

Prophets of Pentecost

Anticipating the Coronation of the Messiah



“But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...’” (Acts 2:14-16)

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The Day Of Pentecost

Introduction

- I. The second chapter of the book of Acts begins with the Holy Spirit descending upon the twelve apostles on the day of Pentecost.
- II. Pentecost was one of three annual pilgrimage festivals of the Jews in which “all your men shall appear before the Lord” in Jerusalem (Exod 34:22–23).
 - A. Pentecost, known in Judaism as *Shavuot* (lit., *weeks*), came fifty days after the feast of Passover and celebrated the end of the wheat harvest (Lev 23:15–16).
 - B. Greek-speaking Jews commonly referred to it as *Pentecost* because of these fifty days (e.g., 2 Macc 12:32; Philo, *Spec. Laws* 2.176; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.252).
 - C. Pentecost was a feast of joy and thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest season.
 - D. The feast was proclaimed as a “holy convocation” on which “no customary work” was to be done, and at which every male Israelite was required to appear at the sanctuary (Lev 23:21).
 - E. “The Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22) is also known in Scripture by other names. It is referred to as the ‘feast of harvest’ (Ex. 23:16) because it inaugurated the beginning of the wheat harvest. It is called the ‘day of the first fruits’ (Num. 28:26) because its primary purpose was to bring a designated portion of the harvest, the ‘first fruits,’ into the Temple as an act of dedication to God in recognition of His provision. The festival is also termed in the New Testament as ‘Pentecost’ (lit., *fiftieth*) [Acts 2:1], signifying the *fiftieth* day from the waving of the *omer* {sheaf} of first fruits (Lev. 23:15–16).” (Scott, *The Feasts of Israel: Seasons of the Messiah*, 58)
 - F. “The Festival of Weeks, about seven weeks or 50 days after Passover (Lev 23:15–16). It was here that God’s people celebrated the first of the wheat harvest (Ex 34:22; Nu 28:26; Dt 16:9–10). Jewish tradition also associated the festival with covenant renewal. Not everyone in the Diaspora could attend the three expected pilgrimage festivals (Dt 16:16; 2Ch 8:13), but local people could, and large numbers of Diaspora Jews would be present for each festival. Jerusalem would thus be crowded at this time.” (Walton and Keener, *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*)
 - G. In the intertestamental period and later, Pentecost was regarded as the anniversary of the giving of the Law of Moses and the making of the covenant at Mt. Sinai (*Jubilees* 1:1, 6:17, Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, second-century BC).
- III. The Pentecost referred to in Acts 2:1 was the first one after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
 - A. It was one of the most important days in human history!
 - B. It was on this Pentecost our Lord was crowned at the Father’s right hand, and His Kingdom was established upon this earth—it was also the time when the terms of Divine pardon were first made known unto men.
 - C. This was the day that Old Testament prophets like Joel, Isaiah, Daniel, and David had looked forward to and prophesied about.

I. Preparation

- A. The first chapter of Acts deals with the preparation needed before the Holy Spirit would descend upon the apostles.
- B. After His resurrection from the grave, Jesus spent 40 days with His apostles and gave them further instructions concerning the “kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1–3).
 1. Just four years before, when John the Baptist was preparing the way for the Messiah, he urged men to “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2).
 - a) “Note the position of the verb and the present perfect tense. It was a startling word that John thundered over the hills and it re-echoed throughout the land. The Old Testament prophets had said that it would come some day in God’s own time. John proclaims as the herald of the new day that it has come, has drawn near. How near he does not say, but he evidently means very near, so near that one could see the signs and the proof.” (Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*)
 - b) “It is a kingdom of heaven because its origin, its end, its king, the character and destiny of its subjects, its laws, institutions, and privileges — all are heavenly. In the teaching of Christ and in the apostolic writings the kingdom of the Messiah is the actual consummation of the prophetic idea of the rule of God, without any national limitation, so that participation therein rests only on faith in Jesus Christ, and on the moral renewal which is conditioned by the same. It is the combination of all rights of Christian citizenship in this world, and eternal blessedness in the next.” (Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*)
 - c) In New Testament usage, the word *kingdom* (Gr. βασιλεία; *basileia*) denotes “royal power, kingship, dominion, rule” (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*).
 - d) “It is also fairly well accepted among biblical scholars that the term ‘Kingdom of God,’ both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, has as its primary meaning ‘God’s kingly rule.’ That is, the basic emphasis is on the actual rule of God as an activity, rather than on the realm or territory over which he rules.” (Newman and Stine, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, UBS Translator’s Handbooks)
- C. As Jesus began His earthly ministry, He also proclaimed, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17).
 1. Jesus went about Galilee, “preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 4:23).
 2. As He taught His disciples to pray, He gave a model prayer that included the petition, “Your kingdom come” (Matt 6:10).
 3. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Matt 6:33).
 4. Before His transfiguration, Jesus also said some in His audience would “not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power” (Mark 9:1).
 5. On the night of His betrayal, as He instituted the Lord’s Supper, He told His disciples, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom” (Matt 26:29).

- D. Before His ascension from the Mount of Olives, Jesus promised to bestow the Holy Spirit upon the apostles (Acts 1:4–8).
1. “The form of the question, ‘restore the kingdom to Israel’ shows that they still retained their former misconception, that Christ’s kingdom was to be a restoration of the old kingdom of David, and not a new and different institution. The question also shows unmistakably that his kingdom had not yet been inaugurated; for if it had been, it is inconceivable that these men, who were its chief executive officers on earth, knew nothing of the fact; and it is equally inconceivable that, if it had been, Jesus would not have promptly corrected so egregious a blunder on the part of the disciples.” (McGarvey, *New Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*)
 2. It was not important for the apostles to know the kingdom’s timing—but it was extremely important to know when the Holy Spirit would come!
- E. After spending 40 days with the apostles, Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9–11).
1. The two men in white clothing were angels who proclaimed to the disciples that one day Jesus would return in the same way He had gone—bodily and visibly.
 2. The angels asked the disciples why they were gazing into heaven.
 3. Their question might have been reproach of the apostles for wasting time there—they already had a command from Jesus to wait in Jerusalem.
- F. The apostles returned to Jerusalem (Acts 1:12–14).
1. They were told to stay in Jerusalem until they were “endued with power from on high” (cf. Luke 24:49).
 2. They not only prayed, but they prayed together, and they prayed constantly.
- G. Matthias is selected to replace Judas (Acts 1:15–25).
1. Two men’s names had been suggested to replace Judas: Joseph and Matthias (Acts 1:23).
 2. God chose Matthias (Acts 1:24).
 3. The first chapter of Acts ends with Matthias being “numbered with the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26).

II. The Holy Spirit

- A. Early on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles (Acts 2:1–4).
1. This was in partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28–32.
 2. The apostles “began to speak with other tongues” (Acts 2:4).
 3. In the New Testament age, “speaking in tongues” meant speaking in a *known language*—it was never gibberish (cf. Acts 2:6, 8).
- B. On this great day of Pentecost, Jews from throughout the Greco-Roman world had traveled to Jerusalem to worship God (Acts 2:5–13).
1. Here in Jerusalem was a select crowd of honest, upright men devoted to religious matters, who had gathered from every corner of the Greco-Roman world to attend this feast.
 2. The list of nations Luke gives was not based on language, but rather on geography and illustrated how widespread the Dispersion (*Diaspora*) of the Jews was in the first century.

3. “The list includes both ancient kingdoms and current political entities, moving generally from east to west and in its middle section naming first the northern and then the southern lands.” (Barker and Kohlenberger, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*)
 4. “Most of the descendants of Israel who had not returned to Judea after the Babylonian exile remained in Parthia and among other eastern peoples listed here. Many Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora lived in Alexandria in Egypt, Cyrene in Libya, Syria, Asia Minor, and Rome. ‘Arabs’ refers especially to the Nabateans, who were common to the east and south of Judea and as far north as Damascus. Nabateans controlled the caravan route from Damascus in the north to the Sinai in the south, and thus also controlled the spice trade from the east; they were known as merchants even in China. Nabatea’s capital, Petra, was in a steep and rocky area yet was prosperous and well watered; its king was Aretas IV (see note on 2Co 11:32). They spoke an ancient dialect of Arabic, although Greek was known among them; they were polytheistic, but many Jews settled in their region and some Nabateans converted.” (Walton and Keener, *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*)
- C. While all the apostles of our Lord spoke on this occasion, Peter’s sermon is the one which Luke records (Acts 2:14).
 - D. The apostles did not have to worry about *what* to say, for the Holy Spirit was there to guide them (Matt 10:19–20; John 14:26; 16:12–13).

III. The First Sermon

- A. Peter’s sermon, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, was the first sermon ever preached in the name of our risen Lord!
- B. Before Peter could get to the heart of his sermon, an objection had to be cleared away (Acts 2:12–13).
 1. Were these men drunk? No!
 2. As proof, an appeal was made to the Scriptures (Acts 2:14–21; cf. Joel 2:28–32).
 3. The apostles now have the attention of the audience.
- C. Four propositions were presented in the sermon (Acts 2:22–36).
 1. Jesus of Nazareth was a Man approved of God by “miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst” (Acts 2:22).
 2. Jesus was “delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23).
 3. “You have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death” (Acts 2:23).
 4. God raised Jesus from the grave (Acts 2:24).
- D. Peter’s sermon on Pentecost is a model sermon for all time!
 1. He cleared up misunderstandings and prepared the audience for receiving the gospel message.
 2. Not much time was spent on the first three propositions, for the audience already agreed with those points.
 3. The heart of his sermon was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave.

- E. Three pieces of evidence were given as proof of the resurrection of Christ.
 - 1. The testimony of David, the beloved king of Israel (Acts 2:25–31; Ps 16:8–11).
 - a) David was not talking about himself—he was writing as a prophet.
 - b) If they accepted David, they must accept his testimony.
 - c) The purpose of the resurrection of Christ was for Him to be raised to sit on the throne of heaven (Acts 2:30).
 - d) Peter quoted from David again (Acts 2:34–35; Ps 110:1).
 - 2. The eyewitness testimony of the twelve apostles (Acts 2:32).
 - 3. The present demonstration that they could “now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).
- F. Peter ended his sermon with the affirmation that Jesus of Nazareth has been made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).
 - 1. As *Lord*, Jesus is at the right hand of God and is the sovereign.
 - 2. As *Christ*, the Messiah, He fulfills all the Old Testament prophecies that a descendent of David would come and sit on David’s throne.
 - 3. “In Jewish thought, no one has a right to the title Messiah till he has accomplished the work of the Messiah—in fact, in all of life accomplishment must precede acclamation. During his earthly ministry, as that ministry is portrayed in all the Gospels, Jesus was distinctly reluctant to accept titular acclaim, probably because his understanding of messiahship had to do with suffering and because his concept of lordship had to do with vindication and exaltation by God. But now that Jesus has accomplished his messianic mission in life and death and has been raised by God and exalted ‘at his right hand,’ the titles Lord and Christ are legitimately his.” (Longenecker, *Acts*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary)
- G. The crowd was deeply moved and asked, “What should we do?” (Acts 2:37–41).
 - 1. They were cut to the heart and forced to inquire about salvation.
 - 2. The question is, “What shall these believers do?”
 - 3. Peter, guided by the Holy Spirit, responded by saying, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).
 - 4. The response to this simple message was astonishing.
 - 5. Three thousand devout Jews from all over the Greco-Roman world were baptized and become the firstfruits in the beginnings of a movement that would spread rapidly throughout the extent of the Roman empire and ultimately all over the world.
 - 6. The Lord added those who obeyed to the church (Acts 2:47).

Conclusion

- I. The events of Acts two were not an accident.
- II. Throughout the centuries, God had spoken through His servants, the prophets, concerning the events that would transpire on that day.
- III. The same plan of salvation that Peter taught on the day of Pentecost is what faithful gospel preachers will proclaim today.
- IV. Have you been baptized into Christ for the remission of sins?

Prophets Of Pentecost: Joel

Introduction

- I. The book of Acts opens with the account of the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost.
 - A. Pentecost was one of three annual festivals of the Jews in which “all your men shall appear before the Lord” in Jerusalem (Exod 34:22–23).
 - B. The Pentecost referred to in Acts 2:1 was the first one after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.
 - C. On this day, Jesus Christ was seated at His Father’s right hand in heaven, and the apostles announced His rule among men.
- II. The first chapter of Acts deals with the preparation of the event.
 - A. After His resurrection from the grave, Jesus spent 40 days with the apostles and gave them further instruction concerning the “kingdom of God” (Acts 1:1–3).
 - B. Before His ascension, Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to His chosen apostles (Acts 1:4–8).
 - C. Jesus ascended into heaven, and the apostles returned to Jerusalem (Acts 1:9–14).
 - D. Matthias is selected to replace Judas (Acts 1:15–25).
- III. Early on Pentecost morning, the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles (Acts 2:1–4).
 - A. Devout Jews from throughout the Greco-Roman world were in Jerusalem to worship God (Acts 2:5–13).
 - B. The crowds were at a loss to know what was happening.
 - C. In mockery, some said the apostles were “full of new wine” (Acts 2:13).
 - D. Jews did not ordinarily eat so early in the day—on feast days, a Jew would not break his fast until after 10:00 A.M.
- IV. What was happening was to be seen as the fulfillment of a prophecy by Joel—so Peter proceeded to cite the relevant passage (Acts 2:14–21; Joel 2:28–32).
 - A. Even though the languages spoken were understood by the crowd, Peter did not regard this as an *evangelistic tool*, but rather as a *sign* that needed to be explained.
 - B. Peter regarded Joel’s prophecy as applying to the *last days* and claims that his hearers are now living in the last days.
 - C. God’s final act of salvation has begun to take place!
- V. About 800 years before Christ came into the world, God raised up the prophet Joel to deliver a message of doom to the nations and a promise of glory for God’s cause.
 - A. Joel’s prophecy was originally given after a locust plague had ravaged the land, creating a severe famine.
 - B. Joel called the people to repentance, promising the restoration of their prosperity and going on to foresee the coming of the Day of the Lord, the dawn of the Messianic age when the Holy Spirit would be poured out.
 - C. Although other Old Testament prophets hinted at the coming of the Holy Spirit, Joel is so clear in his prediction of what happened in Jerusalem in Acts 2, that he is often called the “prophet of Pentecost” (Joel 2:28–32).

I. The Outpouring Of The Spirit

- A. God would “pour out” His Spirit (Joel 2:28–29).
1. The *Spirit* here denotes the Third Person of the Godhead (Rom 1:20).
 2. The central theme of Joel’s prophecy was that God was going to pour out His Spirit upon all people, i.e., upon all kinds of people and not just upon the prophets, kings, and priests, as had been the case in Old Testament times.
 3. “The word *all*, here, does not mean every individual, but every class or rank of men. It is to be limited to the cases specified immediately. The influences were not to be confined to any class, but to be communicated to all kinds of persons, old men, youth, servants, etc.” (Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament*)
- B. Sons and daughters would prophesy, old men would see dreams, and young men would see visions.
1. “The terms ‘prophesying,’ ‘visions,’ and ‘dreams’ seem not to be completely distinct, but complementary. Prophesying stands for the whole of teaching by inspiration of the Spirit. Visions and dreams indicate two forms of revelation by which God would make Himself known to the prophet (Num. 12:6). It is concluded, therefore, that what took place on Pentecost marked the beginning of the complete fulfillment of Joel’s word.” (Hailey, *Commentary on the Minor Prophets*, 54)
 2. Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied (Acts 21:9).
 3. Some women in the church at Corinth also had this gift (1 Cor 11:5).
 4. Before his conversion, Paul had a vision of Ananias (Acts 9:12).
 5. Before his conversion, Cornelius had a vision of an angel (Acts 10:3).
- C. The Spirit would be poured out on *menservants* and *maidservants*.
1. Nowhere in the Old Testament did God ever call a slave to be His prophet or put His Spirit upon them (cf. Gal 3:28).
 2. The Spirit’s influences would be confined to no class—they would descend on old and young, and even on servants and handmaids.
 3. Cornelius and his household, all Gentiles, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–48; 11:15–17).
- D. Not everything mentioned in Joel 2:28–29 was happening that particular morning.
1. The “last days” include the time between Christ’s first and second comings.
 2. We live in the “last days” right now, and have been for nearly 2,000 years!

II. Wonders In The Heavens, Signs In The Earth

- A. Joel also prophesied about wonders in the heavens and signs in the earth (Acts 2:19–20; Joel 2:30–31).
- B. The “signs in the earth” are probably the gift of tongues and the various healing miracles which are shortly to be recorded in the book of Acts.

- C. The “wonders in heaven above” could have reference to several things.
1. This could have been a reference to the crucifixion (Luke 23:44).
 - a) “Little more than seven weeks earlier the people of Jerusalem had indeed seen the darkening of the sun, during the early afternoon of Good Friday; and later in that same afternoon the paschal full moon may well have risen blood-red in the sky in consequence of that preternatural gloom. These phenomena are now interpreted as harbingers of the advent of the day of the Lord a day of judgment, to be sure, but more immediately the day of God’s salvation to all who invoked his name.” (Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 62)
 - b) “Darkness did not cover just the cross or Jerusalem. It encompassed *the whole land*, or perhaps better translated, the whole earth. The death of Jesus has universal implications. A world that kills Jesus must live in darkness. The sun paid its homage to Christ. When God’s Son dies, the earth’s sun cannot shine. It must hide its face in mourning and darkness. A sinful world cannot count on the guarantee of sunlight, for God controls all the rules and laws of nature. A world that rejects God’s Son must expect signs that God has rejected the sinful world.” (Butler, *Luke*, 396)
 2. There were also signs at the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:11).
 - a) Josephus records many such signs (Josephus, *War* 4:286–287; 6:289–293).
 - b) Even Tacitus, the Roman historian, recorded such signs in the skies before Titus destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70.
 - c) “Various portents had occurred at this time, but so sunk in superstition are the Jews and so opposed to all religious practices that they think it wicked to expiate them by sacrifices or vows. Embattled armies were seen to clash in the sky with flashing arms, and the Temple shone with sudden fire from heaven. The doors of the shrine suddenly opened, a superhuman voice was heard to proclaim that the gods were leaving, and at once there came a mighty movement of their departure. Few took alarm at all this.” (Tacitus, *Histories* 5:13)
 3. The “wonders in the heavens” might refer to the end of the world at the return of Christ and His judgment of all humanity.

III. Calling On The Name Of The Lord

- A. Joel’s prophecy was not one of just gloom and despair, for *whoever* calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32).
 1. Salvation is no longer limited to just the Jews!
 2. Paul quoted from Joel 2:32 when he explained how the gospel plan of salvation is extended to all members of the human race (Rom 10:10–17).
- B. If Peter had ended his sermon at this point, the multitude would have left convinced that he had been speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but not one of them would have been converted to Christ.
 1. How did Peter apply the phrase “Calling on the name of the Lord” to his audience in Acts 2?

2. He told them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38).
3. “The question, ‘What shall we do?’ had reference to the escape of these guilty men from the consequences of their crime; and although the idea of salvation from their sins in general could scarcely yet have had a place in their minds, the real force of their question would be well expressed by the full inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? This is the first time under the reign of Christ that this momentous question was propounded, and the first time of course that it received an answer. Whatever may have been the proper answer under any previous dispensation, or on any previous day in the world’s history, the answer given by Peter on this day of Pentecost, the day in which the reign of Christ on earth began, is the true and infallible answer for all such inquirers in all subsequent time.” (McGarvey, *New Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 37–38)

Conclusion

- I. Peter said Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 2:14–21).
- II. God did pour out of His Spirit (Acts 2:33).
- III. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:38–41).

Prophets Of Pentecost: Isaiah

Introduction

- I. More than 700 years before Christ came into the world, God raised up a prophet by the name of Isaiah.
 - A. He was called to be a prophet “in the year that king Uzziah died” (Isa 6:1), i.e., in 740/739 BC.
 - B. He lived and worked during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah ruled over southern kingdom of Judah (Isa 1:1).
 - C. He exercised his ministry with uncompromising firmness and boldness and was noted for his profound reverence for God.
- II. The book of Isaiah is the first and longest book of the Hebrew prophets.
 - A. The *Isaiab Scroll* (also called the *Great Isaiab Scroll*) was found in a cave near the Dead Sea (Qumran Cave 1) with six other scrolls by Bedouin shepherds in 1947.
 - B. These ancient scrolls were later known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.
 - C. The Isaiah Scroll, written on 17 sheets of parchment, is the most complete scroll out of the 220 found—it is complete from beginning to end.
 - D. This scroll is also the oldest complete copy of Isaiah’s book known—it is 1100 years older than the next oldest manuscript, the Leningrad Codex.
 - E. Pieces of the Isaiah Scroll have been carbon-14 dated, giving a date between 335–324 BC and 202–107 BC.
 - F. The scroll, along with other fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, can be viewed in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.
- III. The first five chapters of the book of Isaiah consist of prophecies delivered during the reign of King Uzziah.
 - A. The second chapter of Isaiah contains a prophecy concerning the Messiah’s rule and the establishment of His kingdom (Isa 2:1–4).
 1. Something would happen in the latter days.
 2. The Lord’s house would be established.
 3. All nations would flow to it.
 4. The law would go forth from Jerusalem (Zion).
 5. Men would turn their swords into plowshares.
 - B. The language of Isaiah is nearly identical to that of Micah (Mic 4:1–3).
 1. This is not surprising since Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries and shared the same expectation for God’s purpose.
 2. However, the context of Micah is obviously the destruction of Jerusalem and what will happen *after* that.

- IV. Since 1790 the doctrine of premillennialism has become a popular teaching among many Evangelical groups, both in the United States and England.
- A. It started with groups like the Plymouth Brethren and the Christadelphians, then moved to groups like the Church of God, the Christian Israelite Church, and the Seventh-day Adventists.
 - B. They have destroyed Isaiah's poetry and have turned the figurative language of prophecy into the reading of tea leaves.
 - C. In this lesson, we want to try to understand the message of Isaiah as it is explained in the New Testament.
 - D. We also want to note how both the "Church Fathers" and older scholars understood these verses.

Discussion

I. The Latter Days

- A. "This sermon begins with the prophecy relating to the last days, the days of the Messiah, when his kingdom should be set up in the world, at the latter end of the Mosaic economy. In the last days of the earthly Jerusalem, just before the destruction of it, this heavenly Jerusalem should be erected, Heb. xii. 22; Gal. iv. 26." (Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*)
- B. Nearly 150 years later, the prophet Daniel would also speak of what would happen in the "latter days" (Dan 2:28) and then looked down the course of human events until the rise of the Roman Empire (Dan 2:44).
- C. Peter understood the words of Joel to applied to his day (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28).
- D. Peter also affirmed that we are living in the "last times" (1 Pet 1:20).
- E. Christ came at a time when world when conditions were ripe for the spread of the gospel to all nations (Gal 4:4).
 1. The Romans had brought in the era of *pax Romana* (Latin for "Roman peace").
 2. Their network of roads made travel more convenient, and they were safe because the legions were stationed to guard them.
 3. The Greek language was adopted as the *lingua franca* of the empire.
 4. The emptiness of the many pagan religions created a spiritual hunger for something genuine.
 5. "God sent his Son at the right moment in human history, when God's providential oversight of the events of the world had directed and prepared peoples and nations for the incarnation and ministry of Christ, and for the proclamation of the gospel." (*ESV Study Bible*)
- F. John the Baptist began his ministry by announcing that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matt 3:1-2).
 1. For four hundred years, God's prophets had been silent. No more!
 2. John called for people to repent—to remove hindrances from their lives that would interfere with their reception of the gospel message.
- G. Jesus also announced that the kingdom was near (Mark 1:15; 9:1).
- H. God spoke in the *last days* by His Son (Heb 1:2).

II. The House Of The Lord

- A. Isaiah looked forward to the day when the “house of the Lord” would be established in Jerusalem (Isa 2:3).
- B. “Of this the blessed Esaias prophesying of old time said, And on this mountain, — (now he calls the Church a mountain elsewhere also, as when he says, In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be manifest) — on this mountain shall the Lord make unto all nations a feast; they shall drink wine, they shall drink gladness, they shall anoint themselves with ointment.” (Cyril of Jerusalem {c. 315–386}, *Catechetical Lectures* 21.7)
- C. The church is the “house of God” (Matt 16:13–19; 1 Tim 3:15).
- D. Paul used similar language in other passages (Eph 2:19–22; 1 Cor 3:9–17).
- E. One the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, those who were baptized into Christ were added to His church (Acts 2:47).

III. All Nations Would Flow Unto It

- A. Once the house of the Lord was established, all nations would flow to it (Isa 2:2).
- B. The Gentile nations’ eager desire to follow God’s ways stood in stark contrast to the gloomy picture of the spiritual life of the people of Jerusalem in Uzziah’s time (Isa 2:6–4:1).
 - 1. God’s plans for mankind always included His desire to reach the whole world, not just the small nation of Judah (Isa 45:22–23; 60:3).
 - 2. They now come, not for plunder, but in peace, not to rob, but to learn.
- C. The message of the gospel was intended for all nations (Matt 28:19–20; Acts 1:6–8).
- D. “The nations shall be admitted into it, even the uncircumcised, who were forbidden to come into the courts of the temple at Jerusalem. The partition wall, which kept them out, kept them off, shall be taken down. *All nations shall flow into it*; having liberty of access, they shall improve their liberty, and multitudes shall embrace the Christian faith. They shall flow into it, as streams of water, which denotes the abundance of converts that the gospel should make and their speed and cheerfulness in coming into the church. They shall not be forced into it, but shall naturally flow into it. Thy people shall be willing, all volunteers, Ps. cx.3. To Christ shall the gathering of the people be, Gen. xlix.10. See ch. lx.4, 5.” (Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*)

IV. Beginning At Jerusalem

- A. While the destruction of Jerusalem was discussed in the first chapter of Isaiah, its function as the center of salvation for all nations is also mentioned (Isa 2:3).
- B. “Physical Zion was the steep hill in the southeastern section of Jerusalem on which David had built his fortress and on which Solomon later built the temple. It became a symbol of an impregnable stronghold against enemies and the dwelling place of God among His people. The word *Zion* came to be used in prophecy to refer to the spiritual Zion to come, that is, the dwelling place of God among His redeemed people where they find security and peace. Later in the Book of Isaiah this point will be emphasized and become clear. *Zion*, as the mountain of God’s house and people, was the place from which the law would go forth and from which the people would be ruled by His word.” (Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, 47)

- C. “I am amazed at the persistence of some to interpret this passage in such a way as to conclude that this is a prediction of the return from Babylonian captivity. Which nations rushed to the temple after its rebuilding? What law was given from there? God gave the ancient law on Sinai, not Zion. Clearly Isaiah is referring to the New Testament, where the law was first given to the apostles and then delivered to all peoples by them. He announces that in addition to the law, the word would come from Zion. The term word is a title given to the message of the gospel. The blessed Luke says, ‘Those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us.’ He is not talking about God the Word but the message of the divine word. Zion is not where God the Word was from but where he taught the truth.” (Theodoret of Cyr {c. 393–466}, *Commentary on Isaiah* 2.4)
- D. “And that it did so come to pass, we can convince you. For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number, and these illiterate, of no ability in speaking: but by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God; and we who formerly used to murder one another do not only now refrain from making war upon our enemies, but also, that we may not lie nor deceive our examiners, willingly die confessing Christ.” (Justin Martyr {c. 100/110–165}, *First Apology* 39)
- E. “What can this law proceeding from Zion, which is different from what was made law by Moses in the desert at Mount Sinai, be but the word of the gospel through our Savior Jesus Christ which proceeds from Zion through all the nations? For clearly it was in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, where our Savior and Lord lived and taught, that the law of the new covenant originated and from which it proceeded to all people.” (Eusebius of Caesarea {c. 260/263–340}, *Proof of the Gospel* 1.4)
- F. Jesus commanded the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were granted power from on high, then they would take His message into all the world (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4–5).
- G. The gospel of Christ was first preached to Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5), then to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; Rom 1:16).
- H. There is a sense in which we all come to Zion as we obey Christ (Heb 12:18–24).

V. Swords Into Plowshares

- A. Isaiah prophesied that during the time of the Messiah, people would turn weapons of war into instruments of peace (Isa 2:4).
- B. This passage speaks of the peaceful nature of the kingdom (John 18:36).
- C. “Long ago did Isaiah declare that ‘out of Sion should go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem’ — some other law, that is, and another word. In short, says he, ‘He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people;’ meaning not those of the Jewish people only, but of the nations which are judged by the new law of the gospel and the new word of the apostles, and are amongst themselves rebuked of their old error as soon as they have believed. And as the result of this, ‘they beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears (which are a kind of hunting instruments) into pruning-hooks;’ that is to say, minds, which once were fierce and cruel, are changed by them into good dispositions productive of good fruit.” (Tertullian {c. 155/160–225}, *Against Marcion* 4.1)

- D. “*Nations shall then not lift up sword against nation, as they now do, neither shall they learn war any more, for they shall have no more occasion for it. This does not make all war absolutely unlawful among Christians, nor is it a prophecy that in the days of the Messiah there shall be no wars. The Jews urge this against the Christians as an argument that Jesus is not the Messiah, because this promise is not fulfilled. But, 1. It was in part fulfilled in the peaceableness of the time in which Christ was born, when wars had in a great measure ceased, witness the taxing, Luke ii.1. 2. The design and tendency of the gospel are to make peace and to slay all enmities. It has in it the most powerful obligations and inducements to peace; so that one might reasonably have expected it should have this effect, and it would have had it if it had not been for those lusts of men from which come wars and fightings. 3. Jew and Gentiles were reconciled and brought together by the gospel, and there were no more such wars between them as there had been; for they became one sheepfold under one shepherd. See Eph. ii.15. 4. The gospel of Christ, as far as it prevails, disposes men to be peaceable, softens men’s spirits, and sweetens them; and the love of Christ, shed abroad in the heart, constrains men to love one another. 5. The primitive Christians were famous for brotherly love; their very adversaries took notice of it.*” (Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*)
- E. “The prophet points to the character of the citizens of the kingdom: *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* Here the prophet is certainly not speaking of the world, for its people will war continually, but rather of the *all nations* and *many peoples* who will come to the mountain of Jehovah’s house. He is describing the character of the citizens of the new kingdom. In the holy mountain they will learn war no more. ‘They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain’ (11:9). Isaiah is not describing a future situation in which the nations of the world will not fight wars; wars will always be fought. He is describing the character of the kingdom of *the latter days*, the one to which the Hebrew saints had come (Heb. 12:18–29), and to which men of all the nations may and do come today.” (Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah*, 49)
- F. Some people have taken this poetic language literally—and some have used the words for their political advantage.
1. In New York City, at the United Nations building, there is a garden with several sculptures and statues that have been donated by various countries.
 - a) One of the more famous statues was sculpted by Evgeniy Vuchetich and is called “Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares.”
 - b) This sculpture was a gift from the former Soviet Union and presented to the United Nations in 1959.
 - c) The bronze statue represents the figure of a man holding a hammer in one hand and, in the other, a sword which he is making into a plowshare, symbolizing man’s desire to put an end to war and convert the means of destruction into creative tools for the benefit of all humanity.
 - d) Of course, this was donated by one of the most aggressive, bloodthirsty, totalitarian states in world history!

2. Across the street from the United Nations is Ralph Bunche Park, a small municipal public park in the Turtle Bay neighborhood of New York City.
 - a) This park contains the famous Isaiah Wall.
 - b) In 1975 the northern wall was inscribed with the famous quotation from Isaiah 2:4.
3. If you are hoping for the United Nations to bring peace on this earth, you will die disappointed—it is one of the most evil and corrupt organizations known to man!

Conclusion

- I. The poetry of Isaiah 2 pictures an ideal world, but it is still the truth.
 - A. Not every sinner will come to God—many love darkness rather than the light (John 3:19).
 - B. However, access to God is available to both Jew and Gentile, for He shows no partiality (Acts 10:34-35).
- II. Christ has an invitation for you to share in His glory (Rev 3:20-21).

Prophets Of Pentecost: Daniel

Introduction

- I. Six centuries before Christ came into the world, Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, began his rise to power (626–605 BC).
 - A. His son, Nebuchadnezzar, was made commander of his armies and around 612 BC, and he marched against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.
 - B. In the summer of 605 BC, there was a decisive battle at Carchemish (Karkamis, or Karchemiš), where the Assyrian armies were defeated.
 - C. This was one of the most important and decisive battles in world history.
 - D. Carchemish was an important ancient city of the northern Hittite empire, located on the border between Turkey and Syria.
 1. This was the battle Pharaoh Necho II sought to join but was hindered by Josiah at Megiddo (cf. 2 Kgs 23:29–35; 2 Chr 35:20–24).
 2. The Egyptians were further delayed at Riblah, and Necho arrived at Carchemish too late.
 - E. Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had surprised the Assyrians and had captured Carchemish.
 - F. He then turned on the Egyptians and thoroughly defeated them in a bloody battle, and the combined Egyptian and Assyrian forces were devastated.
 - G. The *Babylonian Chronicles*, now housed in the British Museum, claim that Nebuchadnezzar “mustered the Babylonian army and took command of his troops; he marched to Karchemiš which is on the bank of the Euphrates, and crossed the river to go against the Egyptian army which lay in Karchemiš. They fought with each other and the Egyptian army withdrew before him. He accomplished their defeat and beat them to non-existence. As for the rest of the Egyptian army which had escaped from the defeat so quickly that no weapon had reached them, in the district of Hamath the Babylonian troops overtook and defeated them so that not a single man escaped to his own country. At that time Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole area of Hamath.” (ABC 5, Obv 2–8)
 - H. Before the battle of Carchemish, Egypt had one of the greatest armies in northern Africa and was a threat to the Middle East, but the battle of Carchemish changed all of that when the Babylonians destroyed the power of Egypt and the independent existence of Assyria.
- II. The battle of Carchemish was the end of the Assyrian Empire, and Egypt was reduced to a second-rate power.
 - A. Babylon became the master of the Middle East.
 - B. Shortly after this, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were taken captive by the Babylonians (Dan 1:6–7).
 - C. These four young Hebrews, all men of the royal family, were to receive training to serve in Nebuchadnezzar’s palace (Dan 1:3–5).

- III. In the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (603–602 BC), he had a dream that left him deeply troubled (Dan 2:1).
 - A. Nebuchadnezzar demanded his wise men tell *him* the dream and give the explanation of it (Dan 2:2–3).
 - B. His counselors wanted Nebuchadnezzar to tell *them* the dream (Dan 2:4).
 - C. Nebuchadnezzar knew that if he told them the dream, they could make up a story about what would happen after he died (Dan 2:5–9).
 - D. Nebuchadnezzar threatened to kill all of his counselors if they did not tell him the dream (Dan 2:12–13).
- IV. In the process of time, Daniel stood before Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:26).
 - A. Daniel said the God of heaven could make known the dream (Dan 2:27–30).
 - B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream was about “a great image” (Dan 2:31–35).
 - C. The interpretation of the dream was given by Daniel (Dan 2:36–45).

Discussion

I. The Great Image

- A. The great image that Nebuchadnezzar saw was not an idol, but a statue of a man composed of four metals and clay.
 - 1. The image stood shining before Nebuchadnezzar, and he was full of dread and terror.
 - 2. Commentators usually point out that the metals degenerate from most precious to least precious—gold, silver, bronze, and iron.
 - 3. While Nebuchadnezzar gazed at the image, he saw “a stone was cut out without hands,” and it struck the image on its feet.
 - 4. The great image was broken into pieces, crushed, and ground to powder.
 - 5. The image was destroyed, never to exist again.
 - 6. “And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth” (Dan 2:35).
- B. Daniel's explanation of the dream.
 - 1. Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar that God had given him his kingdom, power, strength, and glory (Dan 2:38).
 - 2. The head of gold represented Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom.
 - a) Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was not the greatest in territory.
 - b) However, his kingdom was important because it was the beginning of these kingdoms—others sprang from it.
 - 3. The “chest and arms of silver” (Dan 2:39) represented the Medo-Persian Empire (539–330 BC).
 - a) Darius the Mede was 62 years old when he took control of the Chaldean kingdom following Belshazzar's death (Dan 5:28–6:2).
 - b) Daniel, though now an old man, prospered under both the Median king's rule and that of Cyrus the Persian (Dan 6:29f).
 - c) Jerome (c. AD 347–420) was a gifted scholar and is best known as the translator of the Latin Vulgate.

- d) In his *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome wrote, “That is to say [arms of silver], the empire of the Medes and Persians, which bears a resemblance to silver, being inferior to the preceding empire and superior to that which is to follow” (Stevenson et al., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13)
 - e) Theodoret of Cyr (c. 393–466), in his *Commentary on Daniel*, said, “The second element, silver, signifies the Persian kingdom and the Medes. Cyrus, by way of his own success and marriage, created from the Medes the kingdom of Persia ... He speaks of a chest and arms to show that he knows there were two peoples, each limb a founder, that are joined together.” (Stevenson et al., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13)
4. The “belly and thighs of bronze” (Dan 2:39) represented the Grecian Empire (330–63 BC).
- a) The Grecian Empire began with Philip of Macedon and was brought to its greatest glory under his son, Alexander the Great.
 - b) When Alexander died on June 10, 323 BC in Babylon at the age of 33, his empire was divided among his four generals.
 - (1) Ptolemy gained Egypt and made Alexandria the capital.
 - (2) Seleucus and the Seleucid Empire centered in Syria with Antioch as the capital.
 - (3) Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Bithynia.
 - (4) Cassander ruled Macedonia.
 - c) Jerome, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, said, “This [thighs of bronze] signifies the Alexandrian empire, and that of the Macedonians and of Alexander’s successors. Now this is properly termed brazen, for among all the metals, bronze possesses an outstanding resonance and a clear ring, and the blast of a brazen trumpet is heard far and wide, so that it signifies not only fame and power of the empire but also the eloquence of the Greek language.” (Stevenson et al., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13)
5. The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire (Dan 2:40).
- a) The Roman Empire was strong as iron in conquering, crushing, breaking in pieces, and bringing conquered peoples under its control.
 - b) As they conquered nation after nation, they gained control of the known world.
 - c) However, there was a weak point—it had feet of iron and clay.
 - d) While Rome conquered many nations, she could not hold them together due to economic, social, and cultural differences.
 - e) As iron and clay cannot be fused together, so Rome could not amalgamate its conquered people.

- f) It tried to unite the world by emperor worship, but this failed.
 - g) Jerome, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, also said, “Now the fourth empire, which clearly refers to the Romans, is the iron empire that breaks in pieces and overcomes all others. But its feet and toes are partly iron and partly of earthenware, a fact clearly revealed at the present moment. For just as there was at the first nothing stronger or hardier than the Roman realm, so also in these last days there is nothing more feeble, since we require the assistance of barbarian tribes both in our civil wars and against foreign nations.” (Stevenson et al., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13)
6. Daniel prophesied that in the days of Rome, God would set up His kingdom (Dan 2:44).
- a) As John the Baptist began his ministry in the wilderness of Judea, he proclaimed, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matt 3:2).
 - b) As Jesus began His earthly ministry, He taught that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17).
 - c) Jesus said some in His audience would “not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power” (Mark 9:1).
7. A small stone is cut out of a mountain “without hands” (human aid) and struck the image and broke it into pieces (Dan 2:45).
- a) The stone *became* a great mountain (Dan 2:35).
 - b) The stone was to begin the smiting the image during the days of the Roman Empire.
 - c) Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430), in his *Homilies on 1 John*, wrote, “We know that the stone cut from the mountain without hands is Christ, who came from the kingdom of the Jews without human father: the stone that shattered all the kingdoms of the earth, all the tyrannies of idols and devils; the stone that grew and became a great mountain and filled the whole world.” (Stevenson et al., *Ezekiel, Daniel*, ACCS 13)
 - d) I submit to you that this is a picture of the militant church.
 - e) The Roman Empire no longer exists!
 - f) “The greatest of historians held that Christianity was the chief cause of Rome’s fall. For this religion, he and his followers argued, had destroyed the old faith that had given moral character to the Roman soul and stability to the Roman state. It had declared war upon the classic culture—upon science, philosophy, literature, and art. It had brought an enfeebling Oriental mysticism into the realistic stoicism of Roman life; it had turned men’s thoughts from the tasks of this world to an enervating preparation for some cosmic catastrophe, and had lured them into seeking individual salvation through asceticism and prayer, rather than collective salvation through devotion to the state. It had disrupted the unity of the Empire while soldier emperors were struggling to preserve it; it had discouraged its adherents from holding office, or rendering military service; it had preached an ethic of nonresistance and peace when the survival of the Empire had demanded a will to war. Christ’s victory had been Rome’s death.” (Durant, *Caesar And Christ*, 667)

II. The Kingdom Of Christ

- A. Christ came in the days of the Roman Empire (Mark 1:14-15).
- B. His kingdom was “without hands” (human aid) (John 18:36).
- C. He broke other kingdoms into pieces (Matt 3:10).
 - 1. By the preaching of the gospel (cf. Jer 1:10).
 - 2. This is a picture of the militant church (Matt 10:34-36; 2 Cor 10:3-6).
- D. His kingdom will never be destroyed (Heb 12:28).
- E. His kingdom filled the earth (Col 1:23; Isa 9:7).
- F. It had a slow and humble beginning (Matt 13:31-33).
 - 1. There are only three ways a kingdom can increase:
 - a) It can increase in *territory*.
 - b) It can increase in *power*.
 - c) It can increase in the number of *subjects*.
 - 2. Christ’s kingdom cannot increase in territory (Col 1:16-18).
 - 3. Christ’s kingdom cannot increase in power (Matt 28:18).
 - 4. The only way His kingdom can increase is in the number of subjects, or citizens, in His kingdom.
- G. The kingdom of Christ does not increase by physical generation.
 - 1. Being a spiritual kingdom, it grows by regeneration (1 Pet 2:5).
 - 2. In the growth of the kingdom of heaven, you will not see the killing fields or the unsheathing of swords; you will not hear the thunder of artillery or the explosion of munitions.
 - 3. His kingdom will grow by the preaching of the gospel (Rom 1:16).

Invitation

- I. Right now, in heaven, Christ rules and reigns over His kingdom!
- II. Christ has an invitation for you to share in His glory (Rev 3:20-21).

Prophets Of Pentecost: David

Introduction

- I. King David of Israel was indeed a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22).
 - A. He was not a perfect man—his sins are recorded on the pages of Sacred Writ for all to read.
 - B. Despite his human frailties, his attitude was one of undying love and devotion to God and profound reverence for His written word.
 - C. Before David died, God promised him that one of his descendants would build a house for God, and his kingdom would be established forever.
 - D. It was a promise that had dual fulfillment—first to Solomon as he built the temple in Jerusalem, and then to the Messiah and His kingdom.
- II. After David's death, the Jews looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, who would be a descendant of David.
 - A. Jesus, "the Son of David" (Matt 1:1), came to this earth, but the Jews rejected Him because He did not offer what they expected (John 1:11).
 - B. Jesus spoke of their attitude when He told the parable of the minas: "We will not have this man reign over us" (Luke 19:14).
 - C. The kingdom that Jesus offered was not the type of kingdom they expected.
 - D. They rejected Jesus as king because they thought the Messiah's kingdom would be an earthly kingdom like that of Saul, David, and Solomon.
 - E. Premillennialists in our day make the same mistake—they misunderstand the King and His kingdom.
 1. They are looking for an earthly kingdom and an earthly throne.
 2. Their mistake is making a literal application out of figurative language, and as a result, they deny the present rule of Jesus Christ.
- III. In this lesson, we want to examine the promise God made to David and see how it was fulfilled in the second chapter of the book of Acts.
 - A. We want to discuss the nature of the rule of Christ.
 - B. We also want to answer the question: Is Christ now reigning on the throne of David?

Discussion

I. The Davidic Covenant

- A. The Davidic Covenant was a contract or covenant between God and King David—a covenant in which David and his descendants were established as the royal heirs to the throne of the nation of Israel (2 Sam 7:12-17).
 1. David's seed is the object of this discussion.
 2. The events would take place after David's death.
 3. God would establish the throne of His kingdom forever.
 4. David's descendent would build God's house.
 5. While portions of this promise could apply to Solomon, the primary focus is on the kingdom that would last *forever*.
 6. David knew that God had chosen him and that he was a part of the Messianic line that would result in a divine King (Ps 2:6-7; 110:1-4).
 7. Ethan the Ezrahite wrote Psalms 89, which is a prayer that God would honor the Davidic Covenant (Ps 89:1-4, 28-37).

- B. The Davidic covenant reached its fulfillment when Jesus, a descendant of the royal lineage of David, was born in Bethlehem nearly a thousand years after God made a covenant with David (Acts 2:29–35).
 - 1. Jesus is of the seed of David (Acts 2:30; Matt 1:1).
 - 2. David was dead and buried (Acts 2:29).
 - 3. Christ is on His throne right now (Acts 2:30; Rev 3:21).
 - 4. Christ built the house of the Lord (Acts 2:47; 1 Tim 3:15).

II. Whose Throne Is It?

- A. Some premillennialists are willing to argue that Christ is now seated on “God’s throne,” but they deny He is sitting on the “throne of David.”
- B. During the time of the judges, in the days of Samuel, the Jewish people rejected God as their King (1 Sam 8:1–7, 19–22).
 - 1. Having an earthly king would make it easy to forget that God was their real King.
 - 2. It was not wrong for Israel to desire a king, for God had mentioned the possibility before (Deut 17:14–20).
 - 3. They wanted to exchange their unique glory as the people of God, Who had brought them out of Egypt and was even now protecting them, for status in the world—in reality, the people were rejecting God as their King.
 - 4. Even though He was rejected as King by the people of Israel, God was still King nonetheless—He allowed certain men to occupy a position of power over His people.
- C. David appointed Solomon to sit on his throne in his place and “to be ruler over Israel and Judah (1 Kgs 1:35).
 - 1. This throne was also called “the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel” (1 Chr 28:5).
 - 2. It was also known as “the throne of the Lord” (1 Chr 29:23).
 - 3. It was also known as “the throne of David” (1 Kgs 2:24).
 - 4. It was also known as “the throne of Israel” (1 Kgs 8:20).
- D. Jesus Christ now sits on this same throne, i.e., He exercises His rule over men and nations (Heb 1:3; 8:1; Acts 2:30–32; Rev 3:21).
- E. If Christ is not now on David’s throne...
 - 1. He will ascend higher when He takes it, *or*
 - 2. He will decrease in power and authority, *or*
 - 3. David’s throne will add nothing to Him!
- F. If the Premillennialists of today are right, what will change when Christ finally takes David’s throne?
 - 1. If He will *gain power* and authority, it contradicts other plain passages of Scripture (Matt 28:18; Eph 1:20–23; Col 1:15–18).
 - 2. If He will *decrease in power*, it would dishonor Him and weaken His supremacy and authority.
 - 3. And if there is no change in His power, then what are the consequences and effects when He takes it?

III. Christ And Coniah

- A. The complete Davidic line down to the exile is given in 1 Chronicles 3:10–16.
 - 1. Jehoiakim begot Jeconiah {*Coniah*} (1 Chr 3:16).
 - 2. Coniah begot Shealtiel {*Salathiel*} (1 Chr 3:17).
- B. God promised that no descendant of Coniah would ever sit on David's throne and rule in Judah (Jer 22:24–30).
 - 1. Coniah was not physically childless—he had sons and their names are recorded in the Old Testament.
 - 2. Coniah would not have a successor on David's throne—Coniah would be the last man to occupy the *fleshly* throne of David.
 - 3. Zedekiah, the son of Coniah, was appointed to the throne by Nebuchadnezzar and was a vassal of the king of Babylon.
 - 4. Zedekiah was the prince and representative of Nebuchadnezzar, but he did not succeed David's throne.
 - 5. With the death of Coniah, the earthly throne of David became extinct!
- C. Jesus Christ is a descendant of Shealtiel (Matt 1:12; Luke 2:37), and therefore He cannot sit on the throne of David and rule *in Judah*!

IV. Christ Is On His Throne

- A. Zechariah specified three things Christ would do on His throne (Zech 6:13).
 - 1. He would *sit* on His throne.
 - 2. He would be a *priest* on His throne.
 - 3. He would *rule* of His throne.
- B. An argument in the form of a syllogism.
 - 1. He would sit on His throne while a priest.
 - 2. Jesus is a priest on His throne right now (Heb 8:1).
 - 3. Therefore, He is ruling on His throne right now!
- C. Another syllogism concerning the throne of Christ.
 - 1. He is a priest on His throne (Zech 6:13).
 - 2. Jesus is a priest in heaven (Heb 4:14).
 - 3. Therefore, His throne is in heaven!
- D. One last syllogism concerning the throne of Christ.
 - 1. He could not be a priest if He were on earth (Heb 8:4).
 - 2. But, Jesus is a priest on His throne (Zech 6:13).
 - 3. Therefore, His throne cannot be on earth!

V. The Tabernacle Of David

- A. The prophet Amos had gone from his home in Tekoa to Bethel to prophesy against the kingdom of Israel, which had become very corrupt, and to warn the people of their coming doom (Amos 1:1; 7:7–17).
 - 1. The rule of David's house had ended for Israel, the northern kingdom, when they left the theocracy.
 - 2. The rule of David's house ended for Judah, the southern kingdom, with the carrying away of Coniah into Babylon (Jer 22:24–30).
 - 3. The people of God were sifted and scattered among the nations.

- B. Amos speaks of their return from captivity (Amos 9:11–15).
1. This passage does not refer to Jews today!
 2. The Jewish people today are not in captivity—therefore, they cannot be brought out of captivity!
- C. What about the promise to “raise up the tabernacle of David”?
1. Some take this to mean that God will rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
 - a) However, the *temple* is not the same as the *tabernacle*!
 - b) David did not build any temple!
 - c) His son, Solomon, built the temple!
 2. In Amos 9:11, the NKJV has a textual note that says the word *tabernacle* is “**Lit. booth**, a figure of a deposed dynasty.”
 - a) The word *tabernacle* in the NKJV is the Hebrew word *sukkāh*.
 - b) The word *sukkāh* is defined as, “a hut or lair:—booth, cottage, covert, pavilion, tabernacle, tent” (*Strong’s Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Old Testament*, paragraph 5542).
 - c) Kohlenberger and Mounce define it as, “tabernacle, shrine; booth, shelter, dwelling, tent” (*Kohlenberger/Mounce Concise Hebrew–Aramaic Dictionary of the Old Testament*, paragraph 12297).
 - d) “*Sukkāh*, a hut, indicates, by way of contrast to *bayith*, the house or palace which David built for himself upon Zion (2 Sam. 5:11), a degenerate condition of the royal house of David. This is placed beyond all doubt by the predicate *nōpheleth*, fallen down. As the stately palace supplies a figurative representation of the greatness and might of the kingdom, so does the fallen hut, which is full of rents and near to destruction, symbolize the utter ruin of the kingdom. If the family of David no longer dwells in a palace, but in a miserable fallen hut, its regal sway must have come to an end.” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament*)
 3. The *tabernacle* of David was the *royal house* or *family* of David.
- D. In the book of Acts, the apostle James said the prophecy of Amos 9 has been fulfilled (Acts 15:13–19).
1. What is the stated purpose of the prophecy of Amos?
 - a) David’s tabernacle would be rebuilt, so “*the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name*”
 - b) Parse the sentence—it is an adverbial clause of purpose.
 - c) *Gentiles* are the subject of the verb *seek*.
 - d) What had to happen *before* the Gentiles could seek after God?
 - e) The tabernacle of David had to be rebuilt!
 2. *If* Christ is not on David’s throne, and *if* the tabernacle has not been rebuilt, *then* the Gentiles cannot seek after God!
 3. The tabernacle of David had to be rebuilt so that the Gentiles could seek after God!

Conclusion

- I. When Peter ended his sermon on the day of Pentecost, he said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).
 - A. Jesus Christ is *Lord* because He is on God’s throne, over angels and men.
 - B. Jesus is *Christ* because He is on David’s throne, according to the promise.
 - C. He is on God’s throne because it is the throne of universal dominion.
 - D. It is also David’s throne because Jesus is the descendant of David and the righteous heir to his throne.
- II. When Jesus Christ arose from the grave, ascended into heaven and was seated on David’s throne at God’s right hand, the inaugural ceremonies of heaven were held.
 - A. Amid the shout of a myriad of angels, the Son of David and the Son of God took His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, to reign until the time that death, the last enemy, is destroyed.
 - B. When death is abolished by the resurrection of all the dead, Christ will surrender the reign of His government, relinquish His throne, and deliver His kingdom back to His Father (1 Cor 15:25–26).
- III. Premillennialists teach that Christ is not now on David’s throne.
 - A. They claim He is not reigning over His kingdom.
 - B. Premillennialists say Christ will not receive His throne until He returns to this literal earth to reign over a literal kingdom.
 - C. In other words, they dethrone Christ now and say He will reign on His footstool, the earth (Isa 66:1).

Reigning With Christ

Introduction

- I. In the apostle Paul's writings, we find several fragments of hymns from the New Testament church.
 - A. Philippians 2:6–11 speaks of the mind of Christ.
 - B. 1 Timothy 3:16 addresses the “mystery of godliness.”
 - C. 2 Timothy 2:11–13 tells of our relationship with Christ and encourages us to remain faithful to Him, even in the face of suffering.
- II. In this lesson, we want to examine the third hymn since it promises that we shall *reign* with Christ and see what application we can make of it in our lives.

Discussion

I. Parallels In 2 Timothy 2:11–13

- A. The first parallel: “If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim 2:11).
 1. Have you died with Christ?
 2. A Christian is one who “died with Him” (Rom 6:2; Col 3:3).
 3. The antecedent is true; hence, the consequence is true, “we shall also live with Him.”
 4. Do we live with Christ now? Yes! (Rom 6:4; Gal 2:20).
- B. The second parallel: “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Tim 2:12).
 1. Christians endure persecution right now (2 Tim 3:12).
 2. The antecedent is true now; therefore, the consequence, “we shall also reign with Him,” is true right now.
 3. We will explain *how* we reign in a few moments.
- C. The third parallel: “If we deny Him, He also will deny us” (2 Tim 2:12).
 1. Some Christians have denied the Lord (Titus 1:16; Jude 4; Rev 2:13).
 2. The antecedent is true; therefore, the consequence is true.
 3. Christ was denying them—He did not have to wait until the final judgment to deny them (cf. Matt 10:32–33).
- D. The fourth parallel: “If we are faithless, He remains faithful” (2 Tim 2:13).
 1. We can be faithless right now (Matt 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 9:41).
 2. If the antecedent is true now, the consequence is true now.
 3. God and Christ are faithful now (1 Cor 10:13; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23).

II. Christians Reign With Christ Now!

- A. We reign on the earth (Rev 5:9–10).
 1. The *reign* in Revelation 5:10 is present tense, not future tense.
 2. “We shall reign (βασιλεύσομεν). Read βασιλεύουσιν *they reign*. Their reigning is not future, but present” (Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*).

3. Notice a few other translations of this passage.
 - a) "And they reign upon the earth" (ASV).
 - b) "And they reign over the earth" (Weymouth).
 - c) "And they reign on earth" (WEB, World English Bible).
 - d) "And they are reigning upon the earth" (TCNT, The Twentieth Century New Testament).
 - e) "And they are ruling on the earth" (BBE, Bible in Basic English).
 - f) "And they reign upon the earth" (Moulton).
4. We have "power over the nations" like Jeremiah (Jer 1:10).
- B. We are kings and priests now (Rev 1:5-6; 1 Pet 2:5, 9).
- C. We reign in life through righteousness (Rom 5:17).
- D. We reign by righteous judgment (1 Cor 6:2).
 1. How, or in what sense, would Christians judge the world?
 2. The Holy Spirit would convict the world (John 16:8), but He did it through the preaching of the gospel (2 Tim 4:1-2).
 3. We are to judge the world right now (John 7:24; 1 John 4:1).
 4. Noah condemned the world while he was alive (Heb 11:7).
- E. We reign by enduring (2 Tim 2:12).
- F. We reign by overcoming (Rev 3:21).

III. The Apostles Are Judging The Nations

- A. Jesus promised His apostles that they would "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28; cf. Luke 22:30).
 1. This would happen "in the regeneration" while Christ was "on the throne of His glory."
 2. Christ is one the throne of His glory now (Luke 24:26; Rev 3:21).
 3. The only other time the word translated *regenerated* is found in the New Testament is in Titus 3:5.
 4. People are being regenerated *right now* (Titus 3:5).
- B. The apostles are judging *right now* (John 20:23; 1 Cor 5:3).
- C. On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Christ "began this process of regeneration. Having enthroned Himself, Jesus enthroned the apostles also, not as kings but as judges, having jurisdiction over all questions of faith and practice in the earthly kingdom. During their personal ministry, they judged in person; and since then they judge through their writings. True, we have written communications from only a part of them, but judgments pronounced by one of a bench of judges with the known approval of all, are the judgments of the entire bench." (McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel*)

Conclusion

- I. Jesus said the meek would “inherit the earth” (Matt 5:5).
 - A. What does it mean to “inherit the earth”?
 - B. Is this a promise that we would own priceless paintings, mansions, and sports cars?
 - C. The phrase “inherit the earth” or “inherit the land” is found in many Old Testament passages (Deut 19:14; Ps 25:13; 37:9).
 - D. The idea is traced to the Old Testament view of the land of Canaan as being the earthly object of Divine blessings.
 - E. The meek *have* inherited the earth.
 1. There is a sense in which we own the land right now, for we belong to Christ and all things belong to Him (1 Cor 3:21–23).
 2. The meek man is satisfied now—for Jesus not only promises us everlasting life but the best life possible here on earth!
 3. The meek are content, even if they own nothing (2 Cor 6:10).
- II. My hope for the future is not on this earth!
 - A. “Earth holds no treasures but perish with using, However precious they be; yet there’s a country to which I am going, Heaven holds all to me.
 - B. “Out on the hills of that wonderful country, Happy, contented and free, Angels are waiting and watching my coming, Heaven holds all to me.
 - C. “Why should I long for the world and its sorrows, When in that home o’er the sea, Millions are singing the wonderful story? Heaven holds all to me.”
- III. At the return of Christ, this earth will be destroyed (2 Pet 3:10–13).

Our Eternal King

Introduction

- I. Just four years before the Lord's church was established (Acts 2), as John the Baptist was preparing the way for the Messiah, he urged men to, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matt 3:2)
 - A. As Jesus began His earthly ministry, He also proclaimed that, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 4:17).
 - B. In New Testament usage the word *kingdom* (Gr. *basileia*) "is primarily an abstract noun, denoting 'sovereignty, royal power, dominion'" (Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*).
 - C. The word *kingdom* (Gr. *basileia*) is also defined as "kingship, reign, rule; kingdom, domain" (Newman, *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*).
- II. God has always had a kingdom—He has always been a Sovereign King.
 - A. As the absolute, unrivaled Sovereign Lord of the universe, God has established His throne in heaven over all (Ps 103:19).
 - B. David's great prayer of praise and supplication at the coronation of Solomon marks the highpoint of his reign (1 Chr 29:11-12).
 1. In this passage the king of Israel praises God for His universal kingdom and recognizes Him as the source of all wealth and strength.
 2. In addition to praising the greatness of the Lord and interceding on behalf of Solomon and the people, David acknowledged the truth that, strictly speaking, they had made no donation to the Lord at all (cf. 1 Chr 29:6-9).
 3. After all, God owned everything.
 4. All human beings could do was to demonstrate their devotion to Him with gifts—ultimately they were only giving to God what already belonged to Him.
 - C. The Lord sits enthroned as King forever (Ps 29:10).
 1. The word for *flood* is significant, for it is found elsewhere only in Genesis 6-11, where it refers to the flood of Noah's day.
 2. Here was the supreme example of the forces of nature being purposefully unleashed by God above.
 3. Though the storms rage and the mountains quake, our God is king.
 4. His enthronement over "the Flood" assures His children that great as His power is, He is Sovereign.
 5. He rules over nations and peoples that inhabit and traverse land and mountains or sail over the seas.
 - D. Hezekiah based his prayer on the character of God, "the One who dwells between the cherubim" (Isa 37:16).
 1. These heavenly creatures were set at each end of the mercy-seat (Exod 37:6-9).
 2. They formed the pedestal of the invisible throne of the Lord (Ezek 1:22-28).
 3. The feet of the enthroned Lord rested on the mercy-seat (Pss 99:1-5; 132:7).
 4. Hezekiah directed his thoughts to the King who is above all creation and yet decisively present in everything here below.

- III. Even though our God is a Sovereign King, He has given mankind *dominion* over the earth (Gen 1:26).
- A. The crown of God's handiwork is human life.
 1. Man is a creature—but man is a special creature.
 2. He is made in the image and likeness of God.
 - B. God's purpose in creating human life in His image was functional: man is to rule or have dominion (Gen 1:26, 28).
 1. Our English word *dominion* (Hb., *rādāh*) means to “have dominion, rule, dominate” (Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*).
 2. The word *dominion* in Genesis 1:26 is translated as *rule* in many versions of the Bible (NIV, NIVII, NAS95, HCSB, CJB, NET, CEV, YNG).
 3. The fact the God has delegated the rule of animal life to men does not make Him any less of Sovereign King!
 - C. This dominion is expressly stated to be over all other living creatures: sky, sea, and land creatures (Ps 8:3–8).

Discussion

I. God Is Ruler Over All

- A. He is the ruler over the *physical elements* of the earth, like plagues, winds, waves, and storms (Ps 148:1–14; 19:1–4).
- B. He is the ruler over *human kings* (Rom 13:1).
 1. God promised to give Cyrus the Great, King of Persia, great riches, “though you have not known me” (Isa 45:3–7).
 2. God gave a kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Dan 2:37–38).
 3. “God rules in the kingdoms of men” (Dan 4:17).
 4. Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that, “the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses” (Dan 4:32).
 5. Our God “removes kings and raises up kings” (Dan 2:21).
- C. A king is no less a king because his citizens have rebelled.

II. God Has Always Been A King

- A. God was King over the nation of Israel before He made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai (Exod 15:18).
 1. At Mount Sinai He invited Israel into a *special relationship* with Him—they were to be a “Holy nation” (Exod 19:5–8).
 2. Israel received the covenant, ratified it, and became a kingdom within a kingdom (Exod 19:8; 24:3–8).
- B. King David confessed God's kingship over all nations (1 Chr 29:10–12).
 1. David sat upon the throne over Israel.
 2. However, God did not abdicate His throne in heaven!

- C. David said, “And of all my sons...He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel” (1 Chr 28:5).
1. “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him” (1 Chr 29:23).
 2. The Queen of Sheba told Solomon, “Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne to be king for the Lord your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them...” (2 Chr 9:8).
- D. The nation of Israel was to be a role model of what it is like to live as free and obedient citizens under the sovereignty of the Lord God—they were the reign of God made visible!
1. God put Israel on display before the nations (Ezek 16:14).
 2. What did the world see when Israel’s beauty was on display? The splendor of God Himself.
 3. How was it seen?
 4. It was displayed through Israel’s culture and institutions.
 5. Her courts of law revealed the justice and holiness of God.
 6. Her artistic expressions (the glorious tabernacle and temple, for example) revealed the order, symmetry, and beauty of God.
 7. Israel’s laws of marriage and family, her care for the infants and the aged pointed to her God.
 8. Israel’s relationships to other nations pointed to the covenant-keeping nature of God (as well as His hatred of unrighteousness).
 9. Israel’s law with its exalted views of personal value and the dignity of every human life was part of God’s reflected beauty.
 10. Israel’s code of business ethics as recorded in her laws was another aspect of God’s splendor at work in human affairs.
 11. In a nutshell, Israel’s beauty was the beauty of a redeemed people living, acting, and relating in harmony with Divine will.

III. The Rule Of God Expressed

- A. Rule over the *invisible creation* (angels).
1. “For by Him all things were created...” (Col 1:16).
 2. “He commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:2, 5).
- B. Rule over the *visible creation* (universe, all elements, animal world).
1. “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made...” (Ps 33:6).
 2. “The heavens declare the glory of God...” (Ps 19:1).
- C. Rule over *evil men and nations*, who while subject to God’s royal power, choose to live outside His loving favor.
1. “God rules in the kingdoms of men” (Dan 4:17).
 2. “The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men” (Dan 4:32).

- D. Rule over the *righteous* who live in God's loving favor (including ancient worthies).
 - 1. "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 8:11).
 - 2. In our day, this expression of the rule or kingdom of God is called the *church* (Matt 16:18).
 - 3. Those who submit to this expression of the rule of God are in immediate fellowship with angels and righteous people of all ages (Heb 12:22-24).
 - a) At conversion we become members of a community of those who can worship the living God and receive from Him grace for daily needs.
 - b) Christians already experience a fulfillment of fellowship with God.
 - c) The future will bring a complete consummation of this fellowship.

IV. The Rule Of God And Christ

- A. After His resurrection, all power was given to Christ (Matt 28:18).
 - 1. In his risen state, Jesus exercises absolute authority throughout heaven and earth, which shows His deity.
 - 2. His authority has been given by the Father, which indicates that He remains subject to the Father (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).
- B. He is now the "ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev 1:5).
 - 1. Jesus is a figure of majesty.
 - 2. He is not just a humble earthly teacher, He is the glorious God.
- C. He is now Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev 17:14).
 - 1. Artaxerxes, emperor of Persia, was a self-styled "king of kings" (Ezra 7:12); so was Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Ezek 26:7; Dan 2:37).
 - 2. Only Jesus Christ can truly rule as King over all other kings and Lord over all other lords.
 - 3. Jesus is the mighty conquering King, and He does not come alone.
 - 4. Rather than being described as fierce or heavily armed, His army is described as "called, chosen, and faithful."
- D. Christ is Lord of all—when a person yields to Him, there is a new relationship with Christ (2 Cor 5:17).

Conclusion

- I. When God set Jesus on the throne of David as the Messiah, the universal sovereignty passed into the hands of the Son of God (Acts 2:29-38)!
- II. "When God set Jesus the Messiah on the Davidic throne at his own right hand, the universal sovereignty passed into the hands of a son of David! At that moment all the righteous dead came under the reign of Jesus (they entered his kingdom). So did angels and the members of the newly created 'Church' (Hebrews 12:22-28). The living and the dead, angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, just men made perfect and wicked men with rebellion in their hearts, continents and oceans, winds and waves, sunshine and rain, heaven and earth, birds and beasts, life and death, past and future, all things have been subjected to the sovereign Lordship of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David and the Son of God." (McGuiggan, *The Reign of God*, 89)

This outline on "Our Eternal King" is loosely based on several chapters from *The Reign Of God*, by Jim McGuiggan

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