

PART FOUR

---

THE MOVEMENT  
OF HISTORY

---

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
Pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty,  
Hold me with thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven,  
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain  
Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
Lead me all the journey through;  
Strong deliverer,  
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
Bid my anxious fears subside;  
Death of death and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side;  
Songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams<sup>1</sup>

---

## T H I R T E E N

---

# THE WORLD OF NOAH

We have already looked at the rite of world transformation, in Chapter 10. We now begin to apply it to the world and to humanity. We shall find that Biblical history follows the following pattern.

After the fall of man, the world entered into a *decline*. This decline is always a prelude to God's first step, which is His *taking hold of the situation*. God comes to a man, a prophet, and announces judgment on the old world, and His intention to form a new world. To use the language of the Bible, God announces the destruction of the old heavens and earth, and His intention to create a new heavens and earth. For instance:

- At the Flood, the first physical heavens and earth were destroyed, and a new physical heavens and earth were set up, which will endure until the return of Christ.
- At the Cross and Resurrection of our Lord, the old Adamic heavens and earth were shaken down, and a new heavens and earth were set up, with the God-man seated on the heavenly throne. Thus, in a judicial sense, the New Heavens and Earth began at that time.
- At the end of history, the present heavens and earth will be transfigured into the fullness of the New Heavens and Earth.
- But, each time God brought judgment on His people during the Old Covenant, there was a sense in which an old heavens and earth was replaced with a new one: New rulers were set up, a new symbolic world model was built (Tabernacle, Temple), and so forth.

So, God's first step, in terms of the formula we have chosen to use to organize our material, is His laying hold on the situa-

tion, His announcement that He is going to change the world. We shall call this phase of history God's *announcement*.

Second, having grasped His people in His hand, God moves them from one place to another, from one situation to another, from one world to another. We shall call this transition an *exodus*. The exodus from Egypt is the most celebrated of these transitions, but hardly the first or the last, as we shall see. The end result of this exodus or transition is the establishment of a new world order.

Third, once the exodus has been accomplished, God gives His Word of promise and command: He distributes the new world to His people, and gives them laws and rules to obey as they exercise dominion over it. In connection with this, God sets up a symbolic world model as His sanctuary. We shall call this stage by the word *establishment*.

Fourth, once the new world order has been established, God gets history moving again. This post-establishment history is a time when God makes evaluations of His people, in terms of their faithfulness or disobedience. It is a time of the application of positive and negative sanctions, in terms of the treaty or covenant set up at the establishment. Before the Cross, this phase was always a time of decline toward judgment. After the Cross, we have a promise that it will be a time of growth. (See Chapters 18 and 19 on this.) We shall call this phase by the phrase *history and decline*.

Fifth, and finally, God comes in judgment. His judgment, however, is always simultaneously an announcement of His intention to create a new world; and so the cycle or spiral begins again. In Genesis 1, this fifth point was God's sabbath, His rest. After tasting and evaluating, we said, comes relaxing and enjoying. Because of the sin of man, however, God kept having to start up new worlds instead of relaxing in the existing one. With the coming of Jesus Christ, however, this cycle is broken. God is willing to "relax and enjoy" the Kingdom, knowing that it can never fail.

There are two observations I wish to make at this point, before we turn our attention to Noah. First, God's coming to His people to make evaluations is a sabbath phenomenon, also termed Day of the Lord or Lord's Day. The sabbath was the sev-

enth day of God's week of creation, but the first full day of man's week. Thus, the time of sabbath, of judgment and evaluation, is simultaneously the last day of an old week and the first day of a new week.<sup>2</sup> It is the time of covenant-renewal, and thus of worship. The worship service, then, should be a time of leaving behind the old world of the previous week, and receiving the gift of the Kingdom, the new world, for the new week.

Second, this sequence helps us understand better the Biblical view of time. In traditional paganism, time and history are conceived of as a bondage from which you want to escape through religious activity. In Christianity, however, time is *opportunity*. The succession of moments continues to put before us new choices, and new opportunities to do better than we have done before.

The Christian view of time is also *linear* rather than cyclical. In paganism, time and history are a series of endless cycles, in which no real progress is or can ever be made. Christianity, however, sees real progress in history, as each new "world" is more glorious than the one before.<sup>3</sup>

The Christian view of time is, however, not linear in the modern secular sense: a succession of moments without meaning. Rather, time and history are *rhythmical*; that is, there are fundamental patterns that repeat. There are indeed historical cycles, but they are spirals, not circles. The fact that the patterns repeat, with variations, is of course related to what we have mentioned earlier, which is that the Biblical view of history is fundamentally typological.

Finally, the Christian view of time is *liturgical*. We begin in sabbath at the throne of God, move out into the world and work, and then return at the Lord's Day for His evaluation and blessing. All history proceeds from God's alpha, and develops into His never-ending omega.

### **Announcement**

After the sin of man in the Garden of Eden, and his expulsion, we read of the sin of Cain in the Land of Eden, and his expulsion. Cain went out and built a city, a city basically built on his brother's blood. This city became a city of blood; and in the seventh generation from Adam, we find the murderer Lamech celebrating his violence in song (Genesis 4).

The seventh from Adam in the line of godly Seth was Enoch, who walked with God and was taken to heaven after living a year of years in this world (Genesis 5:23-24). It seems, though, that the godly line of Seth fell away. Three generations later, only Noah was left to find favor in God's sight. What happened? I believe that the line of Seth committed the sin of intermarriage with the line of Cain, and that this is what is meant by the statement that the "sons of God [Sethites] saw that the daughters of men [Cainites] were fair; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose" (Genesis 6:2). There are other views of this passage, but this is the only interpretation that provides an explanation for why the Sethites disappeared.<sup>4</sup> Notice that the Sethites committed the sin of Adam in the Garden. Just as the forbidden fruit was *seen* to be *fair*, so were the daughters of the Cainites (Genesis 3:6).

God made a preliminary judgment, recorded in Genesis 6:3, and gave humanity 120 years to repent. We shall find that God always gives preliminary judgments and opportunities to repent before bringing in full judgment.

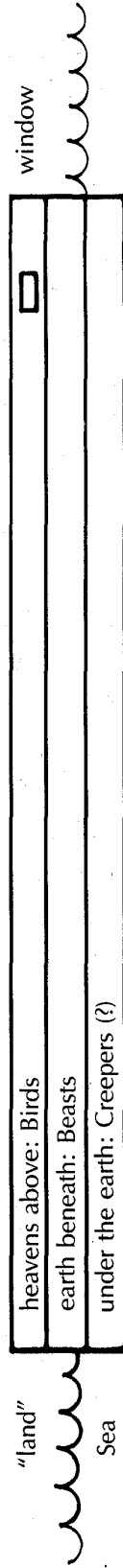
Things continued to get worse, however, and eventually God determined to destroy the world. Simultaneously, He laid hold on Noah and told him that he and his family would be saved.

### Exodus

Noah was told to make the Ark. During the Flood year, the only "land" that was emergent from the sea was the Ark. Thus, the Ark was the only human habitat in the world. Additionally, the Ark was a world model composed of three decks (see Diagram 13.1). Meredith G. Kline has written that the Ark was:

a spiritual house of God, which has its symbolic external prototypes in the Creator's cosmic house of heaven and earth and later in Israel's microcosmic Tabernacle and Temple. What is now to be observed is that the design of the ark suggested that it was intended to be a representation of God's Kingdom in this cosmic house form. For the ark, however seaworthy, was fashioned like a house rather than like a sailing vessel. All the features mentioned in the description of the ark belong to the architecture of a house; the three stories, the door, the window.<sup>5</sup>

Diagram 13.1  
Noah's Ark as  
World Model



Kline goes on to note that the three stories of the Ark correspond with the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth. The lowest deck may be associated with the crawling things, for they burrow in the earth to some extent; or it may be that the lowest deck is associated with the water "under the earth" simply because it was submerged the deepest. As we have seen, there is a rough correlation between the three land environments and the three spatial environments, so that crawling things are parallel to sea creatures (and birds to domestic animals, with wild animals parallel to land animals in general). Kline writes clearly,

the window of the ark is the counterpart to "the window of heaven," referred to in this narrative (7:11; 8:2). Appropriately, the window area is located along the top of the ark, as part of the upper (heavenly) story. One is naturally led then to compare the door of the ark with the door that shuts up the depths of the sea, holding back its proud waves. (For this cosmological imagery see Job 38:8-11.)<sup>6</sup>

Even though God did not tell Noah to put the birds in the top story, beasts in the middle, and creeping things in the lowest; yet every time the animals are mentioned they are listed broken down into categories, creating an in-context conceptual parallel (Genesis 6:7, 20; 7:8, 14, 21, 23; 8:17, 19; 9:2).<sup>7</sup>

Another aspect of the Ark as world model is the fact that God dictated its dimensions to Noah, something only done when a world model is being set up (Exodus 25ff.; 1 Chronicles 28:16; Hebrews 9:5; Ezekiel 40ff.; Revelation 21:10ff.). Thus, the Ark was a world model, and as such has always been regarded as a type of the Church, God's new creation.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, the Ark was made of wood. What else would it have been made of? God's command to make it of wood seems unnecessary and superfluous, except for the spiritual associations of wood with trees. In Chapter 7 we noted that the various periods of history are associated with various trees. The "gopher" wood of the Ark is peculiar to it. In fact, no one knows what "gopher" wood is! Like the Tabernacle and Temple, the Ark of wood was a picture of God's Edenic Grove.



This exodus was a wholly miraculous event. A few moments' meditation will show just how extraordinary it was. First, it involved a miracle for all the animals to come to Noah and enter the Ark. We should consider this parallel to the movement of God's people out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, remembering that animals are images of humanity.

Second, it involved a miracle for these animals to be at peace with one another. During the wilderness wanderings, God performed many miracles, miracles of judgment, to force the people to keep peace and to put down rebellion (cf. esp. Numbers 11:1-3; Numbers 16-17).

Third, feeding and caring for these animals involved some kind of miracle. It would not have been possible to carry on the Ark enough food to feed all these animals for a whole year. God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, and it is easy to imagine that something similar happened here. Then again, perhaps many of the animals hibernated for the whole year.

Thus, the exodus transition was accomplished by a whole series of miracles. While Noah and his family were sustained on the Ark, the angels were busy remaking the world. They were burying animals to make oil, and plants to make coal, and in many other ways preparing a new world for humanity.

A detailed study of the Flood will reveal many re-creation motifs at work.<sup>9</sup> The subsiding waters revealed the land, just as in the creation week. The dove hovering over the water recalls the Spirit's hovering at creation, and the dove-Spirit hovering over our Lord at His baptismal inauguration of the New Covenant.

### **Establishment**

With the resting of the Ark, we have a transferring of the world model to the world. We shall see this again at Mount Sinai, when the configuration of that mountain is transferred to the configuration of the Tabernacle. Here with Noah we find that the triple-decker Ark becomes the model for a new triple-decker world. The waters recede, and the world is made anew after the image of the model.

The arrival of the Ark is like the arrival of Israel in Canaan. God gave the world anew to Noah, telling him to be fruitful and multiply in the new creation (Genesis 8:16-17). God promised

that this new world would be permanent, and that He would act to prevent man's sinfulness from ever again maturing from youth to full age (Genesis 8:21). With this new heaven and earth came a change in God's covenant arrangements. God allowed Noah and his descendants to eat meat, apparently for the first time, and forbade the drinking of blood. Parallel to the drinking of blood is the shedding of blood in murder; and God also bestowed on man, for the first time, the right and privilege to sit as judge and execute murderers (Genesis 9:2-7). Associated with this new privilege was a robe of authority, signifying man's new estate as judge.<sup>10</sup>

God gave a special sign for the new Noahic covenant: He placed His warbow in the sky as the rainbow (Genesis 9:12-17). The warbow, God's weapon, is parallel to the flaming sword of the cherubim (Genesis 3:24), this being the special sign of the Adamic covenant under judgment.

We are to the point now of summarizing the ways in which this new establishment parallels the first establishment in Genesis 1-3. First, the new triple-decker world is like the first one, except that the new one is permanent.<sup>11</sup>

Second, the new high ground, holy mountain, is Ararat. As we have seen, this is probably the same location as Eden originally. Humanity will proceed from Ararat as they proceeded from Eden. Also, in terms of future parallels, note that the resting of God's house, the divinely designed Ark, on the top of Ararat is parallel to the placement of the Temple on top of Mount Moriah.

Third, as there was a Garden in Eden, so Noah planted a vineyard. As Adam sinned in the Garden, so Ham sinned in the vineyard (Genesis 9:18-27).<sup>12</sup> As Adam seized at a symbol of the as yet forbidden prerogative of rulership, so Ham seized at Noah's robe of authority.<sup>13</sup>

Fourth, as God judged Adam, so Noah judged Ham. This change came about because God had committed judgment into human hands, and given Noah a robe of authority as symbol of his office. Noah was a new Adam, but a glorified Adam, an Adam who had some of God's office bestowed on him. Unlike Adam in the Garden, Noah was a prophet. Noah judged Ham the way Adam was supposed to judge the serpent. Noah judged

Ham the way God judged Adam. There are parallels, but there is also an advance in glory. History is not cyclical but spiral.

Fifth, there is a parallel, as mentioned, between the flaming sword of God's wrath and His unstrung warbow of peace. The Garden and the flaming sword were gone, though the latter would continue to play a role in the Tabernacle and Temple until the coming of the New Covenant. There has been, however, a very real and important change from wrath to grace.

Although Noah's vineyard designedly reminds us of the Garden of Eden, yet there is an important difference: Noah's vineyard was not God's garden-sanctuary. In the world immediately after the Flood, there was no garden-sanctuary, nor was there a holy land. Remember that God originally created the world, and then set apart the land of Eden, finally planting a garden-sanctuary in Eden. We find the same sequence after the Flood. Until the time of Abram there was no special land set apart. Until the time of the Tabernacle and its courtyard, there was no earthly garden-sanctuary in the world.

So, what was this "new heavens and earth" after the Flood like? Well, first, in terms of world structure we have the seventy nations of the world, given in Genesis 10. Although the number of nations in the world soon grew beyond seventy, the symbolic number of the nations remains seventy in the Bible.<sup>14</sup> Before the Flood, the land of Eden had been dominant over the whole earth — all the rivers came from Eden. After the fall of man, the land of Nod with its counterfeit city-sanctuary Enoch dominated the world (Genesis 4:16-24). There was a one-state world, ruled by the Nephilim, mighty men (Genesis 6:4). There were not many nations, though various lands had been listed in Genesis 2. Rather, there were simply two genealogical lines, and the line of Cain came to dominate the world. After the Flood, however, there were seventy nations, and no one-world state.

Second, in these seventy nations we have city-states ruled over by priest-kings. The preeminent Biblical example of this is Melchizedek, who was priest of "God Most High" and also king of Salem (later Jerusalem) (Genesis 14:14-22). This rule by priest-kings, or by kings and priests, "chiefs and medicine men," together, is an advancement over the situation before the Flood. Thus, the political heavens before the Flood were the mighty

men who dominated the whole earth; while after the Flood, the political heavens were the priest-kings of the seventy separated nations. Some of the priest-kings were godly, and some were ungodly; but whatever the case, we have moved into a new heavens and earth, with nations and city-states. This would continue to be the situation in the world at large until the time of Israel's exile, when we move into the world-imperial stage of history. (See Diagram 13.2.) For as long as Israel remained a nation, however, the Gentile world was also organized into nations with city-state capitals.

Diagram 13.2  
Polities

	Pre-Flood World	Noahic World	Exilic World
Heavens	Mighty Cainite men who dominate:	Priest-kings who rule:	World emperors (Daniel 2, 7)
Earth	a one-world state; all people	many separate nations	many nations gathered under one ruler

Third, as just noted, the name of God in use among the nations was "God Most High." God Most High was regarded as Possessor of heaven and earth, a name of international significance. Melchizedek, priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18), blessed Abram with these words: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (14:19-20). The name God gave to the Hebrew Patriarchs was "God Almighty," the God who has the ability to fulfill His promises (Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3). Melchizedek, however, used the Gentile name. Note also what Abram said to the king of Sodom: "I have sworn to the Lord, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours" (14:22-23). Abram identified his own God, the Lord, with the one known among the Gentiles as God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.

In summary, the world established under the Noahic covenant had the following aspects:

*Names:*

God: God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth

People: God-fearers (Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26)

*Grant:* The whole earth

*Promise:* No future Flood

*Stipulations:*

Sacramental: No drinking of blood

Societal: No murder

*Polity:* Priest-kings with the right to put murderers to death, ruling separate nations

*Symbol:* "the seventy nations of the world"

### History and Decline

Adam rebelled and was cast from the Garden. Ham rebelled and was cursed from Noah's vineyard. After Adam's sin, Cain became a murderer and went out and built a city. After Ham's sin, the Hamite Nimrod became a "mighty hunter" (of men, by implication), and built a city: the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10:8-12; 11:1-9). God had put away His warbow, but man had not. The city of the Prince of Peace is made of rainbow jewels. The city of this prince of hunters was made of mud bricks.

God had promised, however, to cut off man's sin in its youth. Ham, Noah's *youngest* son (Genesis 9:24), had been prevented from seizing forbidden fruit. Now Nimrod, the new Cain, would be prevented from attaining the heights of power and the depths of depravity of Cain and Lamech of old. His city was cut down.

Nimrod was attempting at the Tower of Babel to re-create the pre-Flood world. His goal was a one-state world, with his mighty men, his neo-nephilim, in charge. By scattering the people from Babel, God created the seventy nations of the world,

enforcing the post-Flood polity. Having failed at Babylon, Nimrod went out and created Nineveh and Assyria (Genesis 10:10-11). Thus, both of these two mighty hunter-conqueror cultures were created by one man, who was carefully carrying on the policy of Cain. Both Babylon and Nineveh are to be seen as extensions of Enoch, the city of Cain.

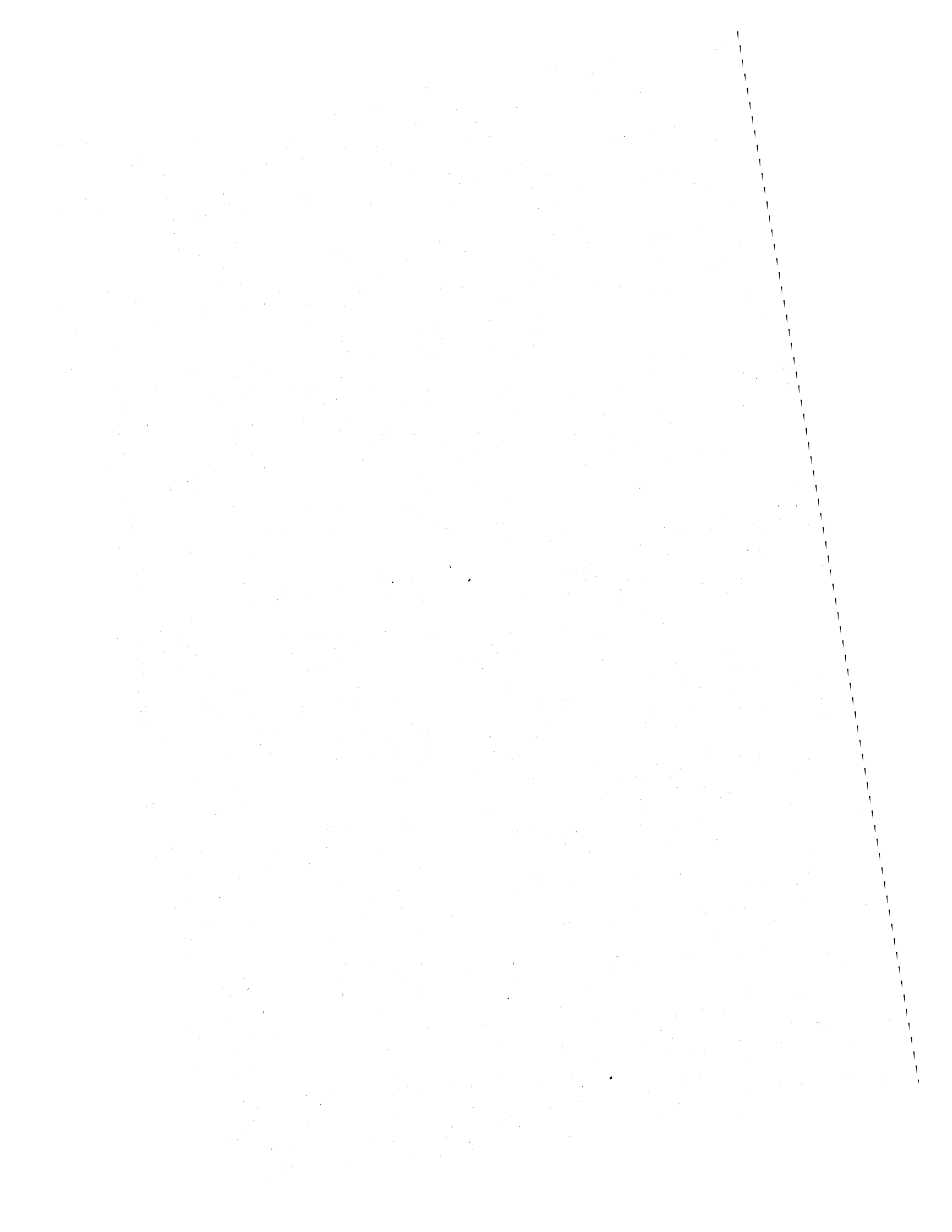
God's judgment on the Tower of Babel, however, was accompanied as always with a new announcement of salvation. All the things that man had sinfully tried to seize at Babel — land, name, priestly influence — God announced that He would bestow upon Abraham.

They had wanted land, "lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). God, however, scattered them (11:8), and gave land to Abram: "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I shall show you" (Genesis 12:1).

They had wanted a name: "And let us make for ourselves a name" (Genesis 11:4b). God, however, confused their languages, so that they could not understand one another's names (11:7), and gave a great name to Abram: "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great" (Genesis 12:2).

Finally, they had wanted to be religious leaders. Their tower was to reach to heaven. They would be the points of contact between other men and "god" (Genesis 11:4). God, however, prevented their tower-building (11:8) and set up Abram and his seed as the priestly nation: "And so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the ground shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3).<sup>15</sup>

This brings us to the world of the Patriarchs, which we must now consider.



---

The God of Abrah'm praise,  
Who reigns enthroned above;  
Ancient of everlasting days,  
And God of Love:  
JEHOVAH GREAT I AM!  
By earth and heav'n confest;  
I bow and bless the sacred Name,  
Forever bless'd.

The God of Abrah'm praise,  
At whose supreme command,  
From earth I rise — and seek the joys  
At his right hand;  
I all on earth forsake,  
Its wisdom, fame, and power;  
And him my only Portion make,  
My Shield and Tower.

The God of Abrah'm praise,  
Whose all-sufficient grace  
Shall guide me all my happy days,  
In all my ways:  
He calls a worm his friend!  
He calls himself my God!  
And he shall save me to the end  
Through Jesus' blood.

He by Himself hath sworn,  
I on his oath depend,  
I shall, on eagle's wings up-borne,  
To heaven ascend;  
I shall behold his face,  
I shall his power adore,  
And sing the wonders of his grace  
Forevermore.

— Thomas Olivers "The God of Abrah'm Praise,"  
A Christian paraphrase of the *Yigdal*<sup>1</sup>

---



## F O U R T E E N

---

# THE WORLD OF THE PATRIARCHS

We have stated that there is always a decline that partially explains the need for a new covenant. It is also true, however, that even if man had not sinned there would have been advances from glory to glory. Thus, the coming of a new covenant is not wholly to be explained by the failure of the previous one. Also involved is the fact of human maturation, so that what was once appropriate and fitting at a certain stage of childhood now must be superseded. As children grow, we have to keep getting them new shoes and new clothing, partially because the old ones are wearing out, but also because the child has outgrown them.

This explains why God never simply calls His people back to the previous covenant. The prophets come and tell the people that they have broken the covenant and remind them of their duties in terms of the old covenant; but when covenant renewal comes, it is never simply a return to the old ways. Rather, it is a renewal of the old ways in a new form, a form appropriate to the times and to the stage of growth.

As we move into the period of the patriarchs, it will be helpful to set out a rough overview of covenantal history. After the Flood, God re-created the *world* with the Noahic covenant. With the sins of Ham and then Nimrod, the world order was threatened, and God took advantage of the opportunity to set aside a new (Edenic) *land* with the Abrahamic covenant, designating one nation, the Hebrews, to be priests to the rest. That nation of priests fell into sin in Egypt, and God took the opportunity to re-create the (Garden) *sanctuary* with the Mosaic covenant, setting aside the Levites and Aaronic priests to guide the Israelite nation. Next, just as God planted a Garden in Eden and then

made a man to rule it, so also, after the priests of Israel fell into sin (1 Samuel 1-3), God took the opportunity to re-create the (Adamic) *king* with the Davidic covenant. With the collapse of the Davidic covenant and the exile, God took the opportunity to inaugurate the *imperial* stage of history, and placed Israel under the protection of world emperors. With the collapse of the imperial stage of history, seen in Rome's crucifixion of the Son of God, God enthroned Jesus Christ to be the True Noahic Gentile, the True Abrahamic Hebrew, the True (Mosaic) Aaronic Priest, the True Davidic King, and the True World Emperor.

Each of these covenants is built on the previous one, by way of being added to it. Each one, however, transforms the previous one as well. Once Abram's family had been set aside as priests, it was no longer enough for the Gentiles to obey the Noahic covenant. They were also required to bless Abram. Once the Tabernacle was set up, it was no longer proper for the Hebrews to have altars in many places.<sup>2</sup> The only altar permitted was at the Tabernacle. Once the Temple was set up, there was no more moving around of the Tabernacle from place to place. Once the Imperial stage of history was inaugurated, God's people were required to "render to Caesar." Of course, with the coming of the New Covenant, there were radical transformations of the entire Old Covenant series.

With this as background and context, let us look at the age of the patriarchs. We have already noticed God's "laying hold" on the situation in His call of Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees. We find that in Ur, Terah had sons, but his son Haran died (Genesis 11:27-28). We find that in Ur, Abram took a wife, but his wife was barren (Genesis 11:29-30). The message was clear: If you have sons in Babylon, they will die; and if you take wives in Babylon, they will be barren. An exodus is clearly needed.<sup>3</sup>

### Exodus

What follows is the second exodus in the Bible, the first being the Flood. The exodus is the second step in the typological pattern of history, the transition from the old world to the new. It is the act of breaking down and restructuring, as when I remove a glass from the cabinet and water from the pipe, and put them together into a new thing: a glass of water; or as when Jesus,

having taking hold of bread, broke it and gave it a new name: His body. What is seen very simply and basically in such acts of restructuring is seen at large in the exodus pattern.<sup>4</sup>

The following are some of the most important exoduses in the Bible:

1. Noah's removal from captivity in the Old World to the New.
2. Abram's removal from death in Babylon to life in Canaan (Genesis 11:27-12:5).
3. Abram's deliverance from captivity in Egypt to life in Canaan (Genesis 12:6-13:18).
4. Lot's deliverance from Sodom (Genesis 19:1-16), God's offer of life at The Mountain (19:17-19), and Lot's death in the wilderness (19:30-38).<sup>5</sup>
5. Abraham's deliverance from danger in Philistia (Genesis 20).
6. Isaac's deliverance from danger in Philistia (Genesis 26).
7. Jacob's deliverance from enslavement in Mesopotamia (Genesis 31).
8. Israel's deliverance from enslavement in Egypt (Exodus 1-15).
9. The Ark of God, taken captive by Philistines, defeats their gods and is returned, laden with spoils (1 Samuel 5-6).
10. David's sojourn in the wilderness and Philistia, and then his return to the land (1 Samuel 21-2 Samuel 2).
11. Israel's return from Mesopotamia, after the exile.
12. Jesus' "exodus at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31); His renunciation of Jerusalem and the Temple, and His crucifixion outside the walls; the new Kingdom of the Mount of Olives.
13. The removal of the Church from Jerusalem before her destruction in 70 A.D. (Matthew 24:16-18; Acts 1-28).

When we remember that the Bible regards the Philistines as a sub-group of the Egyptians (Genesis 10:13-14), we see that there are basically two avenues of exodus in the Old Testament: those from the North (Babylon, Mesopotamia) and those from the South (Egypt, Philistia). All of these find their fulfill-

ment in Christ's abandonment of Jerusalem, and thus of the whole old world.

The sequence of events in the exodus is this:

1. *Some threat, some aspect of sin or of the curse, drives God's people from their home.* Adam was driven from paradise. Famines drove Abram to Egypt (Genesis 12:10), Isaac to Philistia (Genesis 26:1), the Hebrews to Egypt (Genesis 43:1). The disaster at Sodom drove Abraham to Philistia (Genesis 19:28; Genesis 20). Wicked oppressors drove Jacob to Mesopotamia (Genesis 27:42-43) and David to Philistia (1 Samuel 20:31). Personal sin put Lot in Sodom (Genesis 13:7-13). Conquest removed the Ark to Philistia (1 Samuel 4) and Israel to Babylon (2 Kings 24-25). Love for His people caused our Lord to leave Heaven to save us.
2. *During the sojourn in captivity, Eve is assaulted by the Serpent, who wishes to use her to raise up his own wicked seed.* There was intermarriage before the Flood (Genesis 6:2). Pharaoh and Abimelech attacked Sarah (Genesis 12:13; 20:2). Lot's daughters were corrupted (Genesis 19:30-38). Abimelech's people threatened Rebekah (Genesis 26:10). Laban disinherited Rachel and Leah (Genesis 31:14-16). Pharaoh killed the boy babies and kept the girls for his people (Exodus 1:15-22). Amalek attacked David's wives in the wilderness (1 Samuel 30:5). Esther was taken by Ahasuerus during the exile (Esther 2). Demons ravaged Israel during the ministry of our Lord. The bride of Christ was assaulted continually by the Jews in the book of Acts.
3. *The righteous use "holy deception" to trick the serpent and protect Eve.* The serpent had deceived Eve in the beginning (1 Timothy 2:14); and eye for eye, tooth for tooth, it becomes the woman's trick to deceive the serpent. Thus, Abraham called Sarah his sister on two occasions; and Isaac called Rebekeh his sister, because they knew that an honest ruler would not simply seize their women without negotiating with them.<sup>6</sup> (Of course, the tyrants seized them anyway.) Jacob tricked Laban to recover his wives' dowries (Genesis 30:37-43). The Hebrew midwives lied to Pharaoh and saved Israelite boys, and were blessed by God for doing so (Exodus 1:18-21). David feigned madness in Philistia, and pretended to serve the Philistines (1 Samuel 21:13; 1 Samuel 27, 29),

while actually defending Israel. Jesus protected and saved His holy bride by drawing Satan's fire to Himself.

4. *Very often, God's people are enslaved during the sojourn outside the land.* Jacob was virtually enslaved by Laban, and Laban regarded him as his slave.<sup>7</sup> Israel was enslaved in Egypt. Israel was virtually enslaved at the beginning of the Babylonian captivity. Jesus was dragged before Pilate and cast into prison.
5. *God brings blessings upon His people during the captivity, but plagues the tyrant, either progressively or as part of the deliverance.* Abram acquired wealth in Egypt (Genesis 12:16), but Pharaoh's house received plagues (Genesis 12:17). Despite persecution, Isaac became wealthy in Philistia (Genesis 26:12-17). God made Jacob wealthy in Mesopotamia, but gradually decapitalized Laban (Genesis 31:5-12). Israel multiplied in Egypt (Exodus 1:12), but Egypt was plagued. The Ark brought plagues on the Philistines during its captivity (1 Samuel 5:6-6:1). David gathered an army and wealth while in exile, but Saul was plagued by demons (1 Samuel 16:14; 22:2; 1 Samuel 25). The Jews prospered in Babylon; and important Jews were found at court, while Nebuchadnezzar was driven insane (Daniel 4). The work of Christ on the Cross redeemed the world, ensured our blessing, and destroyed Satan, while apostate Israel was plagued by demons during Christ's ministry and throughout the book of Acts.
6. *God miraculously intervenes, often with visions to the pagan lord, in order to save His people.* Noah's Ark and Flood were miracles, as we have seen. God's glory appeared to Abram in Ur (Acts 7:2). God appeared to Abimelech to deliver Sarah (Genesis 20:6-7). Angels came to save Lot, and worked miracles (Genesis 19:11). God appeared to Laban and ordered him to leave Jacob alone (Genesis 31:24). The miracle of Passover saved Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12). The plagues on Philistia were miraculous (1 Samuel 5-6). God appeared to Nebuchadnezzar and converted him, causing him to favor God's people more than before (Daniel 4). God sent Pilate's wife a vision (Matthew 27:19). God raised Jesus from the dead.
7. *Very often the serpent tries to shift blame and accuses the righteous man of being the cause of his difficulty.* Thus, Pharaoh blamed

Abram (Genesis 12:18), Abimelech blamed Abraham (Genesis 20:9), Abimelech blamed Isaac (Genesis 26:10), Laban blamed Jacob (Genesis 31:26), Pharaoh blamed Moses (Exodus 10:28), and Saul blamed David (1 Samuel 20:31). Herod and Pilate tried to shift the blame to each other. Pilate washed his hands, and then put a sign on the Cross blaming God and the believers. The Jews blamed the Christians (Acts 5:28).

8. *God humiliates the false gods of the enemy.* By implication the false gods of Egypt and Philistia were humiliated when Abram and Isaac were delivered. Rachel sat on Laban's gods (Genesis 31:34), and Jacob buried them (Genesis 35:4).<sup>8</sup> God judged all the gods of Egypt (Exodus 12:12). The Ark humbled Dagon of the Philistines (1 Samuel 5:3), and then destroyed him (v. 4). Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were converted and renounced their false gods (Daniel 4; 6:7, 26-27). Christ defeated Satan, and the ascended Christ destroyed the Temple, which had become an idolatrous abomination.
9. *God's people depart with spoils.* Noah brought the true wisdom of the old world with him (Genesis 8:20-22). Abram left Egypt with spoils (Genesis 12:16). Lot, of course, barely got out of Sodom alive, but Abraham received large gifts from Abimelech (Genesis 20:16). Jacob had nothing when he went to Mesopotamia, but came back extremely rich (Genesis 32-33). Israel spoiled the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35-36). The Philistines sent the Ark back laden with gold (1 Samuel 6:17-18). David inherited Saul's Kingdom. The Jews came back from Babylon with much spoil (Zechariah 6:10-11). Between 30 and 70 A.D., the Church spoiled the Old Covenant. She now spoils the world, bringing all into the kingdom.
10. *Finally, God's people are installed in the Holy Land.* This is, of course, the goal of the exodus. Sometimes the people are brought out of bondage, but reject the Kingdom, as in the cases of Lot and of Israel in the wilderness. Eventually, though, they come into the new world.
11. Installation in the new land means setting up worship, building God's house out of some of the spoils, and setting up a priesthood. (This "Victory-Housebuilding Pattern"<sup>9</sup> is actually what we are calling the establishment phase that

comes after the exodus, but for completeness let us take note of it here.) Noah built an altar and offered sacrifice (Genesis 8:20). When Abram came out of Ur, he built altars in the land (Genesis 12:7-8). When Abram came out of Egypt, he restored the altar at Bethel (Genesis 13:4). When Abraham was delivered from Abimelech, God opened Sarah's womb and gave him a son (Genesis 21:1). Remember: the altar, the Temple, etc. are all symbols for God's people. Thus, the miraculous birth of a messianic son corresponds to the building of a house for God. This is "counterfeited" with the birth of Lot's sons after his deliverance from Sodom (Genesis 19:30-38).<sup>10</sup> When Isaac was delivered from Philistia, he built an altar (Genesis 26:25). When Jacob arrived back in Canaan after his captivity in Mesopotamia, he built an altar (Genesis 33:20). When Israel escaped from Egypt, she built first a golden calf out of spoil, and then the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-9; 32:2-4). The return of the Ark from Philistine captivity eventually led to the building of the Temple. The booty from David's Philistine wars also went to the Temple, after David's exodus and enthronement (1 Chronicles 22:14-16). The Temple was rebuilt after the return of Israel from Babylonian exile (Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah). After Jesus' exodus on the Cross, and His priestly installation in heaven, the true Temple of the people of God began to be built of living stones.

Such is the exodus pattern as we find it in the Bible. It is interesting to note a couple of other instances of the pattern. There is a counterfeit exodus in Judges 17-18. There we read of the erection of a counterfeit Tabernacle and the ordaining of a counterfeit priest. Subsequently we have a counterfeit journey by apostate Danites who had rejected the land God gave them. This issues in a counterfeit conquest and the full establishment of a counterfeit sanctuary in Dan.<sup>11</sup>

Another interesting exodus is that of Jeroboam. Like Abraham, Jeroboam was promised part of Canaan (1 Kings 11:29-37). Solomon drove him into Egypt (1 Kings 11:40). When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam acted foolishly. Jeroboam returned to the land, and Northern Israel made him their king (1 Kings 12:1-20). Jeroboam proceeded to apostatize, and built counterfeit sanctuaries and set up counterfeit priests (1 Kings 12:25-32).

### Establishment

Now that Abram has made his exodus from Babylon and come into the land, what is the nature of the covenant established with him, and with the succeeding patriarchs Isaac, Jacob, and the sons of Israel? First, the name of God given in connection with the new covenant is, as we have mentioned, God Almighty. By this name, God assured the patriarchs that He was fully capable of performing what He promised.

Second, God gave new names to His restructured people. God changed Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel. Jacob means Supplanter, and pointed to his being the younger son who replaces the older. The older son is often a type of Adam, and the younger of the Second Adam. Thus, Seth replaced Cain, Shem replaced Japheth (Genesis 5:32; 9:24; 11:10), Isaac replaced Ishmael, Jacob replaced Esau, Joseph replaced the older brothers, Ephraim replaced Manasseh (Genesis 48:18), Eleazar and Ithamar replaced Nadab and Abihu (Exodus 6:23; 24:1; Leviticus 10:1-6), David replaced his older brothers, and Jesus replaced Adam. Israel, however, means God's Prince. When we get to Exodus and the Mosaic covenant, we find that the priestly nation is called "children of Israel," a race of princes and princesses. During the patriarchal period, however, they were known as Hebrews, descendants of the Shemite Eber (Genesis 11:16; 14:13; 43:32; Exodus 1:15; 2:6; 3:18; 5:3; 21:2).<sup>12</sup>

The grant made to Abram and his descendants was the land of Canaan (Genesis 15:18-21). The stipulations that came along with this grant were to obey all of God's law (Genesis 26:5) and in the area of sacraments, circumcision (Genesis 17).

The new world polity that came into being meant that the Hebrews were a nation of priests to evangelize and guide the Gentiles. This is what it meant for Abraham to be a "father" to other nations (Genesis 45:8; Romans 4:11). The evangelistic ministry of the patriarchs is symbolized by their altars and wells, as we shall see.

The internal polity of the people of Abraham was a simple patriarchal or clan order: The family head was also the spiritual leader. Since they were not yet a nation, and did not govern any territory, they did not exercise the sword of civil authority. Thus, "separation of church and state" was not an issue during the pa-



triarchal period. The Hebrews were a family and a church, but not a state.

### Symbolism

Six symbols stand out as especially relevant to the Abrahamic covenant and the patriarchal era. These symbols picture the nature of God's people and of their ministry. The symbols that come to play prominently in the patriarchal era are stars, dust, altars, pillars, trees, and wells. These symbols will recur in the Mosaic covenant, where they will be organized into a package, the Tabernacle. During the patriarchal era, however, the symbols were distributed "under the open sky."

God told Abram, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered" (Genesis 13:16; cf. 22:17; 28:14; 32:12). God also told Abram that his seed would be like the stars of the heavens in quality (Genesis 15:5; see Chapter 5) and quantity (Genesis 22:17; cf. 26:4; 37:9-10). Thus, the people of Abraham would be a new heavens and a new earth. The promise to Abraham was that a righteous people would *fill* the earth as the dust, and that a righteous people would *rule* the earth as the stars. The Kingdom of God, the spiritual people of Abraham, would someday cover the earth and rule it.<sup>13</sup>

Abraham was to conduct a ministry of evangelism and guidance among all the nations of the world. In this way he would be a "father" of many nations, and they would be his spiritual children. Paul picks this theme up and expands on it in Romans 4, but it is found in Genesis (cf. Genesis 45:8). Abraham began his evangelistic ministry in Haran, before he got to Canaan; and we read that many converts came with him on his exodus (Genesis 12:5).<sup>14</sup> He conducted this ministry by erecting altars, which were as we have seen, models of the holy mountain, ladders to heaven. At these altar sites, Abraham and his descendants led their converts in worship, and taught them the ways of God (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7).

Abraham pitched his altars in connection with special trees, also ladders to heaven, as we have seen in Chapter 7 (Genesis 12:6; 13:18; 14:13; 18:4, 8; 21:33; 23:17; 35:4, 8). The association of trees with altars, holy mountains, reminds us of the Garden of

Eden. Edenic imagery is reinforced by the attention given to wells of water in connection with the patriarchal ministry (16:14; 21:19, 25, 30; 26:15, 18-32). This is no accident. Abraham's evangelistic ministry was a call to people to make a spiritual pilgrimage back to God.

In Adam's Garden there was a holy mountain, a grove of trees (cp. Genesis 23:17), a well of water, and also a woman. Significantly, it is in connection with wells that the patriarchs found their wives. Rebekah and Rachel were both found at wells (Genesis 24:11-45; 29:2-10), and Moses found Zipporah at a well (Exodus 2:15). Jesus presented Himself as the True Groom to a Samaritan divorcee and adulteress at a well (John 4:6-26).

The altars spoke of the coming sacrifice of Jesus Christ on God's holy mountain. The trees spoke of God's glory and shade, ladders to heaven. The springs spoke of spiritual nourishment, a nourishment offered by the nation of priests to the Gentiles (see especially Isaac's ministry in Philistia, Genesis 26:12-33).

The patriarchs dug wells, built altars, and planted trees (Genesis 21:33); and everything suggests that these things were done together in grove settings.<sup>15</sup> They created open-air sanctuary-gardens. They did not build a house for God. In our survey of the eleventh step in the "Exodus Pattern" above, we noted that in patriarchal times, after each exodus there was an altar built; while in subsequent eras, a house was built after each exodus. The contrast is important. In the house, all the various materials are organized together: laver, altar, wooden boards (trees). The house structure is an appropriate analogue for a nation. The Hebrews were not an organized nation in the age of the patriarchs, however. Thus, neither a portable house-tent nor a permanent temple would have been appropriate. Once the people progressed from glory to glory, into a full-fledged nation, then the altar-tree-spring garden would progress into the glory of Tabernacle and Temple.

The places Abraham made as his ministry headquarters were Shechem, Bethel, and Hebron (Genesis 12:6-8; 13:18). Jacob later made these the sites of his ministry also (Genesis 33:18, 20; 35:1, 6, 7, 27; 46:1). These were the key sites initially captured by Joshua when he conquered Canaan (Joshua 7:2; 8:30; 10:3). Thus, Abraham and Jacob were engaged in a "shadow

conquest” of the land. More important, we see from this what true conquest is. The building of altars of evangelism preceded the cultural conquest. If we wish to build a Christian civilization in our land, we had best start with altars.

The pillar also becomes an important patriarchal symbol, though only in one instance. When Jacob had his vision of the True Tower of Babel (Babel = Gate of Heaven), he awoke and

took the stone that he had put at his head-place and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top. And he called the name of that place Bethel (House of God); however, formerly the name of the city had been Luz (Genesis 28:18-19).

This means that whenever we read of Bethel in Genesis, the people of that day called it Luz. Jacob stood outside the city and renamed it Bethel by faith, faith that someday Luz would indeed be a House of God. When Jacob came back into the land, he went again to Luz, and God again appeared to him.

Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it and once again named the place Bethel (Genesis 35:13-15).

God’s ascension from this spot is clearly to be associated with the ladder to heaven.

Thus, Jacob’s stone pillars were symbols of God’s holy mountain, the true ladder to heaven. In fact, Jacob explicitly called the pillar the “house of God”: “And this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house” (Genesis 28:22a). Jacob poured out wine at the pillar, just as he would have poured it out at an altar (cp. Numbers 15:1-10). He poured oil over it, just as the Mosaic House of God, the Tabernacle, would be permeated with oil (Exodus 40:9), and just as God’s human house, His priest, would have oil poured on him (Leviticus 8:12). This oil represented God’s cloud coming down on the mountain, filling the Tabernacle; anointing His new Adam. The Bible pulls this imagery together in Psalm 133:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is  
 For brothers to dwell together in unity!  
 It is like the precious oil upon the head,  
 Coming down upon the beard, Aaron's beard,  
 Coming down upon the edge [mouth, top] of his robes.  
 It is like the dew of Hermon,  
 Coming down upon the mountains of Zion;  
 For there the Lord commanded the blessing:  
 Life forever!

Thus, the mist of God's cloud upon His mountain is parallel to the oil poured on Jacob's stone. It was a symbol that at the top of the holy mountain, the ladder to heaven, was the glory-cloud of God. Jacob performed this ritual, which seems so strange to our symbol-impooverished twentieth-century minds, in the sure and certain confidence that someday God's glorious cloud, His heavenly Kingdom, would come to earth. The cloud and the oil represent the Holy Spirit, the Bond of unity in the Kingdom. The descent of the cloud on the mountain, and of the oil on the pillar, find their typological fulfillment with the descent of the Spirit on our Lord at His baptism, and upon the Church at Pentecost.<sup>16</sup>

### History and Decline

For a while, God's priestly nation was faithful to Him. They prospered despite tribulation. They had successful ministries with the Philistines, who were anxious to be led in worship by Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 21:22-34; 26:26-33). As a climax, God converted the Pharaoh of Egypt, and put Joseph in charge of the whole world.<sup>17</sup> When Joseph married the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis, we see a unification between the older Noahic Gentile priesthood and the new Abrahamic special priesthood.<sup>18</sup> During these years, the nation grew larger and larger, so that while only seventy from Jacob's immediate family went down into Egypt (Genesis 46:27), yet the number of people in the nation was so great that they had to be given the entire land of Goshen, the best of that Edenic land, to dwell in (Genesis 47:6; cf. 13:10).

After a prosperous season in Egypt, however, the people lapsed into idolatry (Joshua 24:14). God raised up a tyrant to scourge them, and thus put them into a crucible to restructure

them. He tore apart the nation, reducing it to slavery, but only so that He could rebuild it again more glorious than before.

### **Conclusion**

The patriarchal establishment was a relatively loose one. There was no national political organization, because the people existed under the government of other nations. Thus, in terms of analogical symbolism, there was no house or temple signifying them as God's people.

The patriarchs dwelt in tents. It is a myth to think of them as nomads, moving from place to place. Actually, the patriarchs lived in only a few places, and for years at a time. Abraham lived at Hebron for about twenty-five years, and at Beersheba in Gerar for about seventy-five years. If you live in a tent for such long periods of time, you obviously are not living in a teepee or a "Bedouin" tent. To get an idea of the patriarchal tent, we need look no further than the Tabernacle. Such tents had wooden boards for walls, embedded in sockets and held up with metal rods. They had wooden pillars separating various rooms. They were covered with roofs of water-tight leather. The only thing that made them "tents" was the fact that they had curtains along the walls (along with the boards), and the fact that they could, if necessary, be dismantled.

Thus, the patriarchal tent was a semi-permanent affair. The patriarchs were not constantly on the move. This means that the sanctuary-groves they set up were not meager affairs. If you live in a place for twenty-five years, it stands to reason that you will make your place of worship into something nice. The patriarchal worship-oasis was not a rude affair.

Nevertheless, even though the imagery is very Edenic, there is an important difference between the patriarchal worship-garden and the Garden of Eden. God planted the Garden of Eden. God set up that sanctuary. The patriarchal gardens were set up by men, though under divine guidance. Like Abraham's and Jacob's "shadow conquests" of the land, these sanctuary-oases were "shadow gardens." Not until Moses would God give explicit directions and take steps to plant His own garden-sanctuary in the earth.

In summary, the patriarchal establishment had the following features:

*New Names:*

God: God Almighty

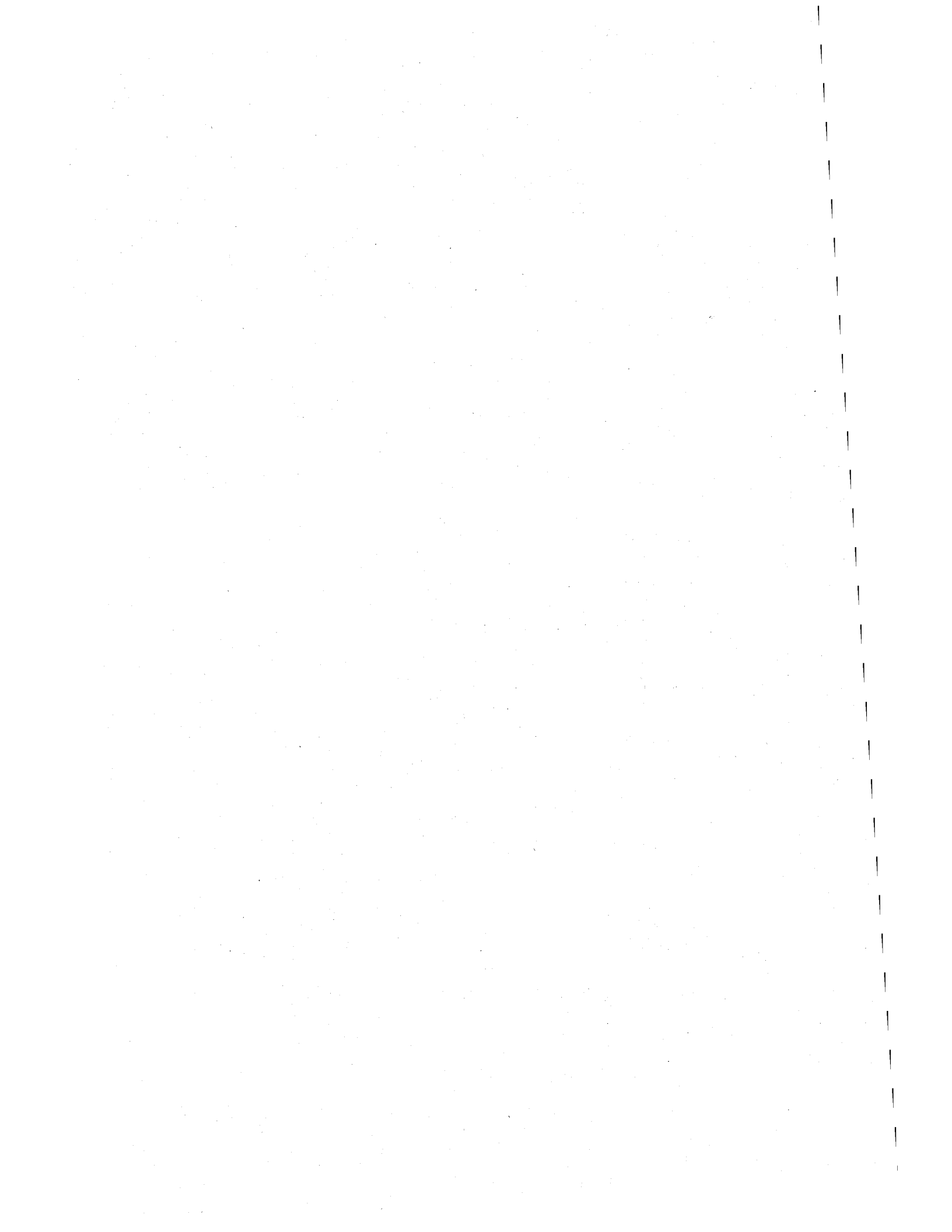
People: Hebrews

*Grant:* Canaan (anticipated)*Promise:* Your seed will possess it*Stipulations:*

Sacramental: Circumcision

Societal: God's charge, commandments, statutes, and laws (Genesis 26:5)

*Polity:* Patriarchal family heads and worship leaders*Symbol:* Oasis-Sanctuary



---

Though nature's strength decay,  
And earth and hell withstand,  
To Canaan's bound I urge my way,  
At his command:  
The wat'ry deep I pass,  
With Jesus in my view:  
And thro' the howling wilderness  
My way pursue.

The goodly land I see,  
With peace and plenty bless'd;  
A land of sacred liberty,  
And endless rest.  
There milk and honey flow;  
And oil and wine abound,  
And trees of life forever grow,  
With Mercy crown'd.

—Thomas Olivers  
“The God of Abrah'm Praise,” stanzas 5 and 6

---



## F I F T E E N

---

# THE WORLD OF THE TABERNACLE

Psalm 102 tells us that the heavens and the earth eventually wear out, and have to be changed:

Of old Thou didst found the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They themselves will perish, but Thou dost endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed (Psalm 102:25-26).

Whether the psalmist has in mind the physical heavens and earth, or the social polity of the world, is not immediately clear. Perhaps his language is designed to encompass both.<sup>1</sup> The principle he articulates, however, clearly applies to both; and it applies to the Abrahamic heavens and earth. They waxed old as the people grew into a nation. Eventually there were too many people to be ruled by simple clan structures. The people began to break out of the seams of the old heaven-and-earth garment.

God acted to change the garment. For one thing, once the people were reduced to slavery, the distinction between the blood line of Jacob and the multitudes of servants in the nation broke down.<sup>2</sup> All were servants now. When Israel came out of Egypt, we do not find an aristocracy of true-blooded Israelites dominating a plebeian class made up of the descendants of the servants, as probably would have been the case had God not put the nation through the crucible of enslavement. The result of this change was that government by patriarchs shifted into government by elders (Exodus 3:16; 4:29). Men of discernment rather than men of blood came to hold power in Israel.

Just as the social polity was forced to change, so was the symbolic polity. Living in cities during the period of slavery (Exodus 1:11), the Hebrews were not able to establish worship-oases. As a result, they began to worship at special tents set aside for the purpose. There is a clear reference to a special tent for God, a "tent of meeting," in Exodus 33:7-11. This passage cannot be referring to the Tabernacle because it had not yet been built.

These two changes in social and symbolic polity *anticipated* the new covenant that was to come, though in only a very rough way. As the Hebrews dreamed of freedom, they doubtless envisioned a return to the garden-oases of their fathers. God had something else in mind, something far more glorious, something they could not have envisioned. God would organize them as a nation around elders and judges, who at last would be able to serve as true magistrates. God would set up a symbolic polity in the form of a glorious tent of gold and precious tapestries.

Thus, God *laid hold* on the Hebrews, and *broke them down* in the fires of His refinement (Exodus 3:2,7). He then *restructured* them into a nation, giving them a new *name* (Israel instead of Hebrew), and revealing a new name for Himself (the Lord, the One who keeps the promises made to the fathers, Exodus 6:3-8).

### The Mosaic Law

The Mosaic establishment, since it entailed a change in priesthood, also entailed a change in law (Hebrews 7:12). The sacramental law of the patriarchal establishment was circumcision. The center of the Mosaic sacramental law was Passover, though circumcision continued. Stemming from the Passover were all kinds of other sacramental laws.<sup>3</sup>

The center of the Mosaic social law was the Ten Commandments. Stemming from the Ten Commandments were all kinds of other social laws. One major change in social law instituted with Moses was an expansion of the laws of incest. Formerly, only cross-generational incest had been forbidden (Genesis 2:24; 19:30-38). Abraham had married his sister, just as Cain and Seth obviously had married theirs (Genesis 20:12). Jacob had married two sisters (Genesis 29:18-30). Now both brother-sister marriages and marrying two sisters were forbidden (Leviticus 18:6-18).

In making His people a nation, God gave them social laws as part of the Mosaic law. There is a good deal of misunderstanding about the Mosaic law in Christendom today. The three most common errors about the law are that it was harsh, was impossible to obey, and is irrelevant to us today.

Against the first misconception, that the law was harsh, we have to say that our God is a God of love. God never gave any mean, harsh, unreasonable, or cruel laws. God's laws, even those thundered from Sinai, were loving, joyous, peaceable, patient, kind, good, faith-filled, gentle, longsuffering, temperate, and spiritual. If they seem harsh to us, it is either because we have misinterpreted them, or because we are still looking at them from a secular humanistic perspective. We dare not, however, judge the Bible by our own modern standards.

Against the second misconception, that the laws were so tough, so demanding, and so stringent that nobody could ever keep them, we must say that this is not so. The Bible tells us that Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (Luke 1:6). Clearly, the law could be kept, and was kept by many godly people. True, they were not perfect, but they kept the law by bringing sacrifices to cover their sins.

Galatians 4:1 says that the people in the Old Covenant were like children, and Galatians 3:24 says that the law was like a tutor for children. The law, then, was a "simplified accommodation" for children. We expect more from adults than from children. Adults have greater responsibilities and are more accountable than children. Thus, the New Covenant law is actually much tougher to obey, because it makes so many demands on our inward attitudes.

Why do people think the Mosaic law was hard to keep? In general, it is because they do not know what the law really commanded, and because they have the Mosaic law confused with the rabbinical traditions of Judaism. The rabbinical traditions were a "heavy yoke" (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; Acts 15:10; Matthew 23:4). Jesus called the people back to the Mosaic law, making it His own, and in doing so said that He was offering an "easy yoke" (Matthew 5:20-48; 11:29-30). We should, then, briefly look at the Mosaic law.

What about all those sacrifices, you may ask? There were the Burnt, Meal, Peace, Thank, Votive, Sin, Reparation, "Heave," and "Wave" Offerings, for starters. Some used salt, and some did not. Some used oil, and some did not. Some required a lamb; others, oxen; others, birds. Leavened bread was used with some, unleavened with others. Some parts of the animal were burned up, others given to the priests, and others were eaten by laymen. These things differed for each sacrifice. It was an awful lot of detail to master. The Israelite citizen, however, never offered any sacrifices himself. Only the priests were allowed to do the sacrifices, and they did them every day. They soon became familiar with all these details.

Compare the details of the complicated sacrificial system with the details of auto repair, and it suddenly becomes clear just how simple the priest's job was. How many different kinds of cars are there? Add on the fact that they change from year to year. Now consider all the different parts and aspects that can go wrong. Next time you take your car in, look at all the volumes of "Chilton" auto repair manuals that your mechanic keeps on hand, and compare their size and detail with the book of Leviticus. If your mechanic can learn to fix cars, and enjoy it, obviously the priests of Israel had no trouble managing the sacrificial system.

What about the sabbath? Wasn't that a burden? No, it was a time of rest. But weren't they forbidden to cook on the sabbath? No, they kept the sabbath as a feast. But weren't they forbidden recreation on the sabbath? No, the Bible nowhere says this. Well then, what did they do? They went to church to worship God at the synagogue (Leviticus 23:3), and relaxed the rest of the day. The sabbath was not an "impossible burden."<sup>4</sup>

What about all those cleansing rules in Leviticus 11-15? Well, in the first place, becoming unclean only meant one thing: You were not permitted to go into the forecourt of the Tabernacle and bring a sacrifice. Since most forms of uncleanness only lasted a day or a week, it was no real burden to be unclean. Second, if you were seriously unclean, you could make other people unclean for a few hours (until sundown) if you touched them; but again, that was only a matter of concern if the other person were on his way to offer a sacrifice. At the most, being unclean was an inconvenience. Of course, if you were unclean for

months on end, and could not attend festivals, it became a more serious matter.

The laws of uncleanness were not hard to keep. You were to wash out a pot if a lizard fell into it and died. We would do the same today. You were not supposed to marry your sister, aunt, or child. Few of us would be tempted to. You were not supposed to eat dog-burgers or salted roast roaches. Most of us wouldn't either. That is because these are our customs, and we don't find them burdensome. If we were used to eating dog meat, as some cultures do, then the restriction would be temporarily burdensome until we got used to it. The Jews were not to eat pork either, but that was not hard for them. They were no more tempted to eat pork than we are to eat roaches.

So, the Mosaic law was not horribly complicated or impossible to keep. Of course, in the New Covenant we are not under the Mosaic law. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ replaces all the sacrifices of Moses. Christ has cleansed the world once and for all in His Resurrection, and so the laws of uncleanness no longer apply to us. That is, they no longer apply as laws. In terms of their symbolism, they still provide wisdom.

That does not mean that the law is irrelevant, however, which is the third common misconception. The Mosaic law has been ignored by the Church for a couple of centuries. In reaction against this, some have taken up the Mosaic social laws as a virtual blueprint for modern society.<sup>5</sup> The proper middle ground is to understand the typological nature of the Mosaic economy. The Old Covenant is a type of the New, and the Mosaic establishment, like the other establishments we are looking at, is a type of the Kingdom of Christ. As a type, it is filled with wisdom for us.<sup>6</sup>

A proper approach to the Mosaic law asks four questions. First, it asks what this law meant in the Old Covenant. Second, it asks how this law was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Third, it asks how this law is to be fulfilled in the Church, which is in union with Christ. And fourth, it asks what relevance this law may have in shaping wider society outside the Church. If we keep such a procedure in mind, the Mosaic laws can be of great value to us; and we can avoid the dangers of legalism on the one side, and antinomianism on the other.

Remember that a *type* is something that makes an *imprint*. If we allow the Mosaic law to imprint itself on our hearts, meditating on its Old and New Covenant significance, we will acquire inner wisdom; and this inner wisdom will enable us to apply God's fundamental principles creatively to modern problems, many of which are not explicitly dealt with in the law (for instance, pornography).

### The Mosaic Polity

We turn now to the social "heavens and earth" of Israel under the Mosaic establishment. There was a clear separation of "church" and "state" in the Mosaic covenant. Only the family of Aaron could serve as priests in the Tabernacle, and only the tribe of Levi could assist them. This meant that no officer of the state could be an officer of the church, and separated the two institutions definitively (cf. 2 Chronicles 26:16-19). The law distinguished between civil punishments on the one hand, and ecclesiastical ones, such as "cutting off from the people," or excommunication, on the other.<sup>7</sup>

The civil polity of Israel had been anticipated during the Egyptian sojourn, and consisted of elders who served as judges. When Israel came out of Egypt, she had never before been a nation in the sense of having a civil order. Her elders had simply been "leading men." Now, however, a system of courts was needed. God brought Jethro to help them set it up (Exodus 18). Jethro was a Noahic priest-king (Exodus 2:16; 18:12), head of the Kenite branch of the Midianite nation (Genesis 25:2; Exodus 2:16; Judges 1:16; contrast Numbers 22:4; Numbers 25; 31). Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, and for forty years Moses had observed Jethro managing a nation (Acts 7:30). Thus, Moses had been trained in civil government. Under Jethro's God-inspired advice, Moses set up a series of judges and appeals courts in Israel: elders over tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, with himself as Supreme Judge.

Moses' successor was Joshua, and after him came other judges, some who oversaw the entire nation, and others who judged in more localized areas. None of these judges was a king, and those who aspired to be were thwarted.<sup>8</sup> None had a standing army or "praetorian guard." Rather, in time of military dis-

ness they had to depend exclusively on the Israelite voluntary militia.<sup>9</sup> The last of these judges was Samuel, who presided over the dissolution of the Mosaic establishment, and who laid the foundation for the new Davidic establishment that replaced it.

In the patriarchal establishment, as we have seen, there were many garden-oasis sanctuaries set up by men. These were places of routine worship and sacrifice. In the Mosaic establishment, the patriarchal-oasis church was divided into two institutions: Tabernacle and synagogue. The synagogue continued the patriarchal tradition of being set up in many places at the determination and design of men. The Tabernacle continued the patriarchal-sanctuary in that in the Tabernacle architecture, the altars, trees, and wells of the patriarchs were woven into an organized structure. The Tabernacle, however, was expressly designed by God, and was located at His command, the new location being indicated by the movement of the glory-cloud.

The sacrificial worship, focused at the three annual festivals, was centralized at the Tabernacle. Only the priests might approach the altar and the Tent to offer sacrifice and to maintain the Tent. The Levites were set apart as guards and helpers of the Tabernacle area. By way of contrast, the worship of preaching and prayers was decentralized into local synagogues, pastored by Levites who lived in the towns (Deuteronomy 14:27, 29; Judges 17:7; 19:1).

For the most part, scholars use the term "synagogue" to refer to the highly structured institution that had developed by the time of our Lord, and that continues in Judaism today. According to Jewish tradition, this synagogue structure was established by Ezra, but it is more likely that it developed later than Ezra's time. Unfortunately, focusing on the New Testament synagogue has often blinded Bible students to the clear statements of the Old Testament to the effect that there were centers of worship (not of sacrifice) throughout Israel. Such houses of prayer were places of "holy convocation," which was required every sabbath (Leviticus 23:3). Worship services were also held on the new moons (2 Kings 4:23). During the Mosaic period, the Levites were the pastors of these local churches. I don't know what we should call them unless we call them "synagogues," and so that is what I shall call them in this book.

The synagogue was the place of sabbath day worship, and came into existence with the Mosaic Exodus. It is unclear whether or how the Hebrews kept the sabbath day before Sinai. God rested on the seventh day, after completing the world. There is a sense in which the new world, begun at the Flood, was not completed until Moses, since there was no new garden-sanctuary until that time. Perhaps God did not reinstitute the sabbath in its fullness until then. Given the hebdomadal (seven-day) patterns in Genesis, it is reasonable to infer that the Patriarchs worshipped on the sabbath (e.g., Genesis 7:10, 12). There is little evidence to suggest that the sabbath, at least in its Mosaic form, was binding on the Noahic nations.<sup>10</sup>

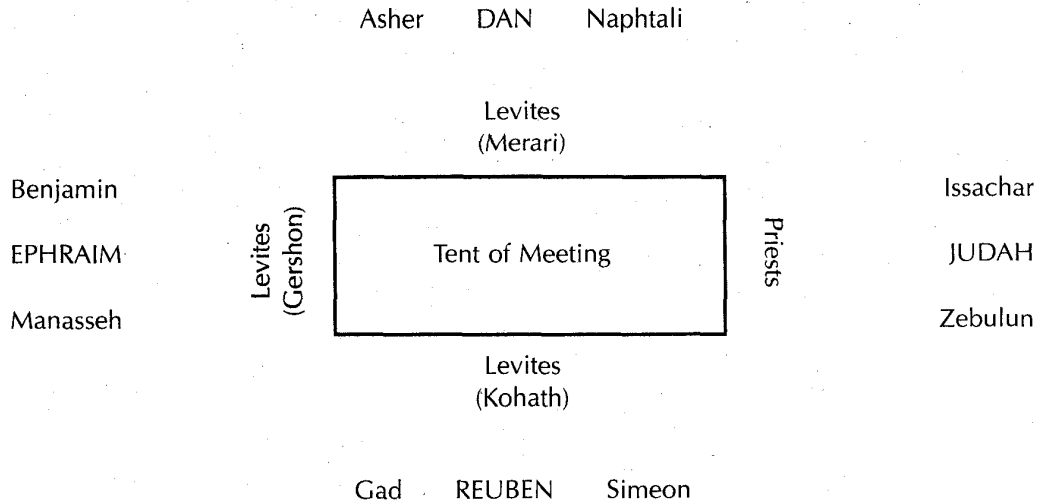
It is surely doubtful, however, that the Hebrews were able to observe the sabbath during the Egyptian bondage. Thus, the sabbath as a day of rest, festivity, and worship became a distinct and wonderful blessing of the Mosaic exodus. The book of Exodus is organized in terms of a passage from slavery to sabbath. The Book of the Covenant, Exodus 21-23, starts and ends with sabbath laws.<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 5:15 says that the reason for keeping the sabbath was to memorialize not only the creation, but also the exodus. Thus, the creation of the synagogue parallels the establishment of the weekly sabbath.

### **The Symbolic Polity**

In the wilderness, God had his holy army, the militia, camp around Him in a special symbolic array. It is important for us to consider this, because it correlates to certain features of the design of the Tabernacle, the symbol of the body politic. The Book of Numbers shows Israel as God's host, His army (Numbers 1:2-3). When Israel encamped, the Aaronic priests were positioned on the east side of the Tabernacle, as guardians of the door (which was on the east). Around the Tabernacle on the other three sides were the three groups of Levites. As an outer ring of warrior guards were the twelve tribes, carefully positioned on the four sides (see Numbers 2, 3; also see Diagram 15.1). In this way, the army clearly formed a human tabernacle for God's dwelling (cp. Exodus 23:17; 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16).



Diagram 15.1  
The Israelite Camp



Meredith G. Kline has written that God’s “house-building, as depicted in Exodus, is of two kinds. There is first the structuring of the people themselves into a formally organized house of Israel.”<sup>12</sup> This took place in Exodus 18–24, with Jethro’s reorganization of the nation, the giving of the Ten Commandments, and the giving of the social laws of the Book of the Covenant. Then,

having narrated the building of this living house of God’s habitation, the Book of Exodus continues with an account of the building of the other, more literal house of Yahweh, the tabernacle. . . . Though a more literal house than the living house of Israel, the tabernacle-house was designed to function as symbolical of the other; the kingdom-people-house was the true residence of God (a concept more fully explored and spiritualized in the New Testament). The Book of Exodus closes by bringing together these two covenant-built houses in a summary statement concerning Yahweh’s abiding in the glory-cloud in his tabernacle-house “in the sight of all the house of Israel” (40:34–38).<sup>13</sup>

This brings us to a consideration of the Tabernacle as the symbol for the Mosaic establishment. There are five aspects of the Tabernacle we wish to consider. First, the Tabernacle was a

house for God. Second, since the universe of heaven and earth is God's house, the Tabernacle symbolized the heavens and the earth. Third, the Tabernacle was a holy mountain, specifically reproducing the configuration of Mount Sinai. Fourth, since God's house is His people, the Tabernacle symbolized the body politic of Israel at this stage of history. And fifth, since the people-house started out "in Adam" and eventually came to be "in Christ," and since Christ is the True Israel, the Tabernacle also symbolized the righteous individual person, and as such was a type of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Tabernacle as God's House**

First of all, the Tabernacle was a place for God to dwell. The innermost chamber, the Most Holy, was His throne-room. God sat enthroned upon the wings of the cherubim, with His feet resting on the mercy seat.<sup>15</sup> Into this room only one man, the High Priest, could go, and only once a year, to clean the footstool (Leviticus 16:14-15). This was basically to prevent God from becoming displeased, lest He remove His feet from the footstool and depart from Israel, thus withdrawing His protection.

The outer room, the Holy Place, was the living area of the tent. In it were three pieces of furniture. There was a lamp to give light. There was a dinner table with bread on it. And there was an incense platform. We today use potpourri and scentsprays to make our homes smell nice. In the ancient world, before flush toilets were developed and when animals lived very close at hand, the noisome smells were stronger, and people burned incense regularly to make their homes smell nice.

Outside the tent was the kitchen area. Before the days of gas and electric ovens, people who could afford it put their kitchens in rooms off to the side, or even in a separate building. Just so, the kitchen was outside the Tabernacle. Here the animals were slaughtered, gutted, and skinned. They were washed in the sink (the laver) and cooked on the altar.

Such was God's tent, His house. God did not want His house to become dirty, of course. It had to be kept clean, because if the people let it get too run down and filthy, God would leave. Now, while doubtless physical dirt was wiped off of the Tabernacle furniture, it was mainly moral filth and ceremonial "uncleanness"

that defiled His house. (After all, the soil under the Tabernacle was "holy ground" and thus was cleansed from the curse of Genesis 3.) The purpose of the purification offerings of Leviticus 4 and 5 was to cleanse the house of these defilements. Blood was put on those parts of the house that had become unclean, blood being the sacrificial "detergent." The Tabernacle curtains, for instance, if defiled with ceremonial dirt, had to be washed (sprinkled) with blood.

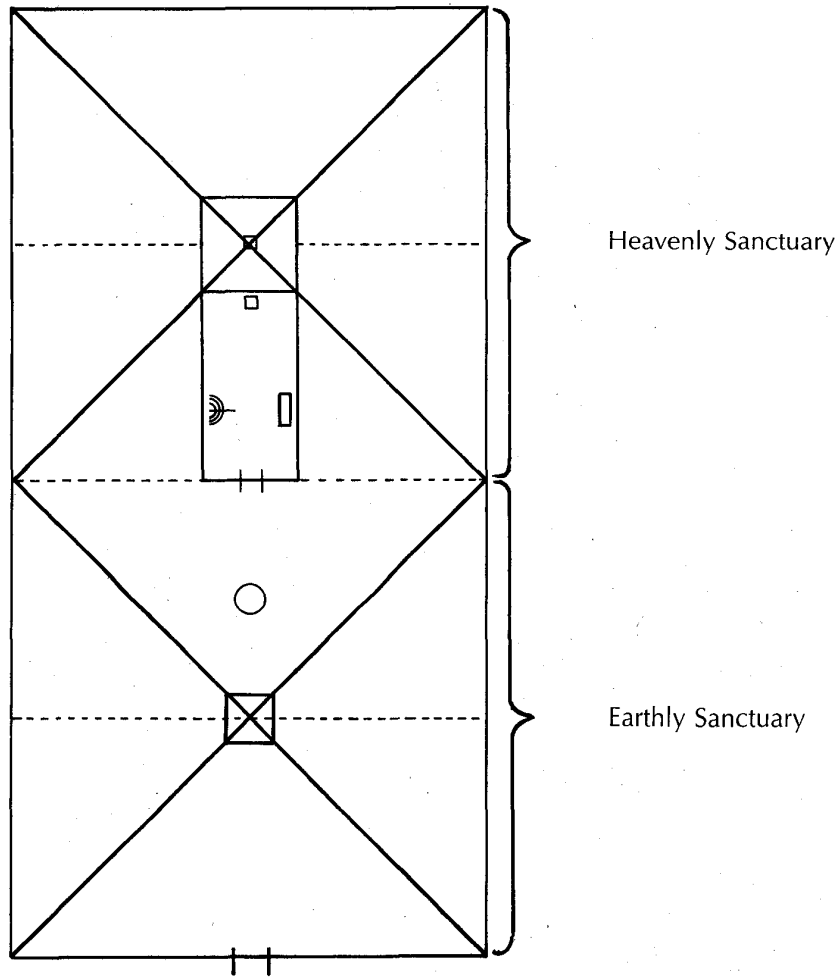
### **The Tabernacle as Cosmic House**

The Bible tells us that the Tabernacle and its courtyard symbolized the heavens and the earth, God's dwelling places.<sup>16</sup> Heaven was God's throne, and the earth His footstool (Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 5:35; Acts 7:49). This was set out in two ways in the Tabernacle. In the Most Holy Place, the heavenly throne was pictured by the winged cherubim. God sat enthroned on the outspread wings of the cherubim, with His feet on the mercy seat that covered the Ark of the Covenant. Thus, the Ark of the Covenant with its mercy seat lid had to do with the earth and humanity as God's footstool.

Second, the whole Tabernacle proper was a model of heaven (Hebrews 8:5; 9:23-25). The Most Holy Place itself was a model of the highest heavens, with the firmament or earthly heavens pictured in the Holy Place, and the earth pictured in the courtyard. (See Diagrams 15.2 and 15.3.) The courtyard altar was the holy mountain that reached toward the sky, pictured in the Holy Place behind the first veil, a veil of sky blue. Associated with the holy mountain was the laver of cleansing, which means that the laver is to be connected with the waters of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14). As we pass through the firmament-heavens of the Holy Place, we come to a second altar, which is as it were a second ladder stretching from the firmament-heavens to the highest heavens. Beyond the cherubic second veil, behind this golden altar was the Most Holy Place, the Highest Heavens.

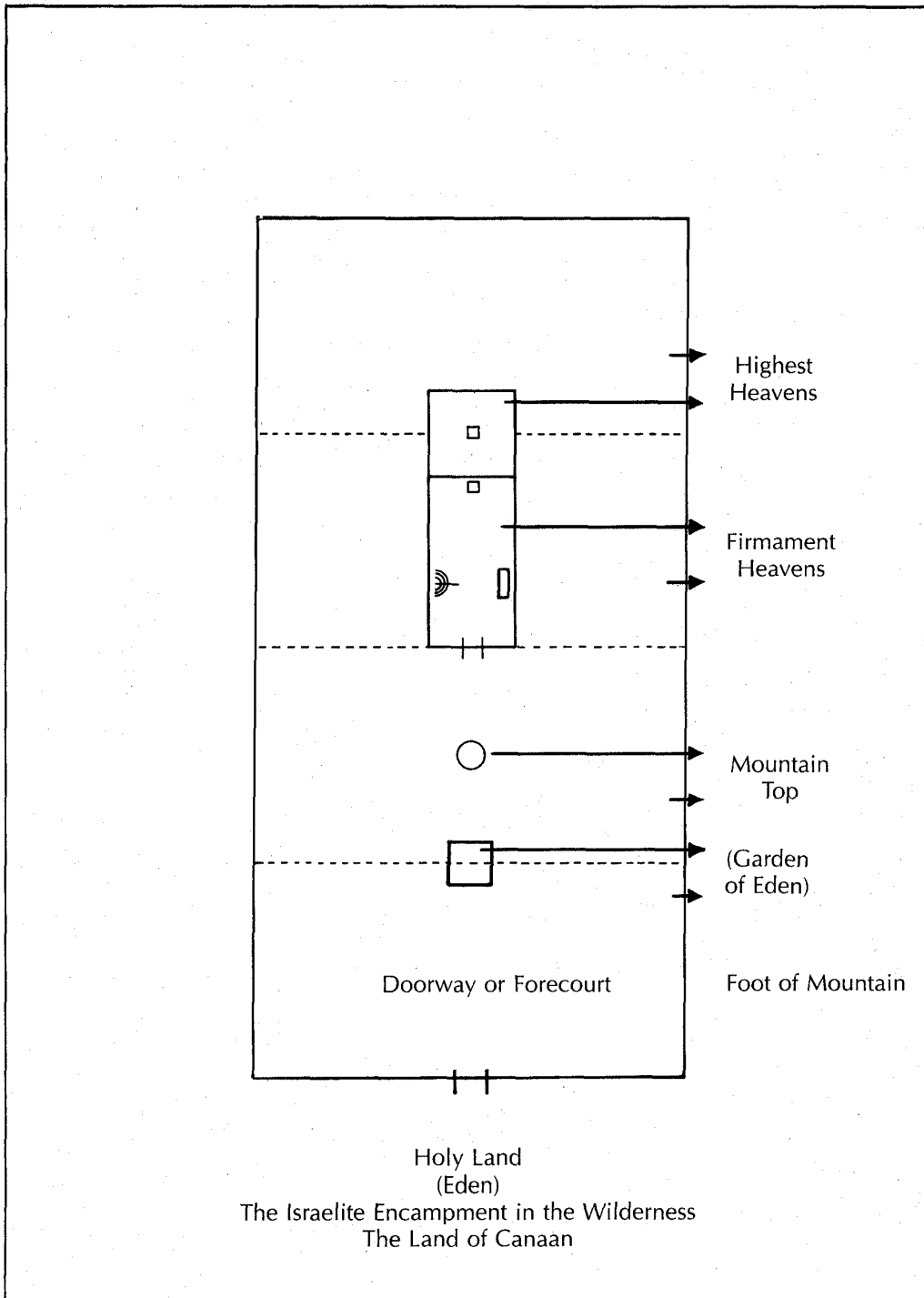
The courtyard thus represented the earthly garden-sanctuary. Adam had been cast from this sanctuary; and it was only under very tight restrictions, codified in the laws of cleanliness, that anyone might be admitted to it in the Mosaic system. Even so, the layman might only come into the forecourt. He

Diagram 15.2  
The Tabernacle Complex



The Bible nowhere explicitly says that the Ark of the Covenant is to be positioned in the center of the heaven half, and the altar in the center of the earthly half of the Tabernacle complex. Doubtless, depending on the terrain of a given encampment, these things might have been positioned differently. At the same time, however, the dimensions of everything connected with the Tabernacle tend to come in squares or double-squares, and so the configuration illustrated above is symbolically the most appropriate. After all, if you had a chance to set it up in a flat place, would you do it any other way? Notice how this arrangement brings out the correspondence between altar and Ark. The altar or holy mountain is the center of the earth, and the Throne of God is the center of heaven.

Diagram 15.3  
Environments



World

Diagram 15.4  
Environments

Place	Symbol	Occupant	Guardian	Furniture	Tabernacle Garment	Boundary Shield
Highest Heavens	Most Holy	God	Cherubim (High Priest)	Ark Mercy Seat	1/2 Tabernacle Curtain	Inner Veil
Firmament Heavens	Holy Place	God	Priests (High Priest) (Cherubim)	Altar Lamp Table	1/2 Tabernacle Curtain	Outer Veil
Garden	Court-yard	(Priests) <sup>1</sup>	Levites (Priests)	Laver Altar	Tent Curtain	Court Curtain
Eden	Canaan	Israel	Israel Army	Dwellings (Lev. 11) <sup>2</sup>	Red Ramskin	River & Boundary <sup>3</sup>
World	World	Gentiles	Gentiles	Dwellings	Dolphin	Four Corners of the Earth

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Adam and Eve were living in the garden, but were kicked out. The temporary and partial privilege of the priests to dwell there pictured man's eventual return to that estate.

<sup>2</sup>The dwellings of the Israelites had to be clean. Dead animals defiled them. Leprosy defiled them. They had to be cleansed annually of all old leaven before Passover.

<sup>3</sup>The importance of these boundaries is highlighted by the huge attention given them in Joshua 15-22. Note also the symbolic boundaries in Ezekiel 48.

This information is taken from James B. Jordan, "From Glory to Glory: Degrees of Value in the Sanctuary," and summarizes the material presented there.

was forbidden on pain of death to approach the holy mountain of the altar.

The area outside the courtyard was the camp of Israel, and later the Holy Land. This corresponds to the land of Eden, the homeland of the priests. Canaan also had very carefully set boundaries, and these boundaries were also guarded (Joshua 13-21). In this case, the guards were the Israelites themselves, a nation of priests. The land of Israel could never be owned permanently by anyone except Israelites, for it reverted to its Israelite owners every fifty years (Leviticus 25). Thus, except for the cities, no one but an Israelite was allowed to dwell in the land. Finally, outside the land was the world—the world of the Gentiles, converted and unconverted. The converted Gentile did not need to be circumcised and become an Israelite, but could remain a Noahic believer. Such Gentiles were welcome at the Feast of Tabernacles, but they could not live in the holy land.

Thus, we have five environments: highest heavens, firmament-heavens, garden-sanctuary, holy land, and world (see Diagram 15.4). A full study of this would reveal the following degrees of holiness:<sup>17</sup>

Highest Heaven/the Most Holy Place:

God  
Cherubim and angels

Firmament-Heavens/the Holy Place:

High Priest  
Priests

Garden of Eden/Sanctuary Courtyard:

Tabernacle Courtyard/War Camp/Nazirites  
Levitical Cities/Wilderness War Camp

Eden/Homeland:

Cities/Wilderness Camp  
The Land of Israel

World:

Converted Nations  
Apostate Nations

The Holy Place, or firmament-heavens, is of particular interest. The seven lamps of the lampstand can readily be associated

with stars, as Revelation 1:20 makes explicit. It can be suggested, though not proved, that the seven stars are to be associated with the seven planets of the ancient world. The planets were the "stars" that moved, and the Tabernacle was portable. Another suggestion is to associate the seven lamps with the seven sisters of the Pleiades (Job 9:9; 38:31; Amos 5:8).<sup>18</sup>

The twelve loaves of showbread on the table of showbread should be correlated to the manna that rained upon Israel from heaven during the wilderness sojourn (Nehemiah 9:15; John 6:31). As the people ate this heavenly bread, they were symbolically transformed into a heavenly people. They became the "stars" of the Abrahamic promise.

Finally, the cloud of smoke arising from the altar of incense is to be associated with God's glory-cloud, as it appeared in the firmament-heavens (Exodus 19:18). Incense has to do with prayer, and the glory-cloud environment is an environment of ceaseless angelic prayer (Isaiah 6:3-4; Revelation 5:8).

It is very interesting to note that synagogue buildings dating from the early Christian era very often have three sections of mosaics on their floors, stretching from the door to the front. The first mosaic is generally nondescript; but the one at the Beth Alpha synagogue is a picture of the sacrifice of Isaac, clearly a courtyard, holy-mountain theme. The second mosaic, occupying the center of the hall, is almost invariably a zodiac. The third mosaic, at the front, is a "sacred portal," filled with imagery of the highest heavens. Obviously the zodiac has to do with the firmament-heavens, in this sequence derived from the Tabernacle and Temple. Similar zodiacs are found in early Christian churches.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Tabernacle as Holy Mountain**

While the altar in the Tabernacle complex was a holy mountain, leading toward heaven, in a wider sense the entire Tabernacle complex was a holy mountain, or extended ladder to heaven. What makes this clear is the connection between the Tabernacle and Mount Sinai. We have already noted that the three-storied Ark of Noah was a world model, a model that transferred itself to the three-storied configuration of the world after the Flood. We see the same thing here: Mount Sinai was a



world model that transferred itself to the Tabernacle. When the people left Mount Sinai, they took the Mountain with them.<sup>20</sup>

God's cloud covered the top of the mountain, thus establishing it as a Most Holy Place. Moses and Moses alone was allowed to enter this place, just as later on only the High Priest would be allowed to enter the Most Holy of the Tabernacle (Exodus 19:19-24). At the top of the mountain God gave the Ten Commandments, which were later put in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle.

Midway down the mountain was the Holy Place. Only the elders of Israel were allowed to go into this area, and there they ate a meal with God. These elders were the "sun, moon, and stars" of the nation, and correlate with the lampstand. The meal they ate correlates with the table of shewbread. The elders themselves correlate with the Aaronic priests, who alone might enter the Tabernacle Holy Place. While the elders ate, "they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself" (Exodus 24:10). The blue sapphire pavement is equivalent to the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy.

The courtyard of the mountain was marked off with a boundary, and anyone who trespassed was put to death (Exodus 19:12). Inside this boundary was placed an altar, and only certain select young men might approach it (Exodus 24:4, 5; cp. 19:22, 24). The priests at this point were the firstborn sons, who had been saved by God at Passover. When they fell into sin at the golden calf, they were replaced by the Levites and the sons of Aaron, who thereafter took care of the sacrifices at the altar (Exodus 32:28-29; Numbers 8:14-18). The boundary around the mountain correlates to the boundary inside the courtyard that kept the people from approaching the altar.<sup>21</sup>

In this way, then, the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) were models of the ladder to heaven, of the holy mountain. Israel did not need to go back to Mount Sinai, or regard it as anything special, after the Tabernacle was built. The Tabernacle was God's portable mountain.

### **The Tabernacle as Symbol of the Body Politic**

More than this, however, the Tabernacle symbolized humanity as God's true environment. The Tabernacle was a symbol of the Israelite body politic (1 Corinthians 3:16). For this rea-

son, when the citizens of Israel sinned or became symbolically unclean, corresponding invisible marks “appeared” in the Tabernacle. The more unclean the people became, the more unclean the Tabernacle, its furniture, vessels, curtains, pillars, etc. became. To cleanse the Tabernacle, then, symbolized cleansing the people (cp. Exodus 24:4, 8). Only a cleansed people could draw near to God, and God would remain dwelling only in the midst of a cleansed people. Only a cleansed people could form a throne for God, so that He would be willing to sit enthroned on the praises of Israel, His feet resting on them (Psalm 22:3).

Ultimately, then, the entire tent was symbolic. The veils signified ranks of guardians around the Throne, places where God’s “feet” would rest. The veils of cloth became defiled when the people they represented became defiled. To cleanse the people, blood was put on the veils, and on the altars and mercy seat.<sup>22</sup>

The ranks of guardians stood to keep people away from God, lest God either become angry and destroy them, or become even angrier and pack up and move out, leaving His House desolate and abominated, and leaving His people to their doom (Ezekiel 8-11). Thus, these ranks of guardians were *shoes* between God and the cursed soil of humanity. Accordingly, the veils were also *shoes*. The outermost veil was significantly made of the same stuff as fine shoes: dolphin leather, and this correlation is made plain in the allegory of Ezekiel 16:10, “I clothed you with embroidered cloth, and put sandals of dolphin leather on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk.” Except for the silk, this is a description of the Tabernacle and its veils.

The only kind of people God would permit to draw near to Him were people who properly imaged Him (Genesis 1:26). Such people also needed to be shod. Of course, since the Tabernacle was set up on holy ground, they did not have to wear shoes there, but they had to wear shoes everywhere else.

As we have seen in Chapter 8, the animals that symbolized God’s holy people were all animals who wore shoes or who were particular about where they set their feet. If a man ate an unshod animal, he became symbolically unshod himself, and could not enter the sanctuary precincts to offer sacrifice.

The three zones of the Tabernacle complex symbolized three groups of people. If the High Priest sinned, blood had to be sprinkled on the Ark in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:11-14). If a regular priest sinned, blood was sprinkled on the veil and on the golden altar in the Holy Place. Thus, the Holy Place furniture was closely associated with the priests as the "heavens" of Israel. If the congregation as a whole sinned, this also defiled the Holy Place, which meant that the congregation as a whole was a "heavenly people" to the nations of the world (Leviticus 4:1-21). If a citizen sinned, blood was put on the courtyard altar, and this was also the case if a civil leader sinned (Leviticus 4:22-35). Now, all of the above were for "unintentional" sins. Once a year, atonement was made for the "high-handed" sins of the congregation; and on this occasion, blood was put on the Ark in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:15-16).

What emerges from this is a series of associations, a societal worldview. The congregation is associated with the highest heavens, with the firmament-heavens, and with the courtyard. They are both stars and dust, both heavens and earth, both cherubic veil and altar of earth. The High Priest, as supreme spiritual ruler, is associated with the Most Holy; the lesser priests, with the Holy Place; and civil leaders, with the courtyard. The priests rule in "heavenly things" and the leaders rule in "earthly things."

Once we understand that the Tabernacle was a symbol of Israelite society, there are all kinds of correlations that can be made. The Inner Veil of the Most Holy has to do with God's angelic guardians. The Outer Veil of the Holy Place has to do with the priestly guardians. The goat's hair tent curtain over the Tabernacle has to do with the courtyard and the Levites. The red ramskin cover that was on top of the goat's hair tent curtain is to be associated with Passover, and thus with all Israel, who were claimed at Passover. The dolphin leather cover has to do with the Gentiles—dolphin being a *sea* creature.<sup>23</sup> Interesting as it would be to go on with this, looking at the gold and bronze utensils and other features of the Tabernacle complex, we must move on. We shall consider the altar as a symbol of the body politic in more detail in Chapter 16. The point that has been established and illustrated is that the Tabernacle complex symbolized

Israelite society. When the Tabernacle complex is torn apart, in 1 Samuel, it symbolizes the rending of Israelite society.

### **The Tabernacle as Human Person**

Finally, the Tabernacle symbolized the righteous man, the heavenly man, the man made in God's own heavenly image (John 1:14; 2:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19).<sup>24</sup> We ought not to think of this as a visual symbol, so that the Most Holy Place is the head and the altar the feet. Rather, the Tabernacle symbolized the person in a more holistic fashion. The Most Holy Place symbolized the innermost parts of the man, both head and heart. The Holy Place had to do with the senses, while the courtyard had to do with the outer man, the skin.

Jesus said that "the lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness" (Matthew 6:22-23a). There is a kind of inverted metaphor here. Lamps shine forth light, but eyes take light in. The rest of Jesus' statement is forcefully symbolic also: If our eye is good, the light fills our body with light. This can immediately be related to the lampstand in the Tabernacle, which filled the house with light. The righteous man lets the light of God's glory fill his body, his life.

But what is true of the eye is also true of the other organs, also. If the lamp of the body is the eye, then the incense of the body is the nose. If our nose is unstopped, our body will be filled with incense. Similarly, the food of the body is the mouth. If our taste is good, our body will be filled with God's heavenly manna and showbread. Let us also recall that the high priest always wore bells when he entered the Holy Place (Exodus 28:34-35). The bell of the body is the ear. If our ear is clear, our body will be filled with God's glorious voice.

All these things relate to God's glory-cloud. The cloud made a wonderful sound, replicated in the bells. It was a cloud, replicated by the sweet cloud of incense. It shone with light, copied by the lamp. And it rained manna, copied by the table of bread. As Kline has shown, the cloud signified the Spirit of God.<sup>25</sup> So then, the righteous man is filled with God's cloud, His presence, His Spirit. The Holy Place symbolizes the sensory avenues by which God's life comes to His righteous man. The

man filled with light is wise. The man filled with music is permeated by the voice of God's Word. The man filled with incense is a man of prayer. The man filled with manna is filled with life.

The Ark in the inner room symbolized the heart and mind. It contained the law, as the law was to be written on the heart. It also contained a pot of manna, showing God's life within the heart. Finally, Aaron's rod that blossomed, a picture of prayer, was found within the heart. God's throne of glory was over the Ark, showing that the righteous man has God enthroned on his heart. As head or mind, the Ark pictured leadership, the self-control of the righteous man.<sup>26</sup>

The righteous man's outer life was symbolized by the Courtyard. The laver showed that the righteous man lives a clean and moral public life; and the altar showed that the righteous man is a man who worships in public, not just in his heart.

### Conclusion

A worldview is a complex thing. It is as broad and complex as the world itself. The Tabernacle complex, the description of which covers over a thousand verses, was a world model, and thus was very rich. We have only scratched the surface of the marvels to be found there. Even so, we may have become somewhat lost in the details, so let us summarize the nature of the Mosaic establishment.

*New Names:*

God: The Lord (Yahweh or Jehovah), the God who keeps the promises made to the fathers.

People: Israel comes to replace Hebrews as the prevailing term.

*Grant:* The land of Canaan.

*Promise:* God will be with them, in their midst.

*Stipulations:*

Sacramental: Passover, and the whole sacrificial, uncleanness, and festival system.

Societal:	The Ten Commandments, and the Mosaic Law as a whole, both as it symbolized society (Tabernacle and sacrifice) and as it legislated for society (the "case laws" of Exodus and Deuteronomy).
<i>Polity:</i>	Separation of Church and state.
Church:	Priests at Tabernacle, Levites at synagogues.
State:	Local elders, with judges at the top.
<i>Symbol:</i>	The Tabernacle complex.



---

There dwells the Lord our King,  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS  
(Triumphant o'er the world and sin),  
The Prince of Peace;  
On Zion's sacred height,  
His Kingdom still maintains;  
And glorious with his saints in light,  
Forever reigns.

—Thomas Olivers  
“The God of Abrah'm Praise,” stanza 7

---



## S I X T E E N

---

# THE WORLD OF THE TEMPLE

After Israel had been settled in the land for a while, the Mosaic heavens and earth began to wear thin. Once again, the nation began to break out of the seams of the covenantal garment, and a new covenant began to be anticipated.

### **The History and Decline of the Mosaic Establishment**

In terms of social polity, Israel was governed by elders over tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, with one or more Supreme Judge as final court of appeal. These judges also led the people in war when the nation was attacked. As the nation developed, however, and the population increased, there was more and more of a national spirit developing. Actually, a two-nation spirit developed, with a Northern Israel ethos centered in Ephraim, and a Southern Israel ethos centered in Judah. God had said that eventually a king would come out of Judah, but only when He was ready (Genesis 49:10). For a long time, most of Judah was disqualified to hold public office, because they were descendants of bastards (Genesis 38), and bastards were excluded from public office until the tenth generation (Deuteronomy 23:2). Accordingly, none of the judges in the book of Judges was from Judah. The genealogy at the end of Ruth is designed to show that there were ten generations between Perez and David, so that David was a legitimate Judahite King.<sup>1</sup> Still, Israel failed to see the Lord as their true King, and lusted after human kings (Judges 8:22-23; 9:6; 11:9; 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).<sup>2</sup> Their desire for a human king was thus both an anticipation of the next covenant, and also a symptom of moral decline.

In terms of symbolic polity, we see the Tabernacle turning into a Temple. The Hebrew word for *temple* also means *palace*, and God's Temple was simply His earthly Palace. Such a Palace-Temple is associated, however, with the time of Israel's kings, for they too dwelt in palaces. The Tent of God corresponded to Israel's dwelling in tents. Once Israel settled in the land, and built houses, it was natural for the Tabernacle to become more houselike, and less tentlike. Since the Tabernacle stayed in one place for a long time, it was natural for other buildings to be built around it for storage, to house Levitical assistants, to house the increasingly extended family of Aaronic priests, and for other purposes. Thus, the Tabernacle at Shiloh grew into a temple complex, and the area was called "the temple of the Lord" (1 Samuel 1:9; 3:3). Of course, the Tabernacle itself continued to be what it had always been: a tent of curtains and boards set in sockets on the ground. The outlying buildings, however, created a palace complex.

What was to come could not be envisioned, of course. Israelite political philosophers doubtless meditated on the king to come, but had no idea that he would sustain as close a relationship with the Lord as came to pass. They may not have realized that the king would have a small professional permanent army.<sup>3</sup> Certainly they would not have guessed that the country would be divided up into administrative tax districts that were different from the tribal divisions (1 Kings 4:7-19). Just so, Israelite liturgists may have speculated on a fuller temple to come; but they would have had no idea that the laver would turn into a huge bronze ocean riding on the backs of twelve bulls, or that there would be ten golden lampstands in the Holy Place, with silver lampstands in the courtyard, or that there would be ten water "chariots" in the courtyard, or that there would be two huge pillars on either side of the door (1 Kings 6-7; 1 Chronicles 28:11-19; 2 Chronicles 3-4). These new features were not simple extrapolations of Tabernacle symbolism, but were radical transformations of it.

### **The Breakdown of the Mosaic Cosmos**

After the glory days of Joshua, the nation of Israel entered into a long period of slow decline. There were times of apostasy and times of revival, but basically the course was that of decline.

These were the preliminary judgments. The depth of the decline came when Israel was defeated by Philistia and the Ark was taken into captivity. God also slew the High Priest and his sons (1 Samuel 4). This was the full judgment on the Mosaic establishment.

The final judgment on the Old Covenant is always simultaneously an announcement of a new one, as we have seen. It was at this juncture of history that God intervened to raise up messiahs to restore the nation. Two men were miraculously born of barren wombs, both of whom would be Nazirites, special warrior priests, all their lives. These two men were Samson and Samuel.<sup>4</sup> Both men entered into their ministries at about the age of twenty, the age of citizenship and military service (Numbers 1:3).

As we have already seen in Chapter 14, the Ark plagued the Egyptians and made an Exodus out of Philistia with spoils (1 Samuel 5-6). This was the initial defeat of Philistia, but it took twenty years for Samson and Samuel to rebuild the nation to the point where they could inflict a major military defeat on the Philistines. For twenty years Samson caused the Philistines to appear ridiculous by making sport of them, while Samuel toured the country teaching the Bible and raising up a new, righteous generation.<sup>5</sup> At the end of his career, Samson killed all five princes of the Philistines, and most of the Philistine priesthood and nobility (Judges 16:23, 27). With their leadership destroyed, the Philistines were easily defeated by Israel at the battle of Mizpah (1 Samuel 7:9-11).

The crucible of enslavement to Philistia (and remember, Philistines were Egyptians, Genesis 10:13-14) had the effect of rending the fabric of the Mosaic establishment. The Israelite judge, Samson, had to spend most of his time in hiding, while Samuel had to lay low. As a result, the system of judgeship in Israel tended to break down. Also, during the captivity, the Philistines removed all the weapons of the Israelite militia. The battle of Mizpah was won only by a miracle (1 Samuel 7:10). Even after this victory, Israel was still dominated by Philistia, though not enslaved; and she still had no weapons (1 Samuel 13:19-22).

As a result of this situation, the people demanded a king. Their fabricated pretext was that Samuel's sons were not performing very well as judges. We notice, however, that these young men were judging in Beersheba, on the border of Israel,

about as far away from the center of national life as you could get. Moreover, their offense was bribe-taking, which was nowhere near as serious as the offense of Eli's sons a generation earlier (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25). In addition, all the elders of Israel needed to do was ask that the men be removed from office. Instead they demanded a king (1 Samuel 8).

They wanted a king like the kings of the other nations, "that we also may be like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:20). This was not the kind of king God had in mind for them. God's king would be a shepherd, like David. He would rule by service, as the servant of the people. The kind of king they wanted, though, would rule through fear and domination, and would tax the people to death. Jesus summed up the difference this way:

You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all (Mark 10:42-43).

The crucible of Philistine enslavement also tore up the symbolic polity of Israel. When the Ark returned to the land, it was not placed back in the Tabernacle, but was enshrined at Kiriath-jearim. We are not told why this was, but Samuel was the leader in Israel at this point, and it must have been under his guidance that it was done. Not until the Temple was built, a century later, was the Ark restored to a House of God. During this century, when there was no central sanctuary, the people were permitted to offer sacrifices at "high places," local "holy mountains" analogous to the oasis-sanctuaries of the Patriarchs (1 Kings 3:2; and cf. 1 Samuel 6:15; 7:16-17; 9:12-13; 10:5, 8, 13; 11:14-15; 16:3-5; 20:6, 29; 2 Samuel 15:12). Later, when the Temple was set up, this kind of high place worship was no longer acceptable (Deuteronomy 12:13-14; 1 Kings 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kings 12:3; etc.). For now, however, the nation was clearly torn apart, with no center.

I believe that the rending of the Tabernacle should be associated with the rending of the animal in the sacrificial system. It is a picture of death, and the building of the Temple is a picture of resurrection. Nereparampil has shown that in John's Gospel, Jesus is pictured as "tabernacling" with His people before His

death, and as a “temple” in His resurrection.<sup>6</sup> Thus, what Israel experienced under God’s judgment was a kind of death, and under His grace, a kind of resurrection. The Temple would be a glorified Tabernacle, a resurrection body if you will.

### **The Building of the Kingdom**

The empty Tabernacle was moved to Nob (1 Samuel 21:1) and later to Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39-40). The priests maintained it as a vacant house for God. Once Saul became king, perhaps God would have moved back into a tent. But Saul fell from grace almost as soon as he was crowned, and the Philistines continued to oppress Israel.<sup>7</sup> This corresponds to the wilderness period of Israel after she rejected God’s offer to conquer Canaan, and David’s wilderness wanderings illustrate this.<sup>8</sup> After David defeated the Philistines, and Israel could settle down once again, God moved back into a tent; but even when David moved the Ark to Jerusalem, he set up a separate tent for it, and did not move the Tabernacle there (1 Chronicles 16:1, 37-38).

God also smote the priesthood. Because of their sins, the High Priest, Eli, and his two sons were killed the day the Ark was captured (1 Samuel 4:11-18 — In spite of his sins, righteous Eli was more upset over the capture of the Ark than at the death of his sons). God swore that the line of Eli, the line of Aaron’s son Ithamar, would no longer serve as High Priests (1 Samuel 3:14).<sup>9</sup> Saul in his demonic fury slew all the priests at Nob, including Eli’s grandson Ahimelech (1 Samuel 22:11-19). The son of Ahimelech, Abiathar, escaped to David, and wandered with him in the wilderness until he came to the throne (1 Samuel 22:20). During David’s reign there were two High Priests, Abiathar of Ithamar’s line, and Zadok of Eleazar’s line (1 Chronicles 24:3).<sup>10</sup> Abiathar conspired against Solomon, and Solomon deposed him from being High Priest (1 Kings 2:26-27). This left Zadok as sole High Priest, and finalized the transfer of the High Priesthood.

Now, when there is a change of priesthood, there is of necessity a change of law (Hebrews 7:12). The gradual changes in the priesthood during the century between the Ark’s removal from the Tabernacle and its re-enthronement in the Temple were accompanied by gradual changes in the law. It is easiest to look first of all at the big picture, however. We have shifted from

Ithamar to Eleazar. We have also shifted from Tabernacle to Temple. In social polity, we have shifted from judges and seers to kings and prophets (as discussed in Chapter 11). In the kingdom we now have a small professional army that protects the king and that serves as a buffer against attack while the militia is called up. To support the legitimate needs of the palace and the king, we have a system of taxation; and the nation is divided into tax districts that do not correspond to tribal boundaries (1 Kings 4:7-19).

All of this gradually came into place. To summarize the transition: During Samuel's judgeship, the Ark was at Kiriath-jearim and the Tabernacle and High Priest were at Shiloh. During Saul's kingship, the Ark was at Kiriath-jearim, the Tabernacle at Nob, and the High Priest in the wilderness with David. During David's reign, the Ark was in Jerusalem with Abiathar, and the Tabernacle was at Gibeon with Zadok.<sup>11</sup> Under Solomon, the Ark was re-enthroned in the Temple with Zadok as High Priest. Putting all this together indicates that God refused to put the Ark back into a House until the line of Eli was out of the way, and the transition to the new priesthood was completed.

As we saw in the previous chapter, God sets up His new social polity, the human house, before setting up His new symbolic polity, the physical house. Thus, when Samuel made Saul king, he wrote a new constitution: "Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in the book and placed it before the LORD" (1 Samuel 10:25). It would be interesting to have a copy of this constitution, this new law which was placed before the Lord, that is, in the Most Holy Place along with the Mosaic Law. We do not have it, however.

To me this is most significant. Samuel's new constitution was a transformation of the Mosaic Law for the New Covenant. God has left us the Mosaic Law, but has also shown us that it must be *applied* by transformation to new covenantal situations. Such an application must be made by *wisdom*, and thus wisdom literature comes into focus during the Davidic establishment. The books of Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon were written either largely or exclusively by Solomon and David; and Job was probably added to the canon at this time. This fact strikes a blow against any simplistic and legalistic attempt to impose the

Mosaic legislation in the New Covenant, but it also reminds us that the foundation of our social wisdom must be a careful consideration of that Mosaic Law.

From reading Samuel and Kings, and from a close study of 1 Chronicles 11-27, we can see many features of the new constitution. A full study of this goes beyond the limitations of the present book, but we have already mentioned some of the changes: a small professional army, a system of taxation, a palace complex for the king. The most important feature of the new polity, however, was that the king must always submit to the word of the prophet, for the prophet is the ambassador of the King of kings (1 Samuel 10:8; 13:8-14).<sup>12</sup> It was precisely this that Saul refused to do, and for his rebellion he lost his throne. Throughout the books of Samuel and Kings, we find the interaction of the prophets with the kings. Good kings hearkened to the prophets, while bad ones rebelled.

David defeated the Philistines once and for all. He also captured and secured Melchizedek's ancient capital, Jerusalem. For the first time, the entire land was subdued. Now at last God could move into His capital city and build a permanent sanctuary. David wanted to build a physical house of cedar for God (2 Samuel 7:7), but God told him that it was more important that God have a human tree-house (v. 10). David's own house, said God, would be His new human cedar house (cf. Ezekiel 17), His new messianic community gathered around Him. Only when that human house had been set up would God permit David's son to build Him a physical house (vv. 12-16).

### **The New Heavens and Earth**

When a new heavens and earth is set up, first of all the world is rebuilt. The nations of the world are "restructured," which meant in this case that the oppressive nations had to be defeated. In terms of the wider world, the New Covenant meant that Israel now took her place among the nations as a kingdom, and was no longer immature in this sense. After the world is reconstructed, the land of Eden is recreated. As we mentioned above, it was David's task to reorganize the kingdom in this social polity sense. David had to deal with internal rebellions and thereby quieten the land. At the beginning of Solomon's reign, there

were succession wars. The new land of Israel, unlike the old, had a capital city: Jerusalem. The new federal government in Jerusalem set up administrative districts for federal purposes, while the tribal governments continued to handle the affairs of the tribal republics.<sup>13</sup>

At last the land was at peace, and God was ready to plant a new Garden in the new Eden. The new Garden embraced the Temple and Palace complex on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. This is a significant change from the Mosaic establishment. There was now an Adam in the Land, a King. The High Priest was the Supreme Adam in the Garden-Sanctuary, and had been since Moses' day. Now there is a Supreme Adam in the Land. The Kingdom of God is moving outward from Garden to Land. The King's Palace adjoined and was connected to the Temple or Palace of God (1 Kings 7:1-12; 14:28). The King was the son of David. David himself never lived in this Palace; it was built at the same time as the Temple. Remarkably, God refused to move into His Palace until the Palace of His vice-regent had been built (1 Kings 6:38; 7:1; 9:10). God and Solomon moved into their Palaces at the same time.<sup>14</sup>

Diagram 16.1 shows the progress in glory from the time of Noah to the Davidic or Solomonic establishment.

### **The Symbolic Polity**

Let us first consider Mount Zion as a world model. Zion figures heavily in the Psalms as God's new mountain, because the Temple was set on one of her hills. Zion replicates the three-story universe. At her Northern extreme is the Temple, a model of heaven. To the south of the Temple, on Zion proper, is the city of Jerusalem, a citified Eden. The undeveloped mountain below represents the world. Below the mountain to the South, in a deep crevasse, is Gehenna, the pit, symbol of hell or the Abyss.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Zion reproduces the North-South imagery of creation, as well as the vertical imagery of the three-decker world<sup>16</sup> (see Diagram 16.2).

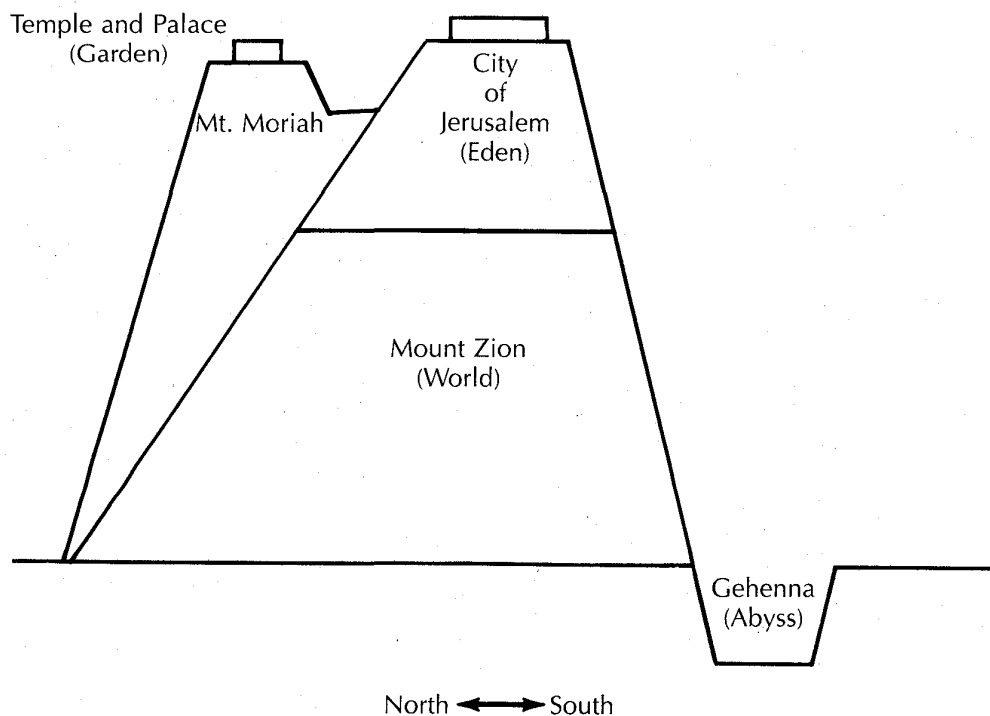
A second expansion of symbolic polity is seen in the Song of Solomon, also called Canticles. We have mentioned that with the Davidic covenant we have not only the world, land, and garden reestablished; but also a premier Adam put into the land.



Diagram 16.1  
Maturation of the Cosmos

Creation	Noah	Patriarchs	Wilderness	Mosaic Settlement	Davidic
Garden			Tabernacle	Fixed Tabernacle	Palace/Temple Complex
Land of Eden		Land of Promise	Tents	Towns	City (Jerusalem)
World	70 Nations	Canaanites rule the Land	Israel interacts with other nations inside the land: Canaanites, Philistines; or near cousins: Ammon, Moab	Israel interacts with other nations outside the Land: Sheba, Syria, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon	

Diagram 16.2  
Zion as a World Model



This is the meaning of the King, and of the King's palace being associated with the Temple on Mount Moriah (between the Temple and the Edenic city on Mount Zion). There is a parallel between the king's palace-garden and bride, and God's Temple-garden and bride (Israel). The Song of Solomon shows us Adam and Eve restored to the garden. The book abounds in garden or paradise imagery. We see the bride tempted to unfaithfulness. We see much talk of trees and fruit, and the husband feeding the bride. Also, there is a great deal of architectural imagery in Canticles, comparing the human body to God's Temple.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Christian expositors have usually seen Canticles as a parable of Christ and the Church, though it is also a celebration of the restoration of marital love.<sup>18</sup>

The Temple, of course, is the major symbolic polity change. As the Tabernacle symbolized the political cosmos of Israel in the Mosaic era, so the Temple symbolized the political cosmos

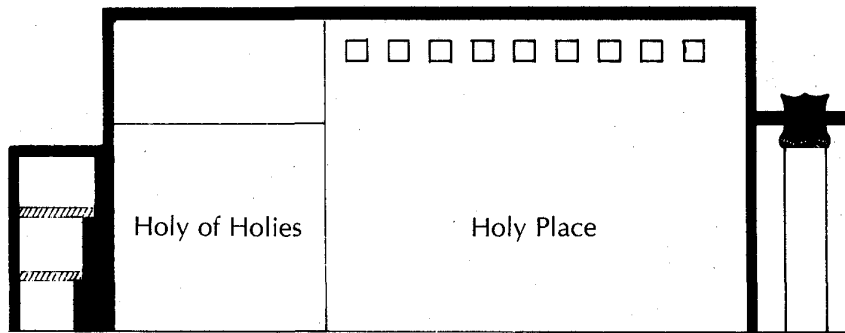
during the Davidic era. The Temple proper consisted only of the two rooms, the Most Holy and the Holy Place. The dimensions of the Most Holy were doubled, which made it eight times as large; while the Holy Place was twelve times as large.<sup>19</sup> The Temple itself was shaped as a stepped pyramid, its walls becoming thicker stage by stage as one approached the ground (1 Kings 6:6; Ezekiel 41:7). (See Diagram 16.3.) Leaning on these stages were three stories of outlying rooms. The floor of the Temple was no longer made of dirt but of gold (1 Kings 6:30). The walls of the Temple were engraved with cherubim and palm trees, symbolizing God's two hosts of angels and men (1 Kings 6:29). In the Most Holy, there were now four cherubim guarding God's throne. He "sat" on the wings of two, and the wings of the other two overshadowed the throne. This new arrangement was called God's Chariot, and in Ezekiel we see the four cherubim repositioned as the four wheels of the Chariot (1 Chronicles 28:18; 1 Kings 6:23-28).

In the Holy Place there were ten new golden lampstands in addition to the tree-lampstand from the Tabernacle. There were also ten tables for the utensils of the new lampstands (2 Chronicles 4:7-8).

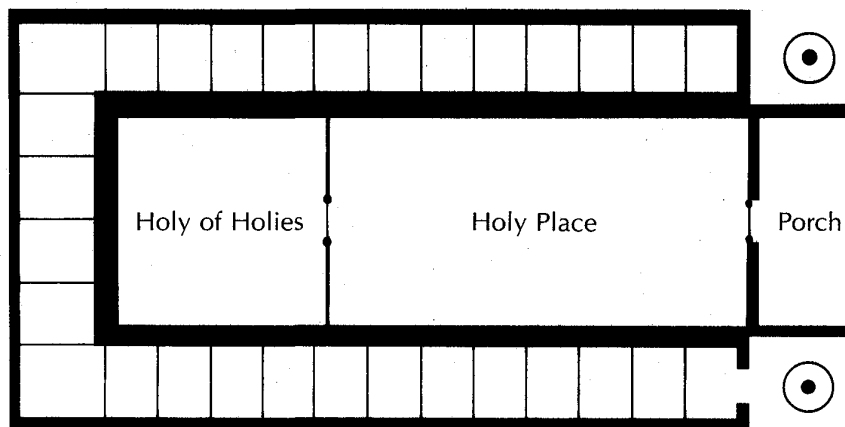
Outside the Temple was an open porch flanked by two huge freestanding pillars named Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings 7:15-22). Jachin represented the High Priest, and Boaz the King, as the two servant-guardians of God's Kingdom. The design of these pillars symbolized ladders to heaven, with the bronze shaft associated with the Courtyard, the arboraceous collar representing the Holy Place, and the cubic Lily at the top representing the Most Holy<sup>20</sup> (see Diagram 16.4).

Also in the courtyard was a huge bronze sea (1 Kings 7:23-26; 2 Chronicles 4:2-5). This replaced the small laver of cleansing of the Tabernacle. The bronze sea also replicated the Temple, with its bronze bowl associated with the Courtyard, the row of bulls representing the Holy Place, and the Lily design at the top signifying the Most Holy. The twelve bulls under the bronze ocean were positioned in the same configuration as Israel's encampment in Numbers 2, and thus represented Israel and the land.

Diagram 16.3  
The Temple of Solomon

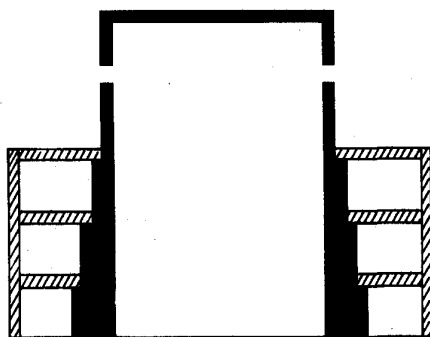


Cross section, side view

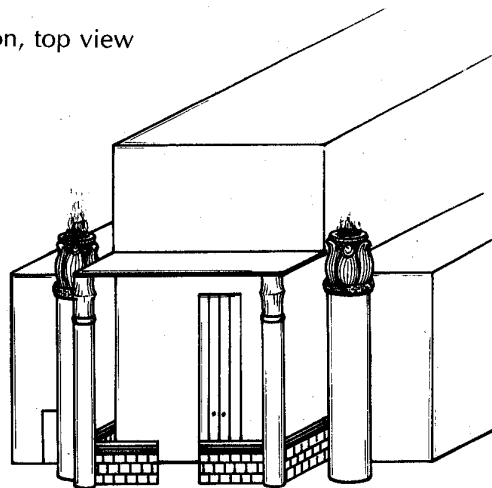


Side chambers

Cross section, top view



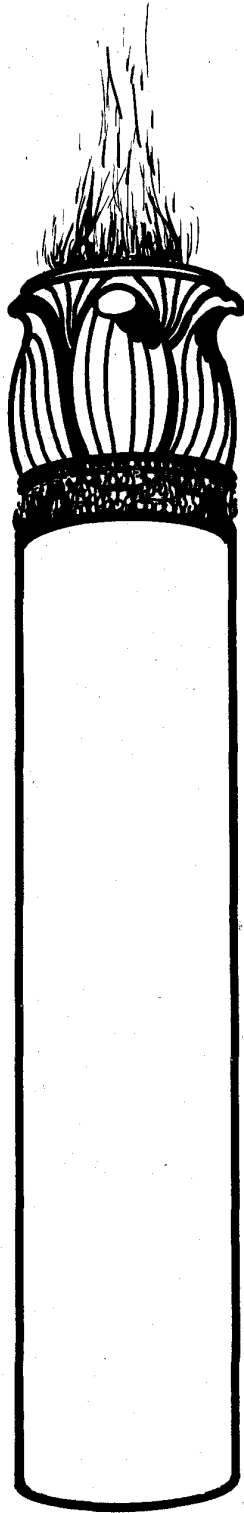
Cross section, front view



Front view

All diagrams assume walls one cubit thick.

Diagram 16.4  
Temple Pillar



—4 cubit lily (Holy of Holies; head)

—1 cubit collar (Holy Place; neck)

—18 cubit pillar (courtyard; trunk)

There were ten huge fixed stands in the courtyard that held water, and that, though immovable, were made in the design of chariots (1 Kings 7:27-39). There were also silver lampstands in the courtyard to give light at night (1 Chronicles 28:15).

The altar was greatly increased in size (2 Chronicles 4:1), and was separated from the laity by a low wall, creating two courts and institutionalizing the separation of the layman from the altar that had been in effect in the Tabernacle (1 Kings 6:36).

All of this shows a tremendous increase in glory and in revelation. Although the people still could not get into the Temple and see the inner furniture, they could see equivalent symbolism on the pillars and bronze ocean. The pillars, of course, were brand new, not extensions of anything found in the Tabernacle. As mentioned, they had to do with the institution of Kingship, which was the definitive change in the Davidic covenant.

The change from Tabernacle to Temple forced some changes in law. For instance, the jealousy inspection of Numbers 5 could no longer be performed according to the Mosaic rules, since the water of jealousy had mixed with it the holy dirt of the Tabernacle floor (Numbers 5:17); and the Temple floor was made of gold. Some kind of adjustment had to be made. Also, since the Levites no longer had the duty of carrying the Tabernacle, they were given new tasks by David under Divine inspiration (1 Chronicles 24:25 – 26:32).

### **History and Decline**

No sooner had the Kingdom been established than Solomon wrecked it through sin. Samuel had portrayed a tyrant king in 1 Samuel 8, and both Saul and David at various times had filled the description, though David unlike Saul repented of it. Now Solomon became a tyrant.

The people had been taxed and enlisted to help build the Temple and Palace. This was fitting for two reasons. First, they had demanded a king, so it was fitting that they build his palace. Also, however, the people had made contributions to build the Tabernacle (after all, in part it symbolized them); so it was fitting that the people contribute to building the Temple. Sadly, after these works were finished, Solomon continued to lay heavy burdens on the people.

In Deuteronomy 17:16-17 Moses provided the people with three laws of kingship. The king was not to multiply horses or gold, or take more than one wife. In 1 Kings 10:14–11:8 we find Solomon breaking all three of these laws. First, Solomon took in 666 talents of gold per year (1 Kings 10:14).<sup>21</sup> According to the *Open Bible*, a talent of gold in 1985 money would be worth U.S. \$5.76 million.<sup>22</sup> This means that Solomon was taking in over \$3.84 billion each year. This was hefty revenue for a country the size of New Jersey. Second, Solomon multiplied horses and chariots (1 Kings 10:26). *Adding* a few horses and chariots for the small professional army would not have been wrong, but Solomon went overboard. Finally, of course, Solomon committed polygamy, and his wives turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:1-8).

This disruption in the spiritual environment of the covenant manifested itself right away in a rending of the social polity, as the ten northern tribes, with God's blessing, seceded from the nation (1 Kings 12). An equivalent disruption in the symbolic cosmos occurred when Pharaoh removed the gold from the Temple and Palace, and these were replaced with bronze (1 Kings 14:25-27).

These were only preliminary judgments, however. There were good times as well as bad times during the Kingdom establishment. Good kings listened to God's ambassadors, the prophets, and being blessed by God, were able to restore much of the gold to the Temple.

The kingdom of (Northern) Israel was separated from the Temple in Jerusalem. The people were supposed to go into Judah and worship God at the Temple, but then return to their homes in the separate kingdom of Israel. Of course, the apostate kings of Israel resisted this, and sometimes even closed the borders to prevent the people from leaving the country to worship (2 Chronicles 16:1). Thus, for much of their history the people in Israel were left only with synagogue worship.

On one occasion God provided them with proper sacrificial worship. When Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel—Carmel means "fruitful place"—he built an altar and God honored it. God would not accept such non-Temple altars, because He would not accept strange fire, fire that He Himself

had not lit (Leviticus 9:24; 10:1-2; 2 Chronicles 7:1). On this occasion, however, God sent His own fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifices (1 Kings 18:38).

Elijah's altar was a model of God's kingdom. First of all, it was a symbol of the religious body politic of Israel, both north and south:

And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying "Israel shall be your name." So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord (1 Kings 18:31-32a).

As a cosmic model, the altar had a trench around it (for Gehenna, or the Abyss). Wood was put at the top, to be burned for the sacrifice of course, but also as a sign of God's arboraceous garden (vv. 32-33). The burnt offering on the wood reminds us of the animals in the Garden.

Then Elijah poured water all over the burnt offering and wood. Why? Not just to make it harder for God to light the sacrifice. Remember, Elijah offered this sacrifice after three years of drought (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1). The water pouring over the altar was a sign of rain pouring over the holy mountain of Israel, which of course was what happened that very day (vv. 41-45). The water washed over the altar and filled the Gehenna-trench. Just so, as it rained the brook Kishon filled with water and flushed the dead bodies of the prophets of Baal out of the holy land and into the sea, cleansing the land (v. 40).

Elijah's altar speaks clearly of the cosmic significance of the altar. The four elements found in the Garden of Eden—trees, animals, water, and priest—are all present here. The destruction of the altar by God's fire substituted for the destruction of the world represented by the altar: "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." When we remember that the stones represented Israel, and that man is made of dust, we see that the destruction of this altar and its components signified the destruction of the world. The altar received the wrath that Israel deserved. The water on the altar was dried up, so that water could once again come to the land. Thus Israel was spared the judgment of God.



The Northern Kingdom, however, slid downhill very fast, and was taken captive by Assyria. The Southern Kingdom endured longer, but God eventually judged it as well. The last preliminary judgment is recorded in 2 Kings 24. Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried off the nobility, including such persons as Daniel and Ezekiel. He also carried off the gold of the Temple, which was symbolically equivalent to these leading men.

Israel refused to repent, however, and so Nebuchadnezzar returned. This time he blinded the king, burned the city, burned the Temple, and carried off all the people. After being told of the deportation of the people, we are told that he broke up the bronze pillars and took away all the bronze "service" utensils of the Temple (2 Kings 25:11-17). These small bronze vessels were the symbolic equivalent of the ordinary people, while the break-up of the pillars, to which special attention is called, is to be associated with the destruction of the king.<sup>23</sup>

### Summary

The Kingdom establishment can be set out as follows:

*New Names:*

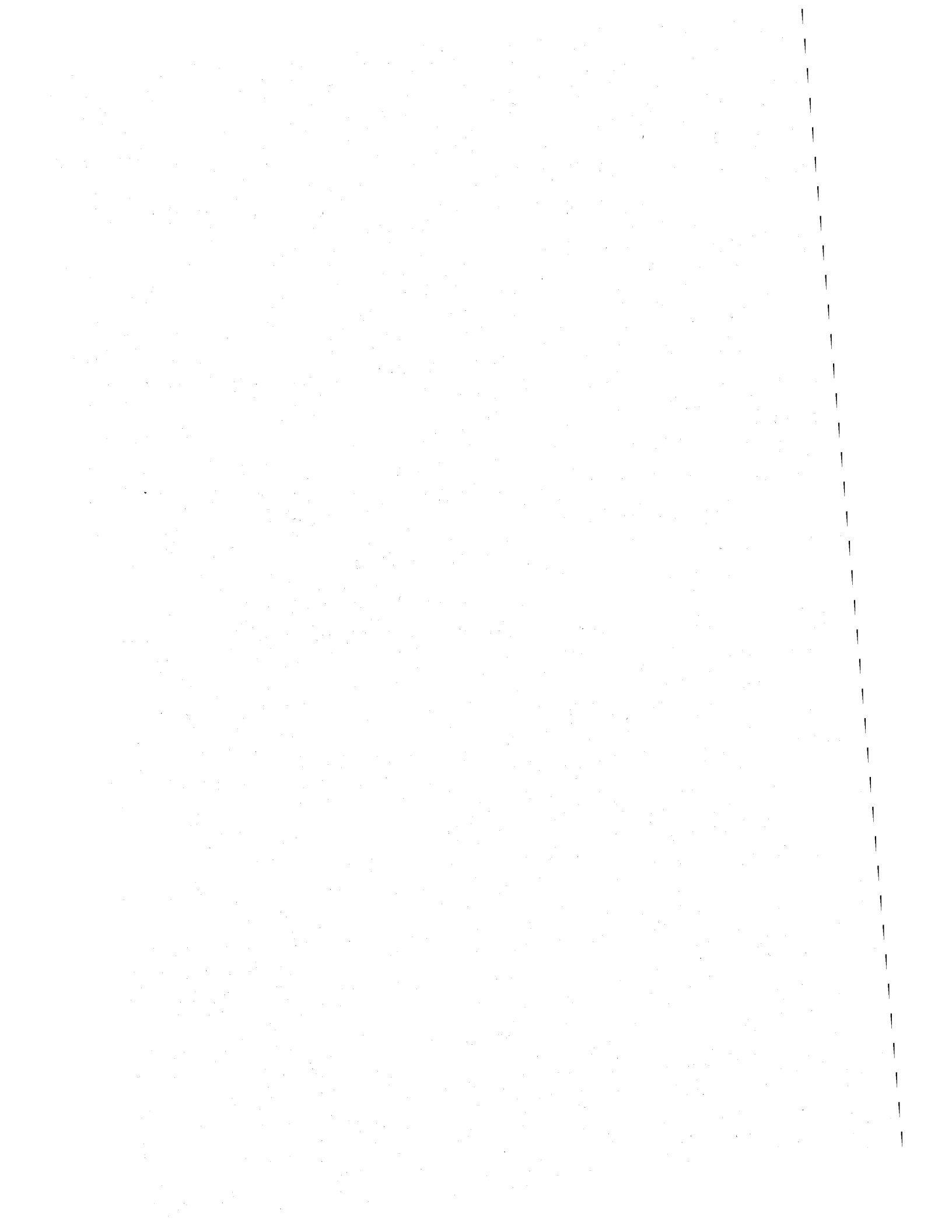
God:

No new name is really highlighted, but in David's prayer of 2 Samuel 7, when the Davidic Covenant was made, the name used is Lord God, which in Hebrew is "the Master, the Lord." Since the condition of the Kingdom was that the human King recognize the Lord as Supreme King, this phrase "Master, Lord" seems eminently appropriate.

People:

The House of David is a new name here. Also, the name Israel comes to be associated with Northern Israel, and thus with apostasy; while the name Judah comes to signify the relatively more faithful Southern Kingdom. Yet another name that comes into play is "Remnant," denoting the faithful in times of apostasy.

<i>Grant:</i>	The city of Jerusalem, as capital of the Kingdom.
<i>Promise:</i>	God will not forsake the House of David.
<i>Stipulations:</i>	
Sacramental:	Slight changes in the worship system reflecting the change from Tabernacle to Temple. Also, certain sacrifices were paid for by the King, acting as Chief Layman (e.g., 2 Chronicles 35:7).
Societal:	The new constitution of the Kingdom, in particular the rule that the King hearken to the prophet.
<i>Polity:</i>	
Church:	Priests at Temple, prophets and Levites at synagogues.
State:	Elders and judges, with King at the top.
<i>Symbol:</i>	The Palace/Temple complex.



---

He keeps his own secure,  
He guards them by his side,  
Arrays in garments, white and pure,  
His spotless bride:  
With streams of sacred bliss,  
With groves of living joys—  
With all the fruits of Paradise  
He still supplies.

— Thomas Olivers  
“The God of Abrah’m Praise,” stanza 8

---

## S E V E N T E E N

---

# THE WORLDS OF EXILE AND RESTORATION

The Davidic heavens and earth had hardly gotten under way before it fell into sin. The Kingdom was split, and the Temple was raided. Thus, both social and symbolic polities were changed. In time, the fabric of the Davidic covenant began to wear thin. It was no good trying to put a patch on it; a new garment was needed.<sup>1</sup>

The new garment consisted of a World Imperial order, with Israel under the protection of (or at the mercy of) a world emperor. Within Israel the synagogues, which had previously had Levites as local pastors, were now run by laymen. The Restoration Temple, the symbolic polity, was nowhere near as glorious as Solomon's, but what it symbolized was a far more glorious and powerful Spiritual presence.

All of this had been anticipated in the centuries before the new covenant came into being. First, in terms of symbolic polity, the loss of Temple-glory matched the loss of the Davidic house when the Kingdom split. This anticipated the relatively less glorious Restoration Temple.

Second, in terms of local "holy convocations," while Levites continued as local pastors in Judah, in Northern Israel there were very few Levites. Most of them moved to Judah as a result of persecution (2 Chronicles 11:13-14). Thus, God raised up prophets; and these prophets set up theological seminaries, the "schools of the prophets," to train local pastors.<sup>2</sup> The synagogues of the faithful (the "remnant") continued to meet on sabbaths and new moons (2 Kings 4:23), but their pastors were laymen trained and ordained by the prophets. Thus, while the Levites

continued to have Temple duties, there was a shift away from them at the synagogue level.

Third, in terms of social polity, both Judah and Northern Israel were repeatedly conquered and vassaled by powers to the North and South. This anticipated the world imperial system that would come in with the Restoration Covenant. Once the people went into Babylonian captivity, God completely broke down the Davidic establishment. There was no king, and the people were directly under the imperial government. There was no Temple, and the people had to get used to the idea of a Spiritual Temple. There was no regular synagogal structure, and the people had to make do without Levitical leadership.

The new polity was thus anticipated, but the full nature of it could never have been envisioned by the people living during Israel's decline. In exile they still envisioned that a renewed covenant would be much like the old Davidic covenant. The New Covenant, however, was far more glorious than the previous one.

First, God wanted the World Imperial era because it facilitated evangelism. The Jews (their new name) had been told to settle in Babylon and work for the good of their new cities (Jeremiah 29:4-7). As a result, the faith was spread throughout that land. In the Restoration Covenant, God's Spirit would be given in greater measure, and the Jews would travel land and sea, making Gentile converts.

Second, God wanted non-Levitical synagogues, because these brought out the spiritual gifts of laymen, and anticipated the New Covenant Church.

Third, God wanted a smaller Temple. With the Restoration Temple we have great shift in meaning. Moses had seen the pattern on Mount Sinai, and had built it below. The Mosaic Tabernacle symbolized both the nature and the glory of the Mosaic establishment. Similarly, David had been given the directions for the Temple. The Solomonic Temple symbolized both the nature and the glory of the Davidic covenant. This time Ezekiel was given a vision and blueprint for the post-exilic Temple, but it was a temple so vast and huge that it could never be built. Ezekiel's visionary Temple symbolized both the nature and the glory of the restoration establishment, but the Temple actually built by Ezra was a small affair. Ezra's Temple symbolized the nature, but not the glory, of the new restoration covenant.

### **The New Heavens and Earth in Prophecy**

God announced His intention to bring judgment on His wayward people, and on the nations, repeatedly through His prophets. One famous passage in Jeremiah uses the cosmic language of “heaven and earth” to describe the fall of Judah’s body politic:

I looked on the earth, and behold!  
    formless and void;  
And to the heavens, and they had no light.  
I looked on the mountains,  
    and behold, they were quaking,  
And all the hills moved to and fro.  
I looked, and behold, there was no man,  
And all the birds of the heavens had fled.  
I looked, and behold, the fruitful land  
    was a wilderness,  
    and all its cities were pulled down  
Before the Lord,  
Before His fierce anger.

For thus says the Lord,  
“The whole land shall be a desolation,  
“Yet I will not execute a complete destruction.  
“For this the earth shall mourn,  
“And the heavens above be dark,  
“Because I have spoken,  
“I have purposed,  
“And I will not change My mind,  
“Nor will I turn from it” (Jeremiah 4:23-28).

These announcements of judgment were always accompanied by announcements of a restoration, a new covenant, a new heavens and earth to come. The new covenant and the new heavens and earth ultimately point to the coming of Christ, but their first fulfillment is to be found in the restoration of Israel from exile.<sup>3</sup> That restoration was a downpayment, a pledge of God’s faithfulness. After all, each new covenant, being a resurrection in more glorious form of the previous one, pointed to *the* New Covenant.

It is often overlooked that the restoration establishment was indeed a new covenant, and an advance in glory beyond the Davidic establishment. Whether we call the post-exilic establishment a new covenant or simply a "covenant renewal," the fact is that there were very great changes involved in the new cosmos, changes equivalent to the changes involved in previous new covenants. Also, the point of Zechariah 3 is that the Davidic covenant had become so defiled that it could not be renewed, and thus what is shown in Zechariah 3 is the establishment of a New Covenant. We shall return to this when we consider Zechariah's night visions later in this chapter.

The book of Ezekiel is a useful place to see the Restoration heavens and earth portrayed in prophecy. The message of Ezekiel to the first group of exiles was that even though the Temple was going to be torn down, the true Temple was in heaven and was with them wherever they went. As Solomon had made clear, God Himself did not dwell in the Temple, only His "name" (1 Kings 8:27-29).

In the first chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet is given a vision of the Cherubic Chariot that had been symbolized by the four cherubim in the Most Holy Place. Only High Priests ever entered the Most Holy, and this alerts us to the possibility that Ezekiel will be the High Priest of Israel during the exile. The fact that Ezekiel is addressed as "son of man," that is, as a second Adam, highlights this. Daniel, Ezekiel's friend and co-worker in Babylon, saw the Messiah as the Son of Man. Ezekiel, as High Priest, typified the true Second Adam to come.<sup>4</sup>

In Chapter 1, Ezekiel sees the Chariot in Babylon. This meant that God was with His people in exile. He had not abandoned them, though He was chastising them. In Chapters 8-11, Ezekiel sees the Chariot of Glory get up and move out of the Temple, and fly away. The Temple, now abandoned and "desolate," has become an "abomination," and God will destroy this "abomination of desolation." After the destruction of the Temple comes the exile of the prince, the king of Israel (Ezekiel 12), but a twig of the Davidic house will be preserved (Ezekiel 17:22).

In Ezekiel 24:16-27, God told Ezekiel that He was going to take away his wife. The death of Ezekiel's wife was a symbol of God's judgment against Israel, His own bride. From the time of



her death until word reached the exiles of the destruction of Jerusalem, Ezekiel would be dumb, unable to speak. When the first of the new refugees arrived, Ezekiel would once again be able to prophesy (Ezekiel 33:1-22). The intervening chapters of Ezekiel are taken up with prophecies against the nations of the world. It seems that during his period of muteness, Ezekiel wrote these prophecies. The fact that they are bracketed by the destruction of Jerusalem means that the judgment on Jerusalem entails judgment on the whole world. Tyre, once allied with Jerusalem when her king helped build the Temple, would be destroyed. All the nations would be brought into the new World Imperial system, and be subjected to Nebuchadnezzar: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia (Ezekiel 25), Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28), Egypt, Ethiopia, Put, Lud, Arabia, Libya (Ezekiel 29-32), Assyria, Elam, Meshech-Tubal, and Sidon (Ezekiel 32). God was laying hold on the world and tearing it apart, so that He could rebuild it as a new heavens and earth.

After the judgment on the sanctuary, on Eden, and on the world, Ezekiel sets out the nature of the restored world. Ezekiel focuses on the renewal of the land, which he even calls Eden (Ezekiel 36:35). After discussing the coming Restoration and peace (Ezekiel 34-37), he tells them that there will come a time of severe trouble (Ezekiel 38-39). An army made up of people from many nations, under the leadership of a prince named Gog, will invade the land, but will be defeated. The immediate fulfillment of this prophecy was the invasion of Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes during the inter-testamental period. According to Revelation 20, however, this war provides a picture of the Church's conflict in all eras. Ezekiel uses symbolic and exaggerated descriptions to highlight the fact that not only literal battles but also spiritual warfare was to be involved in this conflict. For that reason, Christian expositors have always seen the battle of Gog and Magog as having spiritual relevance.<sup>5</sup>

Housebuilding follows an exodus from captivity and the destruction of an enemy. The destruction of one nation, Egypt, led to the building of the Tabernacle. The destruction of several enemies in Canaan and Philistia led to the building of Solomon's bigger Temple. Now Israel defeats all the nations of the world, organized by Prince Gog. Thus, in Ezekiel 40-48 we have a de-

scription in highly symbolic terms of a vast, huge restored Temple and land.

This is not a picture first and foremost of the New Testament, but of the spiritual realities present in the Restoration. This is indicated by the context of the prophecy, but there are also clear indications in the text, especially the fact that the river in Chapter 47 only flows in one direction, not four, and only to the edge of the Holy Land, not into the wider world.<sup>6</sup>

The prophecy begins with Ezekiel's being taken to a very high mountain north of a city (Ezekiel 40:2). The city obviously is visionary Jerusalem, and the mountain is visionary Moriah, north of Zion. We notice that the mountain is growing higher and higher with each new heavens and earth. In Chapter 40, the Temple is described with a tremendous stress on doorways and guard chambers. The new Restoration establishment will be a time of greater openness for the Gospel than ever before (doors), and also a time of greater holiness (guards). (See Diagram 17.1).

In Chapter 43, Ezekiel sees the glory-chariot return to inhabit the Temple. This is a promise to those who would rebuild the Temple, that God would come back to it. In Chapter 44 the prince is restored, and the priests and Levites are reestablished in their places. Also, Ezekiel shows that the sacrificial system will be restored.<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel describes a new huge Jerusalem that has tremendous suburban areas (Ezekiel 45:1-8). There would be no more Levitical cities in the Restoration, and so the Levites would need a place to live. In reality, they would live among the people in the land, but Ezekiel shows the spiritual reality, that they would live around the Temple (see Diagram 17.2). Ezekiel also describes the tribal boundaries in the new establishment, boundaries that are wholly geometric and symbolic in character, but which did assure the exiles that their children would return to the land (Ezekiel 48). (See Diagram 17.3).

The things Ezekiel describes in these chapters could never have been built. The Temple, City, and Land are entirely visionary and symbolic. The Kingdom of God in the Restoration was going to be so powerful and glorious that it simply could not be pictured in any architectural model that could be built. Only a vision would do.

Diagram 17.1  
Ezekiel's Temple Complex

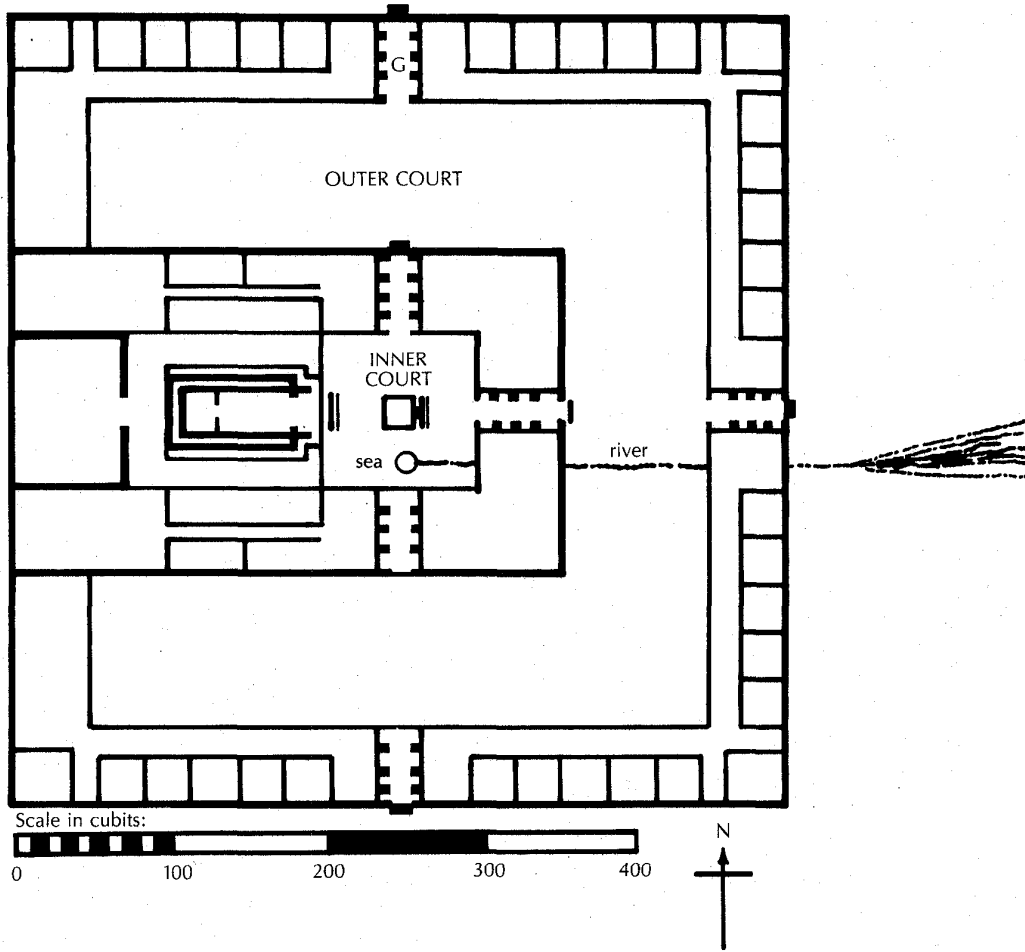


Diagram 17.2  
The Center of the Land

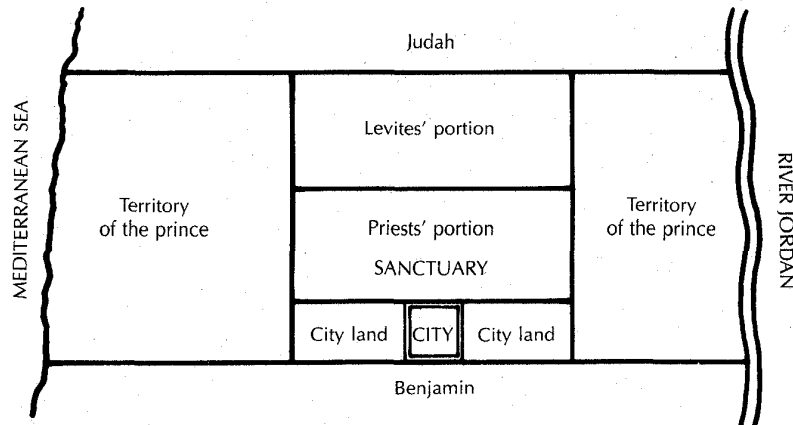
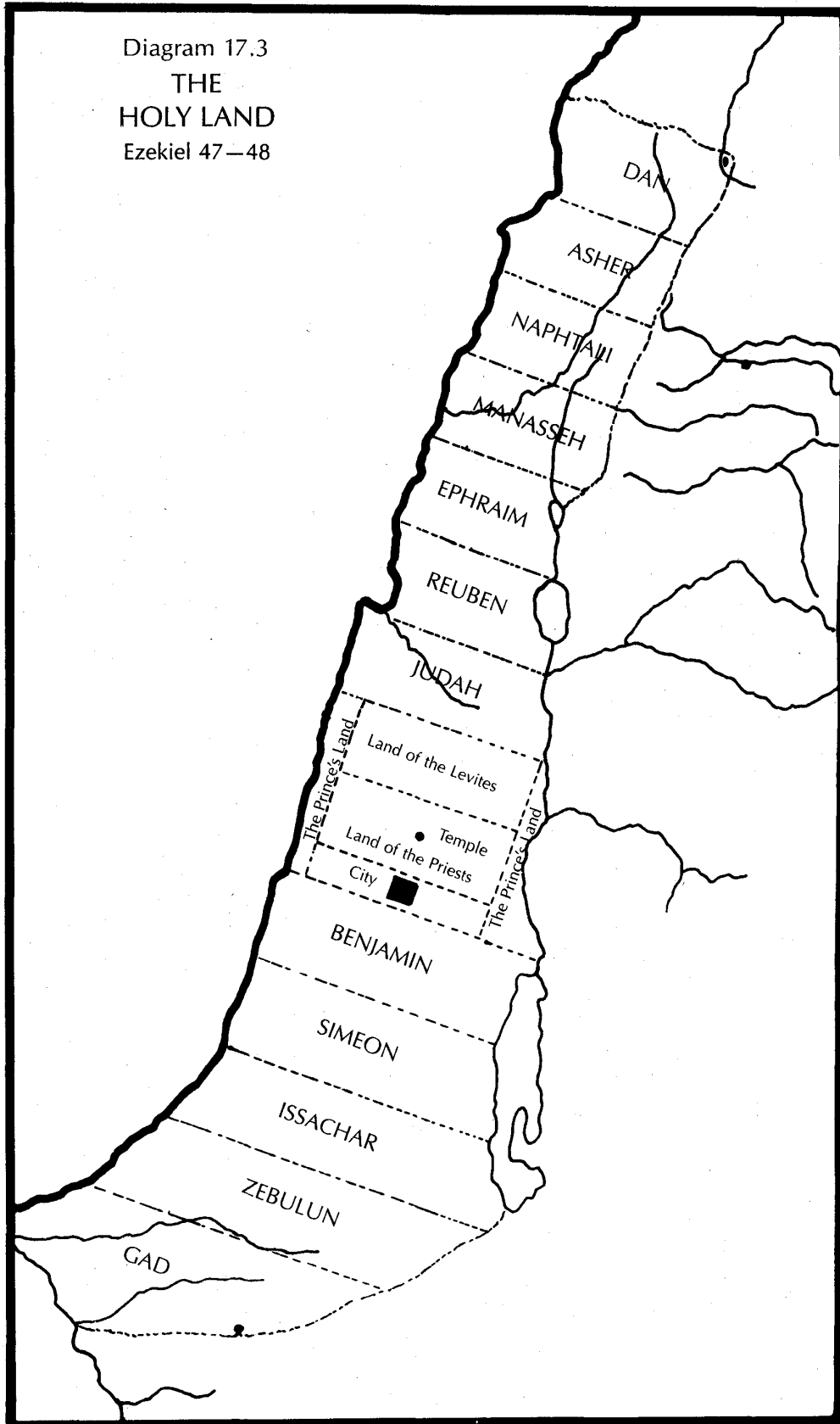


Diagram 17.3  
THE  
HOLY LAND  
Ezekiel 47-48



The most interesting aspect of Ezekiel's Temple is its river. In Chapter 47, Ezekiel sees a river flowing out of the Temple. As it flows it becomes deeper and wider, until finally it comes to the Dead Sea and restores the sea to life. This is, of course, a picture of the cleansing of the land and of renewed life, since water has to do with cleansing and life. It is a picture of the greatly increased spiritual power of the Restoration covenant. Let us briefly trace this river. We first met it in Eden, where it flowed out as four rivers to water the whole earth. After the fall of man, the river was cut off. Man's sin cut him off from cleansing and life, and eventually the world was destroyed in the Flood. After the Flood, God called the patriarchs to minister to the world. The patriarchs dug wells in the ground and set up oasis-sanctuaries. For them, the water was down in the ground and had to be brought up. They labored to provide it for their converts.

In the Mosaic heavens and earth we find a laver of cleansing in the Tabernacle. There is still no outflow, but at least the water is no longer underground. In the Temple of Solomon, we come closer to a river. We have a huge bronze ocean, much higher and fuller than the earlier laver, and we also have ten water chariots. These chariots are fixed and do not flow out; but at least there is much more water, much more spiritual power, in the Kingdom.

During the periods of the patriarchs, of the Tabernacle, and of the Temple, God had His people placed at the center of the world. Caravans from Europe and Asia to Africa had to go through Palestine. God put His people at the center so that they could be His evangelists. He brought the nations to them, as the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon. The water stayed in the land, in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple, and the nations came to it.

In the world of the Restoration, however, the bronze ocean is tipped over. There is no laver or ocean in Ezekiel's Temple. It has finally become a river, flowing out. True, it only flows in one direction, and not to the ends of the earth, but it still flows out. For the first time, the Jews would begin to move out from Palestine as missionaries, so that by New Testament times there would be synagogues and Gentile converts in all the world.

We should conclude our survey by taking note of Revelation 22:1. Here the mountain has become so high that it pokes through the firmament, with God's throne at the apex of the pyr-

amid. The Edenic waters thus are finally coalesced with the heavenly waters of Genesis 1. Since the city is a pyramid, it stands to reason that the waters flow down all four sides. Thus, Ezekiel's river is transcended in the New Covenant.

### **The New Heavens and Earth as Built**

Let us now look at the Restoration as it actually came to pass in fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecies. First, we find in the book of Daniel the fact that God's new world order involved world empires that dominated the nations. These empires would gather into themselves "the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven"; but in the plan of God, this was only so that they could all be turned over to the Son of Man (Daniel 7:27). The Christ to come would be the final World Emperor, and His non-political Church would be the true world empire, embracing and transforming every nation without dominating or destroying any of them.<sup>8</sup> Daniel prophesies the course of empire in detail from its establishment under Nebuchadnezzar until the time of Christ.<sup>9</sup>

In this new world order, God's witnesses are to try and influence the world imperial centers. Thus, Daniel and his friends become strong at Nebuchadnezzar's court, and eventually Nebuchadnezzar is converted. The same thing happens with the Persian court later on. Thus, in the world of the Restoration, while Jerusalem may be the world's spiritual capital, the political capital of interest to the Jews will be the capital of the world empire. This theme continues in the New Testament as Paul yearns to get to Rome and go to work on Caesar's household.

Something new comes into focus at this stage of history: the importance of witness-bearing. This becomes an important theme in the books of Daniel and Esther, and points to the New Testament. Daniel must serve Nebuchadnezzar faithfully and well, but at the same time must bear witness for God Most High, the Lord of Israel, without compromise. This is the theme of Daniel 1, the test of food, of Daniel 3, the three youths in the fiery furnace, and of Daniel 6, where Daniel is forbidden to pray. Daniel is the exemplary witness; he never compromises, but also never rebels.

A more complex case is presented in Esther. At the beginning of the story, Mordecai wants to have influence at court, but shows a needless rebellious streak in refusing to bow to Haman (Esther 3:2; cf. Genesis 23:12; 33:3; 42:6; 43:26; Ruth 2:10; Esther 8:3); and Mordecai also tells Esther to conceal her identity, cloaking her witness (Esther 2:9-10; cp. Daniel 1:8). When as a result of Mordecai's proto-Pharisaical and proto-Zealot behavior the Jews are put in danger, Esther is compelled to reveal her heritage and bear witness. The result is the salvation of the Jews and the elevation of their leaders into positions of influence. The compromised Mordecai, whose name means "Worshipper of Marduk," received honor when he assisted the king (Esther 6); but he received a permanent position when he stopped concealing his witness (Esther 10).

The books of Ezra and Haggai describe the return of the people to the land and the rebuilding of the Temple. As the people began to rebuild the Temple, God gave a series of visions to Zechariah, contained in Zechariah 1-6, that explained the nature of the Temple. To be sure, to the outward eye the new Temple was not very glorious (Ezra 3:12; Haggai 2:3); but the spiritual reality of the Restoration was such that the entire heavens and earth were going to be shaken (Haggai 2:4-9). Thus, if we are going to understand the *true* nature of the Restoration establishment, we must move back into the realm of vision.

As we have seen, the Temple courtyard is the equivalent of a garden-sanctuary, leading to heaven. The altar was a holy mountain and ladder to heaven, but so were the bronze pillars Jachin and Boaz. The bronze shaft was equivalent to the bronze altar, and the capital to the heavenly temple.

This is alluded to in Zechariah 6:1,

Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains.

The meaning of this verse and its allusions have been widely debated, but I believe that the clue lies in the nature of the visions themselves. Zechariah is identified as one of the twenty-four chief priests of the Temple (Zechariah 1:1 with 1 Chronicles 24:4-19; Nehemiah 12:1, 4, 16).<sup>10</sup> He had access to the Holy

Place, and must be compared with Ezekiel, who as acting High Priest had access to the Most Holy. Ezekiel saw the cherubic chariot of the Most Holy. Zechariah sees the lesser horse chariots of the Holy Place (the chariot-like water stands). Ezekiel saw water flow out from the restored Temple. Zechariah sees the (water) chariots ride out.

Zechariah prophesied simultaneously with Haggai. Both were exhorting the people to rebuild the Temple. Zechariah's Night Visions, like Ezekiel's earlier (Ezekiel 40-48), were designed to show the spiritual truths that the rebuilt post-exilic Temple would embody and manifest. There are eight Night Visions, and they run from sundown to sunrise, with the important transition, the new Passover, at midnight.<sup>11</sup>

*Vision 1 (1:1-17).* The first vision states that the people must lay a moral and spiritual foundation, not merely an architectural one, and then the Temple will be rebuilt. The context of the first vision is a ravine, where God's myrtle people are quietly fed by hidden waters associated with the ground water of Eden, the oases of the patriarchs, and the laver and sea in the Tabernacle and Temple.

*Vision 2 (1:18-22).* The second vision states that apostate worship at the horns of an idolatrous altar was the real cause of Israel's distress, but that the rebuilding of Temple and altar—the return to true worship—would be her restoration.

*Vision 3 (2:1-13).* The third vision states that God's glory, which Ezekiel had seen depart, would return and God would again dwell in His Temple. Just as the Tabernacle had been built after the Egyptian exodus, so the people are enjoined to make a new exodus from Babylon in order to build the Temple. Just as God had been a wall of fire between Israel and Pharaoh's army, so He would be a wall of fire to them. According to 2:8, after God's glory had taken its seat, the nations would be dealt with.

*Vision 4 (3:1-10).* The fourth vision concerns the investiture of the High Priest. Satan argues that because the priesthood is defiled, the Temple cannot be rebuilt. There is no way to cleanse the High Priest without Temple ceremony. Thus, we are in a "Catch-22."<sup>12</sup> But God sets up Zechariah as a new Moses. Moses as prophet had initiated the Tabernacle system and consecrated Aaron, based on information provided by revelation from God.



Just so, Zechariah as prophet sees that in heaven God has passed judgment, and on that basis Zechariah can tell the people that Joshua has been cleansed. The system can be set back up. This meta-liturgical vision is the pivot of the series, which runs from sunset to sunrise. It comes at midnight and points to Passover. Thus, it has more the marks of a "new covenant" than of just a covenant renewal. Joshua is given the festal robes (garments of glory and beauty) and the turban (the golden plate for his forehead), and thus the High Priest is restored.

The next morning, after these Night Visions, Zechariah would tell all this to the people. They would realize that Heaven had cleansed Joshua, and thus that Joshua could now cleanse the Temple site and rebuild the Temple.

*Vision 5 (4:1-14)*. The fifth vision concerns the lampstand and the ministry of God's anointed king. This complicated vision shows us a new lampstand, now with forty-nine instead of a mere seven lamps. This is a symbol of God's Spirit and power, which now will run throughout the whole earth, bringing the light of the Gospel to the nations. The mountains of the world will become plains before the sons of David. Just as Pentecost came after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, so this great outflow of the Spirit came after restoration of Joshua the High Priest.

*Vision 6 (5:1-4)*. The sixth vision concerns the cleansing of Israel. The rebuilding of the Temple and of the Holy Place (whose Tabernacle dimensions are here alluded to, v. 2), will result in the return of God's specific judgment of leprosy for hidden sin. Israel will be purged.

*Vision 7 (5:5-11)*. The seventh vision is a parody of the Ark of the Covenant. Instead of cherubim we have unclean storks. Instead of a holy box, we have a round ephah containing wickedness. Instead of a trip to the Holy Land and an establishment in the Temple, we have a trip out of the Holy Land and an establishment in the land of Nimrod. The point is that God's presence will not coexist with evil; and when God returns to the Temple, evil will be driven out.

*Vision 8 (6:1-9)*. And so we come to the eighth, or sunrise vision. The symbolism of the vision draws from the Temple in that there were ten water chariots in the Temple courtyard. We

should associate them with the four horse-drawn chariots seen in the vision. Also, though, the four chariots are the four winds of heaven, which have already been identified as God's holy people in 2:6. That being the case, the bronze mountains, the pillars Jachin and Boaz, should also be people, and who else can they be in context but Joshua the High Priest and Zerubbabel the Prince? The chariots run out to cleanse and convert the world.

The sequence of renewal in Zechariah's Night Visions is as follows:

1. The people must repent of moral wickedness and set aside all known sin.
2. Then, the people must tear down false worship (altars) and rebuild the worship of God. (To reverse #1 and 2 is liturgical pharisaism.)
3. When this happens, God will be a wall of fire for His people; and the numbers of the righteous will increase.
4. Then God will pass judgment on their behalf, and will glorify His Church. David's wilderness camp will move to Jerusalem. Humble Bible-believing churches will meet in cathedrals.
5. As this happens, God will give them a God-fearing king, a Zerubbabel.
6. The effect of such a renewal will be that God will also expose hidden degeneracy. A more thorough cleansing will come.
7. When the impenitent see this, they will depart, and thus wickedness will be further removed from the land.
8. Finally, God will enable the Gospel to go forth with power to shake up and convert the world.

### **Conclusion**

The Restoration is the least familiar and least studied phase of Old Covenant history. It is often assumed that the Kingdom of God went into the doldrums during this period, and that the people simply suffered until the coming of Messiah. Such an understanding of the post-exilic era utterly fails to do justice to the case. The Restoration was actually a far more glorious time

than ever before, in terms of spiritual power, though not in terms of outward glory and splendor.

The Restoration establishment can be set out as follows:

*New Names:*

God:

Lord of Hosts. God had been called this before, but a glance at a concordance will show that this name comes into tremendous prominence in the post-exilic books, especially Zechariah. It stands to reason. After the exile, the Jews no longer had an army, and had to depend on God's army for their protection. By giving them this name as their peculiar treasure, God assured them that He would indeed be a wall of fire around them.

People:

Jew. This comes from Judahite, and is exclusively post-exilic. All the children of Israel come to be considered as part of these "Judahites," even those of the already-exiled northern tribes who joined back up with Judah during the Babylonian exile.<sup>13</sup>

*Grant:*

Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but with influence throughout the empire. In a sense, the Jews became a "world people," as the Christians would later be. The grant began to be expanded.

*Promise:*

The visions of Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah showed them that God was with them.

*Stipulations:*

Sacramental:

Slight changes in the worship system reflecting the new Temple, the loss of many Levitical genealogical

records, the loss of Levitical cities, the full establishment of the non-Levitical synagogue.

Societal:

The Kingdom constitution was nullified, since there was no longer an independent kingdom and army. The Mosaic establishment also no longer applied in many respects, since the Jews were under over-arching imperial laws. Note that God left them to apply the *wisdom* of these systems to constantly changing circumstances. They were maturing, becoming more "adult," and thus were left to make their own applications. Also, witness-bearing becomes an important new duty.

*Polity:*

Church:

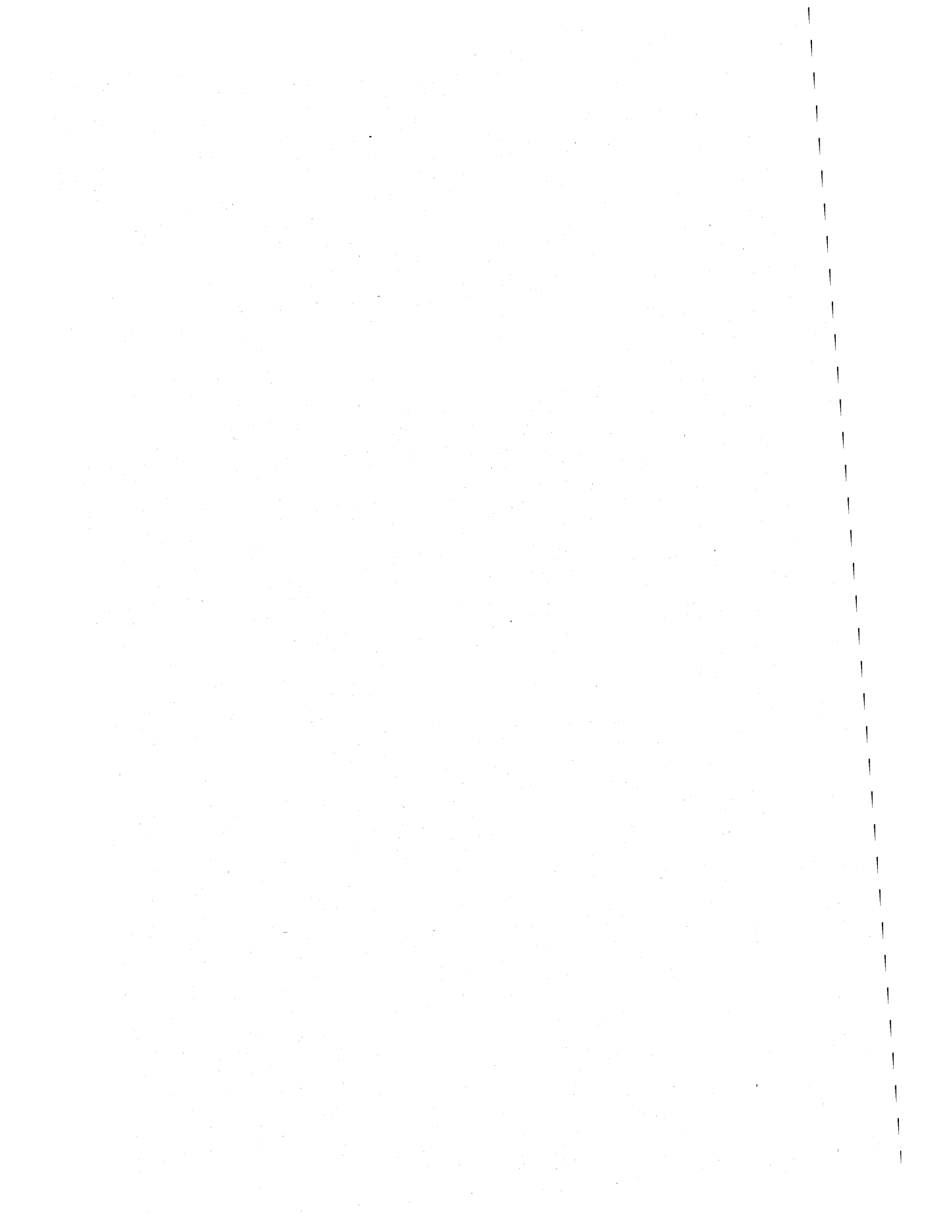
Priests and Levites at Temple, lay-leaders at synagogues.

State:

World emperor who protected God's people, or who chastised them. Imperial overseers, such as Nehemiah, and local Jewish prince, such as Zerubbabel, over the land.

*Symbol:*

The Temple in Jerusalem, but only as a rude representation of the visionary Temples of Ezekiel and Zechariah.



---

Before the great THREE-ONE  
They all exulting stand;  
And tell the wonders he hath done  
Thro' all their land:  
The list'ning spheres attend  
And swell the growing fame;  
And sing the songs which never end,  
The wondrous NAME.

The God who reigns on high,  
The great archangels sing,  
And "Holy, holy, holy," cry,  
"ALMIGHTY KING!  
"Who Was, and Is, the same;  
"And evermore shall be;  
"JEHOVAH — FATHER — GREAT I AM!  
"We worship Thee."

Before the SAVIOUR's face  
The ransom'd nations bow;  
O'erwhelmed at his Almighty grace,  
For ever new:  
He shows his prints of Love —  
They kindle — to a flame!  
And sound through all the world above,  
The slaughtered LAMB.

The whole triumphant host,  
Give thanks to God on high;  
"Hail, FATHER, SON, and HOLY-GHOST,"  
They ever cry:  
Hail, Abrah'm's GOD — and *mine!*  
(I join the heav'nly lays,)  
All Might and Majesty are Thine  
And endless Praise.

— Thomas Olivers  
"The God of Abrah'm Praise," stanzas 9-12

---

## E I G H T E E N

---

# THE NEW WORLD

The coming of the New Covenant is a story that does not need rehearsing in full here. There was a decline in the centuries before Christ, as the Jews gradually lost a true understanding of the Old Covenant, and developed a corrupting tradition. The announcement of the Kingdom by John the Forerunner was simultaneously a condemnation of the corruptions of Judaism (Matthew 3:7-12). John's announcement was the preliminary judgment, and Jesus' announcement was the full judgment (Matthew 23-24). The Exodus was made by our Lord on the Cross, on behalf of His people (Luke 9:31). After this transition, there was a new world established, with a new name for God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ) and a new name for the people (Christians; Acts 11:26). The new grant given God's people was the Kingdom in its fullness, including the whole world. There was a new law (John 13:34), new sacraments (baptism and holy communion), and a new visionary symbol (the New Jerusalem).

### **The Summation of the Old Covenant**

From the perspective of the New Covenant, the Old Covenant in its entirety, from Adam to John the Baptist, was inadequate and imperfect. It was a system "under law" in the sense that it could only condemn men, not save them. The entire Old Covenant stood in Adam, and Adamic humanity existed under the condemnation of the first covenant: Having seized the forbidden fruit, they were exiled from God and destined for death.<sup>1</sup> Although each of the new covenants before Christ provided a more glorious kingdom establishment for God's people; yet before the coming of the Messiah, the world was still "in Adam." Thus, the glories of the Old Covenant could never be anything other than provisional and anticipatory.

In order for a wholly new covenant to come, someone had to fulfill all the righteousness of the law, something Adam had failed to do. There had to be a new Adam and thus a new creation. And so we read that “when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law” (Galatians 4:4). Jesus took unto Himself the law, God’s perfect standard of holiness as expressed in terms matching human nature at that stage of history, and fulfilled its terms. In the death of Jesus Christ, the law, indeed the Old Adamic Covenant in its entirety, died. In the resurrection and transfiguration of Jesus Christ into glory, the law and the Old Covenant were resurrected as the New Covenant.

We have mentioned that during the Old Testament period, the prophets would call the people back to the standards of the earlier covenants; though when the revival came, the new form of the covenant would always transform and transcend the terms of the previous one. Just so, Jesus began His ministry by calling men back to the Old Covenant law. His prophetic words are found in Matthew 5:17-20:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill (v. 17).

The word “fulfill” here does not mean simply “cause to stand,” but implies transformation into a newness of power.<sup>2</sup> It means to bring something into its fullness, a fullness not previously seen. Thus, it is a good term to use to refer to the transformation of the old into the new. The New Covenant is not going to replace the Old with something different in kind, but only different in glory.

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished (v. 18).

As we have seen throughout this book, the passing away of the heavens and earth does not need to refer to the physical world. It often refers to a covenantal establishment. Here that is clearly what is in view. After the Cross, the Church certainly does not keep every jot and tittle of the Old Covenant law. Once



Jesus had accomplished His work, the law was changed, for “when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also” (Hebrews 7:12). The old heavens and earth passed away in the first century A.D.; and at that time, many of the jots and tittles also passed away, their purpose fulfilled at last.<sup>3</sup>

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (v. 19).

The idea here is this: Anyone who presently ignores the Old Testament Law will find disgrace and condemnation in the new kingdom that will come; but anyone who scrupulously keeps all the Old Testament Law at the present time, will be great in the kingdom when it comes.

The Pharisees in their teaching were setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep their traditions (Mark 7:9). Such men were annulling some of the commandments, and they would find condemnation. Thus, Jesus concludes by saying:

For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven (v. 20).

We are used to thinking of the scribes and Pharisees as meticulous men who carefully observed the jots and tittles. This is not the portrait found in the Gospels. The scribes and Pharisees that Jesus encountered were grossly, obviously, and flagrantly breaking the Mosaic law, while keeping all kinds of man-made traditions. Jesus' condemnation of them in Matthew 23 certainly makes this clear, as does a famous story in John 8. There we read that the scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken “in the very act” of adultery (John 8:1-11). How did they know where to find her? Where was the man who was caught with her? Apparently he was one of their cronies. Also, when Jesus asked for anyone “without sin” (that is, not guilty of the same crime) to cast the first stone, they all went away, because they were all adulterers.

Remember the point we made in Chapter 15: The Mosaic Law was an easy yoke. It was not hard to keep. The parents of John the Baptist kept it perfectly (Luke 1:6). They obeyed the law; and when they fell into sin, they did what the law said to do about it. Thus, when Jesus called the people back to the law and warned them to do a better job than the Pharisees, He was not laying some heavy burden on them. Actually, He was lightening their load.

Each time the covenant changed in the Old Testament there was a change in law. In one sense, each time the change was total in that the *form* of the law changed and the *historic circumstances* of its phrasing and application changed. Yet, since the law reveals God's character, its fundamental *content* can never change. At the same time, God only reveals His law to man in specific forms and circumstances. Even the form of the Ten Commandments changed between Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. It is because the fundamental content of the law never changes that the prophets called men back to the older law each time; but it is because the circumstances of history change and mature that the new covenant, when it comes, is always different in form. The changes in law during the Old Testament were relatively minor compared to the change from the Old Adamic Covenant to the New Covenant, as we shall see.

### Law, Wisdom, and Paradox

In calling the people back to the Old Covenant Law and Prophets, Jesus simultaneously advanced the standards of the kingdom a step further. We have seen that God gave the people a written law for the Mosaic establishment, but that in the Davidic establishment, the focus is on wisdom based on the law. The people were to take the principles of the Mosaic Law and apply them to new and changing circumstances. In the Restoration establishment, wisdom was taxed further since under imperial rule the Jews were unable to keep much of the law in its original form. Jesus takes us one step further, from law and wisdom to what I shall call *paradox*. A paradox is an apparent contradiction that forces us to meditate on deeper meanings.<sup>4</sup>

There is a great deal of paradox in Jesus' teaching and in the teaching of the New Testament as a whole. In the Sermon on the

Mount itself, Jesus said concerning adultery that if your eye offends you, pluck it out; and if your hand offends you, cut it off (Matthew 5:27-30). Concerning justice, Jesus said not to resist him who is evil, and to give to him who asks of you (Matthew 5:38-42). Those who wish to become pacifists and take Jesus "literally" on the subject of not resisting evil, must also take Him literally on chopping off hands and ripping out eyes. Of course, no one does the latter, and the Church has always recognized the wisdom-paradox nature of Jesus' teachings here.

A second realm of paradox is seen in the parables, which were both clear and deliberately obscure. Jesus made it plain that He used parables in order to instruct the righteous and to confuse the wicked (Matthew 13:10-17). This conception of truth and teaching is utterly opposed to the Greek rationalistic tradition in Western thought, which assumes that unaided "reason" is able to apprehend truth. Jesus says the opposite, maintaining that the truth is only finally reasonable to the elect, while the wicked can ultimately never regard it as reasonable. This applies not only to the parables, but also to the whole of truth. It is a fundamental aspect of Christian epistemology.

A third realm of paradox lies in the area of reward. Speaking to the children of Israel, God (Leviticus 26) and Moses (Deuteronomy 28) held out rewards for faithfulness and punishments for disobedience. In general, the rewards had to do with prosperity and the punishments with affliction. By the time of Solomon, wisdom had begun to perceive a more mature view of reward and punishments. In Job, the wise man found that the righteous sometimes suffer for no cause of their own. In Ecclesiastes, the wise man found that simply looking at rewards and punishments gets you nowhere in evaluating the world.

In the New Testament, however, we find highlighted such thoughts as these:

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives. It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons (Hebrews 12:5-8).

The first part of this statement is from Proverbs 3:11-12, but it is a truth that comes to sharper focus in the New Covenant. Why? Because in dealing with "children" (Galatians 4:1-3), we must express reward and punishment in terms of pleasure and pain; but in dealing with adults, we can invite the wise man to consider that chastisement is itself a reward, and a sign of sonship. To be sure, the rewards and punishments expressed in Deuteronomy 28 are not abolished in the New Covenant, but with them also comes a paradoxical and wisdom-inducing reward of suffering.

### **The Order of the Kingdom**

In the New Covenant a different kind of polity was established, though it had been anticipated earlier. The synagogue as it developed moved gradually away from the Levites and prophets into the hands of gifted laymen. In the New Covenant the sacramental aspects of worship were transferred from the Temple to the synagogue, and the Church was born.

The Church is the first, but not the only form of the kingdom. When the kingdom comes to a new locality, it does not come first by force of arms and the establishment of a Christian civil order. It comes first by persuasion and charity and the establishment of worship. Worship is man's first duty. When the Church as a sacramental, instructional, and governmental body has become established in a locality, kingdom influences flow out into society, and a new Jerusalem is built around the new sanctuary.

The transition from the Mosaic establishment to the New Covenant entailed a gradual shift from civil to ecclesiastical punishments. The Mosaic law prescribed death for a variety of crimes. During the later years of the Davidic establishment, when bad kings were on the throne, the Mosaic penalties were ignored. It was necessary for the synagogues to enforce the law through excommunication. This became even more important during the Restoration, when the Jews were frequently under imperial law and could not exercise civil punishments (John 18:31).

With the opening of heaven and the restoration of the keys to man—the flaming sword given by the cherubim back to Peter and the apostles—the central form of discipline in the kingdom became excommunication (Matthew 16:19). The wielding of these keys, which must always be in terms of Biblical standards,<sup>5</sup>

is a far more powerful social force than mere capital punishment, according to the spiritual insight of the New Covenant.<sup>6</sup> Of course, when the Church influences society, then Godly punishments are set up in society as well. All the same, the most important fulfillment of the Old Testament penalties lies in the sanctions exercised by the elders of the Church.

### **The Restoration of Type and Symbol**

The Jews of this period had almost completely perverted the law. As we have seen, they were not keeping the moral requirements of the law. Neither did they understand the symbolic aspects. When Jesus told the Jews that if they destroyed the Temple He would raise it up in three days, referring to His body, they were utterly confused (John 2:19-21). Similarly, when Jesus talked with Nicodemus and referred to the water-cleansing rites of the Old Covenant as a means of resurrection and new birth, Nicodemus was confused. Jesus expressed amazement: "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?" (John 3:10).

In the first century, the Jews had rejected Biblical symbolism and typology, and were divided into two groups. The Pharisees had turned symbolism into moralism, and were keeping the law as a means of salvation. The Alexandrian Jews had replaced Biblical typology with allegories grounded in Greek philosophy. As a result, neither group was able to recognize Christ when He came to them.

It was the task of Jesus and the writers of the New Testament to restore true Biblical symbolism and typology, and to show how the Old Testament revealed Christ. It is for that reason, among others, that John writes his Gospel as a "tour through the Tabernacle"; that Paul explains that the Tabernacle and Temple were symbols both of the individual believer and of the corporate church (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19); that the author of Hebrews expresses shock that his hearers do not understand the Old Testament symbolism and typology (Hebrews 5:12); and that Jesus had to explain the typology of the Old Testament to the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27).

Thus, when Jesus came to be the true Prophet, He first of all had to restore the Old Covenant, both in its moral and in its

symbolic dimensions. An interesting example of this, alluded to above, is found throughout the Gospel of John. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of the Tabernacle.

Before looking at this, let us consider the relevance of it. If Jesus Christ is God's true Tabernacle, then we who are *in Christ* are in that true "body politic" house of God. Moreover, since the cosmic heavens and earth are also imaged in the Tabernacle, if Christ is the true Tabernacle, then all the cosmic heavens and earth must also come to be *in Christ*, so that "in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). By presenting Christ as the true Tabernacle, John is not simply giving us snapshots of redemption in the narrow sense; he is also presenting us with a world-view, a new universe. As Paul puts it in Colossians 1, the Second Person of the Trinity was the center of the first universe, and the God-man Christ Jesus is the center of the new universe (Colossians 1:15-20):

1. Creation:
  - a. And He is the *image* of the invisible God,
  - b. The *firstborn* [i.e., captain] of all creation.
  - c. For in Him all things were *created*,
    - (1) in the heavens and on earth,
    - (2) visible and invisible,
    - (3) whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities,
  - d. all things have been created through Him and for Him.
2. Restoration:
  - a. He is also the *head* of the body, the Church:
  - b. And He is the beginning, the *firstborn* [i.e., captain] from the dead, so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.
  - c. For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him and through Him to *reconcile* all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His Cross;
  - d. through Him, whether things on earth or things in the heavens.

Accordingly, the Tabernacle-commentary aspect of John's Gospel is not merely a curiosity. It is, rather, a profound statement of the nature of Biblical worldview. In Christ, the entire social order and the entire cosmic order are renewed.

One other point that should be made is this: John's Gospel is not *only* a commentary on the Tabernacle. John also comments on the various feasts of the Old Testament, and on other matters as well. The Tabernacle is only one dimension, one layer, of his Gospel. With this in mind, let us briefly tour the Tabernacle.

John begins in John 1:14 by saying that "the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." The reference to glory is to the glory-cloud that filled the Tabernacle and was enthroned in it.

John begins where the priest would begin, with the laver of cleansing. Here the priest would wash himself and also the sacrifice before offering it. Jesus is both priest and sacrifice, and also the one who washes His living sacrifices, the Church.<sup>7</sup> Thus, John 1:18-34 concerns the baptism of John the Forerunner. In John 2:1-11, at a wedding Jesus takes water out of "six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification" (2:6) and turns it into wine. In John 2:13-25, Jesus cleanses the Temple. In John 3:1-21, Nicodemus engages Jesus in a discussion of the new birth, of water and the Spirit. In John 3:22-36, John's baptism leads to an argument over purification, and a discussion of Jesus as the Bridegroom. In John 4:1-42, Jesus presents Himself as Bridegroom to a Samaritan woman at a well. In John 4:46-54, Jesus restores a dying boy to life at "Cana of Galilee, where He had made the water wine" (4:46). In John 5:1-47, Jesus heals a man at the pool of Bethesda, and then gets into a discussion with the Jews about resurrection. This concludes John's section on the laver, which has revolved around water, purification, baptism, resurrection, and Christ as Bridegroom.

John then turns to the Table of Showbread. In John 6, Jesus feeds the five thousand, calls Himself the bread of life, and tells the people that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood (v. 53). In John 7, Jesus presents Himself as the drink of life (v. 37), recalling the libations that went with the showbread and meal offerings.

The Lampstand comes next. Jesus presents Himself as the light of the world in John 8. In John 9, Jesus heals a blind man. In John 10, Jesus presents Himself as the Good Shepherd. The connection of this to the Lampstand lies in the fact that David was the Good Shepherd of the Old Covenant, and the Bible repeatedly speaks of David as a lamp (2 Samuel 21:17; 1 Kings 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19; 2 Chronicles 21:7). There is a conceptual parallel between a lamp shining in a dark place and the voice of the shepherd heard by the sheep. In John 11, Jesus raises Lazarus, explaining that it is a matter of awakening him from darkness and sleep to light and day (vv. 9-11). In John 12, Jesus comments that those who had not believed in him were blind, but that those who did believe would become sons of light (vv. 35-41).

Starting in John 13, we move through these items of furniture a second time. Jesus washes the disciples' feet in 13:1-20. He breaks bread with them in 13:21-30. Then He moves into a discussion of the Holy Spirit, the ultimate archetype of the seven lamps in the Tabernacle (John 14-16). After this, Jesus prays His high priestly prayer at the altar of incense (John 17).

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus involved a double motion, in terms of the Tabernacle. The sacrifice was made outside the Tabernacle in the courtyard on the altar. Then, on the day of atonement the High Priest took the blood into the Most Holy and presented it before the Throne of God (Leviticus 16:15). Just so, we see the Lamb of God sacrificed outside the gate, and then He presents His Death before the Father's throne (Hebrews 9:7, 23-26). Under the law, when the High Priest came back out from the Most Holy, still alive, it was a sign that God had accepted the sacrifice. The Resurrection of Jesus fulfills that type. Also, when the High Priest offered the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, he put aside his garments of glory and beauty and wore a simple linen garment. Agreeably, when Peter entered the tomb, "he beheld the linen wrappings lying there" (John 20:6), because Jesus had put back on His garments of glory and beauty (Leviticus 16:4, 23-24).

When Mary Magdalene looked into the tomb, "she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying" (John 20:12). Arthur Pink comments,



Who can doubt that the Holy Spirit would have us link up this verse with Exodus 25:17-19—"And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold . . . and thou shalt make *two* cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, *in the two ends* of the mercy-seat."<sup>8</sup>

The tomb enclosed by the great stone formed but one more Most Holy Place, all the more so because here the incarnate Word was placed.<sup>9</sup> Outside this tomb was a garden (John 19:41), a reminder of the garden-sanctuary of the Tabernacle. When Mary Magdalene saw Jesus, she rightly recognized Him as the new Gardener, the new Adam (John 20:15). The Magdalene, restored from her seven demons (Mark 16:9), symbolizes the Church, the new Eve.

John is not finished with his Edenic motifs. As God breathed life into Adam in Genesis 2:7, so Jesus breathes life into His Apostles in John 20:22. As naked Adam hid in the garden, so naked Peter hid in the sea until Jesus restored him (John 21:7). As Adam named the animals, so Peter and the rest of the disciples are told to guard and feed Christ's sheep (21:15-17).

Thus our Lord wrapped Himself in the garment of the old creation, and in His Death and Resurrection created it anew. But what is this new creation like?

### The New Heavens and Earth

According to Revelation 21:1, the work of Christ brought about a new heavens and earth, "for the first heaven and the first earth passed away." This is explained a few verses later as the New Jerusalem, coming from *heaven*, overlaying a high mountain, which is the *earth*. Thus, the New Jerusalem-mountain complex is a picture of the new heavens and earth.

This is often nowadays taken to refer to the final eternal estate, but I believe the older commentaries are right in referring it first of all to the Gospel Age. After all, in the New Jerusalem the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2), something that will not be needed after the last judgment. Also, people are invited to wash their robes and enter the gates (22:14), and the Spirit and bride summon outsiders to come in (22:17). Clearly, such evangelism will not take place

after the last judgment. So, while the fullness of the New Jerusalem and the New Heavens and Earth will not come until after the last judgment, yet they are spiritual realities now. Thus, Hebrews 12:22 says that we have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Both the literal heavens and the governmental heavens have been changed. The literal heavens were changed when a man, Jesus Christ, ascended into them for the first time, and sat down next to God the Father (Hebrews 9:24; Revelation 4-5). This had never been the case before, because Adam and his posterity had been barred from the garden and from heaven. Now that Jesus has taken His throne, there is no longer any room for Satan in heaven; and at last, Satan is cast out (Revelation 12:9).<sup>10</sup>

The change in the literal heavens necessitated a change in the governmental heavens. The saints are seated in heaven with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), and thus are stars (Philippians 2:15). The total Church is pictured as seven lampstands, with her elders as seven stars (Revelation 1:20). Thus, the Church as a whole and her leaders in particular constitute the new heavens. The old heavens are cast down. In the Old Covenant, there were two political heavens: the sun, moon, and stars of Israel, and the suns, moons, and stars of the nations. The heavens of Israel were destroyed in A.D. 70, and this is pictured in Revelation 6:11 as the fall of her sun, moon, and stars. The heavens of the nations began to be shaken down immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Matthew 24:29. (See our discussion of these passages in Chapter 5 above.)

As regards the earth, we find the same dual change. The literal earth was changed at Pentecost by the descent of the Spirit. Until the ascension there had never been a man in heaven, and until Pentecost the fullness of the Spirit had never been poured out on the earth. The coming of the Spirit literally changed the earth.

This literal and cosmic change on the earth resulted in governmental changes as well. Previously, the priests had possessed a status different from that of the lay Israelite. Only priests were permitted to draw near into the Holy Place. Now, however, all believers are *in Christ*, and in Christ there can be no distinction of access. Christ is at the right hand of the Father, and in Him all

believers have fuller access than anyone had in the Old Covenant. Also, formerly Jew and Gentile had been separated, with the Jews as priests to the nations, and only Jews allowed to draw near into the courtyard and eat Passover. Now, however, all believers are *in Christ*, and in Christ there can no longer be such distinctions. Thus, the Jew-Gentile distinction was obliterated (Ephesians 2:11-22).

As a result of the elimination of these distinctions, the distinction between priestly Garden and lay-Israelite land is broken down. Also, the distinction between an Edenic land and other lands is eliminated. In fact, since the Gentile lands are often pictured as the sea, "there is no longer any sea" (Revelation 21:1).<sup>11</sup> Moreover, with the outpouring of the Spirit, and immediate access to heaven anywhere, there can no longer be any central sanctuary on the earth (Hebrews 9:8; 10:19-22; 12:18-24; Matthew 18:20).<sup>12</sup> The central sanctuary is in heaven, where Christ is.

These fundamental reorganizations mean that the kind of cosmic model found in the Old Testament will no longer do. We no longer have five environments with five different degrees of access to God (Heaven, Firmament-Heaven, Sanctuary, Land, World).<sup>13</sup> Now all believers have the same access, and all unbelievers are outside. There are only two environments.

The concept of the "world" changes in the New Covenant. Formerly, the "world" included converted and unconverted Gentiles, all those outside the Land. Now, however, "world" implies the realm outside the Kingdom altogether. The New Testament speaks of "worldliness" and of the "world, flesh, and devil" in a way not found in the Old Testament.

Practically speaking, the distinction between places of worship (sanctuaries), places of family life (homes), and places of work (world) is still valid. The distinction no longer has anything to do with nearness to God, however. There are no more *holy* places on earth, only *designated* places.

The radical character of this change is pointed to by Jesus in His curse upon old Jerusalem:

that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between

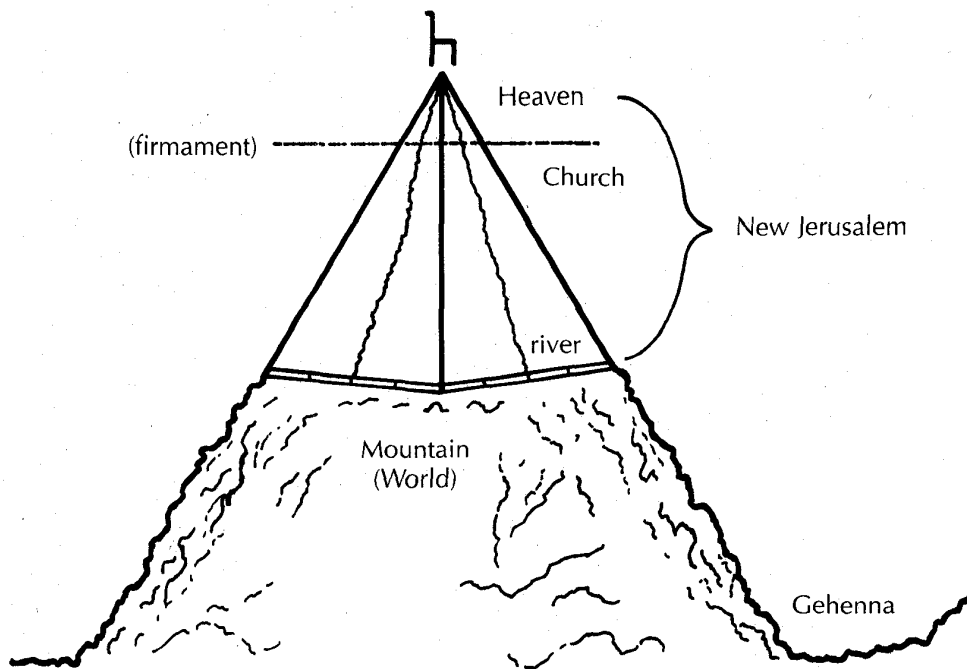
the Temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation (Matthew 23:35-36).

Since the Temple in view, being rebuilt by Herod, had only come into existence with Ezra, we might expect its destruction to include all the martyrs from then on; but that is not what Jesus said. Since Jerusalem had been built by David, we might expect her destruction to include all the martyrs from then on; but that is not what Jesus said. Since the Old Covenant received a definitive proclamation by Moses, we might expect its destruction to include all the martyrs from then on; but that is not what Jesus said. Since the "present heavens and earth" (2 Peter 3:7) had been set up after the Flood, we might expect its destruction to include all the martyrs from then on; but that is not what Jesus said. No, Jesus went all the way back to the original order of creation, to the first martyr. The whole order of the first creation, with its Heavens-Sanctuary-Eden-World divisions, was going to be wiped out. A new creation had come.

Thus, the cosmic model presented in Revelation 21-22 is different from anything found in the Old Testament. There are only two environments: inside the New Jerusalem and outside the New Jerusalem. New Jerusalem is a hollow pyramid, a shell of gems that comes out of heaven and is laid over a high mountain (Revelation 21:10). It symbolizes the body politic of the Church (21:12, 14).<sup>14</sup> It is sanctuary and land rolled together, and set up "on earth as in heaven," so that it is four-square in shape like the heavenly Most Holy (21:16). It has no temple, because it is so tall that it pokes through the firmament—except that there is no longer any firmament—to the very throne of God (22:1). (See Diagram 18.1.) Unlike Tabernacle and Temple, which were enclosed and thus dark except for the lamps, New Jerusalem is open and always daytime (21:23, 25).

In summary, the symbol of the New Covenant gives us only two environments. There is the holy combined heaven, sanctuary, and land of the New Jerusalem; and there is the defiled combined hell and "world" of those outside her walls. The ministry of the church is to persuade men to flee through her gates and be saved.

Diagram 18.1  
The New Jerusalem



### History

The coming of the new creation was in three phases. The first phase was in Jesus Christ alone. During the years of His earthly ministry, He was the Kingdom. His Disciples followed Him, and experienced a foretaste of His Kingdom; but before Pentecost, the Kingdom did not come to them. Only then were they clothed with power from on high.

The new Kingdom could not be envisioned by the Disciples. They and the rest of the Jews believed that Jesus would simply restore the glories of the Davidic monarchy in an imperial form. This was a logical vision for them to hold, in terms of the development of history, but it was an error. Just as the Hebrews in Egypt could not have envisioned the Tabernacle, and just as the Israelites of Samuel's day could not have envisioned the Temple, so the Jews of Jesus' day could not have envisioned the New

Covenant. Before Pentecost, the Disciples were still so confused as to ask when Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6). After Pentecost, the believers continued to be somewhat confused over the relationship of Jew and Greek, so that it took miracles, confrontations, and a Church council to establish the new nature of the New Covenant (Acts 10-11; Galatians 2:11-21; Acts 15).

The second phase lasted from Pentecost in A.D. 30 to Holocaust in A.D. 70. This phase is known in the New Testament as the "last days," a phrase that unfortunately has been often misapplied to the time just before Christ's second coming.<sup>15</sup> During this phase, Ishmael and Isaac were together in the house, competing for possession of the kingdom. Finally, Ishmael was cast out, and Isaac stood forth as sole heir (Galatians 4:22-31). Also, during this forty-year period the Church despoiled the Old Covenant of its treasures, as Israel spoiled Egypt and as David spoiled the Philistines. These treasures built the new temple of God, His Church. Thus, during this period the old heavens and earth coexisted with the new.

What came down upon the disciples at Pentecost was God's glory-cloud. When we remember that the Tabernacle and Temple were Old Covenant architectural models of the glory-cloud, it is apparent that the New Jerusalem descended from heaven at Pentecost. What John sees in Revelation 21 is but a picture of what happened in Acts 2. It was on Pentecost that God gave the law from Mount Sinai.<sup>16</sup> As the cloud covered Mount Sinai with wind and fire and thunder, so "there came *from heaven* a noise like a violent, rushing wind" (Acts 2:2). The cloud was also filled with fire, which was distributed to the disciples (Acts 2:3). As the cloud filled the Tabernacle and Temple, so the cloud "filled the whole house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2). In the Old Covenant, when the cloud filled the house, the priests had to flee; but in the New Covenant the Church is *in Christ*, and thus is not driven away from the Throne (cf. Exodus 40:35; 2 Chronicles 5:14). The heavenly cloud-pattern typologically imprinted itself on the house, creating a new world, and also upon the individuals in the house, filling them with the Spirit (Acts 2:4) and creating a new humanity.

The often controversial gift of other tongues was bestowed at Pentecost. According to the New Testament (1 Corinthians 14:20-22), one of the primary meanings of this gift, if not the only one, was as a sign of judgment upon Israel. The Gospel was going to the Gentiles and would be preached in new languages. If Israel was to hear it, they would have to hear it in other tongues. Indeed, the New Testament would be written not in Hebrew but in Greek! Such languages would sound like drunken speech (Isaiah 28:7-10; Acts 2:13-15), but would actually communicate judgment. Throughout the book of Acts, the Gospel went to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. Finally, in Acts 28:28, Paul declared to the Jews that full judgment was coming upon them, and that the Kingdom had been taken from them.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, after the elimination of the competition in A.D. 70, the new kingdom stood forth in glory. The former heavens and earth were done away, and the new had fully come.

Yet, while the initial coming of the Kingdom was in three stages, there is yet a fourth and final stage to come. After A.D. 70, God made it clear who the true heirs of the Old Covenant really were. All the same, the Church still exists in conflict in this world; and no matter how glorious the kingdom may become, she will still experience difficulty and death, and will still coexist with unbelievers. Only with the Second Coming of Christ will the Kingdom be finally come in all its fullness.

### **Typology**

It remains only to note that all the different heavens and earth, all the different establishments of the Old Covenant are typological of the New. There is instruction for the Church in every aspect of the Old Testament. The book of Revelation, which deals largely with the destruction of old Jerusalem, begins with letters to seven churches. The message to these churches is this: You are the true heirs of the Old Covenant, but watch out. If you commit the same sins as Jerusalem, you will be punished as Jerusalem is about to be punished. So take heed!

Each of these seven churches was a true and separate church existing in Asia Minor. In the providence of God, however, each church was in a different spiritual state. These seven states correspond to seven stages of Old Covenant history. (We have only ex-

Diagram 18.2  
Types of the Church in the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia

**Ephesus: Eden and the Fall**

2:1	the Lord walking among tree-like lampstands (Ex.37:19-21)	the Lord walking in Eden (Gen. 3:8)
2:4-5	falling from the first love	Adam's fall
Reward:		
2:7	tree of life; paradise of God	Genesis 2:9

**Smyrna: The Patriarchs, especially Joseph**

2:8	death and resurrection	Rom. 4:19; Gen. 25:21; 29:31; Gen. 22:1-14; Heb. 11:17-19
2:9	poverty and riches	Heb. 11:9
2:9	counterfeit Jews	counterfeit Isaac, Gen. 21:9; Gal. 4:22-31
Reward:		
2:10	prison & elevation to the crown	Gen. 39, 41

**Pergamum: The Exodus and Wilderness**

2:13	Satan's environment	wilderness, Matt. 4:1; 12:43
2:14	Balaam	Num. 22-24; 31:16
2:14	Balak	Num. 25:1-3
2:16	sword against fornicators	Phineas, Num. 22:31; 25:7-8; 31:8
Reward:		
2:17	hidden manna	Heb. 9:4 (manna hidden in ark)
2:17	white stone	Ex. 28:9-12; Zech. 3:5-9*

**Thyatira: The Davidic Monarchy**

2:18	bronze legs	Jachin & Boaz, 1 Kings 7:15-22
2:20	Jezebel	1 Kings 16, 21
2:22	great tribulation	1 Kings 17; Rev. 12:6; 13:5
2:23	God searches the heart	Psalms of David, esp. Ps. 51, 139
Reward:		
2:26f.	Kingly rule	the Davidic Son, Psalm 2
2:28	the morning star	Root of David, Rev. 22:16

**Sardis: Jeremiah and the Later Prophetic Period**

3:1	almost dead	judgment and exile
3:3	invasion like a thief	sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (cp. Luke 12:39; Rev. 16:15; the sack of Jerusalem by Titus)
3:4	soiled garments	the garments of Joshua, Zech. 3
Reward:		
3:5	white garments, Christ defending us against Satan before the Father	Zech. 3*

**Philadelphia: The Return from Exile**

3:7	restored David	Zerubbabel, Zech. 4*
3:8	little power	the post-exilic community (Ezra, Nehemiah)
3:8	open door	world influence (Esther)
3:9	false Jews	Ezra 4; Neh. 4, 6, 13



3:10 hour of testing

the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes,  
Dan. 11

Reward:

3:12 rebuilt Temple

Haggai, Zechariah, Ezekiel 40-48

3:12 inscribed Name

Zech. 3:5, 9; 14:20\*

#### Laodicea: The Period of Christ and the Apostles

3:15f. lukewarm

Jews of Jesus' day

3:16 spew out of His mouth

Lev. 18:24-28; Luke 21:24

3:20 the Lord's Supper

New Covenant sacrament

Reward:

3:21 enthronement

Rev. 20:4-6

---

\*On the symbolism in Zechariah, especially the identification of the white stone as the golden plate on the high priest's forehead, see James B. Jordan, "Zechariah's Night Visions," thirteen tapes available from Geneva Ministries, P.O. Box 131300, Tyler, Texas 75713.

plored six of them in this book.)<sup>18</sup> The imagery used to describe each church is drawn from the stage of history appropriate to it. This is outlined in Diagram 18.2.<sup>19</sup> What we learn from this is that we can draw parallels between our present churches and civilization to specific times in the Old Covenant, analogies that will help us understand our present predicament. I shall make an attempt to do just that in Chapter 19.

### Conclusion

The New Covenant establishment can be set out as follows:

*New Names:*

God:	Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Jesus Christ
People:	Christians

*Grant:*

The New Jerusalem, which is the Church and the kingdom; and the world as the place New Jerusalem is to permeate.

*Promise:*

I will be with you, even until the end of the world.

*Stipulations:*

Sacramental:	Water baptism and holy communion.
Societal:	The entire Biblical law, transformed through wisdom and paradox into the New Covenant, as illustrated but not exhausted in the Epistles.

*Polity:*

Church:	Temple sacraments and synagogue preaching are rolled together. There is no longer any blood line of priests. The Church is the first form of the Kingdom, around which a new culture develops.
State:	Romans 13 says that the civil magistrate is set up by God to be an avenger of blood. Under Christian influence, the magistrate is per-

suaded to avenge blood according to the standards of the Bible. Christ is world emperor before whom every local prince is to be persuaded to bow the knee. But note: we have moved beyond priest-kings, judges, kings, or emperors. Depending on times and places—the typological principle expressed above—any of these kinds of government can be appropriate, provided it is Christian.

*Symbol:*

The New Jerusalem.

---

The Church's one Foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord:  
She is His new creation  
By water and the word:  
From heaven He came and sought her  
To be His Holy Bride.  
With His own blood He bought her  
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation,  
One Lord, one Faith, one Birth;  
One Holy Name she blesses,  
Partakes one holy Food,  
And to one hope she presses  
With every grace endued.

The Church shall never perish!  
Her dear Lord, to defend,  
To guide, sustain, and cherish,  
Is with her to the end;  
Though there be those that hate her,  
And false sons in her pale,  
Against or foe or traitor  
She ever shall prevail.

Though with a scornful wonder  
Men see her sore opprest,  
By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distrest;  
Yet saints their watch are keeping,  
Their cry goes up, "How long?"  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song.

---

---

'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace for evermore;  
Till with the vision glorious  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great Church victorious  
Shall be the Church at rest.

So, Lord, she stands before Thee,  
For evermore thine own;  
No merit is her glory,  
Her boasting this alone:  
Then she who did not choose Thee  
Came, chosen, at Thy call,  
Never to leave or lose Thee,  
Or from Thy favour fall.

For Thy true word remaineth;  
No creature far or nigh,  
No fiend of ill who reigneth  
In hell or haunted sky;  
No doubting world's derision  
That holds her in despite,  
Shall hide her from Thy vision,  
Shall lure her from Thy light.

Thine, Thine! in bliss or sorrow,  
As well in shade as shine:  
Of old, to-day, to-morrow,  
To all the ages, Thine!  
Thine in her great commission,  
Baptized into Thy Name,  
And in her last fruition  
Of all her hope and aim.

---

---

As she on earth hath union  
With God, the Three in One,  
So hath she sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won;  
With all her sons and daughters,  
Who by the Master's hand  
Led through the deathly waters,  
Repose in Eden-land.

O happy ones and holy!  
Lord, give us grace that we  
Like them, the meek and lowly,  
On high may dwell with Thee;  
There past the border mountains,  
Where, in sweet vales, the Bride  
With Thee, by living fountains,  
Forever shall abide.

—S. J. Stone (1885)<sup>1</sup>

---

## N I N E T E E N

---

# THE COURSE OF HISTORY

As we come to the end of this study, let us step back and take a larger view of history (illustrated in Diagram 19.1). One thing that stands out is that each stage of history is more glorious than the previous one. There is definite growth and maturation in history; and though the wicked also grow and mature, their development is in the direction of degradation, not of glorification. The Bible clearly shows a progression for the righteous, and only a retrogression for the wicked.

### **The Growth of the Kingdom in the Bible**

Before the Flood the whole world was corrupt, and there were only eight righteous souls to enter Noah's Ark. In the Patriarchal era, the Kingdom only existed by way of anticipation, since the Patriarchs did not possess the land. They dug their water out of the ground. In the Mosaic era, the Kingdom did hold the land, though with difficulty. A laver of water was positioned above ground in the Tabernacle, and the land drank its rain from heaven (Deuteronomy 11:11). In the Davidic era, the internal enemies of Israel were subdued permanently, and the Kingdom became much more glorious. A huge sea of water stood in the Temple Courtyard. In the Restoration, Israel began to bear witness to all the nations of the earth, and the Kingdom began invisibly to spread and influence the world. A river flowed out of the Temple. Finally, in the New Covenant, the Kingdom was fully internationalized, and the four-fold river of Eden was restored, only this time flowing out of heaven itself.

Such a vision of the growth and gradual influence of God's Kingdom was once the common coin of Christendom, though in

Diagram 19.1  
A History of the Cosmos

	Prominent Symbols of the Cosmic Order	The Literal Heavens	Characteristic Political Heavens over the World	Political Heavens over the Land (Eden)	Spiritual Heavens
1st — Pre-Fall	Eden & Garden	Angels	Adam	Adam	Adam as Priest
Post Fall	Eden & Garden	Satan included	Strong Men	Seth's Line	Seth's Line
2nd — Noah 2 Peter 3:5-6	(The Ark) Rainbow, Altars	Satan included	Priest-Kings	No land	Godly Priest-Kings
3rd — Patriarchs Genesis 15:5	Oasis Sanctuaries	Satan included	Developing nations	Patriarchs (Genesis 14)	Abrahamic line
4th — Mosaic Isaiah 51:15-16	Tabernacle	Satan included	Developing nations	Judges	Aaronic priests, and seers
5th — Davidic Jer. 4:23-31	Temple	Satan included	Nations	Kings	Priests, reorganized by David, and Prophets
6th — Restoration Jer. 4:23-31	Ezekiel's Visionary Temple, and the physical Temples of Ezra and Herod	Satan included	Empires	Imperial Appointees and Jewish leaders	Priests and Synagogue leaders
7th — New Rev. 21:1	John's Visionary New Jerusalem	Man included; Satan cast out	Political Rulers	Political Rulers	Church and Elders



the past century or so it has become more common to expect evil to triumph.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, the Bible does say that right before our Lord's return, the wicked will mount an assault on the holy city (Revelation 20:7-10). This attack, however, is evidence of a decline; and so we ask, a decline from what? Obviously, a decline from an earlier period of Kingdom prosperity.

In numerous places the Bible indicates the continued growth of Christ's Kingdom at the expense of Satan's. For instance, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the course of empire, the Kingdom of God strikes the statue of humanism. As Daniel explains to Nebuchadnezzar:

You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:34-35).

I believe on the basis of Exodus 20:25 that the stone cut without hands is a reference to the altar. Remember, the altar is a holy mountain, and we have seen the altar grow and become bigger throughout Old Testament history. The altar speaks of Jesus Christ, of course, but also of true worship. It is true worship that will undermine and destroy the kingdoms of this world.

Notice though, that the stone (or altar) grows until it fills the whole earth. It does not say that the altar simply coexists with the wicked world. Nor does it say that the altar jumps instantly to fill the world. No, it says that the altar (or stone) *gradually* grows to fill the world.

Along similar lines we can consider the river of Ezekiel 47. We remember that the first application of this passage is to the Restoration establishment, but since the Restoration covenant, like all covenants, is a *type* of the New Covenant, we can legitimately make applications to the New Testament era as well. Notice, then, that after the river begins trickling out of the Temple, it grows deeper and wider as it goes.

When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins. Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded (Ezekiel 47:3-5).

Again, this is not a picture of instant Kingdom, but of gradual growth and development.

Jesus said the same in His parables. Let us consider the Kingdom parables of Matthew 13. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, Jesus makes it clear that the wicked will always coexist with the righteous in this world (Matthew 13:24-30), but this parable does not say that they remain at equal strength. No, rather Jesus immediately tells the Parable of the Mustard Seed, which says that the Kingdom starts small but gradually grows to become the largest of all garden trees, so that the birds, the nations of the world, rest supported by its branches (Matthew 13:31-32). Jesus follows this up by comparing the Kingdom of God to leaven, which gradually leavens a lump of dough (v. 33).<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the Bible pictures the continuing growth of the Kingdom after its establishment by Jesus Christ. Of course, theologians have debated how far this will go — whether or not there will be a one-thousand year golden age, and the like.<sup>4</sup> It is not my purpose here to get into this question, but simply to make the point that the Kingdom is growing from glory to glory.

### **The Growth of the Kingdom in Church History**

Since we live in an age of setback, it is not always apparent to us that the Kingdom has, in fact, grown. But, if we take a look at the Kingdom in the year 300, we find it suffering in pre-Constantinian tribulation. A few centuries later, the Church was wrestling the tribes of Northern Europe into the Kingdom; while in the East, Christianity experienced a real golden age, and what we call “Nestorian” Christians had influence throughout India and China. A few centuries later, after the high “Middle” ages and the Protestant Reformation, Christianity greatly disciplined

the European countries, spread to the Americas, and gave birth to the printing press, university education, technology, and many other benefits. During the last century, Christianity extended all over the globe as a result of the missionary movement and almost eradicated slavery (though slavery still exists in some Islamic countries, and behind the iron curtain).<sup>5</sup>

The history of the Church is not a history of smooth advances, however. From what we have seen of Biblical history, we should expect periods of setback. We should expect that an old establishment wears thin, and declines into stultification and error, only to be replaced by a new establishment that does fuller justice to the faith. Each new establishment takes up the strengths of the previous one, but transforms it into something new and more powerful, more glorious.<sup>6</sup>

For instance, after a couple of centuries of tribulation, God gave Constantine to the Church. Constantine is much criticized by ignorant persons today; but there can be no doubt that his conversion was a welcome change for the thousands of maimed, crippled, and raped Christians of his day. The Constantinian Establishment may not measure up by today's standards, but it was glorious in its time. It gave peace to the Kingdom, and enabled Christianity to blossom in the East, bringing the Gospel to many peoples and bringing about tremendous blessings.

In the West, the Constantinian Establishment did not last. It was, after all, imperfect. After several centuries of strife and disorder, God brought to pass the Papal Establishment in the West. Protestants like me find it easy to find fault with the Papacy, but we should remember that the firm hand of strong godly Popes helped bring the unruly tribes of Europe into the Kingdom. Just because the Popes of Luther's day were bad does not mean they always had been. In their day, the tribes of Europe were in a state of continual warfare. By outlawing war during Lent, on Sunday, and at such times as the Peace of God and the Truce of God, the Papacy eventually brought about a condition of continual peace. Wars were declared, fought, and ended. Peace was normal. The Popes and godly emperors brought this about, using the rod of excommunication.

The Papal Establishment, however, was imperfect. It led to abuses, and the Christians of Northern Europe did not like

being dominated by Italians. So, God gave the Reformation. The Reformation functioned differently in various countries, but it did bring a new and better "covenant." The Reformation brought freedom of the press, literacy, university education, and technology. But the Reformation Establishments were imperfect also. They were too closely tied to the various nations, and in the United States to separate denominations. The sense of true catholicity in Christendom was lost.

### **The Growth of the Kingdom in the Future**

So, what is next? From our study of the Bible, we can say that when God is pleased to give us a New Establishment, it will take up the best of all the previous ones; but it will transform them into something new. The future cannot be envisioned. For me, the period of Samuel is a close analogy to our present situation. In Samuel's day, the Ark was located at Kiriath-jearim, the Tabernacle at Nob, and the High Priest out in the field with David. An evil, demonized king was on the throne.<sup>7</sup> I imagine that the priests at Kiriath-jearim insisted that the Ark was the most important thing. I imagine that the priests at Nob emphasized the Tabernacle and its importance. I imagine David's troops felt that the dynamic presence of the High Priest and his ephod was the most important thing. Theologians of the day doubtless speculated on how to get all this back together, but they had no idea of what was really going to happen. The New Establishment was something they could never have imagined.

Compare our situation today. We have the discipleship wing of the charismatic movement, which is composed of devout, God-fearing people who pray and work for reform. Many of them think that the best thing would be if we all joined up with them. We also have the revival in Eastern Orthodoxy, signaled by the writings of Alexander Schmemmann. Of course, Orthodox theologians believe that we all need to pack up and join Orthodoxy! Then there is the strong revival in Reformational churches, centered on the profound thought of Cornelius Van Til. Many of these people go by the name "Christian Reconstruction," and wish that everyone else would join the Reconstructionist movement. As we continue our survey, we find the neo-Puritan movement in Presbyterian and Baptist churches.

These earnest people call us back to the best of our forefathers, but all too often think that this is all we need.

Now, I don't want to leave anyone out, but I'm sure I will. Time will fail me if I tell of the revival of evangelical belief in Roman Catholicism, the renewal of Psalm-singing in mainline churches, the deepening theological endeavors of various parachurch organizations, and the like. I have been involved with many of these, and in each case, those with the Ark think it is most important; those with the Tabernacle think it is most important; and those with the ephod think it is most important. Christendom today is scattered.

The future, though, cannot be envisioned. It is no good if we all join the neo-Puritans, or the Reconstructionists, or the renewed Orthodox, or the discipleship Charismatics. God has taken hold of Christendom and He has torn it apart. He intends to put it back together again in a new Kingdom Establishment. We cannot advance His timetable, or presume upon His designs.

What then? Our present duties remain the same as ever. The Christian is not called to play God and manipulate history, but to serve God in his calling. And this pulls us back to basics: Bible study, prayer, the sacraments, godly home life, public worship, faithful work on the job.

For the pastor, it means that whatever camp we are in, our duties remain the same. Let worship be a true covenant renewal, with the rite of covenant renewal restored (see Chapter 10). Let us return to God's hymnal, the Psalter, as the foundation of our hymns (not excluding the other great hymns of the Church). Let Bible study and Biblical exposition be foremost in our teaching and preaching. In this way, we lay a foundation, we build up the saints, we prepare the way for the New Establishment to come. Who knows just how wonderful it will be?