved Joseph more than all his children" (Gen. 37:3). Joseph also shared a dream

with his brothers, which depicted Joseph in a power position over them. Joseph's brothers resented him for his dream, so they decided to rise against Joseph.

During the process, they faked his death and left him stranded; but, God was with Joseph, and He had a plan for him. As a result of his brothers' betrayal, Joseph was taken prisoner into Egypt.

His initial time in Egypt is emotionally taxing. Almost immediately after his arrival he ends up in prison on account of being accused of adultery. It is a rough start for Joseph in this new place.

Even though this is was dark time for him, God uses it to work out His greater plan. While Joseph was in prison, God prospered him. Consider this: just because you are in prison, God can still utilize you.

God provided an opportunity for Joseph to rise to fame while in prison. Through the gift of dream interpretation, Joseph was able to establish a name for himself. Joseph prayed for an interpretation of the dreams of two inmates, relying on God to reveal the meaning. In good faith, God provided Joseph interpretation which greatly impressed his guards.

There is a similar story in the book of Daniel, as God provides Daniel with the gift of dream interpretation, and enables him to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. As a result, the king brings Daniel into power by placing him over a large portion of his kingdom.

Sometime after Joseph's dream interpretation, the pharaoh had a dream which he was unable to understand. One of the inmates who was in prison with Joseph was released and retook his position in the pharaoh's court. Having remembered Joseph's skills in dream interpretation, he told pharaoh of Joseph's skills. This provided an opportunity for Joseph to make his mark on Egyptian and world history.

Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; (Gen. 41:29–30)

In the pharaoh's dream, there was a seven year famine. Prior to the seven year famine there were seven years of plenty. Joseph is not only able to interpret the pharaoh's dream, but he gives him advice. Joseph advises pharaoh to store up food for the seven years of plenty, then during the seven years of famine they may sell their stores to surrounding nations. His advice was definitely business savvy.

Because Joseph is able to interpret the pharaoh's dream, and offer him advice, Joseph was set over the land of Egypt, second only to the pharaoh. God's plan was always to have Joseph in a power position in Egypt, which was set up through a tense set of events.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. (Gen. 41:41)

This story is about salvation, because the famine was a severe one. This famine could have severely crippled or wiped out the Israelites. Despair not, because Joseph has a new power position in Egypt.

It was because of his new power position that he was able to provide sanctuary for his family. In Genesis 45:9 Joseph uses his new found power in order to bring the Israelites into Egypt, where the Scripture says they will live for four hundred years.

It was during the famine that Joseph brought his family into Egypt. This included his, father, and his 11 brothers along with their families. These were the descendants of Jacob, who as a collective became Israel.

Despite Joseph's hardships in Egypt, God was with him. The Lord was looking out for Joseph and his family. This family, Israel, would have a future in the land of Canaan, but not for many years.

Their time in Egypt was part of God's plan, which He implemented through Joseph and the pharaoh. Similar to the way Noah brought his family onto the ark during the flood, Joseph brought his family into Egypt during the famine.

The famine was a sort of flood, and Egypt was a form of ark. The story of Joseph parallels the story of Noah in this way. Just like the saving nature of the ark in Noah's day, the ark in Joseph's story is Egypt.

In both accounts God had His plan in mind. He knew that a remnant of mankind would be saved for His purposes. A people would be spared who would walk in his ways. They would be His representatives, His people.

The Israelites were in Egypt for four hundred years until the time of Moses. The pharaoh of Moses' day had forgotten their history, and disrespected the relationship established with Joseph. As the Israelite people grew exceedingly large, the pharaoh became frightened.

The Ark of Moses:

Around the time of Mose's birth, the pharaoh was heavily persecuting the Hebrews. The population of Israel had grown large; they became a formidable people. The pharaoh was threatened by this mighty nation, which had grown up inside of Egypt. Because the pharaoh was threatened by these people, he does two things. The first, he places them under servitude, in order to carry out the work of building bricks. Number two, he orders the execution of Hebrew newborns.

At the time of this order of execution, Moses was just an infant. His mother, who was deeply concerned for her son, hides

him in a basket among the reeds of the Nile River. It says in the KJV that he was placed in an ark, whereas other versions use the word basket.

*And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him **an ark of bulrushes**, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. (Exod. 2:3-6, emphasis mine)*

It was because of this ark that Moses escapes execution, and ultimately becomes an adopted child of pharaoh's daughter. She finds him among the reeds, where she rescues him. The language used in KJV is apt to describe the vessel which carries Moses in the Nile, because it is termed an "ark." This ark was a means to salvation for Moses, just like Noah's ark was a means to salvation for him.

We see soon after that Moses becomes part of an Egyptian family, and not just any Egyptian family, but the pharaoh's family. He is under protection now through his new family, but fellow Israelites are still under persecution as slaves of Egypt. Eventually this catches up with Moses. Moses one day is witnessing the persecution of his people. He reacts violently by killing an Egyptian slave driver.

And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. (Exod. 2:12)

This horrendous act became known by the pharaoh, who seeks after Moses' life. Moses flees to the land of Midian. There he

meets his wife Zipporah, whose father Jethro gives her to Moses because of an heroic act.

Moses stays with these people for forty years, until the time that God remembers his covenant with Israel. God looks upon their affliction because of their cries.

And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. (Exod. 2:23)

What follows is the iconic story where Moses comes to a burning bush. This is at the mountain of God, where an angel of the Lord appears to him in a flame. This is where the Lord tells Moses of his plan to deliver his people from bondage under Egyptian rule.

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. (Exod. 3:2)

God had a plan to liberate His people from the persecution of the pharaoh. This plan will eventually lead to a face-to-face between Moses and the pharaoh. Ten plagues would have to be placed on Egypt, before the pharaoh would allow them to leave. The last plague was the worst, and led to the death of the first-born.

This final plague was so significant that the Jews celebrate this as Passover. Death would pass over the homes painted with the blood of a lamb. This would allow them to escape the pharaoh's grasp.

The epic finality of Israel's escape from Egypt was Moses parting of the Red Sea. This sea was a very large body of water, which is still in existence today. This massive body of water,

which Moses is said to have parted, allowed the Israelites escape the Egyptian army.

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. (Exod. 14:21-22)

The Egyptian forces are following closely behind Moses and his people, although they are trailing behind. Before they are able to catch up with Israel, Moses releases the water. The pharaoh and his forces are decimated. The force of the water must have been unimaginable.

In a way this is another ark motif, because Moses, like the ark brought his people through the destruction of water. Just as in the time of Noah, the evil of this world was deluged. The pharaoh and his army may be thought of as representing the evil powers of this world.

Just as Noah brought his family out of the corruption of the world through the Ark, Moses brought his people out of the corruption of Egypt.

This story of the exodus reveals two forms of arks. The first is the basket which carried Moses to safety during the persecution of the Hebrew children. God had a plan to use Moses as an instrument of His salvation, but first Moses was to be saved.

Moses himself became a form of ark, when he brought his people out of Egypt through the Red Sea. After escaping the power of the pharaoh, God brings the Israelites into the wilderness.

The Israelites were never meant to spend forty years in the wilderness. God wanted to bring them into the promised land immediately, but they kept rebelling against Him.

The Lord finally tired of their rebelling and stiff-necked nature. He decided to have them spend forty years in the wilderness, which is enough time for the first generation, the generation which came out of Egypt, to completely perish.

Only two people from the first generation, Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter the promised land. Moses was never allowed to enter the promised land.

During their time in the wilderness, God supernaturally provided care for them. It was said that the soles of their sandals would never wear out. The Lord also provided manna for them to eat, which is later called the “bread from heaven.”

In another instance, Moses supernaturally yielded water from a rock, merely by striking the rock with his staff. This happens twice, once in Exodus 17 and the other in Numbers 20, both accounts rich in symbolism.

We may also consider the wilderness as a form of ark, in which the Israeli people were cared for and provided for. A remnant of the people was spared from complete destruction, so they may enter the promised land. Just like the Ark of Noah, the wilderness was a vessel of salvation.

In review, we began with the Israelites coming into Egypt under Joseph, which was during a severe famine. This was a place of refuge for them. For a long time, the Israelites tarried in Egypt, until the ruler of Egypt oppressed the people.

Eventually, God heard the cries of His people, and He used Moses as an instrument to liberate them, but first God saved infant Moses through a tiny ark.

Israel's history is rooted in the patriarchal stories of Joseph and Moses, who as a combination led the Israelites into Egypt, and then led them out.

These stories demonstrate that the Ark is a powerful biblical symbol, which will keep occurring.

The Ark of the Covenant:

During their time in the wilderness, God commanded the Hebrews to build an ark. This was different from Noah's ark and the basket which carried Moses.

This, like the Ark, was a vessel that God instructed the Israelites to build in Exodus 25. This new ark becomes symbolic of God's presence among Israel. The Ark of the Covenant would be part of the Tabernacle.

They shall make an ark of acacia wood. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, a cubit and a half its breadth, and a cubit and a half its height... And you shall put into the ark the testimony that I shall give you. (Exod. 25:10–16)

The Lord's presence would come over the Ark of the Covenant. The Lord will meet Moses there to speak with him about the commandments to Israel. The ark was situated in the Holy of Holies, which was the innermost room of the Tabernacle and Temple. It was where the high priest would offer blood for the atonement of sins.

There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel. (Exod. 25:22)

The Ark of the Covenant represents the Lord's presence. Despite the priestly significance of this ark, it also had a symbolic significance. The ark is an intersection between heaven and

earth. In Numbers the Lord speaks to Moses from above the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony.

And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him. (Num. 7:89)

To Israel the ark symbolized his presence. Not only that, but the Lord had their backs. We see this specifically in Numbers 10:35 which talks about the ark going out with the Israelites into battle.

And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. (Num. 10:35)

The Ark of the Covenant, more commonly called the ark, was symbolic of the Lord's presence. It testified to the Lord's desire to shepherd his people. The ark, in a symbolic sense, is an instrument of salvation and a sign of the Lord's presence. During the time of Noah, the ark was a symbol of the Lord's presence. God was not far from Noah and his family during those days. Noah abided in the ark made of gopher wood, thereby seeking the presence of God and escaping the flood. The ark became an instrument of salvation during the Great Flood.

During the time of Joseph Egypt was a type of ark, which saved Israel from the famine. Moses had his own ark, which saved him from the wrath of pharaoh. This was so he could be a type of ark, which saved Israel from pharaoh's wrath. Finally, during their time in the wilderness, a type of ark in its own right, the Israelites built the Ark of the Covenant. These all testifying to God's presence and saving grace.

The Final Ark:

While Jesus was on a boat with his disciples, a storm was brewing. Throughout the Gospels, we almost never see Jesus sleeping, except for this time. Jesus said that the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. This time Jesus found a place to lay his head, but it happened to be during a storm.

And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (Mark 4:36–41)

Jesus, being on a boat, in the midst of a storm, saved His followers from the wrath of the storm. In spite of the storm which could have shipwrecked them, Jesus was not nervous. Instead, He calmed the storm like it was nothing. Just like Noah and his family during the flood, the disciples were safe from the storm.

After Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension angels appeared to his followers. They promised that Jesus would return to the Mount of Olives, in a fashion similar to how he left.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus sheds light on the times of his return. He recalls the times of Noah, in which the world was

deeply fallen into sin. They were so corrupt that God decided to wipe out his creation, leaving only a remnant.

Around the time of his second coming, things will appear like the times of Noah, the world will be corrupt.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. (Luke 12:26)

Will there be a flood during this time? No, because God promised Noah that the earth would never again be destroyed through a flood.

At this time, the people alive will go on about their business, not realizing that Jesus' return is imminent. They will continue on in their corruption.

Jesus offers us this illustration in the Olivet Discourse. It is not to scare us, but to signify that He is a type of ark. The ark is all about salvation and thereby signifies God's presence through his promises.

Those who abide in Him will be raised up, which means to be raised from the dead. Paul says that the ones still alive at that time will be changed. He says that whatever is corruptible will be raised incorruptible.

To abide in him means to partake in His sacraments, which include the sacrament of the flesh and blood. These sacraments illustrates the necessity of abiding in Him, as the branch abides in the vine.

Conclusion:

Jesus is a type of ark, which was prefigured by His calming the storm. He was demonstrating that He, like Noah, is a savior of his people.

Just as Moses saved his people from the grips of an evil pharaoh, Jesus will save his followers from the grips of an evil world. Ultimately, He will accomplish this by raising us with immortal bodies, on the Last Day.

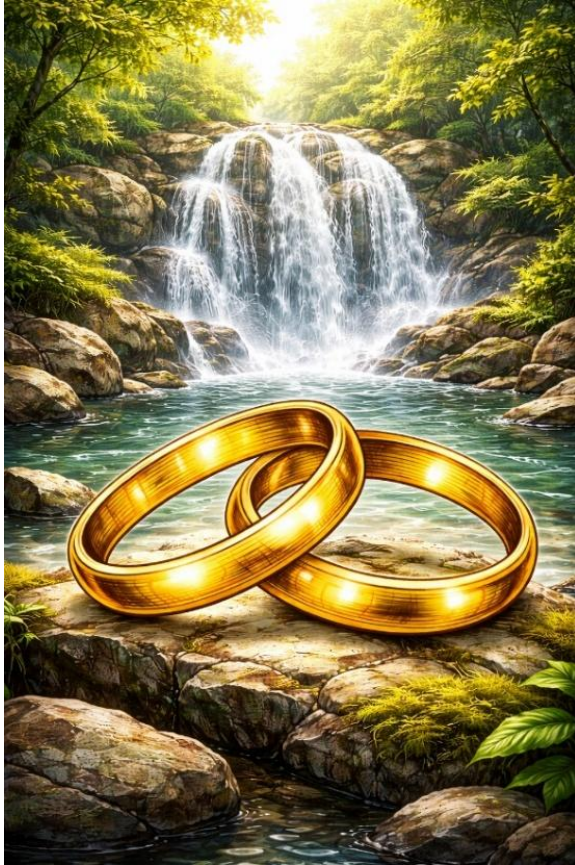
It is said that Jesus is the firstborn of the dead, which means others will be born from the dead.

This final ark, the Ark of Christ, will save us from the wrath which will come upon the world. Many think of this as the Great Tribulation, a time when the earth will be subjected to great distress.

When will this occur?

This is a matter of great debate. Even so, God's promises and never return null. His promises will be fulfilled; it is just a matter of time. With Christ as our Ark, may we abide in Him.

The Bridegroom



And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. (Matthew 9:15)

Water is essential to life. Without water our bodily processes would cease to function. It is necessary to lubricate our joints and carry nutrients; it participates in chemical reactions. When people are thirsty, they drink water or something that contains water. Think about when you drink cold water after coming in from exercise. Isn't it refreshing?

In Old Testament times, wells were where people drew water from. In modern times we get our water from a faucet or the store. Generally speaking, there are very few wells today as in ancient times. In those times when a person was thirsty, they would have to visit a well. Today we can just turn on our faucets or stop by a local convenience store. We take our access to clean water for granted.

John 4 depicts Jesus at a well with a Samaritan woman. They were there because they needed water, although Jesus had something else in mind. The fact that this story takes place at a well is symbolic and allegorical. An example for an allegorical story is *The Matrix*, which is a story about breaking free from societal constructs.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is similar to an allegory, but it carries a spiritual significance. The book tells a story that resembles Christ and His sacrifice.

Aslan the lion sacrificed his life for the sake of Narnia, thereby defeating the wicked queen. As in C.S. Lewis' story, Christ's encounter with the Samaritan is allegorical, but the story is an allegory for spiritual matters, or anagoge.

When a story takes on a spiritual significance and depicts matters of the spiritual realm, it is considered anagogical. An anagoge is similar to an allegory, because it is essentially a spiritual allegory.

Understanding the setting of this story, thereby understanding the meaning of the well, is key to grasping anagogical significance.

This story is truly about the marriage between Jesus and the Church. A good starting point for investigating this marriage is John 4, where Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman.

In this encounter, there are symbolic elements that work together, and this chapter will investigate those elements. A greater understanding of these elements will be enhanced by thoroughly grasping those elements.

The story goes like this. During His travels, Jesus arrives at a well. The well itself is symbolic, which will be supported in this chapter. At this well, Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman.

While the woman is drawing water from the well, Jesus asks her for a drink. Initially she is perplexed by this request, since Samaritans and Jews generally avoided socializing. The woman, not understanding why a Jew would ask her for water, is suspicious of His request.

Jesus goes on to challenge her suspicion.

*If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee **living water**. (John 4:10, emphasis mine)*

The elephant in the room is “living water.” What is this living water? It seems strange for Jesus to mention living water, because generally people just ask for water.

This passage is by no means the only reference to living water, as this motif occurs a few times throughout Scripture. There is a deep meaning and spiritual significance to the living water that is revealed in the scriptures.

There are multiple symbolic elements interacting in this chapter. The two primary symbolic elements are the living water

and the well. Investigating these two symbolic elements will offer insight into the deeper spiritual meaning of this chapter.

First, let the reader ponder the meaning of living water, which will be the next section of this book, which will dive into more Old Testament scripture, since the first reference to living water is in Jeremiah.

Fountains of Living Water:

There are multiple depictions of living water in Scripture. One of these depictions occurs early in the book of Jeremiah. This is a good start for investigating the rich symbolism dealing with water.

Jeremiah was a prophet who prophesied to Judah, the Southern Kingdom, during the time of the kings.

The people of Judah were the target audience for this prophecy, which Jeremiah received from the Lord. They had fallen into great sin.

A prophecy is not merely something that happens in the future, but is a call for change. Jeremiah merely relayed the words of the Lord, which instructed them to alter course.

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. (Jer. 2:13)

From the context of this passage, it is clear that the Lord is referring to himself as a fountain of living waters. The people had forsaken the Lord, who is “the fountain of living waters.” Jeremiah 17:13 again refers to “the fountain of living waters,” which appears to be a reiteration of what was stated in Jeremiah 2:13. If this is being restated, it must be significant.

A look at the book of Revelation provides additional insight into living water. It says that the Lamb will guide them to springs

of living water. The Lamb of God is Jesus. If God is the fountain of living water as Jeremiah 2:13 says, then is Jesus simply leading them to God?

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. (Rev. 7:17)

As Scripture says, Jesus is “the Alpha and Omega.” He will give from the fountain of water of life, as Revelation states, which the reader may consider as living water.

Revelation is the end of the story. In stark contrast, the beginning of the story is Genesis. The prior book is God’s final letter to mankind, and it depicts the culmination of human history. It is a saga of redemption in the midst of judgement.

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Rev. 21:6)

Christ will lead us to living water, and the Father will provide it. This illustrates the union of the Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Spirit. They agree in one.

The Water and the Spirit:

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for

the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37–39)

Here is a picture of Jesus crying out. What could be so important to have Jesus crying out? The matter here is belief, because the one who believes in Jesus will produce living water from their inner being.

The author of this Gospel clarifies the spiritual significance of living water. The living water is the Spirit which is given to those who believe.

Before they would receive the Spirit completely, Jesus would be glorified. This culminated in His crucifixion, resurrection and finally ascension. Ten days following His ascension, the Holy Spirit was poured out. These events needed to occur in order for the Holy Spirit to be sent.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is represented as water, but it is not always called *living water*. The truth that the Spirit is living water is presented in John 7.

There are also verses in Isaiah which speak on the pouring out of waters. The coming verse is a prophecy most likely referring to the coming of Christ and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

Its language is somewhat symbolic and metaphorical. The phrases “lame man leap” and “dumb sing” are references to the healing ministry of Christ.

However, it was not only Christ that healed people; his apostles took over this ministry. A prime example is Paul's gift for healing, from which his garments had healing powers.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall

waters break out, and streams in the desert. (Isa. 35:6)

Isaiah 44 is more direct in connecting the Spirit to water, because the Lord is referring to His Spirit in this verse. The depiction of the Spirit is one of water, such as was revealed in John 7. A person may infer from this passage that the Holy Spirit is like water, in that it is poured out. While the term living water is not used here, there is a strong connection between water and spirit.

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: (Isa. 44:3)

Liquids are something we pour. The nature of a liquid is that it is fluid. In that way the Holy Spirit is depicted. It is depicted as a fluid substance. Isaiah 44:3 depicts the Holy Spirit in a fluid manner, as does Joel 2:28. Acts 2 also references Joel in regards to the pouring out of the Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost, ten days after Christ's ascension, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews. Shortly after this pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Jews, the Spirit is poured out on the Gentiles.

These pourings of the Spirit were prophesied by Isaiah and Joel. When the Spirit was poured on the believers during Pentecost, Peter knew the significance of this event.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (Joel 2:28)

The Spirit was poured upon the believers in Acts 2, just as was prophesied by Joel. At that time, it was only to the Jews,

because the promise was initially to His Jewish disciples. Nevertheless, the Spirit would be poured out on the Gentiles shortly after. Acts chapter 10 depicts the Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles. God's plan of salvation and inclusion into His kingdom involves all mankind; it is not limited to the Jews. The Holy Spirit seals all believers until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

A Source of Living Water:

Earlier in this book there were two accounts of Moses drawing water from a rock. Each time Moses struck the rock, which brought forth the water. There is a symbolic significance to this event which is revealed in 1 Corinthians 10. In the following passage from Exodus there are two motifs, which are the rock and the water.

*Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the **rock**, and there shall come **water** out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not? (Exod. 17:6–7, emphasis mine)*

Another similar instance occurs in Numbers 20:8. In this instance, Moses struck the rock as with the first instance. Scripture says he “smote the rock,” indicating that he struck it. Again, as a result of striking the rock, it yields water to Moses. Let the reader consider that the water from the rock is symbolic of living water. This begs the question: What does the rock represent?

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the **rock** before their eyes; and it shall give forth his **water**, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. (Num. 20:7-9, emphasis mine)*

In both instances we see a supernatural means of provision for the Israelites. Moses struck the rock, but it was the rock providing the water. The water issued forth from the rock. The significance of this event is evident by the fact that this event is recounted in Isaiah 48:21 and Psalm 78:20, but how does this connect to Jesus?

In 1 Corinthians 10, Jesus is referred to as the rock. Whether He was literally or figuratively that rock, the theological significance is the same. Paul depicts Christ as the rock which provided water to the Israelites. The reader may consider that the events in Exodus and Numbers were allegorical, because they were prefiguring Christ as a rock and the water as living water, the water which Christ leads his followers to.

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:2-4)

The Holy Spirit is the living water, according to John 7, and Jesus leads His followers this water (Revelation 7:17).

With the Samaritan, Christ represented the rock and the Spirit represented the water in the well. What then is the significance of the well in respect to the bigger picture?

It is tempting to stop here and ignore the wells' symbolic significance, but that will leave our theological underpinnings lacking. The symbolic significance of the well goes beyond being a source of water. Consider events in the Old Testament that illustrate the significance of this well.

The Symbolic Significance of the Well:

In three instances, two in Genesis and one in Exodus, a marital union is initiated at a well. Wells were gathering places in those times. They may have been a place to meet a young lady who was drawing water from the well, as Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well. Because of exchanges at a well, Abraham was able to find a wife for his son Isaac. Jacob also met his wife Rachel at a well.

Abraham, when aged in years, sent his servant to seek a wife for his son. After traveling to the land of Abraham's relatives to seek out a wife, Abraham's servant finds himself at a spring of water (i.e. well). There the servant beseeches God and requests a woman who will provide him and his camels water.

An offering of water from the woman would indicate she's the one. The servant's plan was to say "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher" (Gen. 24:17). His hope is the response: "Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also" (Gen. 24:46). This would affirm her as Isaac's wife.

Later in the story of Genesis, Jacob, who is Isaac's son, meets his wife Rachel in comparable fashion. Although the setting is similar, this time Jacob is the one at the well and not a servant.

Abraham sent his servant to seek a wife for Isaac, but Jacob will take matters into his own hands. Even so, he is directed by Isaac to seek a wife from the same people as Abraham's servant was directed.

Jacob's encounters Rachel at a well, which leads to him meet Laban, her father. Because of his love for Rachel, he is willing to

serve her father for 7 years as a dowry. That was the initial plan, but Laban had other plans.

Laban tricks Jacob by giving Jacob his other daughter Leah upon the completion of 7 years. Jacob then agrees to work another 7 years for Rachel.

Finally, Moses met his wife Zipporah at a well. When Moses left the land of Egypt after being pursued by the pharaoh, he traveled from Egypt to the land of Midian (Exod. 2:15). He first encounters the local population at a well.

Seven daughters of a Midian priest were drawing water at this well. Then, shepherds arrived, apparently angry, and drove the women away. Nevertheless, Moses was nearby. He protected the women from these false shepherds.

Not all shepherds are righteous, as this story illustrates. Because of Moses' heroic deeds, he was introduced to Reuel, also known as Jethro (Exod. 3:1). For the sake of consistency, the reader should consider Jethro as the name of his father-in-law. Apparently, Jethro was impressed with Moses on account of his deeds, and he gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage.

Three occurrences in the Old Testament reveal marriage unions which were initiated at wells. This makes the well a symbol, which is illustrated with Christ and the Samaritan woman.

Consider viewing a well from a bird's eye view. Wells are sometimes depicted as circular, so when looking from above they look like rings.

When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman, the setting is like that of Jacob meeting Rachel at the well. This setting should put marriage in the mind of the reader.

A New Marriage:

The Samaritan woman had been married several times. Is this merely a coincidence? Instead, let the reader consider this

encounter to be alluding to another marriage. In this marriage, who are the bride and bride-groom?

This woman who had been married several times, was not married to her current companion. For whatever reason, those other marriages had failed, and maybe she was searching the truth. She was at her wits end.

*Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For **thou hast had five husbands**; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.
(John 4:17, emphasis mine)*

Obviously, the woman was worn out and looking for something better. She was thirsty, and she was looking for something to drink. It was not merely water from the well that she was seeking. This woman was experiencing a deep spiritual thirst, which only Jesus could satisfy.

Christ offered this woman living water, which is a symbolic representation of the Holy Spirit. When a person receives this water, they no longer thirst.

When the woman arrived at this well, she didn't know what she was looking for. Jesus knew this woman was thirsting, so He made her aware of what He has to offer. Only the Holy Spirit (i.e. the living water) can satisfy spiritual thirst.

In the Old Testament, the relationship between God and Israel is presented as a marriage. In this marriage God is represented as the Bride-groom and Israel as the Bride. God had a very special and intimate relationship with Israel.

They were considered His people, but time and time again they would fall away. Spiritually speaking, they would commit adultery. There are numerous examples when God speaks through His prophets in order to accuse Israel of behaving like a harlot (i.e. a prostitute).

Ideally though, God views Israel as His bride. The following passage demonstrates the intimacy God shared with Israel.

For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.
(Isa. 62:5)

When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman, He was representing a bridegroom, while the Samaritan woman represented a bride.

Christ came to do the works of His Father (John 10:37). Like His Father Jesus also plays the role of a bridegroom, but in a different sense. Instead of being the bridegroom of Israel, Jesus is the bridegroom of the Church.

True believers in Jesus are part of His Church. This includes both Jews and Gentiles, because all are called toward belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

Just like a husband and wife walk hand in hand, God the Father walked with Israel. Similarly, Jesus walks with His Church hand in hand. We are to be His Bride.

Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. (Matt. 9:15)

Jesus offered living water to the Samaritan woman, because He wanted a relationship with her. That relationship is through His Holy Spirit, which is the living water. The Samaritan woman represented the Church as the Bride, and Christ represented the Bridegroom of the Church.

This entire scene illustrates Christ's relationship with the Church. If Jesus represents the Bridegroom, and the woman represents the Bride, then the living water represents the spiritual union between them.

The well is like the wedding ring, which is filled with the living water. It is through His Spirit with which we are "sealed to the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: (John 15:26)

On the day of Pentecost was the pouring of the Spirit. Jesus asked His disciples to wait in the city until they would receive power from above.

At the time of Pentecost, which was approximately 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, the Spirit came down like a strong wind. If you are a dispensationalist, then this was the beginning of a new dispensation. Many consider this to be the beginning of the Church age.

At the time of Pentecost, the Spirit was only poured out to Jewish believers, but later in Acts the Spirit was poured out to Gentiles alike. The Church consists of all believers, whether Jew or Gentile.

*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost**, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1–4, emphasis mine)*

All things considered, Jesus is the Bridegroom of the Church. As such, He is our source of living water, the mediator of our spiritual union with Christ. The Parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25 illustrates the necessity of the Holy Spirit, which is symbolized by the oil in the lamps.

The virgins are the Church, and are coming to attend the wedding feast. There is a caveat, because only the virgins who

have oil in their lamps (i.e. the Holy Spirit) will be accepted into the feast. Like the virgins, the Church must prepare for the wedding feast, which starts with receiving His living water.

*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him:
for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife
hath made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)*

Conclusion:

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman a greater marriage, one between Him and the Church. He is inviting this woman to be a part of His Church, which is sealed through receiving the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). The well and the water signify our spiritual rebirth and marriage to Christ through the Church.

Christ will lead us to living waters, which is representative of the Spirit of God. The book of Jeremiah confirmed that God is the fountain of living water. Scripture clarifies that Jesus offers us that water, as was prefigured when Moses drew water from the rock. As with the Samaritan woman, Jesus offers every believer living water (i.e. His Spirit).

One day we will be with Jesus forever; but in the meantime, we are readying ourselves for the marriage feast. May we prepare ourselves for the wedding feast so we may forever draw living water from the well that never runs dry. Amen!

The Lamb of God



And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." (Exodus 12:5-7)

There is some irony in two offices that Christ holds; they are the Lamb and the Shepherd. People don't usually think of things as equal and opposite at the same time. An airline pilot is not a passenger, but could sometimes be a passenger. A doctor is not the patient, but could sometimes be a patient. It depends on the context of the situation.

The circumstances of a situation define our role in the situation. If the airline passenger hails a taxi, then he becomes the passenger. If the doctor gets injured, he becomes the patient. This is one of those paradoxes which occur in Scripture. His spiritual offices vary depending on the context; in one situation He is the Lamb, and in another He is the Shepherd. Each circumstance bears specific conditions, so the role He plays depends on the conditions of that circumstance. Just like a doctor needs another doctor when he/she is injured, thus becoming a patient, Jesus becomes a lamb because of our sinful nature.

Revelation 5:6 offers a depiction of a lamb which has been slain, which represents Jesus. His nature as a lamb ties back to the story of Exodus, when the Israelites were brought out of Egypt. Moses was their instrument of salvation and used 10 plagues to break the powers of Egypt. The beginning of this story is the 10th and final plague upon Egypt. Jesus' nature as a lamb is foundational to Scripture.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter will begin by starting in the New Testament with a verse from Revelation. In previous chapters, the significance of Christ shedding His blood for us was presented. Christ, as with the Jewish high priest, offered blood for the atonement of our sins. In this way, He became a sacrifice in the likeness of a typical Levitical priestly sacrifice.

The story of Passover began with the sacrificing of lambs for the ceremonial remembrance of the Passover plague. Recall that during Passover the Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a

lamb. They were not to waste the blood of the lamb, but they were to place the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. In this way the angel of death would pass over their homes and spare their firstborn. The blood of the lamb was protection for the people.

Through Christ's crucifixion, which occurred during Passover, He became the sacrificial lamb (John 19:14). His blood was shed for us, so we may place His blood on our doorposts. That way, death will pass over us.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: (1 Cor. 5:7).

The book of Revelation is about the end of days. This book illustrates the culmination of human history and God's relationship with mankind.

Daniel spoke of distant prophecies about the end of days, but Revelation provides a detailed picture. Studying these books side by side provides great eschatological insight.

During the time when John was exiled on the island of Patmos, He had a vision where He was taken up into heaven to be shown prophecies of future events.

It is generally agreed that the book of Revelation prophecies about future events, which will occur at the end of this age. This will be at the time of Christ's second coming.

Throughout this book, the symbolic representations of Christ have been considered in depth.

Many books of the Bible use figurative language. This sort of language appears heavily in the Psalms and the Prophets. Many examples of this have already been provided throughout this book.

As a reminder of this, consider Psalm 27:5, where the psalmist says that the Lord shall set him upon a rock. The rock is

figurative language because it represents the idea of being spiritually grounded. Revelation is no different in this sense of figurative language. Being a prophecy, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, this book is highly figurative due to its prophetic and perhaps poetic nature. Throughout Revelation there are figurative allusions, such as “the beast” in Revelation 11:7.

A first time reader of Revelation may consider this to be an animal. A more seasoned reader of Revelation and the Bible would understand the symbolic significance of this beast.

Daniel, in his prophecies, uses the same type of figurative language. In fact, his prophecies resemble the prophecies in Revelation in many respects. Daniel mentions beasts in his prophecies, and he explains that these beasts represent nations.

Having this knowledge, the reader may consider that the beast in Revelation is representing a nation.

Other people take the beast to be referring to the antichrist which is said to arrive on the scene at the end of this age. This is said to occur immediately prior to the second coming of Christ.

Let this draw the reader’s attention toward the highly symbolic language in Revelation.

The Lamb Slain

The book of Revelation offers us many symbolic connections, as it is filled with spiritual symbolism. Revelation 19:9 speaks of the marriage supper of the Lamb, thus provoking the concepts of marriage and sacrifice. Another nature of Christ presented in Revelation is as the “Alpha and Omega” (Rev. 1:11); that is to say, the beginning and the end. He was there at the beginning as the instrument of creation, and He will be there at the end as a king ruling with the sword of His Word.

The previous chapter of this book investigated John 4, which gave powerful insight into this story. It portrayed a marriage between Christ and His Church through His Holy Spirit (i.e. living

water). This chapter will investigate symbolic connects between Christ and the lamb mentioned in Revelation.

In Rev 5, there is a picture painted. God the Father is sitting on His throne, and He is holding a book with seven seals.

Throughout the Bible seals represent closing up a matter, whether legal or prophetic. For instance, prophecies are sealed in the book of Daniel. In the last chapter of Daniel, God instructs him to seal up a prophecy. When kings put out a decree, it is sealed. Only a person who is authorized may open the seals.

Revelation 5 is a powerful scene, because John weeps that nobody in heaven or earth is worthy to open the seals. Then a lamb enters the scene and the “four and twenty elders” fall down before the lamb saying “thou art worthy to take the book (Rev. 5:9)”. Christ is the only one worthy of opening the seals, because He redeemed us by His blood from every nation.

*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth... And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;... Saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain** to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
(Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; emphasis mine)*

The NIV says we were purchased rather than redeemed. Is there a difference between being purchased and redeemed?

Jesus redeemed us from death by shedding His blood for us. The payment was the blood, so in that way we are both

purchased and redeemed. As was seen in Chapter 4, *The High Priest*, the blood represents atonement which was provided by Christ of His own blood. Prior to His sacrifice, the high priest would bring blood into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the people (Heb. 9:7). As the new High Priest, Christ offered His blood once and for all.

Jesus is worthy to open the seals because He shed His blood for us. As the lamb shed its blood on Passover, Christ shed His blood for us. Satan offered all the riches of this world to Jesus, but instead Jesus chose to die for us so we may be reconciled (Col. 1:20).

The Passover of the Firstborn:

The story of the Passover is recounted in the book of Exodus. As with every spiritual symbol in Christ, this symbol of the Passover lamb may be traced to the Old Testament.

Recall that the high priestly office of Christ was prefigured by Melchizedek in Genesis. An ark-like portrait of Christ was illustrated by stories such as Noah's flood and Joseph saving his people in Egypt. This is no different with regards to the nature of Christ as a lamb. This also can be traced back to the story of Moses, when he led the Israelites from Egypt under God's instruction and protection.

The celebration of Passover has been a Jewish tradition throughout known history, and it was also a tradition during the time of Christ. The Last Supper took place during what appears to be the Passover meal. At the Lord's supper Christ offered His flesh and His blood as a sacrament.

We are to partake in the sacrament of Communion because it is a way to remember this new covenant. Christ aptly chose this event to offer this sacrament because He is the Passover Lamb.

Moses led the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt, but Christ will lead us out of bondage from sin and death. Christ, as a

greater sacrifice, replaces the Passover lamb. It is on account of His blood in which we are spared from death.

Egypt represented an oppressor holding the people captive. Let the reader consider that pharaoh and Egypt symbolically represented sin and death. Moses as a type of Christ saved his people out of sin and death. In addition, the plagues of Moses and the final destruction of pharaoh prefigure the final destruction of death in Revelation (Rev. 20:14). The people of Israel were in bondage to pharaoh, so he is a type of adversary.

The Israelites initially came into Egypt under the power of Joseph, who was given his power by the pharaoh of that time. Joseph's gift of dream interpretation so impressed the pharaoh that he was given a position second to the pharaoh. His power allowed him to bring his brothers into Egypt.

For four hundred years the Israelites were said to tarry in Egypt. It seems that for the majority of this time they were prosperous and happy, but eventually things took a turn for the worst.

At the time of Moses, the Israelites were under oppression by the pharaoh of that time. Their prosperity and numbers became a threat to the pharaoh, so he put them in bondage.

Moses was initially born among the Hebrew people, but was taken into the pharaoh's household at an early age. Recall that Moses was saved from the killing of Jewish children by the oppressive pharaoh. Moses was placed in a basket (i.e. an ark) and floated down the Nile river, where he was discovered by the pharaoh's daughter.

Even though Moses was born a Hebrew, he was brought up and educated in Egyptian ways. God spared Moses so he could be an instrument of salvation for his people in the likes of Noah. Though raised Egyptian, Moses was of Hebrew seed. The Lord used him as an instrument of salvation.

Many years went on before Moses was called to save his people. Most people do not realize but Moses would have been around eighty years old when he brought the Hebrews out of Egypt. Moses spent forty years in the land of Midian before God gave him his calling. Recall that Moses killed an Egyptian and was being pursued by pharaoh.

The land of Midian provided Moses with a temporary safe-haven. Let the reader consider that it was another type of ark.

After forty years in Midian, Moses received word from the Lord at the burning bush (Exod. 3:2). God was aware of the persecution of his people, and called upon Moses to be an instrument of their rescue.

Moses utilized ten plagues to break pharaohs grip on the Israelite people. It is the tenth and final plague that is relevant to this chapter.

The Passover feast is named after this final plague. This tenth plague was unique among the other plagues. This involved a specific ritual which was to be properly executed. The final plague was the killing of the firstborn of Egypt, in which every firstborn of every household would be killed.

The Israelites were instructed to kill a lamb and put the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. Every house that had blood on the doorpost, during the “passover,” would have their firstborns spared from death.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the

bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. (Exod. 12:21–22)

This was a blood offering. On account of this blood offering, where blood was placed on the doorposts of every Hebrew home, death passed over the Hebrews. The only ones who did not have the blood on their doorposts were the Egyptians, because they were in the dark. As far as the Bible relates, there was not a single Egyptian who knew about the coming and the passing over of death.

The final plague was successful, because it broke the arms of pharaoh and allowed Israel to escape. Because of the success of this final plague in allowing the Israelites to escape, the Lord commanded the Israelites to keep a Passover feast. This tradition was to be kept every year to commemorate their escape from Egypt. This would serve as a reminder for the people so they would not forget what the Lord did to bring them out of Egypt.

And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. (Exod. 12:25–27)

The significance of keeping the tradition of Passover was to remind the Hebrews of their history. Because of the passing over of the firstborns, during the final plague, the Hebrews were saved from the catastrophe that came upon Egypt. Not only were they saved from that catastrophe, they were also liberated on account of that catastrophe. The blood of the lamb was necessary for the

angel of death to pass over. Numbers 9 tells us that the children of Israel kept the Passover feast on the fourteenth day of the first month.

And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. (Num. 9:5)

During Passover there was a sacrifice of a lamb, this was the Passover lamb. During the passover in Egypt, the Israelites sacrificed a lamb, which was then presented as a burnt offering. At the same time, the blood of the lamb was harvested in order to place upon the doorposts of every Hebrew house, so the angel of death would pass over. In remembrance of this occasion, a lamb was sacrificed as a burnt offering at every subsequent Passover. This was called the Passover lamb.

*But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, **there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even**, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt. And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents. (Deut. 16:6-7)*

Even though there is an offering of a lamb on the Passover, offering lambs as sacrifices does not seem to be restricted to the Passover celebration. There are verses which suggest that offering lambs was a daily practice. We see this for instance in Exodus 29, where they are called to sacrifice two lambs “day by day.”

*Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; **two lambs** of the first year day by day continually... This shall be **a continual burnt***

offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. (Exod. 29:38, 42, emphasis mine)

This may have been another reminder for the Israelites of their exodus from Egypt, and that it was the Lord who led them out of Egypt. Even though Moses was the Lord's instrument, the Lord still expects the credit for leading them out of Egypt. By remembering that the Lord led them out of Egypt, they are perhaps being reminded to have faith in the Lord, and not themselves.

Atonement:

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

The *Lexham Bible Dictionary* defines atonement as “the process by which two (typically estranged) parties are made “at-one” with each other.” This may be considered a reconciliation between God and man, but how is this to be completed?

Blood has a big role to play in the Old Testament, beginning with Exodus. In ancient Israel blood signified atonement. There is an instance in Leviticus 8 when Moses places blood on the horns of the altar and the bottom of the altar. Leviticus 8:15 says the blood was used to make “reconciliation.” Was this a type of atonement?

And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood

at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it. (Lev. 8:15, emphasis mine)

2 Chronicles says that priests in the Old Testament would kill animals and make reconciliation with their blood. In this verse both words *reconciliation* and *atonement* are used. This is evidence that those words were considered synonymous, which is an important inference to keep in mind moving forward. These words may be used interchangeably. In a sense, atonement and reconciliation are the same, because atonement brings about reconciliation.

*And the priests killed them, and they made **reconciliation** with their blood upon the altar, to make an **atonement** for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel. (2 Chron. 29:24, emphasis mine)*

The book of Hebrews does an excellent job of surveying the acts of atonement in the Old Testament. This is a powerful letter when seeking insight into traditional Jewish Temple practices, especially when dealing with blood.

The author of Hebrews does a fantastic job unpacking the idea of atonement, and how this was held in an ancient Jewish mindset. One of the core Jewish Temple practices was offering blood at the inner part of the Temple once per year. It was the job of the high priest, because nobody else was authorized to enter the inner Temple, or “Holy of Holies.”

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (Heb. 9:7)

The high priest offered this blood, which was animal blood, for the sins of the people.

In Hebrews 9:7, the word *error* in the KJV is translated in other versions as sins. The high priest was offering this blood for the sins, or errors, of the people.

The Greek word used in the following verse for the “errors” of the people is “agnōēma,” which is Strong’s #51. This word is related to ignorance (*A Concise Dictionary of the Words...*).

There is also another Greek word (i.e. hamartia) that is translated as sin (*A Concise Dictionary of the Words...*). This Greek word used in this verse is applying that the errors or sins were committed on account of ignorance.

But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: (Heb. 9:7)

Hebrews goes on to say in verse 9:22 that by the Law all things are purged by blood. It also says that without blood, there is no remission.

So, according to the Law, blood was required for remission of sins. Remission of sins is another way to say atonement or reconciliation. The terms “remission of sins,” “reconciliation” and “atonement” are synonymous.

The NIV chooses to translate the word *remission* as the word *forgiveness*, which is similar to *reconciliation* or *atonement*. To be reconciled or atoned implies forgiveness.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (Heb. 9:22)

The task in this section was to establish blood as a means of atonement in Old Testament theology. This Old Testament theology extends into the New Testament, which paves the way for Christ’s atoning sacrifice as His blood.

Recall that Christ came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. Because blood was necessary for atonement in Old Testament

theology, this blood-atonement relationship extends to the New Testament. Nothing about what Jesus did replaced Old Testament theology, but it literally completed it.

A Better Sacrifice:

In spite of all this blood sacrifice and offering, we get a sense in Isaiah of how the Lord feels about the sacrifices. Because they were consistently offering sacrifices without genuine repentance, the Lord grew weary of their sacrifices.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; And I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats, (Isa. 1:11)

Furthermore, in Hosea the Lord lets the people of Israel know the importance of mercy and not sacrifice. This verse makes it clear that there are at least two things that God desires more than sacrifice: they are knowledge of Him and mercy.

For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

In both of these accounts, prophets are speaking to their people because of their ongoing transgressions. Despite offering innumerable animal sacrifices, which consisted of both rams and lambs, God was becoming displeased.

God was not pleased with their sacrifices, because they offered them as a means to offset their perverted ways. The Law was not bringing genuine transformation; it became a scapegoat for perversion.

God would rather us seek the knowledge of Him and His mercy, then have us offer ritualistic sacrifices. So, was there something wrong with their sacrifices?

Even though Moses commanded these sacrifices, God was no longer pleased. If genuine conversion came from the Law, there would be no need for Christ, who bore the Law. The end to these offerings would be a greater and more perfect sacrifice in Christ at the cross. The blood of animals was never enough to atone for sins, but it was representative of the sacrifice which Christ would make. It was through that sacrifice that He became the High Priest.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (Heb. 10:4)

Blood sacrifices were rampant in the Old Testament, but they were simply a foreshadow of a greater sacrifice. Despite all these blood offerings, the people kept on sinning and falling away from God.

One may argue that these sacrifices made them aware of their sin, but in their corrupt nature they offended God. Sacrifices simply became a spiritual and moral crutch for the people, essentially allowing them to do whatever they wanted.

This reminds me of the saying “go to Church on Sunday; then sin on Monday.” The people were doing exactly that; they would go to the Temple one day; then they would sin the next day.

By now it's apparent that the blood of animals could not adequately atone for sins; a more perfect offering was needed by the Messiah. Peter confirms in 1 Peter that the blood of Christ was needed for redemption, as opposed to vain and corruptible things like silver and gold.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your

fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (1 Pet. 1:18–19)

At the start of this chapter Jesus was depicted as a lamb. Revelation depicts Jesus as a lamb because there is a symbolic thread through Scripture that points to Christ. Recall that John the Baptist referred to Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” because His blood takes away our sins. The KJV puts it more elegantly, as it recounts John saying that Jesus “taketh away the sin of the world.” This was accomplished on the cross.

*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which **taketh away the sin of the world.** (John 1:29, emphasis mine)*

But how was Jesus to take away the sins of the world? Recall that Old Testament practices were geared towards atonement for sins and bringing about reconciliation, but the Letter to the Hebrews clearly states that it is impossible for the blood of animals to atone for sin.

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

It was not the blood of bulls and goats that obtained redemption for us, but the blood of Jesus. He entered into the holy place by His own blood, to make atonement for our sins.

As the spotless lamb, Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. It was only the incarnate Son of God who could be a

sacrifice that was worthy to take away our sins. That is why it is only the Lamb in Revelation who is worthy to open the seals.

It was only that lamb who could take away sins, so He is worthy.

Conclusion:

The book of Hebrews mentions the blood of bulls and goats, not the blood of lambs. Sacrifices were made with a variety of animals, but the lamb motif connects to the Passover celebration.

In the final plague against Egypt, it was the blood of lambs that was spread on the doorposts. This blood protected Israelite homes when death passed over that Passover night.

Any home that lacked this blood was stricken with the death of its firstborn. God decided for the blood to be from a lamb, not a goat or a bull. This story was prefiguring Christ as the Lamb of God.

Christ is our Passover sacrifice. It was because of His sacrifice that death passes over true believers.

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: (1 Cor. 5:7)

Since Christ is our Passover Lamb, we are adopted into Jewish tradition. Every true believer in Christ has painted His blood on their doorposts. When death passes over each of us, it will have no sting (1 Cor. 15:55).

Every Christian needs to celebrate Christ as the new Passover lamb. It was His blood as the Lamb of God which was shed for us. In light of this, His blood protects us from death.

If the blood of animals was enough, we would still be offering sacrifices at the Temple; however, only the precious blood of Jesus Christ was an adequate payment for sins (1 Pet. 1:19).

The Word



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)

John 1:1 famously says “In the beginning was the Word.” In Greek, this is the word *logos*. The idea of the Word started in the Old Testament. Many times, God would speak to His prophets through His word. Characteristics are often given to this word in Scripture. Let the reader consider this as a form of personification, which is to give human characteristics to something non-human.

The core of this chapter is the personification of God’s word. In many cases God’s word is given human-like characteristics. This is done in a way that makes His word seem human. There are examples where God’s word is speaking or appears to be moving. Similar to how a person might say “the wind howled,” Scripture says things like “the word of God came...saying.” Statements such as this offer a personifying aspect of God’s word.

This chapter will consider the personification of God’s word in greater depth, and will present arguments that Jesus embodies the personification of God’s Word.

Throughout the Bible God speaks to His people through prophets and kings. Many times, when God is speaking to a prophet, the Bible will say “the word of the Lord” came to that prophet. In these instances, there is a tendency of Scripture to add human qualities to the Word of the Lord. In some verses the Word of the Lord is shown to be speaking, while in other verses the Word of the Lord appears to be moving.

This chapter is by no means an exhaustive study of how the Word of the Lord is given human attributes. Instead, this chapter will consider how Jesus being called “the Word” in the Gospel of John connects to the Old Testament verses which show God interacting with the Prophets through the Word of the Lord. By considering Jesus as the Word and the tendency of the Old Testament writers to personify this phrase, we may see Jesus in the Old Testament. The personification of God’s words allows us to see them as a living person, which represents the person of Christ.

Essences of the Word of The Lord:

The Word of the Lord had great significance in the minds of the ancient Prophets. This is evident in Jeremiah 7:2 where Jeremiah is prophesying to Judah, instructing them to “hear the word of the Lord”.

However, Israel generally did not want to listen to the Word of the Lord. They would rather follow their own path than listen to God’s word. This was apparent in the chapter The King. The people of Israel did not want to follow God directly, but instead chose to follow a human king. Regardless of what the Israelites thought, the Word of the Lord is significant. Our attitude toward the Word of the Lord does not change its power.

Stand in the gate of the LORD’S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. (Jer. 7:2)

The Word of the Lord is a hot topic. Think about the headlines on your favorite news station or newspaper. You may see something like “BREAKING NEWS.” The Word of the Lord has press, meaning it wants to be published.

Furthermore, the Word of the Lord has power. When a powerful figure makes a move, like a president, many people hear about it. Not only that, but many people act on the moves of a president. Oftentimes, the stock market fluctuates based on the actions of the president. In such a way, the Word of the Lord has a wide impact.

The Lord gave the word: Great was the company of those that published it. (Ps. 68:11)

The Word of the Lord is something that even the angels hearken to. To hearken to something means not only to hear it. Simply hearing the Word of the Lord is not enough. To hear

something means simply to register the words in thought. It means to take the words at face value, but to hearken has greater depth. It means not only to hear the words, but to ponder them. Furthermore, it means to contemplate and meditate about them. Someone who hearkens to something will meditate on them and ultimately abide in them. The Lord wants us to hearken to His words. He wants us to contemplate them, and to meditate on them.

*Bless the Lord, ye his angels, That excel in strength,
that do his commandments, hearkening unto the
voice of his word. (Ps. 103:20)*

The Word of the Lord is right and true. Everyone may count on the Word of the Lord. God promised the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham. Abraham never witnessed this promise in his life, but it was his descendants who would reap this promise. King David lived during the time when this promise was realized. He even solidified it by capturing the City of David, which is where Mt. Zion is located.

The pinnacle of this promise was during the reign of King Solomon. During his time the height of the kingdom was reached. The promise of the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham is in effect today. Even during the reign of Solomon this was never fully realized. The kingdom under Solomon did not reach its full potential.

In 1948 the nation of Israel was established after about 2000 years of the Jewish nation lacking sovereignty in its home land. God made a promise to Abraham, and that promise still holds.

*For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works
are done in truth. (Ps. 33:4)*

The Word of the Lord has creative power. Psalm 33 says “by the word of the Lord were the heavens made.” How powerful is the Word of the Lord? In the beginning when God spoke, He spoke

creation into existence. Simply by speaking God was able to create the universe we know. When God said “let there be light,” there was light (Genesis 1:3). When God said “let there be,” there was. Simply by God speaking, things are brought into existence, and they are brought into existence through His word.

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; And
all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. (Ps.
33:6)*

In the Beginning Was the Word:

The Gospel of John reveals the Jesus is the Logos (i.e. the Word). He is the ordering force that the Greeks conceived of. The book of Genesis starts with “in the beginning,” and so does the first verse in John. Why does John use similar language to Genesis, if not to draw a connection?

***In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was
with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, emphasis
mine)*

***In the beginning** God created the heaven and the
earth. (Gen. 1:1, emphasis mine)*

Many Christians conceive of God in three persons. 1 John 5:7 establishes that there is a tripartite God, who consists of God *the Father*, God *the Word*, and God *the Spirit*. This idea is commonly called the *Trinity* in Christian circles.

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the
Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these
three are one. (1 John 5:7)*

At the beginning of Genesis is the creation account. At that time, the world was “without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. 1:2). God spoke creation into existence through His words. Through the words of the Lord, all

creation was brought into existence, merely by being spoken. Every time God brought something into existence, He spoke it. The first instance of this creative force of God's word is in Genesis 1:3 where God brings light into existence. He does this merely by speaking the light into existence. The entire creation account of Genesis is a repetition of God speaking and things being brought into existence. What does speaking require? It requires words.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. (Gen. 1:3, emphasis mine)

In the Gospel of John, Jesus is called the Word. Genesis reveals that it was by words in which God created. Is there a connection between the words God spoke at creation and the *Word*? In the beginning were the Lord's words, when God spoke creation into existence. It is a short stretch to envision the Son at the Father's side, as an instrument of creation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. (John 1:1)

The consistent personification of the Lord's word suggests it has human attributes. Since Jesus is called the Word, it is reasonable to think that Jesus was appearing to the Prophets.

Furthermore, John 1 confirms that everything was made through the Word. The creation account was wholly dependent on the collaboration of the Word with God the Father. God is the creator, and His Word is His instrument of creation. The two persons were side by side at the moment of creation.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:3)

In the preceding verse, it is clear that “all things were made by him.” We know this to be talking about Jesus because of the context of the chapter.

Let us consult an epistle of Peter’s, which beautifully illustrates the creative power of the Word of the Lord, and that it was “by the word of God” that the heavens and the earth were created.

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: (2 Pet. 3:5)

Peter and John viewed the Word as an instrument of creation. Genesis only further supports this because it confirms that God spoke creation into existence. While Genesis does not directly refer to the Word, it is implied. If the word is an instrument of creation, and Jesus is the Word, then there should be a personification of the *Word* throughout scripture. It is worthwhile to look into the Old Testament for evidence of personification of the word.

The Word of the Lord:

The phrase “the word of the Lord” occurs some 250 times in the Bible. This phrase generally precedes when God is speaking to the Prophets. The Word of the Lord is how God addressed the Prophets when He was speaking to His people. For instance, in Jeremiah, we often see that the “word of the Lord” came to him.

*Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying...
(Jer. 1:4)*

There appears a personification of these words, because they exhibit characteristics of a living thing. Not only did the Word of the Lord come to Jeremiah, but it spoke to him. The Word of the Lord is doing two things in this verse. One, it is approaching Jeremiah as if it is moving on its own accord. Two, it is speaking to Jeremiah as if it has a voice. Later in Jeremiah we may see this same type of interaction with the Word of the Lord. Again, there is a sense of personification of the Lord's words here.

And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying... (Jer. 13:3)

In this next verse, we see a different aspect of the Word of the Lord. So far, we have investigated two human capabilities of this Word, moving and speaking. In the following verse we may add another human capability, trying. This is not in the sense of making an attempt, but instead of something being difficult to endure. In this verse, the Word of the Lord comes and tries Joseph. This verse further strengthens demonstrates that the Word of the Lord has human characteristics. So, instead of merely speaking and arriving, the Word of the Lord is trying. This adds yet another human characteristic, or personification, to His Word.

Until the time that his word came: The word of the Lord tried him. (Ps. 105:18)

The point of this section is to emphasize and reveal the personification of the "word of the Lord" which recurs throughout the Old Testament. When the Lord speaks to prophets or kings, He does so through His Word. In the previous section Jesus was established as "the Word." It was this *Word* which was with God in the beginning.

The personification of “the word” spoken to the Prophets reveals a human figure behind the scenes. Jesus is both human and divine, so He embodies divine and human characteristics. Scripture depicts the Word of God as having divine and human attributes, which aligns with the person of Jesus.

The following section will show that like God’s words in the Old Testament, Jesus’s words in the New Testament also had transformational power. Whenever Jesus spoke, people paid attention. This may remind the reader of Psalm 68:11 which says “great was the company of those that published” His Word. This was also true for Jesus, because His words traveled throughout the land of Israel and further. Eventually His apostles would spread His words throughout the known world.

Let the reader consider that it was pre-incarnate Christ who was visiting the Old Testament prophets. This makes sense in light of Christ being the Logos, the Word, because the personification of God’s word in the aforementioned text is evidence there is a person present. The pre-incarnate deity of Christ may have visited the Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

The Words of Jesus:

In this chapter, verses have shed light on the Word of the Lord, which is personified throughout the Old Testament. Earlier in this chapter, it was concluded that Jesus is the Word which the Gospel of John speaks of. This Word was with God in the beginning at the creation account. The Word was an instrument of creation, but was also a co-creator. Throughout the Old Testament, the personification of the Word of the Lord reveals a person.

That person is Jesus, whose words are everlasting. In three of the Gospels (Mathew, Mark and Luke), Jesus assures His disciples that His words will never pass away. This was near the end of the Olivet Discourse, when Jesus was speaking of the end times. This

is an apt place for Jesus to make this statement, since He is talking about the end of the world. Jesus is assuring His followers that even though this earth and current heavens will pass away, His words will remain forever. That is all the more reason to abide in His word, because we will never go wrong abiding in Him. Through Him and the pouring out of His Spirit we have everlasting life.

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (Luke 21:33)

In many places in the New Testament, when Jesus is speaking, there is emphasis on His words. Pay attention in the following verses how His words relate to the larger context of Scripture. In each instance, His followers are listening intently to His words. Each writer goes out of his way to mention the words of Jesus. The writers are making the words of Jesus a focal point.

*And **the disciples were astonished at his words.** But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! (Mark 10:24, emphasis mine)*

The disciples were “astonished” at Jesus’ words. Here, Mark was placing emphasis on the words of Jesus. We see a similarity in the Gospel of Luke when Mary is at Jesus’ feet. The writer, Luke, emphasizes Jesus’ words by portraying Mary hanging on His every word.

*And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, **and heard his word.** (Luke 10:39, emphasis mine)*

After Jesus passed away, His words were remembered by the disciples. These were the words that Jesus spoke about becoming the Temple, when He was challenging the Jewish leadership. Jesus

is the embodiment of the Temple, which would be destroyed in His death and raised again in His resurrection.

*When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and **they believed** the scripture, and **the word** which Jesus had said. (John 2:22, emphasis mine)*

Jesus' words have power; they have influence. In each one of the above verses the disciples or followers of Jesus hearkened to His words. To hearken means to listen closely, but not merely for the sake of listening. When the disciples and followers are listening to Jesus, they are listening so they may receive wisdom and instruction. They cherish each and every word of Jesus. We may envision Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, hanging on to every word. Mary is listening intently, waiting for the next nugget of truth. She must have recognized that His words were of the highest importance as she sat at His feet listening intently.

Furthermore, in Luke 6, we are reminded of the spiritual stability provided in His words. This passage illustrates that whoever abides in His words, will build on solid foundation, which will withstand the elements. His words provide a solid foundation, but we must abide (meaning to trust in them and behave accordingly) in them as Christians.

Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: (Luke 6:47-48)

This passage sets the scene for two men building their own houses. The first man built his house on the words of Jesus, and the second man built his house on a lesser foundation. Scripture tells us it was the man who abode in the words of Jesus which built his house on a solid foundation. The other man built his

house on sand, which is a very poor foundation. Each house, the one on rock and the other on sand, was subjected to the elements.

It is the house built on rock which is able to withstand the elements, while a house that neglects the words of Jesus is built on sand, which is destroyed. Through abiding in Jesus, our very existence becomes strengthened. We may draw from Him in order to strengthen our foundation, and to bear fruit.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:4–5)

Instead of the analogy of a home's foundation, the analogy in this verse is that of a vine. Just like the man who abode in the words of Christ kept his home, the one who abides in Christ bears much fruit. The branch without the vine is unable to bear fruit, just like the man who ignores Christ's words lost his house. Furthermore, the branches which do not abide in the vine will be gathered up and thrown into the fire (John 1:6). Whatever is your interpretation of this verse, the importance of abiding in Christ is emphasized.

Conclusion:

At this point, there is ample evidence to propose that Jesus is the embodiment of the Word of God. He is the Word made flesh. It was clear from John 1 that the Word was present with God in the beginning, and that Word was Jesus.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Word of the Lord is personified, thus giving it human attributes. The most human aspect of the Word of the Lord is the ability to speak. The embodiment of this Word is Christ.

John wrote of the *Word* being with God in the beginning. In the Genesis account of creation, God spoke creation into existence. It was through His word that God created. The same *Word* that John speaks of, was with the Father in the beginning. This was the ordering force, the *Logos*, that was with the Father in the beginning. The Greeks thought of the *Logos* as an ordering force underlying the universe.

One thing that we often forget is that the Word of God was there in the beginning. Even though Jesus is never mentioned by name in the Old Testament, He is alluded to in many ways. One of these ways in which Christ is alluded to in the Old Testament is through the personification of the word of God. Throughout the Old Testament, God would speak to His prophets and kings through His word.

The personification of the words of God was the focus of this chapter. They point to a person, who is the person of Jesus Christ.

Epilogue:

Each chapter has illustrated a spiritual facet of Jesus Christ, which was established in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New. Taken together, these facets help us navigate toward Christ.

This requires that we see these symbols as fulfilled in Christ. They form a bridge from the Old Testament to the New by revealing the deeper meaning of narratives such as Noah's Ark and Joseph in Egypt.

If we do not understand what unites us, how can we be unified? As the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Christ is that unifying factor. Through these symbolic representations, we arrive at a common understanding and are brought together in Him. As the Bride, we must intimately know and remain devoted to our Bridegroom.

In order to do this, we must be filled with the Spirit. This is reflected in the story of the Samaritan woman and the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The virgins whose lamps were filled with oil were prepared for the Bridegroom.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (Mat. 25:1)

This begs the question: what does it mean to be unified? It is about coming together toward a common understanding in Christ. As Christians, we are called to fellowship in Him. When we come together in His name, we partake of His bread.

Christ is the beginning and the end, which means He unifies all time. When we come to unity in Him, we share in the same faith as believers throughout history, who faced similar challenges as we face today.

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Rev. 21:6)

To be effective, we must partake of the Body of Christ, which is our source of life. This means drawing from His very being.

Does this mean a person must partake of the Eucharist in order to be saved? That is an entirely different matter, as the thief on the cross never partook of the Eucharist. Jesus offers His bread to everyone who believes, and the Eucharist and Communion bear witness to that truth.

Notwithstanding, one may inquire about the attributes of Christ's body. We may go into great depth on the spiritual meaning of "bread from heaven," but not everything in Scripture needs a definitive explanation, as God reminded Job that he was not present at the creation of the heavens and the earth. The Lord addressed Job in this way:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. (Job 38:4)

Some things will remain a mystery, as they should. What is important to understand is that God created the heavens and the earth. They were formed by God Almighty, with the Word as His instrument of creation, not from the emptiness of space.

In the same way, it is not important exactly how the Body and Blood of Christ are received into our being, but that we recognize our need for them. If we understand them as essential to our union with Him, then we acknowledge that we must receive them into our being. Just as we digest the nutrients from bread, we must receive and partake of the very being of Christ.

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us. As He said “it is finished” (John 19:30), thus finalizing the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Through His work on the cross, a new covenant was established—not only through His blood, but through the Spirit poured out at Pentecost.

We may find rest and peace in the work of Christ. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

Jesus is our King, so we must stand behind Him in unity under one banner. Jesus taught that a divided house cannot stand, so we must be united in His heavenly court.

The present times may appear bleak, as Christ is not yet reigning on earth in the literal and visible sense, but He promised us that He will return.

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse;
and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and
True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make
war. (Rev. 19:11)*

As our King, He will return to execute judgment and establish His full rule. We may have confidence our King will come again on a white horse, making war against the powers that subjugate and oppress in this world.

The Logos, the creative and ordering force that was in the beginning with the Father, is the embodiment of God’s Word. As such, He is the fulfillment of what the Israelites were instructed, for these instructions pointed to Christ.

The ancient manifestation of these practices was the Jewish Temple. Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed, which is what happened in 70 A.D. under Emperor Vespasian and General Titus.

The Temple was never meant to last forever, but Jesus' words will endure forever. Even heaven and earth will pass away before His words, as He assures us:

Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (Luke 21:33)

No matter what happens in this life, we may be confident in the world to come. The sufferings of this present time are small in comparison to what will be received.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. (2 Cor. 4:17)

Why should we be consumed with the temporary struggles of this earth, when we abide in the eternal words of Christ? Whoever believes in Him will live forever. We may find consolation in this truth.

As we deepen our understanding of these symbols, they will align us with Christ and the hope He has set before us. These symbols serve as guides, just as the stars guide sailors. They are like constellations, directing us toward Him, our final destination.

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