

## **God's Scandalous Love**

### **Expressed in His Epic Covenants Shaping Human History**

For some 40 years as I have taught on Israel there has been a progressive unfolding of revelation. At first my biblical knowledge was scant: disconnected scriptures. It was a learning process. And continues to be so.

- A major breakthrough was discovering **the structure of the Bible** – God's overall purpose became clearly apparent. All the various Scriptures I had learned from both the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament (the New Covenant) fitted together providing clearly God's eternal purpose.
- It was like assembling a giant jigsaw puzzle. When I had the outline assembled, the details became more obvious. I could then see the goal.

#### **The Divine Purpose Revealed**

Let us closely look at the detailed pattern that occurs when we assemble together the facts of the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, of the Bible.

- In the first three chapters of Genesis, we have the creation of heaven and the earth; in the last three chapters of Revelation, there is a new heaven and a new earth in which dwells righteousness.
- In the first three chapters, paradise is lost; in the last three chapters, paradise is gained.
- In the first three chapters, satan enters; in the last three chapters, satan is cast out forever.
- In the first three chapters, earth is cursed; in the last three chapters, *'no curse anymore'*.
- In the first three chapters, there are two human beings – Adam and Eve; in the last three chapters, they have become a redeemed people that no man can number.
- In the first three chapters, there is a garden; in the last three chapters there is a city. Interestingly, the city is a garden city, but it is a city. So, first there is a garden, and in the last three chapters, as it were, the garden has become a city.
- In the first three chapters, there is a tree of life in the midst of the garden; in the last three chapters, there is a tree of life in the midst of the garden city.
- In the first three chapters, there is a river whose source is in the garden, and which becomes four great rivers that water the earth; in the last three chapters we have the river of life, which proceeds out of the throne of God, out of the midst of the city.
- In the first three chapters, God walks in the midst of the garden, visiting daily apparently to fellowship with Adam and Eve; in the last three chapters, God is *'at home'*. He dwells forever in the midst of His city.

- In the first three chapters, there is an earthly marriage – Adam and Eve. In Genesis chapter 2, we are told the whole story of marriage and its institution; in the last three chapters, there is a heavenly marriage between the Lamb and the wife of the Lamb.

### Was creation witnessed?

I have heard the remark, “If only someone was present at creation, we could be sure of the accuracy of Scripture.” Well, there were many present!

God speaking to Job, “*Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? ... On what were its footings set, or who laid the cornerstone – while the **morning stars** sang together and all **the angels** shouted for joy?*” Job 38:4,6-7. There were more than anyone could count.<sup>1</sup>

**God then created a totally new and unique being**, even the angels were amazed: “*let us **make man in our image, in our likeness.***” Genesis 1:26

No being in the entirety of the created order was there one similar to man/mankind.

#### God’s commission:

*God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over ... every living creature ...”* Genesis 1:28

Then the **man** (and the woman) were placed in a garden providing for all their needs with strict instructions not to eat fruit of a specific tree, if so, the consequence was, “**you will die.**” Clearly, **man was to be an exalted being in the created order with specific responsibilities**, above everything else on this planet under Yahweh, to whom he is accountable. **Man was never created to die.**

(God = Yahweh = I am/will be what I am/will be)<sup>2</sup>

#### This was a test:

Would Adam **reject Yahweh’s right to rule over him** or would he declare himself **independent of God**, as had satan who said, “You will not die.”<sup>3</sup> **The lie that ruined the world.**

This is the first revelation of the Kingdom of Yahweh/God.

**Yahweh’s purpose in creating man was, and continues to be, that mankind partner with him on earth and in eternity.**

Adam (and his wife) listened to satan, and died! Until this event they had *eternal life* which they forfeited. Adam betrayed Yahweh. Adam’s God-given authority was usurped, hijacked by satan. Adam’s rebellion affected every person born after him and **all creation was alienated – the Fall.**

In spite of the serious consequences of Adam and his wife’s rebellion God had, and continues to have, a **restoration strategy** to return fallen man to his original purpose.<sup>4</sup>

### **The First Rebellion**

<sup>1</sup> Revelation 7:9

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 3:14. Yahweh is known by many names according to his activity in particular circumstances: Elohim = Mighty Creator; Adonai = Lord; Abba = Father; El Elyon = God Most High; ha Shem = the Name; Jehovah Jireh = the Lord will Provide, the Angel of Yahweh, the Ancient of Days ... etc.

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 3:4.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 3:14-19.

As the population increased rebellion exponentially increased, Yahweh determined to destroy – by flood - humankind except for Noah, “*a righteous man*”<sup>5</sup>, and his family whom Yahweh preserved - a remnant.

Repeated commission: Yahweh began again, the commission given to Adam is now given to Noah: “*Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.*”<sup>6</sup>

The sanctity of life: “*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.*”<sup>7</sup>

Yahweh made an **everlasting covenant** with Noah and his descendants and all living creatures never to flood the earth again. The sign of the rainbow will be reminder of this covenant.<sup>8</sup>

## **The Second Rebellion**

### **Creating the Nations**

**The post-flood world’s population** had expanded eastward, their lineage traced back to Noah’s three sons.<sup>9</sup> They all spoke the same language, in a unity that would enable them to effectively carry out God’s instruction: “*Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.*” In other words: lead humankind into righteousness, as partners with Yahweh.

But, like Adam, humankind refused to work in harmony with Yahweh.

Yahweh’s cataclysmic judgment of man’s corruption and violence by the flood, as traumatic as that was, had become a faded memory! A fact that is hard to grasp!

The population was **now unified in their defiance of Yahweh** and chose to unite to **make a name for themselves – not working in harmony with Yahweh.**<sup>10</sup> This was a clear message. Humankind had not only rejected Yahweh’s plan but they had rejected Yahweh himself.

Yahweh responded by confusing their language – hence the name Babel/Babylon - and scattering them all over the earth.<sup>11</sup>

## **The Third Rebellion**

We have now witnessed three occasions when Yahweh had to deal with rebellious attempts to scuttle His plans to populate the world with partners co-operating with Him in establishing His kingdom. Again, we are about to see testimony of Yahweh’s Scandalous Love.

Yahweh’s strategy in dealing with this situation is demonstrated in three scriptural passages:

1. “*When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of sons of God. For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.*”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 6:9

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 9:1.

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 9:6.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 9:8-17.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis: 10.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 11:4.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 11:7-9.

<sup>12</sup> Deuteronomy 32:8-9.

This is their elderly statesman Moses speaking to the Israelites after 40 years in the wilderness preparing them to enter the Promised Land. Moses is recalling the Babylon-event making abundantly clear the danger of any contact with foreign nations and their gods. Moses stresses Yahweh's clear demarcation between the disinherited nations, and forming his nation of which he is their God: "***the Lord's portion.***"

2. "*Do not be enticed into worshiping things the Lord apportioned to all the nations under heaven. But as for you, the **Lord took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you are.***"

<sup>13</sup>

A stern warning not to get involved in worship of other gods! That is treachery! Moses is stressing Yahweh's unique deliverance from Egypt, "*I brought you out! You are mine! You are unique! I am your God.*"<sup>14</sup>

3. The Psalmist provides an insight into a scene in the heavenlies, "*God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the "gods". How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? ... "They know nothing, they understand nothing ... I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High. But you will die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler.*"<sup>15</sup>

These are the "gods" apportioned by Yahweh to the other nations.

**To Summarise:** Yahweh chose to divide the world's population, who had rejected him, into nations. To those rejecting him he gave "gods" who are described in Psalm 82 as ignoring the poor, weak, oppressed, homeless, corrupt, lacking justice and will ultimately die like men without eternal life in Yahweh's kingdom. Yahweh then chose to create a nation of his own; a holy nation and a kingdom of priests led initially by a man whom he can trust to partnership with himself. Ultimately, that chosen nation will bless all the nations of the earth, and Yahweh will indeed rule all the nations of the earth.<sup>16</sup>

Can you believe it?

**Yahweh took a man from the heart of this rebellion, Babylon, and from him promised to make a unique nation of His choosing: a righteous nation.** The Scandalous Love of God!

Yahweh commanded this man from Babylon,

*"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all peoples [nations] on earth will be blessed through you.**"<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Deuteronomy 4:19-20.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 20:2-3.

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 82.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel 7:13-14.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 12:1-3.

**Note:** Yahweh divided the rebellious people into nations with “gods” but promises this man from Babylon, **Abram (exalted father) who Yahweh is to rename Abraham (father of many), that his descendants will bless all the nations.**

On this occasion Yahweh revealed himself to Abraham as **El Shaddai**, the One who has the power to fulfil these promises, who named this man **Abraham**:

*“Your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”*<sup>18</sup>

Test 1: Abraham struggled with understanding Yahweh’s repeated promises of *descendants* when his wife was barren. “*Abraham believed the Lord.*”<sup>19</sup> God removed her barren state, Sarah was pregnant with Isaac “**the son of promise**”<sup>20</sup>.

Test 2: Yahweh again tested Abraham’s obedience: would he sacrifice Isaac – ‘*your only son*’?<sup>21</sup> Isaac’s death would stymie Yahweh’s plan of rescuing mankind: no descendants. Abraham knew that, as did Yahweh. Abraham believed in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>22</sup> As he was about to sacrifice Isaac a ram was provided: the first **substitute sacrifice**. A type of what Yahweh’s own Son was destined to be: a substitute sacrifice for sin as the Lamb of God.<sup>23</sup>

**Abraham modelled a partner who totally co-operated with El Shaddai in establishing Yahweh’s Kingdom on earth. Abraham received the exclusive commendation as Yahweh’s friend.**<sup>24</sup> **Yahweh promised that his descendants would bless all the nations. An event still to be fulfilled in the New Covenant age.**

## **The Family that Became a Nation – ‘Yahweh’s-portion’ nation.**

Yahweh uniquely intervenes in history as the God who orders history (His story).

Yahweh chose Egypt, the world’s ancient super-power, to demonstrate his power in order to deliver Abraham’s descendants.

Yahweh startled the entire ancient world as the all-powerful El Shaddai.

- i. The ten plagues are Yahweh’s judgment on Pharaoh’s infanticide (killing Abraham’s children),
- ii. the blood of the lamb protects Yahweh’s-portion from the judgment of death provided they paint their doorposts with the lamb’s blood.

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<sup>18</sup> Genesis 17:5-8.

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 15:6.

<sup>20</sup> Galatians 4:28.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis 22:2.

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 11:17-19.

<sup>23</sup> Revelation 5:5; 12:11; 13:8; 15:3-4.

<sup>24</sup> 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8.

- iii. every generation of Yahweh's-portion is commanded to remember this birthing-event – it is their national identity.<sup>25</sup>

The **Ten Commandments**, also known as the Law, made Yahweh's-portion distinctively different, a nation set apart, destined to influence the laws of many nations.

The weekly **Sabbath** observance aimed at a heart-felt weekly transformation of the family unit of Yahweh's-portion: to be their strength and source of inspiration as **“a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”**<sup>26</sup> Teach your children – their legacy.<sup>27</sup>

The **Tabernacle** housed the Law, the instrument of Yahweh's kingly rule over Yahweh's-portion. The images in the tabernacle – the golden lampstand, the table of showbread, the golden altar of incense – each reflecting the originals in heaven – are an affirmation of Yahweh's kingship, who made the originals and who resided in the Holy of holies within the tabernacle.<sup>28</sup> When Moses was dedicating the Tabernacle *“Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”* Some 500 years later when King Solomon was dedicating the Temple the glory of the Lord again filled the Temple interrupting the priests.<sup>29</sup>

Yahweh spoke to Moses “face to face as a man speaks with a friend ... The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers.

**You must listen to him.**<sup>30</sup> A reference to Jesus Christ: Yahweh's words we will hear again at Jesus' transfiguration.

### **The fourth rebellion**

### **The Messenger Who Forgot the Message.**

#### **Daniel's agony:**

***Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.”*** Daniel 9:12

- **Yahweh's-portion nation was in total shock – shaken to the core.**  
The inconceivable had happened. The Temple, Yahweh's presence in their midst, was totally destroyed.
- The covenant promising David's everlasting kingdom ignored – for now anyway.
- Yahweh's-portion nation is now exiled, of all places, in Babylon: the very place where Yahweh judged mankind for their rebellion against him.
- The prophets' repeated calls for repentance have gone unheeded. No repentance for worshipping Babylonian gods.
- Long forgotten are the words of Yahweh at Sinai:  
*“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.”*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Exodus 12:14.

<sup>26</sup> Exodus 19:6.

<sup>27</sup> Exodus 12:24-28.

<sup>28</sup> Exodus 25:8-9, 40; Hebrews 8:5.

<sup>29</sup> Exodus 40:35; 1 Kings 8:11.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 147: 19-20.

<sup>31</sup> Exodus 20:2-3.

- This is another generation who not only rejected Yahweh’s plan, but like them too, have rejected Yahweh himself.  
Like their ancestors Yahweh’s-portion nation are clamoring to be like the nations, not “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*”<sup>32</sup>

**All absolute failures ...**

**... But Yahweh was not finished yet!**

**Again, we are about to witness Yahweh’s scandalous love, in the midst of rebellion.**

- Jeremiah promised an end to this exilic-humiliation: he believed the exile was limited to seventy years.<sup>33</sup>
- Further hope came in the promise of a **New Covenant**, a revolutionary Covenant like no other, declared the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.<sup>34</sup>

**This time, ensuring no failures, Yahweh sent his only Son.**

*“The Lord will create a new thing on earth ...”*<sup>35</sup>

**The new covenant, unlike the previous covenants,<sup>36</sup> contained five totally revolutionary elements by which Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham would be fulfilled.**

- Yahweh would send his Son born of a woman as a human being: unheard of!!!  
Isaiah 9:6-7.
- His Son would, like the sacrificial Passover lamb, be slain for humankind’s sins: no longer a lamb but the Lamb of God: impossible!!! Isaiah 53.
- The Holy Spirit will internalise the Law/Torah in Yahweh’s portion!!!  
Jeremiah 31:33.
- Gentiles would be included in the Kingdom of God: no longer enemies???  
Acts 10:44-48.
- The *one new man* the fruit of reconciling Jew and Gentile: never!!! Ephesians 2:15.

**A messenger declared the exile is over.**

*“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that **her sin has been paid for** ...”*<sup>37</sup>

A man, in appearance like Elijah, preaching his heart out on Jordan’s banks, a repetitive cry: **“Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!”**<sup>38</sup>

His message attracted crowds from all over the region who came confessing their sins.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Exodus 19:6.

<sup>33</sup> Jeremiah 29:10.

<sup>34</sup> Isaiah 59:20-21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27.

<sup>35</sup> Jeremiah 31:22.

<sup>36</sup> Edenic Covenant Genesis 1:28-30; Adamic Covenant Genesis 3:14-19; Noahic Covenant Genesis 9:1-17; Abrahamic Covenant Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:15-18; to Isaac 26:2-5; 24; to Jacob Genesis 28:13-15; Mosaic Covenant Exodus 20:1 to Deuteronomy 28:68; Land Covenant Deuteronomy 29:1 – 30:20; Davidic Covenant 2 Samuel 7:11b-16 the second account 1 Chronicles 10b – 14; New Covenant Jeremiah 31:31-34. Source: “*The Eight Covenants of the Bible*”, Dr Arnold G Fruchtenbaum.

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 40:1.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 3:1-6.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 3:5.

He is interrupted: **“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**<sup>40</sup>

Every Jew on the river bank that day was familiar with the lamb of the Passover, and the protection of the lamb’s blood. It took them back to their roots: the lamb, the protective blood on the doorpost, the death of the firstborn, the wailing like never heard before.”<sup>41</sup>

Reluctantly, John, the preacher, baptised the Lamb who said:

*“Let it be so for now; it is proper for us **to fulfil all righteousness.**”*<sup>42</sup>

No one had heard from heaven for 400 years. That silence was broken at Jesus’ baptism.

*“He saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: **“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.**”*<sup>43</sup>

### **Jesus’ Father was announcing the beginning of his Son’s ministry.**

**The promised New Covenant was unfolding** – but not without opposition.

- Satan was determined to rob Jesus of His righteousness as he had with Adam. His success would disqualify Jesus from fulfilling His ultimate goal - atonement for humankind’s sin. And, establishing his Kingdom.
- Jesus had to prove that He is the Son of God. In Egypt Yahweh released Israel (Yahweh’s-portion) also known as His “*first-born son*” from slavery.<sup>44</sup> Here, Jesus, the Son of God, needs to prove His freedom and victory over satan’s power. At stake was the question of submitting to satan’s power. Jesus the winner, satan the loser.
- After Jesus’ victory over satan in the wilderness, he announced, *“The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”*<sup>45</sup> The next stop the Capernaum synagogue where a demon announced Jesus’ identity: *‘a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!”’*<sup>46</sup> The demonic world, not only recognised Jesus, they were terrified of him!
- The battle raged between the religious authorities (satan’s advocates<sup>47</sup>) and Jesus. They built an entire religious system through which they became wealthy and powerful. Jesus was rattling satan. The final straw was Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Caiaphas, the high priest, was obsessed with killing Jesus – nothing was going to stop him. satan wanted Jesus dead. Caiaphas had a fail-safe plot – so he thought!

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<sup>40</sup> John 1:29.

<sup>41</sup> Exodus 11:5-6; 12:1-14.

<sup>42</sup> Matthew 3:15.

<sup>43</sup> Mark 1:10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Exodus 4:22-23.

<sup>45</sup> Mark 1:15.

<sup>46</sup> Mark 1:21-26.

<sup>47</sup> John 8:39-44.



- Jesus exposed the motives of the religious hierarchy in his Parable of the Tenants and they knew it! They wanted his blood!<sup>48</sup> Jesus thundered “*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man ...*”<sup>49</sup> They ignored his warning.
- There was a secret truth hidden from both Caiaphas and Satan – **Jesus’ resurrection!** Paul explained: “*We speak of God’s secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God **destined for our glory** before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified **the Lord of glory**. However, as it is written: ‘No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.*”<sup>50</sup>

## **We will now further explore Jesus’ glory and our Identity as believers/Christians.**

Prior to his death and resurrection Jesus took his disciples to a significant place at the foot of Mt Hermon in northern Israel. It has to have been the most significant time he has ever had with his disciples. For sure it was a never-to-forget experience. And the most difficult to absorb. He is preparing them for what will occur in Jerusalem. Peter’s reaction was spontaneous: “*Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!*”<sup>51</sup>

This time is divided into two sections: two separate events and totally connected.

1. With all the disciples, understanding who exactly Jesus is.
2. With Peter, James and John, the revelation of Jesus in his glory.

### **1. Who is Jesus?**

Jesus had deliberately taken his disciples to an area known as Baniyas – today it is part of the Golan Heights. It is essential we consider the context of Jesus drawing his disciples aside to this place at the foot of Mount Hermon. Today, ruins of some twenty ancient temples are evidence that here was the center of pagan sacrificial worship. From out of a large cavern under the rock face, springs of water flow copiously replenishing lake Galilee. In antiquity this place was notoriously known as ‘*the gates of Hell*’. It was commonly identified as the entry point to the underworld. The area was known biblically as Bashan which means ‘serpent’. The area was generally known as ‘the place of the serpent’ connecting it with the Garden of Eden and the rebellion of Adam and Eve.

In this context Jesus asked his disciples, “*Who do you say that I am?*” Peter clearly responded, “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*”<sup>52</sup> Jesus was deliberately putting the demonic realm on notice. Recall the man in the Capernaum synagogue when the demon in him identified Jesus as ‘*the Holy One of God*’. That demon’s question “*Have you come to destroy us?*” indicated that the demons knew, not only who Jesus is, but that he will destroy them at an appointed time. On another occasion, “*What do you want with us, Son of God?*”

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<sup>48</sup> Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19.

<sup>49</sup> Matthew 24:37

<sup>50</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:7-10.

<sup>51</sup> Matthew 16:22.

<sup>52</sup> Matthew 16:15-16.

they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”<sup>53</sup> They were terrified. Their days were numbered and they knew it!

We need to interpret Jesus’ proclamation in this light:

*“And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock (Jesus), I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”<sup>54</sup>*

Jesus is addressing, not only his disciples, but also the resident spiritual strongholds. Note, “**I will** give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven ...” refers to a future event. The promised power and authority were only a promise at this time. The risen Jesus directed the disciples to await their empowering “when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses ...”<sup>55</sup> That promise was fulfilled at Shavuot/Pentecost.<sup>56</sup>

We need to remember that gates are defensive structures, that keep the enemy in! They are not offensive weapons. The enemy is the one that is under threat here! As it has been said: Hell will one day be satan’s tomb. Jesus in his glory will rule supreme! However, that time is not yet.

## 2. Glorified Jesus

John provides us with what has been described as Jesus’ High Priestly prayer: John 17. He petitions his Father,

*“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, **glorify** me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”<sup>57</sup>*

Prior to Jesus’ final returning to Jerusalem from Mt Hermon in the north, he selects Peter, James and John and chooses a secluded spot high up the mountain where Jesus is **transfigured** before them.

Matthew describes Jesus: ‘His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light’<sup>58</sup>. Mark describes Jesus: ‘His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them’<sup>59</sup>. Luke describes Jesus: ‘As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning’<sup>60</sup>.

Matthew reports a voice from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. **Listen to him!**”<sup>61</sup> Mark reports a voice from the cloud, “This is my Son,

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<sup>53</sup> Matthew 8:29.

<sup>54</sup> Matthew 16:18-19.

<sup>55</sup> Acts 1:8.

<sup>56</sup> Acts 2.

<sup>57</sup> John 17:4-5.

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<sup>59</sup> Mark 9:3.

<sup>60</sup> Luke 9:29.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew 17:5.

whom I love. **Listen to him!**”<sup>62</sup> Luke reports a voice from the cloud, “*This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him.*”<sup>63</sup>

This voice was repeating Moses’ instruction concerning his successor the Messiah, “Listen to him.”<sup>64</sup> An absolutely emphatic command: “**Listen to him!**”

Peter, James and John saw a glimpse of Jesus glorified. They heard the voice from the cloud: “**They were terrified!**”<sup>65</sup>

As they descended the mountain Jesus instructed the disciples not to tell anyone what they had witnessed until after he “**has been raised from the dead.**”<sup>66</sup> Jesus also gave them more explicit detail of what lies ahead: “*The Son of Man*<sup>67</sup> *is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life.*”<sup>68</sup>

This entire passage describing Jesus’ identity and his transfiguration are vital, pointing to the fulfilment of why the babe was born in Bethlehem. He was born to die ... and rise!

Jesus must carry the total weight of mankind’s sin before his glorious resurrection.

Paul expressed it clearly:

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: **first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.** For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith. ... There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: **first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;** but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: **first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.** For God does not show favouritism.”*<sup>69</sup>

**Adam’s rebellion was the cause not only of his own fall but also the fall of the entire created order. Everything will change in the order of the New Covenant. It will be a paradigm shift.**

Paul enlightens us:

*“The creation waits in eager expectation for **the sons of God** to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it [satan], in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay<sup>70</sup> and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

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<sup>62</sup> Mark 9:7.

<sup>63</sup> Luke 9:35.

<sup>64</sup> Deuteronomy 18:15.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 17:6.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 17:9, 12.

<sup>67</sup> Daniel 7:13 The term appears in Daniel’s vision of the night “*there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*”

<sup>68</sup> Matthew 17:22-23.

<sup>69</sup> Romans 1:16-17; 2:9-11.

<sup>70</sup> Isaiah 55:12-13; Jesus’ rebuke of Pharisees Luke 19:40.

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*<sup>71</sup>

**The “sons of God” – the redeemed - have a pivotal role in the restoration of all things:**

*“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, **he also glorified.**”<sup>72</sup>*

The author to the Hebrews wrote:

*“But we see **Jesus**, who was made a little lower than the angels, **now** crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”<sup>73</sup>*

**Man was uniquely created in the image of God.** No other being was created reflecting God’s image. Adam’s fallen nature we share. What was the change in Adam when he chose to be independent of God? We know Adam forfeited eternal life on our behalf. But the **last Adam** (Jesus) gives us eternal life.<sup>74</sup>

John writes:

*‘Dear Friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But **we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.**’<sup>75</sup>*

In other words: **Jesus became like us so that we might become like Him?**

## **The future of ‘Yahweh’s-portion’ nation, Israel, with the Nations**

**Paul**, the apostle to the Gentiles, assures his readers that God has not forsaken Israel in preference for the Gentiles. Rather, he has permitted the Gentiles to enjoy the covenantal privilege, originally given Israel, to provoke Israel to jealousy for what is inherently theirs.

*“For if their [Israel’s] rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?... And so all Israel will be saved ...”<sup>76</sup>*

That soundly demolishes ‘replacement theology’. Would you agree?

Paul reveals a mystery, a plan never known to man, not even to “the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms”<sup>77</sup> but will be revealed to them through the redeemed church. It is that

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<sup>71</sup> Romans 8:19-22.

<sup>72</sup> Romans 8:29-30; Genesis 3:17-19.

<sup>73</sup> Hebrews 2:9-11.

<sup>74</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:42-57.

<sup>75</sup> 1 John 3:2

<sup>76</sup> Romans 11:15, 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ephesians 3:10-11.

*“the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus ... [God’s] intent was that now, **\*through the church\***, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*<sup>78</sup>

- ‘church’ = ecclesia = the community of *redeemed* Jews and Gentiles.  
In Paul’s phraseology “*the one new man*” = an embryonic community of Jews and Gentiles redeemed through the shed blood of Yeshua HaMashiach

As the end draws near Jesus will judge the nations<sup>79</sup>; he has withheld his judgment, offering the opportunity of repentance before the period known as the tribulation. We note that Jesus is the only one qualified to judge, as he is the one who died for mankind’s sin, for our sin. To change our very nature! **The Saviour of the world is the Judge of the world.**

The Psalmist informs us of Yahweh’s statement:

*“You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance.”*<sup>80</sup> The disinherited nations of Babylon Yahweh promised Abraham his descendants would bless.

Isaiah states,

*“I ... am about to come and gather all nations and tongues and they will come and see my glory.”*<sup>81</sup> Again fulfilment of Yahweh’s promise to Abraham.

Jesus said he would not leave the believers as orphans but the Father would send Holy Spirit as their Counselor, teaching believers all things, revealing and leading into truth.<sup>82</sup> Holy Spirit will hold back the full effect of satan’s destructive work until the time comes to remove Holy Spirit when chaos will be unleashed upon the earth. Jesus, known as the *Word of God*, on his robe inscribed “*King of kings and Lord of lords*” leads the armies of heaven in the final battle.<sup>83</sup>

*“For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready ... Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them ... I am making everything new!”*<sup>84</sup>

**Redeemed Man is restored to his pre-fall relationship with his Creator pursuing his God-ordained purpose, partnering with God.**

**Footnote:**

**‘Yahweh seen’ and ‘Yahweh unseen’ = he who has seen me has seen the Father =**  
**= John 10:30; 14:9, I and the Father are one**

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<sup>78</sup> Ephesians 3:6 NIV.

<sup>79</sup> Isaiah 63; Revelation 19:11-21.

<sup>80</sup> Psalm 2:7,9

<sup>81</sup> Isaiah 66:18-21

<sup>82</sup> John 14:15-31.

<sup>83</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Revelation 19:11-21.

<sup>84</sup> Revelation 19:6-7; 21:1, 3, 5.