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The Promise and Christ's Inheritance

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Introduction

A casual, unbiased reading of the Bible (accurately translated that is), particularly the letters of Paul, reveals the following facts of an epic story involving us all.

From the beginning of time, God has had a specific plan for this earth and it intimately involves humanity. Through a portion of mankind, representing His authority, He would set up a kingdom on this earth to show forth His righteousness and love. But before this could occur, man had to be tested for his obedience to His God and Father. This occurred with the first human couple, named Adam and Eve.

Sadly, yet inevitably, Adam failed the test, forfeiting his right to be a son of God ruling the earth for His Father. Instead, Satan, the spiritual Adversary, became the god of this world and he claimed the title deed to this earth and humanity by installing the Monarch Death to enslave all mankind in Sin. Yet even this inevitable failure of Adam was all part of God's original Plan, so that eventually a much greater blessing will come to all humanity through our experience of sin, evil and death.

This initial sin and transgression of the first human couple was rightfully judged by God, but this now meant that no son of Adam could rightfully rule the earth without the gracious power of God's Spirit, and no one could ultimately redeem mankind from its slavery to sin and death because all humanity is imprisoned under the power and deception of the spiritual Adversary of God, the ruler of the dark spirit forces, the one who had been used to bring about man's initial downfall through a crafty serpent; and therefore, no one is found worthy to save mankind from its inevitable fate - Death.

Yet even this was all part of the greater plan that God had in mind all along, a plan and purpose that will bring untold blessing to everyone eventually. This purpose is centered in His Son, Who is the Image of the Father. Through Him all things were created, in the spirit realm and on the earth. The Son already holds all the rights to creation because He is the Firstborn Son of God, and as the Image and Form of God, He is the Creator of all. And as Owner of everything, it is His responsibility to save the human race from its slavery to sin and death, and all its dire consequences. It had to be this way so that the epic story of the ages, the greatest Love Story of all, the most epic good versus evil battle of all time, could be played out, being known and experienced by all.

Only the celestial Son of God can rescue mankind from death, and only He can rule the earth as its rightful King. But first He was to become a Man, a flesh and blood human like one of us, yet be uniquely free from inherent sin and death. He therefore came as the Second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, to pay the Ransom price to rescue mankind from sin and death. During His life on earth as a Servant, He learned obedience to His God and Father through what He suffered, with love and grace, and He ultimately gave His life and soul as the ultimate Sacrifice on behalf of all humanity by dying the humiliating death of the cross.

Yet as a glorious result of this, God raised Him from the dead to be the first immortal human, Head of a New Humanity, Head of a New Creation, The Firstborn among many brethren. He alone is worthy to be the Rescuer and Redeemer of humanity and the whole of creation. Christ has already begun His mission of rescuing the whole human race, that is, all those who have come from Adam, who are dead in their sins and transgressions. He alone can rescue us from this bondage to darkness and corruption.

But only a minority amongst humanity, who are chosen and given the faith to believe God's Word, to come to know Him as their Father, to be trained in this life as children of God learning to be Sons of God; these are the ones who have already begun to receive, in Spirit, the promise of ruling the earth with Christ Himself in

immortality and incorruption. It is this Body of Christ Ecclesia (commonly rendered Church) that shall rule and serve the rest of creation to bring ALL into the glorious freedom of the children of God in the ages to come, resulting in Universal Restoration and Reconciliation. Christ is truly the Champion of the universe and He really is the Saviour of ALL mankind, the Conqueror of sin and death.

In the New Creation, every son of Adam (as well as every spirit being) shall be alive on the New Earth, but only a small portion shall be experiencing eonian life in the Kingdom of God, the Celestial Israel of the New Jerusalem, the Bride and Body of Christ. The rest shall be outside experiencing the chastening of God's Divine Law and Justice (metaphorically called the Lake of Fire, the Second Death) until they have served their sentence, which will have been passed at the Great White Throne, having been judged in accordance with their acts.

Yet whereas in the Old, Primitive Creation, everything is dragged down to corruption and death (the Law of Entropy and the Second Law of Thermodynamics), in the New Creation everything, including humanity, shall be raised up to glorious life and incorruption. ALL those who are injured by the Second Death shall receive healing from the Body of Christ, the Tree of Life, as each one is saved, justified and reconciled to God as Father of ALL. What a glorious Plan!

Inheritance or Allotment?

Now with this as an introduction and a brief overview of God's plan, let us now take a journey through the Scriptures to learn in more detail about The Promise of God and Christ's Inheritance.

Firstly, it needs to be said that in most versions the Greek word *kleros* is translated as *inheritance*. The word more accurately describes a *lot* or *allotment*, that which is *allotted*, as in the casting of lots to determine an outcome, similar to the ritual of drawing straws to see who gets what. The various words *kleronomeo*, *kleronomos* and *kleronomia* are describing the actual experience of enjoying an allotment. These phrases are used more accurately in the Concordant Version in relation to the spiritual things that are allotted to the children of God. Throughout Scripture, man is viewed as a tenant who has been allotted certain things by God. Absolutely speaking, man owns nothing! It all belongs to God for He created it all, including man, who was formed from the soil of the earth.

"For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land."

(Psalm 95:3-5 NIV)

"The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all...Praise the LORD, all His works everywhere in His dominion."

(Psalm 103:19 & 22 NIV)

The nation of Israel was given the land of Israel as an allotment from God, but ultimately it is God's Land, not theirs. As we shall see, this was part of the original Promise.

"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is Mine and you are but aliens and My tenants."

(Leviticus 25:23 NIV)

Even Christ has an allotment (and no, it's much more than a little plot of land down the road, known in England as a hired garden or allotment), and we shall see that He shares this allotment with others. It is still correct to call it His inheritance, as an inheritance is that which a son inherits from his father. Christ is the rightful Heir to all that belongs to His Father, for the Father has given all things to the Son.

"The Father is loving the Son and has given all into His hand."

(John 3:35)

The Rulership Mandate

In the beginning, humanity, in the form of male and female, was given a mandate (that is, an authoritative command) to rule over all the earth as representatives of God Himself, having been made in His image and likeness. Some call this the Dominion Mandate. [After the transgression of Adam, and his wife's deception, whereby death and sin entered this world and the whole race, Adam was given the headship over his wife for he was created first, hence man is now head of the woman (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3, 7-9). Nevertheless, in the Lord, that is, in the spirit of the New Humanity, male and female shall rule together as it was in the beginning as sons and daughters of God (1 Corinthians 11:11-12; Galatians 3:26-28).]

"Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth (*or all land life*), and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God **created man in His Own image**, in the image of God He created him; **male and female He created them**. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

(Genesis 1:26-28 NIV; also 2:15-17)

Centuries later, this Rulership Mandate was reiterated to Noah and his sons after the Flood, with a few additions (this mandate is often referred to as the Adamic Covenant and also the Noahic Covenant, although it is more accurately a Blessing. The Covenant with Noah and all mankind was the promise that there wouldn't be another universal Flood).

This time it also included authority over other groups of humans in the form of human government, allowing for capital punishment to be meted out to murderers. Noah, like Adam before him, was set up as God's administrator in the earth (also called theocratic administrator, that is, ruling or governing on God's behalf).

"Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase and fill the earth and subdue it. The fear and dread of you shall fall upon all living things...they are given into your hands...whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God has God made humanity. As for you, be fruitful and increase, roam in the earth and rule in it.""

(Genesis 9:1-7 FT)

The line of theocratic rulership was later specifically passed on to Noah's son Shem, rather than Ham and Japheth (Genesis 9:26-27). Centuries later, Abraham was to come from this Semitic line to whom the

promises and covenants were given in a much more specific manner (Genesis 11:10-26). (The ancient patriarch Job was most probably from this line of Shem also). And it was through this Semitic line that eventually the Messiah would come through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David and Solomon - The Ultimate Seed Who is to be the Ruler of all creation, Christ Jesus, The Son of Mankind and The Son of God (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38).

King David highlighted the original Rulership Mandate in one of his psalms.

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet..."

(Psalm 8:3-8 NIV)

In the New Testament, the writer to the Hebrews (which was most probably the apostle Paul) picks up on this theme in the light of Jesus' mission.

"For not to messengers does He subject the impending inhabited earth, concerning which we are speaking. Yet somewhere someone certifies, saying,

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or a son of mankind, that Thou art visiting him? Thou makest him some bit inferior to messengers, with glory and honour Thou wreathest him, and dost place him over the works of Thy hands. All dost Thou subject underneath his feet."

For in the subjection of all to him, He leaves nothing unsubject to him. Yet now we are not as yet seeing all subject to him. Yet we are observing Jesus, Who has been made some bit inferior to messengers (because of the suffering of death, wreathed with glory and honour), so that, in the grace of God, **He should be tasting death for the sake of everyone.** For it became Him, because of Whom all is, and through Whom all is, in leading many sons into glory, to perfect the Inaugurator of their salvation through sufferings."

(Hebrews 2:5-10)

The writer to the Hebrews is confirming here that the Rulership Mandate for the earth was originally given to humanity, and not to messengers (that is, spirit beings or angels). But at present, due to sin and death, humanity does not have the power or ability to exercise this complete subjection of the earth. Humanity can only demonstrate its inability to rule correctly by causing complete chaos and destruction! This is truly Man's Day.

Nevertheless, by faith we see the Man, Jesus, the Mediator of God and mankind, Who, as the Son of God, took on the likeness of a human being and offered up His body as a Sacrifice to fully pay the Ransom price to redeem all mankind from death. And it is through Christ that God will ultimately bring this subjection to all creation during the Lord's Day or Day of the Lord. In the process, He is bringing many sons into glory to rule with Him in the ages to come to bring about this glorious subjection of all to God.

These sons include the ancient fathers of the Faith, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah and Shem, as well as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the faithful remnant of Israel, along with all those who truly follow Christ, called out of Israel and the nations, up until Christ returns. Paul reveals that all of these saints are now the

One Body of Christ Ecclesia, the Bride and Wife of the Lamb, the Sons of God, the celestial Israel of God, who will rule with Christ in the ages to come (Hebrews 11:1-12:29; Ephesians 2:11-22).

This particularly applies to 'the administration of the complement (or fullness) of the eras' (often rendered 'dispensation of the fullness of times'), the glorious Age of the New Creation, when all humanity will be resurrected and ruled over by Christ and His Ecclesia until ALL are truly subjected, and death is finally abolished, eventually giving true life to ALL at the consummation. But during that age, only the Body/Bride Ecclesia, the Overcomers, the Sons of God, the Celestial Israel of God (the 144,000), shall be experiencing true eonian life, that is, immortality, in the Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem. The rest, in contrast, shall be experiencing the Second Death, symbolised as the Lake of Fire, until the consummation (Revelation 20:11-22:5, 12-15).

"...in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus...in all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will...to have an administration of the complement of the eras, **to head up all in the Christ** - both that in the heavens and that on the earth..."

(Ephesians 1:5, 8-10)

"...and **subjects all under His feet**, and gives Him, **as Head over all**, to **the ecclesia which is His body**, the complement of the One completing the all in all."

(Ephesians 1:22-23)

"...to Him be glory **in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus** for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!"

(Ephesians 3:21)

"(Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. **For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified**. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power.

For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. **For He subjects ALL under His feet**. Now whenever He may be saying that ALL is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him (*God*) Who subjects ALL to Him (*Christ*). Now, whenever ALL may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects ALL to Him, **that God may be ALL IN ALL.**)"

(1 Corinthians 15:20-28)

So we can already see that a major part of God's plan and purpose for humanity and the earth is one of righteous subjection or dominion over ALL His creatures. This will be achieved through Christ and the sons of God reigning in Life.

"Or are you not aware that the saints shall judge the world?...Are you not aware that **we shall be judging messengers, not to mention life's affairs?**"

(1 Corinthians 6:2-3)

"So that, let no one be boasting in men, for all is yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas (*Peter*), or the world, or life, or death, or the present, or that which is impending - all is yours, yet you are Christ's, yet Christ is God's."

(1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

"Already are you sated, already are you rich, apart from us you reign. And would that you surely reign, that we also should be reigning together with you!"

(1 Corinthians 4:8)

In this text, Paul is declaring to the Corinthian believers that they were already kings in Christ, but due to their fleshly, immature behaviour, they were not acting accordingly. They were instead causing division and strife within the Body, even discriminating between various apostles and leaders. So Paul, in effect, says 'If only you were actually reigning as sons of God, for then we would be reigning together with you as one Body!' They were misunderstanding the unity of the Body, as well as God's grace.

For if, by the offence of the one, death reigns through the one, much rather, **those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in life through the One, Jesus Christ...**even as Sin reigns in death, thus Grace also should be reigning through righteousness, for eonian life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

(Romans 5:17, 21)

Paul is declaring here that the superabundant grace of the New Humanity in Christ shall reign in righteousness and life in the ages to come. Whereas death and corruption reigns because of sin in the Old Creation, Life and Incorruption shall reign in the New Creation, bringing life to all eventually. The principle of the New Creation is totally opposite to the Old Creation.

"Thou dost also make them a kingdom and a priesthood for our God, and they shall be reigning on the earth...The kingdom of this world became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons...**And I perceived thrones, and they are seated on them, and judgement was granted to them.** And the souls of those executed because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who do not worship the wild beast or its image, and did not get the emblem on their forehead and on their hand - **they also live and reign with Christ a thousand years.** (The rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years should be finished.)

This is the former (*or first*) resurrection. Happy and holy is he who is having part in the former resurrection! Over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years."

(Revelation 5:10; 11:15; 20:4-6)

But let's back up a bit and continue our journey through scriptural history to find out more about the Promise and those to whom it is given.

The Original Promise

The first time the promise of God was spoken in detail to mankind was the promise to Abram in Genesis 12, which caused him to leave his country of Ur in Mesopotamia with his family to go to Canaan, but they settled in Haran first (Genesis 12:1-3; 11:31-32). Some years later, Abram left Haran and entered Canaan. Abram was 75 years of age when he arrived in Canaan (Genesis 12:4-5). While at Shechem, Yahweh appeared to Abram and gave him the land promise (Genesis 12:6-7). This Promise was ratified in a solemn blood covenant ceremony a little later, probably that same year, after Abram returned from Egypt (Genesis 15). This is the original Promise and Covenant given to Abraham, as a package, though it actually contains a number of promises within it.

"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 makes light of you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your seed."

(Genesis 12:2-3 FT)

"...Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your seed till the eon (*that is, of indefinite duration, till the distant future*). I will make your seed like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your seed could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you and your seed for the eon (*indefinite duration*)."

(Genesis 13:14-17 FT)

"On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates"..."

(Genesis 15:18-21 NIV)

In about 1877 BC, God 'cut' this covenant with Abram, which officially sealed the promises that God had already given to him earlier, when he had first entered the land of Canaan (Genesis 15). In those times, the most solemn agreement amongst men was a blood covenant. The covenant was sealed between two parties by some kind of animal sacrifice, and each party would promise to keep their end of the deal while walking

between pieces of the slain animal laid out on either side of them. This solemn ceremony involving sacrifice symbolised what would occur to either party if they broke the covenant, that is, they would be slain and cut in two!

But this covenant with Abram was made with only one party liable - God! Abram was put to sleep, so the covenant would be *unconditional* and the fulfillment of it would rely solely on God. It is called an *eonian* covenant. (This word is commonly mistranslated *everlasting*. Eonian is the Greek/English equivalent of the Hebrew word *olam*, which refers to 'indefinite time' or that which is 'obscure,' so the word *eonian* basically means that which lasts for the eons or ages of time (age-abiding) until God's plan is accomplished. See [The Concordant Version](#) article for further information). All of the subsequent covenants, which were passed on to his descendants, the nation of Israel, are based on, and are extensions of, this original covenant to Abraham (apart from the Mosaic Covenant known as The Law).

Through the years, certain conditions were brought in alongside the original covenant, which Abraham's descendants were expected to obey, with the Law of Moses being the major addition. The covenant and sign of circumcision was also included some years later, when Abram's name was changed to **Abraham** (Genesis 17 - And take note that this covenant of fleshly circumcision was to be 'an eonian covenant' (v13). Fleshly circumcision is not to be 'everlasting!'). These conditions only regulated the blessings they received by faith and the *timing* of the ultimate fulfillment of the original covenant.

For example "If you will do 'this,' then you'll receive 'this.'" But the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant is guaranteed by God Himself. Abraham's descendants *cannot* negate this covenant, though they may delay it due to disobedience, but because of God's power and grace alone, it will one day find full fruition.

The promises given to Abraham, and confirmed in the covenant, include the following:

- He would become the father of numerous nations, from which kings would come. Some of these many nations have come through his first son, **Ishmael**, whose mother was Hagar the Egyptian handmaid. Ishmael became the father of some of the Arabian peoples through his 12 sons. The founder of the religion of Islam, Mohammed, is said to have come from the line of **Kedar**, who was one of Ishmael's sons. Abraham also had other sons from which many of the Arabian nations descended (Genesis 25:1-6). Nevertheless, Ishmael was not the one chosen to receive the inheritance.

Concerning Ishmael, it needs to be emphasised here that he was promised blessing and fruitfulness, but the covenant was to be established through the promised son, Isaac, who was miraculously conceived by the power of God when Abraham and Sarah were well advanced in years (Genesis 16; 17:18-21; 25:12-18; also Romans 9:6-13).

An interesting prophecy was given to Hagar by the celestial Messenger of Yahweh concerning Ishmael and his descendants, which is very appropriate at this time in history. It reads,

"And he is becoming a wild ass of a man, his hand against all, and the hand of all against him. And he will tabernacle adjoining all his brothers."

(Genesis 16:11-12)

The descendants of Ishmael have generally been against their brother nations from their beginning, Arab against Arab against Jew, and this is particularly true concerning Isaac/Israel. This hostility and persecution was revealed through Ishmael himself when he persecuted his brother Isaac, and sought to kill him (Genesis 21:8-10; Galatians 4:29; also Book of Jasher chapter 21). In accordance with the prophecy,

they have also generally dwelt in the lands adjoining their brothers in the Middle East. This hostility shall continue to plague the Middle East and the world until the end of this age. The religion of Islam will continue to play an important part in all of this.

- The promise/covenant would be confirmed to **Isaac** (not Ishmael) and then to **Jacob/Israel** (not Esau), whose descendants (as the nation of Israel) would become the chosen people of God. And even through Israel, many kings and a group of nations would come from Abraham, via the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

"Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."

(Genesis 26:3-5 NIV)

There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

(Genesis 28:13-15 NIV)

The Promised Land

- The land of Canaan was to become their land, allotted to them by God - the Promised Land of Canaan, which became known as the land of Israel. The exact boundaries are given as the river of Egypt in the south to the great river Euphrates in the north (Genesis 15:18-21).

In previous writings (before I had to revise them), I have to say that I was greatly led astray on this subject of the Promised Land of Israel, largely due to the influence of Dispensationalism. I found that the widely held belief that Israel has not received the full allotment of the land as yet, and will therefore be given it in a 'Millennial kingdom' (which also seems to help justify their present occupation of Palestine) **is complete error!**

The Scriptures are very clear that Israel has already received the full allotment of land that was originally promised to Abraham. It has all been fulfilled and it therefore doesn't require a literal future fulfillment, otherwise God could be accused of going backward rather than forward!

The original Abrahamic covenant gives the north and south boundaries of the promised land.

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, **from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates-** the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

(Genesis 15:18-21 NIV)

The southern boundary was to be the river of Egypt. This river or brook could also represent a wadi. A wadi is a river or stream that usually dries up during the summer months. This 'river of Egypt' is commonly identified as Wadi El-Arish near the Mediterranean coast, presently within the borders of modern Egypt in the northern part of the Sinai peninsular. There are other places further west in Egypt that are believed to be this river, but whatever the location, the scriptures make it clear that Israel occupied the land as far as this river on the border of Egypt.

The northern boundary was to be the Great River Euphrates. This is referring to the northern part of the Euphrates that passes through northern Syria. This was ultimately fulfilled in the time of David and Solomon, when the united kingdom of Israel was at its greatest extent. The whole allotment of land, which would've included all of Lebanon, as well as parts of northern Syria, in the north, down to the border of Egypt in the south, were given to Abraham's descendants in accordance with the covenant.

The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River (i.e. the Euphrates) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

(1 Kings 4:20-21 NIV)

Even though the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were eventually exiled from the land due to sin, a remnant was nevertheless graciously restored to the land as a united nation under Judah and Jerusalem. In Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple, which was given to him during the Babylonian exile, the boundaries of the promised land are given (Ezekiel 47:13-23).

Now if these details are compared with the original boundaries given through Moses (Numbers 34) and Joshua (Joshua 13-19), then we can see that they are virtually identical. Apart from the original allotment of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan, the main boundaries are the same. The northern boundary was Lebo Hamath (somewhere between Tyre and Sidon) and the southern boundary was the river of Egypt. The kingdom of Israel at its greatest extent under Solomon, the king of Peace, is a type of the kingdom of Christ, the ultimate Prince of Peace.

This should be enough evidence for those who seek only truth that the physical, literal fulfillment of the land promises to Israel has been fulfilled in history. Now there remains only a spiritual, figurative Sabbath-Rest of entering the promised land of a New Creation, the kingdom of Christ Jesus (Hebrews 4:1-11).

The present occupation of Palestine by the Jews is fulfilling various types and shadows in Scripture, and it is also revealing the fact that God has not completely cast off His earthly people, for He is still gathering in a spiritual remnant in the Messiah. It is also fulfilling some prophecies in Jeremiah 31 & 33 that state that the descendants of Israel will survive until this present creation passes away. Their presence in the 'Holy Land' is also reviving the teaching of the Hebrew roots of the Faith, which is extremely useful in gaining a better understanding of the Scriptures, as well as allowing archaeological digs which are helping to verify the Bible.

Nevertheless, this physical restoration of Israel and Jerusalem will ultimately lead to judgment, for it is not in accordance with God's revealed will in Christ Jesus.

The reason why God originally gave the land of Canaan to ancient Israel, commanding them to destroy the clans of the Canaanites occupying the land at that time, was to show us all that only *He* decides who has what and who goes where. The whole earth belongs to the Lord, although mistakenly humanity thinks that it owns most of it. The Canaanites in the land at that time had become wicked and abominable through their depraved and immoral practices (which included sacrificing children in fire), soaking the land with innocent blood - so God ousted them (Deuteronomy 7 and 9:4-6). Those that remained served Israel, in fulfillment of Noah's prophecy (Genesis 9:24-27).

'Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants...And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.'

(Leviticus 18:24-28 NIV)

But this only took place when - and not before - the depravity of all the various nations of the Canaanites living in the land was ripe and ready for judgment, particularly the Amorites (Genesis 15:16). God's timing and His reasons are perfect. But the same thing applied to Israel centuries later because they violated His covenant and became worse than the other nations - so they too were vomited out!

It needs to be emphasised again that Yahweh is the Owner of the earth, but especially that plot of land in the Middle East - it is *His* land (Leviticus 25:23). Israel was supposed to be the obedient tenant of their allotment, but they failed (Matthew 21:33-46).

- His descendants will eventually be a blessing for all nations. This is ultimately fulfilled through the promised Messiah and His kingdom, and the Gospel going to all nations.

This covenant is unconditional and is to be fulfilled by God Himself (see Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18; Psalm 105:8-11; Hebrews 6:13-18).

Further Covenants

Centuries later, about 1000 BC, this promise was enlarged upon in the Covenant that was made with king David (the Davidic Covenant) concerning the ultimate Anointed King and His Kingdom. The Messiah would be of the Seed of David through his son Solomon .

"Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel...

'...The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (for the age or time indefinite). I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever (for the age) before me; your throne will be established forever (for the age).'

(2 Samuel 7:8-16 NIV)

Yahweh promised David that He would establish a royal house through one of his own sons (which was Solomon) to rule over the people of God indefinitely. His son would be the one to build the Temple of God (of which David was to write the plans), and in a special sense God would be his father. He would also need disciplining if he sinned, which would occur through other men causing him grief. Nevertheless, God promised that no matter what, He would establish David's throne and kingdom through his chosen son.

The historical fulfillment of all this through Solomon and the kings of Judah is recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Yet it is evident that this covenant was to have a greater fulfillment in the Messiah, the ultimate Son of David and Solomon, the ultimate King of Peace.

This covenant was to fulfill the Judah role of the Messiah - the Sceptre - prophesied through Jacob's blessing.

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's (or lawgiver's) staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

(Genesis 49:10-11)

Joseph received the Birthright blessings through his son **Ephraim**, while **Judah** received the Rulership.

"Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers...

...Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm—may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth."

When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.' " So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

(Genesis 48:5-6, 15-20 NIV)

The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, **and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph**)

(1 Chronicles 5:1-2 NIV)

These blessings were literally fulfilled in the history of the two kingdoms of Israel/Ephraim and Judah. When the united kingdom of Israel was divided after Solomon's reign, the kingdom of Israel was headed up in Joseph/Ephraim ruling from Samaria, while the kingdom of Judah remained headed up in David's line ruling from Jerusalem.

Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an **Ephraimite** from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah...

...Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes....I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.

(1 Kings 11:26, 31, 36 NIV)

The ultimate fulfillment of these things is spiritually found in Christ. The Joseph role fulfills the Birthright blessings of the sons of God, which will fully come to pass at the Adoption (or Placing of sons) at Christ's Second Advent; while the Judah role is literally and spiritually fulfilled in Jesus as the Son of David, King of Israel and the world.

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord

God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

(Luke 1:31-33 NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

(Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV)

One of the reasons Christ came was to confirm and fulfill these Patriarchal Promises and Covenants.

For I am saying that Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, **to confirm the patriarchal promises.** Yet the nations are to glorify God for His mercy, according as it is written, "Therefore I shall be acclaiming Thee among the nations,"

(Romans 15:8-9)

Yet these promises could only be fulfilled via a New Covenant, as the Old Covenant of the Law (the Mosaic Covenant) could only bring down the curse and condemnation of God.

So in the 6th century BC, the New Covenant was promised to Israel and Judah through the prophet Jeremiah. This New Covenant was to eventually supercede the Old Covenant system of the Law of Moses, as the Law could only condemn the people of Israel to death, and have them ousted from the land due to their failure to keep it.

The New Covenant was foreshadowed in the gracious restoration of a remnant of all Israel after the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, when God fulfilled His promise of restoring them, cleansing them, and renewing them. This promise or covenant of peace was a re-establishing or re-confirming of the Old Covenant to Israel for a time, until the Messiah would come in the fullness of time. The ultimate fulfillment though is in the New Covenant in Christ.

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession

of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

(Deuteronomy 30:1-6 NIV)

" For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

(Ezekiel 36:24-28 NIV)

This New Covenant determines the spiritual blessings and power of the kingdom that will bring about the ultimate fulfillment of the Promise (Jeremiah 31:31-36; also 32:40-41). Yet even this New Covenant will have far reaching consequences that goes beyond Israel and this present earth - it will reach the heavens also, and will become the basis for a New Creation.

The writer of Hebrews makes this point when quoting Jeremiah.

"Yet now He (*Jesus*) has happened upon a more excellent ministry, in as much as He is Mediator, also, of a better Covenant, which has been instituted on better promises. For if that first one were unblamable, no place would have been sought for a second one. For, blaming them, He is saying,

"Lo! the days are coming," the Lord is saying, "and I shall be concluding with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant, not in accord with the covenant which I make with their fathers in the day of My taking hold of their hand to be leading them out of the land of Egypt, seeing that they do not remain in My covenant, and I neglect them," the Lord is saying, For this is the covenant which I shall be covenanting with the house of Israel after those days," the Lord is saying:

"Imparting My laws to their comprehension, on their hearts, also, shall I be inscribing them, and I shall be to them for a God, and they shall be to Me for a people. And by no means should each be teaching his fellow citizen, and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord!' for all shall be acquainted with Me, from their little to their great, for I shall be propitious to their injustices, and of their sins and their lawlessnesses should I under no circumstances still be reminded."

In saying "new," He has made the former one old. Now that which is growing old and decrepit is near its disappearance."

(Hebrews 8:6-13)

These words were written only a few years before the Jewish war of 66-70 AD in which Jerusalem and the temple worship system prescribed by the Law were destroyed by the Roman legions. This was God's judgment upon Israel for rejecting their true Anointed King, Messiah Jesus, and for also rejecting the testimony of Christ's Apostles during the nation's era of probation (30-70 AD, the 40 year era, which included Christ's ministry and the transitional Acts period).

The Old Covenant of the Mosaic Law, as a theocratic system for Israel, was dead. Only the New Covenant in the Messiah can save them and fulfill the original Promise. This is the Good News or Gospel of God.

"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, **have foretold these days**. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

(Acts 3:24-26 NIV)

Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, a called apostle, severed for **the evangel of God** (which He promises before through His prophets in the holy scriptures), concerning His Son (Who comes of the seed of David according to the flesh, Who is designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead), Jesus Christ, our Lord, through Whom we obtained grace and apostleship for faith-obedience among all the nations, for His name's sake...

(Romans 1:1-5)

All the promises of God are "Yes" and "Amen" in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:18-20). The word *amen* is Hebrew for *faithful* or *truly*. It is used to verify the truth of a particular statement, either before (as in 'Verily, verily' or 'Truly, truly') or after (as in 'Amen'). Christ is the Amen.

"...the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness..."

(Revelation 3:14)

Now many believe that the Law was given to help us do right and that we should all strictly live by it, but this is not what Paul teaches. Here's the shocker! The Law was added alongside the promise **to increase the sin of the people and to lock them up in stubbornness in preparation for the coming of the Messiah**. The Law was to be the school master (an escort or pedagogue) to lead them to faith in Christ as their much needed Saviour. But the Law, and the resulting transgressions, does not nullify the original Promise of God. In fact, the problem is not with the Law itself, for the Law is spiritual and righteous. The problem lies in the infirmity of the flesh.

"What, then, is the law? On behalf of transgressions was it added, until the Seed should come to Whom He has promised...Is the law, then, against the promises of God? May it not be coming to that! For if a law was given that is able to vivify, really, righteousness were out of law. But the scripture locks up all together under sin, that the promise out of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to those who are believing. Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

(Galatians 3:19, 21-24)

"Yet law came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, **grace superexceeds**..."

(Romans 5:20)

"...the law...does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise."

(Galatians 3:17)

The Olive Tree

Paul makes it very clear that the nation of Israel, his brethren according to the flesh, can still be saved, as God has not cast aside His earthly people altogether. Paul's love for them was immense, therefore God's love is even greater!

"...my sorrow is great, and unintermittent pain is in my heart - for I myself wished to be anathema from Christ - **for my brethren, my relatives according to the flesh, who are Israelites**, whose is **the sonship** and **the glory** and **the covenants** and **the legislation (the Law)** and **the divine service (the temple worship)** and **the promises**; whose are the fathers, and **out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all**, God be blessed for the eons. Amen!"

(Romans 9:2-5)

There is no mistaking the identity of these people here! The Jewish people are one and the same as the Israelites, Paul's relatives. (For further study see [The Jew, the Greek and the Ecclesia of God](#)). The original Promise of the Rulership Mandate, that is, the sonship, is theirs, along with the covenants, etc. The true Messiah/Governor/Ruler of the world was born a Jew, of the Seed of David, The Son of God, Who has now been given the title of Lord of all lords and King of all kings. And His Day of reigning is not too far away (although He already rules from the heavens)! But what is happening in the meantime during Israel's rejection?

Well, let us take a closer look at what Paul has to say in Romans Chapter 11.

He explains that, during this present age, only a remnant of Israel will believe, while God is primarily calling out a people from the nations, which Paul calls '*the complement of the nations*' (commonly translated as '*the fullness of the Gentiles*'). This 'complement of the nations' is being gathered in during the 'times of the nations' until Christ returns. Therefore, ultimately, all the Israel of God shall be saved at the return of Christ when the words of the prophets shall be fulfilled in all their fullness (11:25-27).

"I am saying, then, Do they not trip that they should be falling? May it not be coming to that! But in their offence is salvation to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy. **Now if their offence is the world's riches and their discomfiture the nations' riches, how much rather that which fills them!** Now to you am I saying, **to the nations, in as much as, indeed, then, I am the apostle of the nations**, I am glorifying my dispensation, if somehow I should be provoking those of my flesh to jealousy and should

be saving some of them. For if their casting away is the conciliation of the world, what will the taking back be if not life from among the dead?

(Romans 11:11-15)

Paul is declaring here that due to the casting aside of Israel as a fleshly nation, the message of the conciliation is going out to the world, for the glory and riches of the nations. So if such a blessing for the world has occurred due to Israel's downfall, **then how much more so will the remnant be blessed in the kingdom, when they are restored to God as though alive from the dead!** If the casting aside of God's chosen people has brought conciliation to the rest of the world, how much more so will their restoration bring blessing for all! Paul himself is the classic example of this. He was once a Jewish branch that had been cut off due to unbelief, but by grace he was grafted back in to the Olive Tree again through Christ.

The prophet Ezekiel had been given a vision that prophesied this same truth. In the vision, he saw a valley full of dead bones which, at the command of God, then formed into humans on the ground, but they lacked spirit to give them life. So at God's command, spirit is breathed into them and they come alive as a vast assembly (Ezekiel 37:1-8). Here is God's interpretation of the vision.

"...these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land...

I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms...They will follow my laws...they will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever (for the eon)... I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting (*eonian*) covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever (*for the eon*).' "

(Ezekiel 37:11-14, 21-22, 24-26 NIV)

As mentioned earlier, this prophecy was literally fulfilled in the restoration of ancient Israel from the captivities, yet this 'eonian covenant of peace' is ultimately the spiritual restoration and regeneration of the New Covenant. It is evident that Paul had this prophecy in mind when he was inspired to write Romans 11. Yet notice that Paul says here that the purpose of God is to *make Israel jealous* when they realise that others are getting the blessing of God and they're not - and they were the ones who were offered it first, as it is rightly theirs! Truly the first shall be last and the last first.

Then in verses 16-24, Paul clearly shows that God has *not* finished with His people Israel. Using the allegory of an olive tree, he reveals God's present purpose for Israel and the nations. Israel is figured as an olive tree a number of times in Scripture (Jeremiah 11:16-17; Hosea 14:6; Zechariah 4), as well as a fig tree

and a vine. But Christ, as the Prophet, King and Priest of Israel, is the True Vine, Fig Tree and Olive Tree, as He is the real fulfillment of everything that these anointed figures represent.

Now if **the firstfruit** is holy, the kneading is also; and if **the root** is holy, the boughs are also. Now if some of the boughs are broken out, yet you, being a wild olive, are grafted among them, and became joint participant of the root and fatness of the olive, be not vaunting over the boughs. Yet if you are vaunting, **you are not bearing the root, but the root you.**

You will be declaring, then, "Boughs are broken out that I may be grafted in." Ideally! By unbelief are they broken out, yet you stand in faith. **Be not haughty, but fear. For if God spares not the natural boughs, neither will He be sparing you!** Perceive, then, the kindness and severity of God! On those, indeed, who are falling, severity, yet on you, God's kindness, if you should be persisting in the kindness: else you also will be hewn out. **Now they also, if they should not be persisting in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.**

For if you were hewn out of an olive wild by nature, and, beside nature, are grafted into a cultivated olive tree, **how much rather shall these, who are in accord with nature, be grafted into their own olive tree!**

(Romans 11:16-24)

So let us look at the meaning of this allegory of the Olive Tree, as Paul clearly interprets it.

- **The olive tree** represents Israel as God's vessel of testimony and illumination in the world. Olive oil was used for lighting the lamps in the Tabernacle and the Temple, and for the anointing of God's officials. It is a symbol of the Holy Spirit
- **The root** of the tree represents the Patriarchs - Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to whom the original covenants were given
- **The fatness** (or sap) of the tree represents the spiritual blessings of the Messiah Who, in His flesh, is of Israel
- **The natural branches** of the tree represent the generations of Israel, some of which have been broken off
- **The wild olive tree**, which is grafted in to the natural olive tree, represents the generations of the nations, who are now God's primary vessel of testimony and illumination, sharing in the blessings of the Promise

In this passage, Paul reveals the following facts: The root (also figured as the firstfruit) is holy to God. If the firstfruit offering is acceptable to God then the rest of the harvest is as well. If the root is holy, then the whole tree is as well. The original promises and covenants given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have not been, and will not be, revoked. Due to God's choice, Israel is holy and beloved because of the fathers (verse 28).

The nations have only been grafted in to the natural olive tree because some of the natural branches of Israel were broken off. This has resulted in the nations being joint-participants of the spiritual blessings of Israel's Messiah, sharing in the Promise. **But Paul warns them that they must not brag about this position, thinking that they deserve it, or believing that the Gentiles have completely replaced Israel - because**

the truth of the matter is that the whole Church, both Jew and Gentile, has become the spiritual Israel of God!

Yet if they do brag, they must remember that, by God's grace alone, the nations are supported by the same root and sap of the natural olive tree. Some of the natural boughs were broken off due to unbelief, so that the nations could be grafted in. But this position of the nations is based on *faith* and not works, so they too can be broken off at some point due to unbelief. Faith is a gift from God. Paul warns the nations not to become arrogant and haughty, but to fear God (v 19-21).

If the *natural* boughs were not spared, neither will the *wild* boughs be spared. God has shown severity to Israel in cutting off some boughs, and He has shown kindness to the nations by grafting them in to the olive tree. **But if the nations as a whole persist in unbelief then they too will be hewn out of the olive tree!** (v 22)

Sadly, the nations have not continued in God's kindness, and unbelief and arrogance has progressed more and more through the centuries within Christendom! Not only do many Christians believe that the Gentile Church has completely replaced Israel (with some even persecuting Jews), the majority of them also believe that they are the only ones who shall be saved, while the rest will be tormented in fire forever and ever! But the truth is, the nations are only wild olive branches that, contrary to nature, have been grafted in to the cultivated olive tree of spiritual Israel!

Paul then concludes that Israel, as the *natural* branches, will be easily grafted back in again to **their own olive tree, when they will finally no longer persist in unbelief, but will instead turn back to their God and recognise their Messiah.** This means that the nations, who have now been entrusted with the Scriptures and the Gospel, will inevitably become completely apostate and lawless, ultimately giving heed to the Man of Lawlessness, the Antichrist kingdom of Christendom (2 Thessalonians 2:3-5).

Concerning Israel, Paul says,

'As to the evangel, indeed, they are enemies because of you, yet, as to choice, they are beloved because of the fathers. For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God.'

(verses 28-29)

Therefore, Israel as a nation is hardened, in part, until the complement of the nations has come in. As Paul says,

'For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of **this secret, brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, has come on Israel, **until the complement of the nations may be entering.** And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written...'**

(11:25-26)

Yet sadly, many within 'the Church' have persecuted the Jewish people and many believe that Israel hasn't any further part to play in God's plan whatsoever. They have become ignorant of this secret of Israel's partial callousness and they believe that the nations or the Church has replaced Israel! They think that they are wise and intelligent, *'passing for prudent among themselves.'* But they are obviously not reading and heeding Paul's clear words here!

On the other hand, there are those who believe that Christians should support the modern State of Israel at all costs and help the kingdom come! But this is just as foolish, for the State of Israel today is in gross unbelief and riddled with wickedness and injustice, just like the rest of the nations. As we shall see, God is primarily concerned with the Body of Christ ecclesia in this administration, the true Church, where believing Jews and Gentiles are completely at one, together, in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22).

But there will come a time when the Body of Christ ecclesia shall be complete. This Body, which is primarily composed of believers of the nations, shall complement the believing remnant of Israel in the ages to come. This Body, though, will have the privilege of ruling and reigning together with Christ in immortal, spiritual bodies as the Bride and Wife of the Lamb, a Celestial Israel.

Yet even within this universal governing Body or Ecclesia, not all will have the same rank and gifting. Each will be judged in accordance with their acts in this life, as well as their service to their Lord and King. We must lovingly compete together in running this race so as to get the prize (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). From those who are given much in regard to gifts and callings in this life, much more will be demanded.

These saints will each be apportioned their lot at the Dais or Judgment Seat of Christ, being given wages in accordance with their acts (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 4:5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 22:12).

The Sons of God

So we have established that the nation of Israel was given the original Promise and the Sonship, the Rulership Mandate. Well, it is more correct to say that the faithful, chosen ones within the nation, the remnant according to grace, are the sons of God. This is what the writer to the Hebrews is establishing in Hebrews 11, and this was the reason why Paul proclaimed the evangel to the Jew first. Yet the writer to the Hebrews also hints at a greater destiny, a celestial, spiritual destiny, one that goes beyond this present earth.

"By faith Abraham, being called, obeys, coming out into the place which he was about to obtain to **enjoy as an allotment**, and came out, not versed in where he is coming. By faith he sojourns in **the land of promise** as in an alien land, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, **the joint enjoyers of the allotment of the same promise**. For he waited for the city having foundations, whose Artificer and Architect is God."

(Hebrews 11:8-10)

This celestial element was further revealed in Paul's writings, as we shall see. This indicates that those who belong to the Bride/Body of Christ, Christ's called out group, the Ecclesia or Church of God (who have been called out since the beginning of time, particularly during the era when Israel was under the Law, and since that time, under Christ and the Apostles; that is, the Old Testament and New Testament eras) these have a greater, celestial destiny during the ages than what was originally promised to Israel. They will belong to the New Jerusalem, the Celestial City of God, the Mother of all the saints, ruling with Christ in immortal bodies. This is way more than receiving the promised piece of land in the Middle East on this present earth. The New Covenant is the basis for all of this blessing.

"And therefore He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that at a death (*i.e.* *Sacrifice*) occurring for the deliverance of the transgressions of those under the first covenant (*the Old Covenant*), **those who are called may be obtaining the promise of the conian enjoyment of the allotment.**"

(Hebrews 9:15)

But what about the complement of the nations? What of the true Christians amongst the nations, including those of the remnant of Israel, who are called out during the present administration of grace? Well, the risen, glorified Christ appeared to Paul a number of times to reveal more to him concerning the interim period of the Secrets of the Kingdom.

Paul reveals that the nations are now the main focus during an administration of grace, while the fullness of the kingdom has been suspended indefinitely. Then at the conclusion of this present age, when the complement of the nations has come in, the kingdom will have become near again and it will be fully manifested at the return of Christ in the Day of the Lord. Paul also reveals that this Joint-Body of Christ, made up of Jew and Gentile, and all the saints from the past, are promised so much more than Israel ever dreamed of! Those believers of the past can only be perfected by being joined to believers of the present in the One Body of Christ.

"And all these, being testified to through faith, are not requited with the promise of God concerning us (the looking forward is to something better), that, apart from us, they may not be perfected."

(Hebrews 11:39-40)

Melchizedek Priests

It needs to be noted here that the writer of Hebrews also reveals that this Rulership Mandate of the kingdom of God also includes a priesthood (Hebrews 7). A priest is a mediator between God and man. Christ is not only a King but He is also a Chief Priest (and Mediator) after the order of Melchizedek, Who intercedes or pleads on behalf of mankind, especially for believers. This priesthood is far superior to the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant because it existed before the Law was given. In fact, it existed before Israel had become a nation - even before Abraham had even been given the sign of circumcision!

Melchizedek was the king of ancient Jerusalem, then called Salem (meaning Peace), and he was also a priest of God in that land (Genesis 14:18-20). He was considered greater than Abram and therefore *he* blessed Abram, while Abram gave him a tenth of the booty (which he had got from the battle with Kedorlaomer) to show his honour and respect for his spiritual position.

Melchizedek (meaning King of Righteousness) is a type of Christ. Some believe that this was actually a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ, but the book of Jasher, which is an ancient witness to the books of Moses and Joshua, states that this Melchizedek was in fact Shem, the son of Noah (Jasher 16). In Genesis, though, his identity is hidden, with no mention of his genealogy, so that he would fit the type and shadow of the Messiah.

David later prophesied that the Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110). This priesthood will last indefinitely due to Christ's immortality until there is no need for humanity to have a priesthood. Due to this change of priesthood there was a need for the transference of law also. This is established in the New Covenant, so that this new priesthood of Christ is in line with the New Covenant and not the Old. The Sons of God will also partake of this priesthood in their role as royal priests.

"...you, also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, most acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...Yet you are...a royal priesthood..."

(1 Peter 2:5, 9)

"...makes us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father..."

(Revelation 1:6)

So let us now begin to take a look in more detail at what is revealed in the New Testament in relation to the Promise of the Rulership Mandate (that is, ruling and reigning as the sons of God in the kingdom of God) and the Body of Christ Ecclesia, especially through the teachings of Paul.

But firstly, as a foundation, let us briefly see what Jesus taught in relation to the kingdom of God and those who would receive the allotment according to the Promise. We must remember that He was originally sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as they were the chosen nation who had been given the Promises and the Covenants (Matthew 10:5-7). As Paul says,

"...Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises."

(Romans 15:8)

Here are some of the things that Jesus proclaimed.

"Happy, in spirit, are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens...Happy are the meek, **for they shall be enjoying the allotment of the land (or earth)**...Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Happy are those persecuted on account of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens...For I am saying to you that, if ever your righteousness should not be superabounding more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, **by no means may you be entering into the kingdom of the heavens.**"

(Matthew 5:3, 5, 9-10, 20)

"And everyone who leaves houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or fields, on account of My name, shall be getting a hundred-fold, and **shall be enjoying the allotment of eonian life.**"

(Matthew 19:29)

"Then shall the King be declaring to those at His right, 'Hither, blessed of My Father! **Enjoy the allotment of the kingdom made ready for you from the disruption of the world.**'"

(Matthew 25:34)

In the parable of the Vineyard Farmers (Matthew 21:33-45; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19), Jesus was telling the religious leaders of the Jews that, as a nation, they had rejected God's servants the prophets and now they were seeking to kill the true Heir, the Son Himself.

"...Yet the farmers, perceiving the son, said among themselves, 'This is the enjoyer of the allotment. Hither! We should be killing him and have the enjoyment of his allotment.' And taking him, they cast him out of the vineyard and kill him."

(Matthew 21:38-39)

They did indeed throw the Son out of the vineyard, which was Jerusalem, and they killed Him. And ever since, many of the leaders of the Jewish people have sought to take the allotment of the land by violent force. Yet even the assassination of Christ was foreordained by God.

"This One, **given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God**, you, gibbeting by the hand of the lawless, assassinate, Whom God raises, loosing the pangs of death, forasmuch as it was not possible for Him to be held by it."

(Acts 2:23-24)

Unwittingly, they crucified the Lord of Glory which only made Him more powerful, for He conquered Death itself! It was not possible for Him to remain in the grave, for His Sacrifice was sufficient and well pleasing to God.

Going back to the parable, Jesus also went on to tell the Jews this.

"Therefore am I saying to you that the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation producing its fruits."

(Matthew 21:43)

He had previously indicated this to Peter and the other apostles.

'Now I, also, am saying to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will be building My ecclesia, and the gates of the unseen shall not be prevailing against it. I will be giving you the keys to the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever you should be binding on the earth shall be those things having been bound in the heavens, and whatsoever you should be loosing on the earth shall be those having been loosed in the heavens.'

(Matthew 16:18-19)

Here we have the intimation of Christ's Ecclesia, the Body/Bride of Christ, becoming the nation that will produce the fruits of repentance and will therefore receive the kingdom. This was the beginning of Christ's Ecclesia (or Church) built on the Rock (Gr. *Petra* meaning 'big piece of rock') of Peter's (Gr. *petros* meaning 'smaller piece of rock') testimony that Christ Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. This Ecclesia will have the heavenly authority of Christ that was originally given to Peter to bind and loose spiritual powers and to exercise all spiritual power in the kingdom. This is the heavenly Israel of God of the New Jerusalem, the new nation that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

Jesus had also intimated that earthly Jerusalem and its temple would no longer be the place of worship for the nation of spiritual Israel.

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

(John 4:21-24 NIV)

This began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost 33 AD.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

(Acts 2:1-4 NIV)

The group of about 120 disciples were gathered together in the temple courts, the house of God, on this special feast day, as was the custom. Then the Glory and Presence of God, manifested in the wind and the fire, came and rested on each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and miraculously spoke in other languages so that the Jews gathered there from all the nations of the earth could hear the Good News of God in their own tongue. These were signs reminiscent of the dedication of Solomon's Temple (see 2 Chronicles 5:11-14; 7:1-5). This was the beginning of the spiritual Temple of God, and the priests of a New Order of the King of Righteousness (sons of Zadok or Melchizedek).

For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate," says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

(2 Corinthians 6:16b-18 NIV)

Christ further revealed to His disciples after His resurrection that not only has He been given authority on the earth, He has also now been given authority in the heavens. It truly is universal. This authority is to be passed on to His Ecclesia, which is His Body.

"Given to Me was all authority in heaven and on the earth."

(Matthew 28:18)

It will now be shown that the writings of the Apostles in the rest of the New Testament confirm and enhance these teachings of Christ, although the nations are now included as well, together with the remnant of Israel.

Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God's family, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into **a holy temple in the Lord**: in Whom you, also, are being built together for **God's dwelling place, in spirit**."

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

Abraham, the Father of Faith

"For not through law is the promise to Abraham, or to his Seed, **for him to be enjoyer of the allotment of the world**, but through faith's righteousness. For if those of law are enjoyers of the allotment, faith has been made void and the promise has been nullified, for the law is producing indignation. Now where no law is, neither is there transgression.

Therefore it is of faith that it may accord with grace, for the promise to be confirmed to the entire seed, not to those of the law only, but to those also of the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all, according as it is written that, 'A father of many nations have I appointed you'..."

(Romans 4:13-17)

"Now to Abraham the promises were declared, and to his Seed. He is not saying "And to seeds," as of many, but as of One: And to "your Seed," which is Christ. Now this am I saying: a covenant, having been ratified before by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise. For if the enjoyment of the allotment is of law, it is no longer of promise. Yet God has graciously granted it to Abraham through the promise...But the scripture locks up all together under sin, that the promise out of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to those who are believing."

(Galatians 3:16-18, 22)

Paul is laying down here the foundational truth of the evangel of God for today, which is made available to all nations, and not just Israel. He is saying that the original promise to Abraham and his Seed to rule the world is based purely on the righteousness that comes from faith. It has nothing to do with the Law that was added centuries later. The Seed of Abraham is ultimately Christ Himself, born a Son of Abraham, who will fulfill the promise and rule the world.

He is not only the Seed of Abraham, but as regards His royal lineage, He is the Root and Seed of David.

"Remember Jesus Christ, Who has been roused from among the dead, is of the seed of David, according to my evangel..."

(2 Timothy 2:8)

"I, Jesus,...am the Root and Race of David..."

(Revelation 22:16)

He is the Root of David because He is Yahweh Himself, who gave David, and Abraham, the promises! The Jews knew that Jesus was declaring this fact when He told them that He had seen Abraham, which is why they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy!

" "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he may see and know My day, and he did see and know it and rejoiced." The Jews, then, said to Him, "You are not as yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I am saying to you, **Before Abraham came into being, I am.**" They then pick up stones to throw at Him."

(John 8:56-59 FT)

Yet as to His flesh, as the Man Jesus of Nazareth, He was born of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David. Not only is He the Root of Jesse, David's father, He is also the Branch of David.

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

(Isaiah 11:1 NIV)

Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD.'

(Zechariah 6:12 NIV; see also 3:8 & Jeremiah 23:5)

The Hebrew **nazer** can be translated as **branch**, and this is a Messianic term in the prophets, though it is somewhat hidden. The prophets stated that the Messiah would be called the Branch. Now here's the really interesting bit. The word **Nazeroth** (i.e. Nazareth) is derived from **Nazer**. So Jesus was literally called 'the Branch, the Nazarene' - and He is still called this by Jews today.

'...and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."'

(Matthew 2:23 NIV)

Zechariah 6:12, quoted above, was fulfilled when Jesus was before Pontius Pilate and Pilate addressed the crowd.

When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "**Here is the man!**" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

(John 19:5-6 NIV)

Then, when Jesus was crucified on the tree (related to Branch), the sign above Him read, in Aramaic, Latin and Greek, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews' (John 19:19-22). His Name was the Branch and He was nailed to the tree as the Son of David - the King.

Yet Christ also holds the Key of David, that is, He alone opens the door for entrance into the kingdom and He alone shuts it again.

"Now this is saying the True, the Holy One, **Who has the key of David**, and Who is opening and no one shall be locking, and locking and no one shall be opening."

(Revelation 3:7)

Yet Christ is also the Door itself!

"I am the Door of the sheep...I am the Door...if anyone shall be entering through Me, he shall be saved...I came that they may have eonian life, and have it superabundantly."

(John 10:7-10)

But going back to what Paul is saying about Abraham in Romans, the Promise is based on grace and not the Law, for the Law and its fleshly precepts can only condemn. The promises and blessings of God have always been based on faith in accord with grace so that no one can boast before Him! It was always this way. It was never God's intention to establish the promised blessing through Law! The Law was given to condemn those under it, for they could not help but transgress! This in turn prepared them for the coming of the Messiah and Saviour in Whom the promises are to be fulfilled. He then paid the price once for all as the Lamb of God on behalf of Israel and the whole world to deliver them from the curse and condemnation of the Law. Those who believe in Him are sheltered from God's wrath and indignation, and shall receive the allotment of eonian life.

"...Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory shelter, through faith in His blood, for a display of His righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God)..."

(Romans 3:24-25; see also Acts 2:22-40; 17:30)

"And He is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world also."

(1 John 2:2)

"And this is the promise which He promises us: the eonian life...And this is the testimony, that God gives us life eonian, and

this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has **the life**; he who has not the Son of God has not the life."

(1 John 2:25; 5:11-12)

Abraham was a man of the nations when he was called by Yahweh. He then believed God and obeyed, and this faith was credited to him as righteousness. But Paul emphasises the fact in Romans 4:9-12 that **Abraham was uncircumcised when he was called, *and when he showed his faith, and when he was given the promises!*** He was then given the sign of circumcision as a seal in his flesh many years later. But the foundational stuff happened while he was in uncircumcision, well before the Law was given. So he is most definitely the father of us all, whether of those of the Circumcision who believed under Law, or of those of the Uncircumcised nations who have no Law!

Now through Jesus Christ's faith, the Seed of Abraham, all those who show their faith in Him, in the same manner as Abraham did when he believed God, these shall receive the promises. These become the sons of God, those in Christ who are truly led by the Spirit of God and His Son.

"...for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in Whom there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus. Now if you are Christ's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise."

(Galatians 3:26-29)

"For whoever are being led by God's Spirit, these are sons of God."

(Romans 8:14)

Paul is describing the New Humanity in Christ, those who belong to the New Creation in Spirit. This is the Bride/Body of Christ Ecclesia, Christ's Flock, those taken out from the fold of Judaism as well as from the nations.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Those also I must be leading, and they will be hearing My voice, and there will be one flock, one Shepherd."

(John 10:16)

These are the true celestial Israel of God of the New Creation, the true circumcision in spirit not flesh, that which is of the heart, the true sons of Abraham.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, **but a new creation**. And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God."

(Galatians 6:15-16)

"Beware of the maimcison, for we are the circumcision who are offering divine service in the Spirit of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh."

(Philippians 3:3)

"He who has the bride is the Bridegroom...The spirit is that which is vivifying. The flesh is not benefiting anything. The declarations which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

(John 3:29; 6:63)

"Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations in flesh - who are termed "Uncircumcision" by those termed "Circumcision," in flesh, made by hands - that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, **being alienated from the citizenship of Israel**, and the **guests of the promise covenants**, having no expectation, and without God in the world.

Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, **Who makes both one**, and razes the central wall of the barrier (the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, **that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace**; and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross, killing the enmity in it. And, coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, for through Him we both have had the access, in one Spirit, to the Father.

Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God's family, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: in Whom you, also, are being built together for God's dwelling place, in spirit."

(Ephesians 2:11-22)

Instead of the fleshly seal of circumcision, these Sons of God are sealed within by the Holy Spirit of God, the true circumcision of the heart, marked as God's property with a seal of Ownership. This is the Spirit of Promise, which is an earnest or deposit of our allotment, guaranteeing what is to come. This spiritual seal is greater than the fleshly seal.

'...in Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, (*that is*) in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ.'

(Colossians 2:11)

"In Whom you also - on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation - in Whom on believing also, **you are sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise** (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory!...the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of **the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints**..."

(Ephesians 1:13-14, 18)

"Now He Who is confirming us together with you in Christ, and anoints us, is God, Who also seals us and is giving the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

(2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

"And I perceived another messenger ascending from the orient, having the seal of the living God...'You shall not be injuring the land, nor yet the sea, nor yet the trees, until we should be sealing the slaves of our God on their foreheads.' "

(Revelation 7:2-3)

The True Life - Immortality

This spiritual seal of God gives believers a foretaste of their future deliverance from sin and death. This is the ultimate allotment of God - immortality and incorruption! **This is true eonian life: to know the Father and His Son intimately in the power of an immortal body that transcends the laws of this Old Creation of corruption and death!**

"Now this is eternal (*eonian*) life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

(John 17:3 NIV)

"...treasuring up for themselves an ideal foundation for that which is impending, **that they may get hold of life really.**"

(1 Timothy 6:19)

"Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption...For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on

immortality...then shall come to pass the word which is written,
Swallowed up was Death by Victory..."

(1 Corinthians 15:50, 53-54)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His vast mercy, regenerates us into a living expectation, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, for the enjoyment of an allotment incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you, who are garrisoned by the power of God, through faith, for salvation ready to be revealed in the last era, in which you are exulting."

(1 Peter 1:3-6)

"...through which have been presented to us **the precious and greatest promises**, that through these you may become participants of the divine nature, fleeing from the corruption which is in the world by lust."

(2 Peter 1:4)

"...Christ Jesus, Who, indeed, abolishes death, yet illuminates life and incorruption through the evangel of which I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of the nations."

(2 Timothy 1:10-11)

"For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself."

(Philippians 3:20-21)

"For we are aware that, if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made by hands, eonian, in the heavens. For in this also we are groaning, longing to be dressed in our habitation which is out of heaven...that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He Who produces us for this same longing is God, Who is also giving us the earnest of the Spirit."

(2 Corinthians 5:1-5)

The spiritual, immortal body, the true Temple of God, will not be encumbered by all of the limitations of our present soulish bodies. We shall be free from the laws and ways of this Old Creation, such as gravity, death and decay, the need for sustenance and shelter, as well as other bodily functions that are necessary and natural at present (such as sleep and rest, relieving

bodily waste, sexual needs, etc), no more sickness and infirmity, and most of all, there will be no distance from God and His Son, no sin and wrong-doing to hinder us. We shall be truly full of power and life, basking in the glory of the Sun of righteousness. We shall belong to another dimension (a spiritual, celestial, heavenly one) that can interact with the present world. To find out more about this immortal body, just take a careful look at the details of the events after Jesus' resurrection (His appearances to the disciples in Mark 16, particularly Luke 24, John 20-21 and Acts 1).

This is the real blessing of salvation and eonian life.

"...He saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of Holy Spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, that, being justified in that One's grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian."

(Titus 3:5-7)

"...that you should be enjoying the allotment of blessing..."

(1 Peter 3:9)

"Does not God choose the poor in the world, rich in faith and enjoyers of the allotment of the kingdom which He promises to those who are loving Him?"

(James 2:5)

"Are they (*angels or messengers*) not all ministering spirits commissioned for service because of those who are about to be enjoying the allotment of salvation?"

(Hebrews 1:14)

In comparison, anything less than this allotment is death, and not true Life! Hence all those who are not saved shall have to endure the severe chastening of the Second Death on the New Earth until they are reconciled to God.

Paul also reveals that the Body of Christ Ecclesia, the Sons of God, will share in Christ's universal Headship.

"...the secret of His will...to have an administration of the complement of the eras, **to head up all in the Christ - both that in the heavens and that on the earth - in Him in Whom our lot was cast also**, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ...His power...which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over

every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, **as Head over all**, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all."

(Ephesians 1:9-12, 20-23)

"...God...in the last of these days speaks to us in a Son, **Whom He appoints enjoyer of the allotment of all**, through Whom He also makes the eons;...Who...is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heights; becoming so much better than the messengers as He enjoys the allotment of a more excellent name than they."

(Hebrews 1:2-4)

"...Jesus Christ, Who is at God's right hand, being gone into heaven, messengers and authorities and powers being subjected to Him."

(1 Peter 3:21-22)

"Wherefore, also, **God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name**, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father."

(Philippians 2:9-11)

"...God...vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

(Ephesians 2:6-7)

"...in spirit the nations are to be **joint enjoyers of an allotment**, and a **joint body**, and **joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus**, through the evangel of which I became the dispenser, in accord with the gratuity of the grace of God..."

(Ephesians 3:6-7)

"And to the one who is conquering and keeping My acts until the consummation, to him will I be giving authority over the nations; and he shall be shepherding them with an iron club, as vessels of pottery are being crushed, as I also have obtained

from My Father...The one who is conquering, to him will I be granting **to be seated with Me on My throne** as I, also, conquer, and **am seated with My Father on His throne.**"

(Revelation 2:26-28; 3:21)

The whole of creation is awaiting the time when these Sons of God shall be revealed or manifested or unveiled at the return of Christ, and will then take the reins of government.

"For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got **the spirit of sonship**, in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that **we are children of God**. Yet if children, enjoyers also of an allotment, enjoyers, indeed, of an allotment from God, yet joint enjoyers of Christ's allotment, if so be that we are suffering together, that we should be glorified together also.

For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us. **For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God**. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now.

Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, **who have the firstfruit of the Spirit**, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body. For to expectation were we saved. Now expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also? Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, **we are awaiting it with endurance.**"

(Romans 8:15-25)

Yet notice here in the above text that Paul states that the Sons of God will only enjoy the allotment of God's blessing, sharing in Christ's allotment, if we suffer together with Him. Only then will we be glorified together with Him. This means that only those who endure and conquer and overcome by the Spirit of God will be saved to enjoy this allotment of rulership with Christ. These are the true Chosen Ones of God, the Saints or Holy Ones, the Body of Christ who have shown their worthiness by their faith and obedience.

"If ever you should be remaining in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will be making you free."

(John 8:31-32)

"If anyone should be serving Me, let him be following Me, and where I am, there My servant also shall be."

(John 12:26)

"...according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world (that is, before sin entered), we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus."

(Ephesians 1:4-5)

"No one can come to Me if ever the Father Who sends Me should not be drawing him...And no one is recognising the Son except the Father; neither is anyone recognising the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son should be intending to unveil Him."

(John 6:44; Matthew 11:27)

"...for all that is begotten of God is conquering the world. And this is the conquest that conquers the world: our faith. Now who is he who is conquering the world if not he who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God?"

(1 John 5:4-5)

The Overcomers

Let us now take a look at the subject of endurance, and those who are termed Overcomers or Conquerors. Paul makes it clear that not all those who are of the nation of Israel are really Israel, and in the same way, not all those who claim to be Christian and belong to the Church are really the true Church or Ecclesia of God. The other apostles also taught the same thing.

"For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel"

(Romans 9:6 NIV)

" For I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all are baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they drank of the spiritual Rock which followed. Now the Rock was Christ. **But not in the majority of them does God delight**, for they were strewn along in the wilderness. Now these things became types of us, for us not to be lusters after evil things, according as they also lust...

...Now all this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained. So that, let him who is supposing he stands beware that he should not be falling. No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it."

(1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 11-13)

Paul is clearly saying here that of all those who belonged to the nation of Israel who were led by Moses in the desert, who saw and experienced the miracles and blessings of God, the majority of them were not of true faith, and were therefore destroyed by the judgments of God. Only a minority were the chosen ones who evidenced their faith with their actions. Yet even though we are not now under Law, and we belong to an era of abundant grace, these ancient events are there to warn us not to behave in the same way as they did. Paul warns all those who claim to belong to the Ecclesia of God that we can fall due to trial. Only the grace and power of God within us can help us to undergo such trials and remain faithful.

A similar warning is given in the book of Hebrews.

"...Christ...Whose house we are, that is, if we should be retaining the boldness and the glorying of the expectation confirmed unto the consummation. Wherefore, according as the Holy Spirit is saying, "Today, if ever His voice you should be hearing, you should not be hardening your hearts as in the embitterment, in the day of trial in the wilderness"..."

...Beware, brethren, lest at some time there shall be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in withdrawing from the living God. But entreat yourselves each day, until what is called "today," lest anyone of you may be hardened by the seduction of sin. For we have become partners of Christ, that is, if we should be retaining the beginning of the assumption confirmed unto the consummation..."

(Hebrews 3:6-8, 12-14)

Only those who are retaining, that is, holding on to, their original confidence of faith, who confirm their choice by boldly enduring to the end (that is, the end of their life or the end of the age, whichever comes first), believing in the expectation of the kingdom, these are the ones who will enter into God's rest, that is, the allotment of salvation, the allotment of the kingdom. Yet it is inevitable that many shall fall aside, that is, apostatise, due to a hardened heart, while manifesting a wicked heart of unbelief in God's testimony about His Son.

Jesus also made it very clear that only those who endure in the faith and bear fruit, who continue to follow Him and remain in Him, no matter what, will be saved to enjoy the allotment of the kingdom.

The Promise and Christ's Inheritance

"Yet he who endures to the end shall be saved."

(Matthew 10:22 FT; also 24:13)

"Now the seed in the ideal soil stands for those with a good and noble heart, who are hearing the word, are retaining it, and by endurance are bearing fruit."

(Luke 8:15 FT)

"By your endurance shall you be acquiring your souls."

(Luke 21:19)

"He who is remaining in Me, and I in him, this one is bringing forth much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone should not be remaining in Me, he was cast out as a branch, and it withered."

(John 15:5-6)

Paul and the other apostles also teach the same truth.

"...God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts: to those, indeed, who by endurance in good acts are seeking glory and honour and incorruption, (will be given) life eonian;..."

(Romans 2:7)

"Yet not only so, but we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance (is producing) testedness, yet testedness expectation."

(Romans 5:3-4)

"Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, we are awaiting it with endurance."

(Romans 8:25)

"...being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy..."

(Colossians 1:11)

This is the real power of God that we should be praying for - power for endurance and patience with joy! Most today would rather pray that afflictions will cease so that we may 'enter our inheritance of health and prosperity' which takes away the need for endurance and testedness!

"...for your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions with which you are bearing - a display of the just judging of God, to deem you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering also..."

(2 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

"...may be racing with endurance the contest lying before us...For discipline are you enduring. As to sons is God bringing it to you,...Now all discipline, indeed, for the present is not seeming to be a thing of joy, but of sorrow, yet subsequently it is rendering the **peaceable fruit of righteousness to those exercised through it.**"

(Hebrews 12:1, 7, 11)

"...knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance. Now let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and unimpaired, lacking in nothing."

(James 1:3-4)

"Here is the endurance and faith of the saints."

(Revelation 13:10)

Paul also reveals to Timothy that only those who endure shall reign with Christ.

"Faithful is the saying: "For if we died together, we shall be living together also; if we are enduring, we shall be reigning together also; if we are disowning, He also will be disowning us; if we are disbelieving, He is remaining faithful - He cannot disown Himself." "

(2 Timothy 2:11-13)

Paul is saying here that only true believers in Christ, who have died to the flesh, will also live with Christ in His kingdom; only those who endure shall reign with Christ in His kingdom; and even though we may sometimes disbelieve the Word and struggle in our faith, Christ will remain faithful to us, for He cannot disown His own Body!

But Paul also confirms here what Jesus taught about those who completely disown Him before others through their lives - Christ will disown them when He returns!

"Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven...If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

(Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 9:26 NIV)

It is true that Peter disowned Christ three times, but he repented shortly after with great bitterness of heart. He also didn't have the Holy Spirit within him at that time, for the Spirit was given later. He certainly made up for this denial in the years that followed, eventually giving his life for His Lord. Every believer should show his or her loyalty to our King and Lord, which includes confession to others and obedience to the Master's teaching. We should not be ashamed. There is a cost involved.

"...if you should be confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and should be believing in your heart that God roused Him from among the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, yet with the mouth it is confessed for salvation."

(Romans 10:9-10 FT)

"Become faithful until death, and I shall be giving you the wreath of life."

(Revelation 2:10)

"Happy is the man who is enduring trial, for, becoming qualified, he will be obtaining the wreath of life, which He promises to those loving Him."

(James 1:12)

But who are the Overcomers or Conquerors? Well, firstly, here is what Paul and John say concerning those who are conquerors.

"What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...Nay! **in all these we are more than conquering** through Him Who loves us."

(Romans 8:35, 37)

"...for all that is begotten of God is conquering the world. And this is the conquest that conquers the world: our faith. Now who is he who is conquering the world if not he who is believing that Jesus is the Son of God?"

(1 John 5:4-5)

Those who believe in God through Jesus Christ, who are followers of Christ, who obey the evangel, who endure in the Faith, who bear fruit to God by remaining in the Vine, who are led by the Spirit as Sons of God, who belong to the Ecclesia of God, the Body and Bride of Christ - these are the Conquering ones who overcome Satan, the world and the flesh through Christ Jesus.

Jesus addresses these Overcomers in the 7 letters of Revelation chapters 2 & 3. These letters represent every aspect of each individual Christian and local Church that exists throughout this era of the secrets of the kingdom that Jesus spoke of in many of His parables. There's a message for everyone here until Christ returns. The number Seven is the number of spiritual completion, hence there are seven 'churches' or ecclesias.

They also represent 7 distinct epochs within this Church era which can be interpreted using Historical Parallelism, but that's for another study. I will just say this: we are clearly in the 7th and final epoch of the Laodicean Church! The Day of the Lord is certainly near!

The Promises for the Overcomers

At the end of each letter, Jesus says,

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the ecclesias."

(Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22)

This is an intimation of the secret prophetic nature of these letters. Jesus had used a similar phrase to the people when He had been teaching them about the '*secrets of the kingdom*' in His parables (Matthew 13:9,43,52). He spoke about these secrets in parables so that only the spiritual ones amongst the people could understand, while it was hidden from the rest (Matthew 13:10-17; 34-35, 52). These secrets primarily revealed that there would be an extended period of time, during Christ's absence, when the evangel of the kingdom would be proclaimed throughout the world through His Body/Bride ecclesia, right up to the conclusion of the age and His return. (For further study, see the book [The Secrets of the Parables](#)).

In each letter, He also gives a promise of reward to the *Overcomers* or *Conquerors* who keep His words and endure to the end.

Here is what they are promised:

"To the one who is conquering, to him will I be granting to be eating of the log (*tree*) of life which is in the centre of the paradise of God."

(Revelation 2:7)

In the distant past, there was once a real Tree of Life which would've been destroyed in the Flood, and there will probably be another Tree of Life in the future. But the real Tree of Life, The Vine, The Fig Tree, The Olive Tree, is Christ Himself - the One Who gives Life to all who feed on Him as the Bread of Heaven. The Paradise of God is the blessings of the celestial kingdom. All of this was pictured in the Garden of Eden.

"The one who is conquering may under no circumstances be injured by the Second Death."

(2:11)

The Second Death is metaphorically called the Lake of Fire. As we saw earlier, the Body of Christ shall partake of immortality at the return of Christ. This will be a special prior resurrection known as the First Resurrection, and only believers will partake in this out-resurrection out from among the dead. All the unsaved shall later experience the eonian chastening of God in the Lake of Fire after their judging at the Great White Throne. They shall suffer the divine justice of God's law as they are paid in accordance with their acts, yet they shall suffer this in mortal bodies. The Overcomers, though, shall not be injured by this Second Death for they will be clothed with immortality. Instead they shall be healing those who are injured by the Second Death through the ministry of Christ (Revelation 22:1-2).

"To the one who is conquering, to him will I be giving of the hidden manna, and I shall be giving him a white pebble and on the pebble a new name written, of which no one is aware except the one who is obtaining it."

(2:17)

The Overcomers will be given special nearness to Christ (the hidden Manna), and they will be voted in to the administration of His kingdom with a new and secret name as a spiritual son of God (pebbles were often used for ballots). The hidden manna is a reference to the golden urn containing a piece of the bread that was miraculously given to the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). It was kept inside the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle (Hebrews 9:3-4). Christ is the true Bread from heaven (John 6:30-66)

"And to the one who is conquering and keeping My acts until the consummation, to him will I be giving authority over the nations; and he shall be shepherding them with an iron club, as vessels of pottery are being crushed, as I also have obtained from My Father. And I will give him the morning star."

(2:26-28)

They will be given authority to rule the nations as God's administrators under Christ, and they will share in His blessings and allotment. The morning star is a reference to the sun, which brings the light of day at dawn, after the darkness of the night. Christ is the Son, the Sun of righteousness, the resplendent morning star (Revelation 22:16; Malachi 4:2). Peter refers to Christ and the coming kingdom in this way when he encourages the messianic believers to heed in their hearts the words of prophecy,

"And we are having the prophetic word confirmed more, which you, doing ideally, are heeding (as to a lamp appearing in a dingy place, **till the day should be breaking and the morning star should be rising**) in your hearts..."

(2 Peter 1:19)

"The one who is conquering, he shall be clothed in white garments, and under no circumstances will I be erasing his name from the scroll of life, and I will be avowing his name in front of My Father and before His messengers."

(Revelation 3:5)

They will be cleansed and made righteous as Holy Priests (represented by the white garments) and they will not be erased from the Scroll of Life, but they will be given eonian life and will be publicly recognised by the Father and the celestial messengers as belonging to Christ (also Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9; 9:23-26). The Scroll or Book of Life is a spiritual book that contains the names of all God's people, but only those who endure to the end remain in the Book. Ultimately, the Lamb's Book of Life are those who are chosen and written on the heart of God and Christ.

"The one who is conquering, him will I be making a pillar in the temple of My God, and he may be coming out nevermore, and I will be writing on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which is descending out of heaven from My God, and My new name."

(Revelation 3:12)

They will be given a permanent place in the celestial Royal-Priestly nation as pillars in the Ecclesia of God, the spiritual temple of living stones, and they will be the permanent property of God and His Son, belonging to the celestial City, the New Jerusalem, which will eventually replace the old Jerusalem when the New Creation arrives. This 'take over' will begin at the Return of Christ.

In John 14:1-3, Jesus spoke these words to His disciples,

"In My Father's house are many abodes; yet if not, I would have told you, for I am going to make a place ready for you. And if I should be going and making a place ready for you, I am coming again and I will be taking you along to Myself, that where I am, you also may be."

Jesus was comforting His apostles concerning His coming absence, which at that time they didn't understand. He was about to be rejected and then to die at the hands of His people, and then after His resurrection, He was going to return to His Father in the heavens. The apostles were saddened and confused about this. But Jesus encourages them to believe in Him concerning His return, at which time He will take them to Himself. They will then be given a permanent place in the coming kingdom, with spiritual bodies that are the real abodes, buildings from God, which have already been reserved for them.

"...If anyone should be loving Me, he will be keeping My word, and My Father will be loving him, and We shall be coming to him and making an abode with him."

(John 14:23)

One of the robbers, who was crucified next to Jesus, who repented, was also promised a place in the kingdom, which Jesus referred to as '*paradise*' (Luke 23:39-43). (Many believe that the word '*paradise*' here is referring to 'heaven' or some other spiritual place, but no one

has been given the promise of 'going to heaven' as such. Paradise is more than just a location). Only a few are chosen for this privilege (Matthew 22:14). All of this now applies to the whole Body of Christ.

"The one who is conquering, to him will I be granting to be seated with Me on My throne as I, also, conquer, and am seated with My Father on His throne."

(Revelation 3:21)

In the final letter, written to Laodicea, the Overcomers are again promised co-rulership with Christ in His administration of the kingdom, in the same way as He is granted co-rulership with His Father as the ultimate Conqueror or Overcomer. In the previous two verses, Jesus had said,

"Whosoever I may be fond of, I am exposing and disciplining. Be zealous, then, and repent! Lo! I stand at the door and am knocking. If ever anyone should be hearing My voice and opening the door, I will also be coming in to him and dining with him, and he with Me."

(3:19-20)

This passage is commonly used in church evangelism, where it is often said that Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart and you are encouraged to let Him in. This application has some element of truth in it, as many passages of the Scriptures can have a number of various interpretations to be applied on differing levels of truth, and yet all the applications are in fact true from different vantage-points. This is the wonder of God's Word. But there is generally a *primary* interpretation of any given passage in accordance with the context.

The context here reveals that Jesus was talking to His Ecclesia. He is here describing His arrival or return as knocking on the door of their house, with the promise that those servants who will be ready for Him will sit at His table in the kingdom. This is confirmed through some of the parables that Jesus had previously taught to Israel.

In Luke 12:35-40, Jesus describes Himself as a Master returning from the wedding festivities, and the faithful ones are described as His servants. They are to be ready and anticipating His return, so that when He knocks on the door, they can open it and enjoy the meal together. Jesus then promises that those who are watching for His return will be accepted into the kingdom, and the Master Himself will cause them to recline at the table and will serve them. What a beautiful picture this is of love and fellowship.

"Now I am saying to you that many from the east and the west shall be arriving and reclining with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens, yet the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness."

(Matthew 8:11-12)

But Jesus is also saying here that there shall be many who belong to the believing community, whether of ancient Israel or the Church, who, as the sons of the kingdom, shall be locked out of the kingdom and will suffer the Second Death, the ultimate Gehenna of Fire.

"Not everyone saying to Me 'Lord! Lord!' will be entering into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who is doing the will of My Father Who is in the heavens."

(Matthew 7:21)

Words of Warning

Throughout these 7 letters, there are also words of warning and encouragement concerning the Return of Christ and His Judgment.

To **Ephesus**, He says,

"I am coming to you, and shall be moving your lampstand from out of its place, if ever you should not be repenting."
(2:5)

To **Pergamum**, He says,

"Repent then! Yet if not, I am coming to you swiftly, and shall be battling with them (*those who hold to false teaching*) with the blade of My mouth." (2:16)

To **Thyatira**, He says,

"Moreover, what you have, hold until that time whenever I should be arriving." (2:25)

To **Sardis**, He says,

"If ever, then, you should not be watching, I shall be arriving on you as a thief, and under no circumstances will you be knowing what hour I shall be arriving on you." (3:3)

To **Philadelphia**, He says,

"Seeing that you keep the word of My endurance, I, also, **will be keeping you out of the hour of trial which is about to be coming on the whole inhabited earth to try those dwelling on the earth**. I am coming swiftly! Hold on to what you have, that no one may be taking your wreath (*of Life*)."
(3:10-11)

In this last one, we have the description of the Day of the Lord, when the whole inhabited earth will be judged by God. Jesus promises that the believers at that time, who will be enduring to the end, will be kept out of the coming trial of Christ's indignation. Elsewhere we are told by Jesus and Paul that these chosen ones shall be supernaturally snatched away to be assembled together with Christ in the air before He pours out the fullness of His wrath upon the world (Matthew 24:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17).

This protection from God's judgment is typified in the account of Noah and his family being kept safe in the Ark; and of Lot and his family leaving Sodom before it was destroyed; and of Moses and the Israelites being kept safe in Egypt when the plagues were hitting the Egyptians (Matthew 24:15-18, 37-42; Luke 17:26-37; Revelation 12:6, 13-16). And the same protection shall be given to these end-time believers. Only the Conquerors, the true Body of Christ, the Sons of Righteousness, will enter the kingdom.

This separation between the sons of God and the sons of stubbornness shall ultimately be played out in the age to come. The Sons of God will be blessed in the Kingdom (the New Jerusalem) while the rest will suffer God's wrath outside in the Second Death. It is the separation of the Wheat and the chaff; the result of two Harvests: **The Barley (Grain) Harvest**, and **the Grape (Vine) Harvest**.

I looked, and there before me was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one "like a son of man" with a crown of gold on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested...

...The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gathered its grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's wrath. They were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press, rising as high as the horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.

(Revelation 14:14-16, 19-20 NIV)

The Sons of Stubbornness

Both Jesus, and Paul especially, make it clear that the unbelieving, unrighteous sons of stubbornness shall not enjoy the allotment of the kingdom. Instead, they shall experience the divine justice and indignation of God for eonian chastening in outer darkness.

"...God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts...yet to those of faction, and stubborn, indeed, as to the truth, yet persuaded to injustice, **indignation and fury, affliction and distress, on every human soul which is effecting evil..."**

(Romans 2:8-9)

"...yet he who is stubborn as to the Son shall not be seeing life, but the indignation of God shall be remaining on him."

(John 3:36)

"And these shall be coming away into eonian chastening, yet the just into eonian life."

(Matthew 25:46)

"...And, being indignant, his lord gives him up to the tormentors (*jailers*) till he may pay all he is owing him. Thus shall My heavenly Father also be doing to you, if each one should not be pardoning his brother, from your hearts."

(Matthew 18:34-35)

"I am saying to you, 'I don't know you or where you come from! Withdraw from me, all workers of injustice!' There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you are seeing Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out."

(Luke 13:27-28)

"And you, being dead to your offences and sins, in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air (*or atmosphere*), the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness..."

(Ephesians 2:1-2)

"For this you perceive, knowing that no paramour (*or male prostitute*) at all or unclean or greedy person, who is an idolater, **has any enjoyment of the allotment in the kingdom of Christ and of God.** Let no one be seducing you with empty words, **for because of these things the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness.** Do not, then, become joint partakers with them, for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord."

(Ephesians 5:5-8)

"Deaden, then, your members that are on the earth: prostitution (*or unlawful sexual acts*), uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry, **because of which the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness** - among whom you also once walked, when you lived in these things."

(Colossians 3:5-7)

"Or are you not aware that the unjust shall not be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom? Be not deceived. Neither paramours, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor catamites, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards; no revilers, no extortioners shall be enjoying the allotment of God's kingdom. And some of you were these, but you are bathed off, but you are hallowed, but you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

You can't get much clearer than this! The whole of Christendom has been riddled with these things for numerous centuries, particularly the greedy, and thieves and extortioners, adulterers and sodomites, and all manner of lawlessness. Even today there are those who are still raping the people of God through such things as forced tithing and 'seed-faith gifts' along with all kinds of manipulation and control to make the people serve them and not Christ. On the whole, this new Christianity has become a huge money-making machine serving man and money rather than God. People of God, and everyone else, be warned, from the words of the King Himself!

"To him who is thirsting I shall be giving of the spring of the water of life gratuitously. He who is conquering shall be enjoying this allotment, and I shall be a God to him and he shall be a son to Me. Yet the timid, and unbelievers, and the abominable, and murderers, and paramours, and enchanters, and idolaters, and all the false - their part is in the lake burning with fire and sulphur, which is the second death...Outside (*of the New Jerusalem, the kingdom of God*) are curs, and enchanters, and paramours, and murderers, and idolaters, and everyone fabricating and fondling falsehood."

(Revelation 21:6-8; 22:15)

The New Jerusalem

In the very near future, this Old Creation will be superceded by a New Creation, a New Heavens and a New Earth. The old city of Jerusalem shall be superceded by a new city, the New Jerusalem. This celestial City is essentially the special dwelling place of God and His Sons, the Bride/Body of Christ, the Wife of the Lamb. In fact, the saints are the New Jerusalem, the Temple and dwelling place of God. This is the destiny of the true heavenly Israel of God!

"Behold Me creating new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come upon the heart. But be glad and rejoice in the futures of the future

which I will create. I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy...As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before Me,' declares Yahweh, 'so will your name and descendants endure...all mankind will come and bow down before Me,' says Yahweh."

(Isaiah 65:17-18; 66:22-23 FT)

"Yet we, according to His promises, are hoping for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling."

(2 Peter 3:13)

"Yet the Jerusalem above is free, who is mother of us all."

(Galatians 4:26)

Consequently, then, no longer are you guests and sojourners, but are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to God's family, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ Jesus Himself, in Whom the entire building, being connected together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: in Whom you, also, are being built together for God's dwelling place, in spirit."

(Ephesians 2:19-22)

"For he waited for the city having foundations, whose Artificer and Architect is God...Yet now they are craving a better, that is, a celestial (country); wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be invoked as their God, for He makes ready for them a city."

(Hebrews 11:10, 16)

"But you have come to **Mount Zion**, and the city of the Living God, **celestial Jerusalem**, and to **ten thousand messengers**, to **a universal convocation**, and to **the ecclesia of the firstborn**, registered in the heavens, and to God, the Judge of all, and to **the spirits of the just perfected**, and to Jesus, the Mediator of a fresh covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which is speaking better than the blood of Abel."

(Hebrews 12:22-24)

"Wherefore, accepting an unshakable kingdom, we may have grace through which we may be offering divine service in a way well pleasing to God, with piety and dread, for our God is also a consuming fire."

(Hebrews 12:28-29)

"And I perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away, and the sea is no more...And one of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls brimming with the last seven calamities came, and he speaks with me, saying, "Hither! I shall be showing you the bride, the wife of the Lambkin." And he carries me away, in spirit, on a mountain, huge and high, and shows me the holy city, Jerusalem, as it is descending out of heaven from God, having the glory from God.

Her luminosity is like a stone most precious, as a crystalline jasper gem, having a wall, huge and high, having twelve portals, and at the portals twelve messengers, and their names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. From the east are three portals, and from the north three portals, and from the south three portals, and from the west three portals. And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lambkin...

And the nations shall be walking by means of its light, and the kings of the earth are carrying their glory into it...And they shall be carrying the glory and honour of the nations into it, and under no circumstances may anything contaminating, or one who is making an abomination and a lie be entering into it, except those written in the Lambkin's scroll of life."

(Revelation 21:1, 9-14, 24, 26-27)

"And there shall be no more any doom, and the throne of God and of the Lambkin shall be in it. And His slaves shall be offering divine service to Him. And they shall be seeing His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more, and they have no need of lamplight and sunlight, for the Lord God shall be illuminating them. **And they shall be reigning for the eons of the eons.**"

(Revelation 22:3-5)

This is the ultimate destiny of the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision together as the Bride/Body of Christ. This is the ultimate fulfillment of the Promise. This is Christ's Inheritance. What a glorious future! May we walk worthily of this calling and be willing to suffer for the sake of our Lord and King until He returns.

"...walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep **the unity of the Spirit with the tie of peace: one body and one spirit**, according as you were called also with **one expectation** of your calling; **one**

Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all...

...unto the end that **we should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the realisation of the son of God**, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ..."

(Ephesians 4:1-5, 13)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

(Matthew 24:35 NIV)

All Scripture quotations are taken from the Concordant Version unless stated otherwise as follows:

NIV = New International Version

FT = Free Translation based on the CV and NIV texts

For further information on the Lake of Fire, the Scroll of Life, the Resurrection Order, the Body/Bride, and the coming Ages, see the following articles:

[Is There Really a Hell?](#)

[The Conciliation of the World](#)

[The Faithful Love of the Husband of Israel](#)

[God's Plan of the Ages](#)