

CHAPTER I

THE WITNESS OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS TO CHRIST

The first confession of the Church is that Jesus Christ is Lord. Lord, and other names, take us immediately back to the preparation for his coming in the Old Testament, which points the way to his being understood as agent of creation, last Adam, and primal image of God. He can be grasped only in the context of the history of Israel, as Head of the New Covenant, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and as victor over Satan and all the powers of evil. When we face the Lord Jesus Christ, we are brought face to face with the Triune God. In Christ we see what the being and actions of the eternal Trinity are like in space and time.

'Jesus Christ is Lord'

'Jesus Christ is Lord' (Rom. 10:9) is the first confession of the Christian Church, and one that can only be made by the power of the Holy Spirit, who comes from the Father through the Son (cf. I Cor. 12:3). The very name 'Christ' means 'anointed one,' and takes us back into the Old Testament, without which we can never make sense of him whom to know is eternal life (cf. John 17:3).

The Old Testament Scriptures prepared over the long ages for their fulfillment in Christ, the Messiah, who, as the New Testament clearly reveals, is 'one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. 2:5), who was born 'in the fullness of the time' (Gal. 4:4). Here in chapter I, we study the background of the Old Testament preparation for Christ, from the work of creation, to the person of Adam, and especially through the history of Israel.

Old Testament Preparation for the Incarnation

Lessons from the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus

In his post-resurrection appearance to Cleopas and another disciple on 'Easter Sunday' afternoon on the way to Emmaus, the risen Lord dealt with their consternation over the suffering and death of him 'whom they had trusted would redeem Israel' (Luke 24:21). The brutal defeat of the very

one who was to restore the Kingdom of God in Israel seemed to disqualify him from successful completion of that much longed-for mission. Yet after that bitter disappointment, strange things had happened, for 'certain women of our company' found his tomb empty and were told by angels that he was alive (Luke 24:22-24).

The risen Christ, who had not yet revealed his identity, took them to the Old Testament scriptures to show that the promised Messiah first had to suffer, and only then enter into his glory (Luke 24:26). That is to say, the messianic expectations of that time (even among the disciples) had grasped only one side of the scriptural truth about Messiah, the true King of the Kingdom: before he was manifested as the 'conquering lion of the tribe of Judah' (Rev. 5:5), he must first fulfill his office as suffering 'Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world,' as John the Baptist had announced at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry upon his baptism in the Jordan River (John 1:29).

'And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:27). This seems to indicate that he took them through the entire Old Testament canon in order to show them how his incarnate life, suffering, death and glorious physical resurrection were already set forth by Moses and the other inspired writers of what was at that time the only Scriptural record. How we would like to have overheard that conversation! Paul's preaching in the synagogues of the dispersion must have been similar, for he mentions the necessity of Christ's first having to suffer, then enter into his glory (cf. Acts 17:2-3).

Christ as Agent of Creation

Yet we certainly get strong hints of what the Lord must have pointed out that afternoon as we study the way the New Testament writers employ the Old Testament scriptures to show us who Jesus is and what his work involved. John 1:3 indicates that Christ, the Son of the Father, was the very agent of creation, while Colossians 1:16-17 states it in even more detail: 'For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.' Hebrews 1:2, 10 tell us that '[God] hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds... [unto the Son he saith] and, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.' Revelation 4:11 summarizes the entire history of the cosmos in terms of the pleasure of the incarnate Lord: 'Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'

Church Fathers, Medieval Christian scholars, and later Reformers understood the plural name of God (אלהים) that takes a singular verb (ברא in the Qal stem) to have been a sort of prophetic hint of the Trinitarian

activity in the original creation. And they argued similarly for a Trinitarian reference in the consultative form of the verb ‘let us make’ immediately prior to the creation of mankind in the divine image (Gen. 1:26). That is certainly not the reading of rabbinical scholarship, but it has a long history in the church! In this regard, it is instructive to hear echoes of the debate between Justin Martyr, the Christian apologist, and the Jewish scholar, Trypho, on this matter as far back as the second century A.D.¹

Creation by means of ‘wisdom’ and the interpretation of Proverbs 8:22

Some Church Fathers made much of the pre-incarnate Christ as the wisdom of God, through whom God the Father made the worlds. But this was not without its downside, as the fourth-century Arians, who denied the eternal pre-existence of Christ, used the passage in Proverbs 8:22 concerning the connection of wisdom with the divine work of creation to argue that, if Christ is wisdom, then he is subordinate to the Father and is finally a sort of higher creature. Basil the Great replied that the translation of Proverbs 8:22 should not be ‘the Lord created me as the beginning of his ways for all his works,’ but ‘the Lord *possessed* me as the beginning of his ways for all his works.’² ‘Possessed’ is definitely a possible option for translation, but the weight of the evidence, surveyed below, tends towards ‘created.’

Athanasius gives an exegetical survey of this verse in *Contra Arianos*.³ He accepts the verb as meaning ‘created’, but argues that it refers to the created humanity of Christ, which was essential to our salvation. Similarly, Gregory Nazianzus accepted ‘created’ as the operative verb in Proverbs 8:22. But then he attempted to explain it so as to retain the eternal existence of the Son, who is often called ‘wisdom’.⁴

1. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*.

2. Basil, *Against Eunomius* 2.20.

3. See Athanasius, Athanasius also suggests that Prov. 8:22 (as in the LXX) could be thought of as the ‘created’ humanity of Christ, which is essential for our salvation: *Contra Arianos*, 2:18-44.

4. Gregory of Nazianzus writes in his *Fourth Theological Oration, Which is the Second Concerning the Son (XXX) II*: In their eyes the following is only too ready to hand ‘The Lord created me at the beginning of His ways with a view to His works.’ How shall we meet this? Shall we bring an accusation against Solomon, or reject his former words because of his fall in after-life? Shall we say that the words are those of Wisdom herself, as it were of Knowledge and the Creator-word, in accordance with which all things were made? For Scripture often personifies many even lifeless objects; as for instance, ‘The Sea said’ so and so; and, ‘The Depth saith, It is not in me;’ and ‘The Heavens declare the glory of God;’ and again a command is given to the Sword; and the Mountains and Hills are asked the reason of their skipping. We do not allege any of these, though some of our predecessors used them as powerful arguments. But let us grant that the expression is used of our Saviour Himself, the true Wisdom. Let us consider one small point together. What among all things that exist is unoriginate? The Godhead. For no one can tell the origin of God, that otherwise would be older than God. But what is the cause of the Manhood, which for our sake God assumed? It was surely our Salvation. What else could it be? Since then we find here clearly both the Created and the Begetteth Me, the argument is simple. Whatever we find joined with a cause we are to refer to the Manhood, but all that is absolute and unoriginate we are to reckon to the account of His Godhead. Well, then, is not this ‘Created’ said in connection with a cause? He created Me, it so says, as the beginning of His ways, with a view to His works. Now, the Works of His Hands are verity and judgment; for whose sake He was anointed with Godhead; for this anointing is of the Manhood; but the ‘He begetteth Me’ is not connected with a cause; or it is for you to shew the adjunct. What argument then will disprove that Wisdom is called a creature, in connection with the

The most reasonable approach seems to lie in the consideration that this remarkable piece of poetry in Proverbs 8 is a meditation on the relation of God to the wisdom by which he created the world and is not intended to be a precise statement of the relationship of the Lord to one of his attributes, or (in Trinitarian terms) of the relationship of the Father and the Son in the work of creation. Rather, it is suggestive, evocative, and 'inner-connective' in the way of poetry. In that context, wisdom can be thought of as a sort of characteristic of God, or even a companion of God in his work. Something like that seems to be the case in *Sirach* 24:1-28, where Wisdom is 'the breath of God,' created before everything else, and also connected to the Shekinah glory and the Law (Torah). Philo also spoke of wisdom as the 'beginning and image of God' (*De Leg. All.* I.43), by whose agency the world was completed (*De Fuga* 109), and wrought by divine wisdom (*Heres* 199).

So, when God in wisdom created the cosmos, it could poetically be said that the first thing he brought forth was wisdom, without one expecting to find in this poem (in terms of later 'prosaic' doctrinal teaching) precise formulations of distinctions within the Godhead that would have to wait until the coming of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As B.B. Warfield wrote: 'The revelation [i.e. of the Trinity] in word must needs wait upon the revelation in deed...'⁵ James Dunn summarizes the background of wisdom in Judaism as it prepared the way for Christological teaching:

What pre-Christian Judaism said of Wisdom and Philo also of the Logos, Paul and the others say of Jesus. The role that Proverbs, ben Sira, etc. ascribe to Wisdom, these earliest Christians ascribe to Jesus... Paul seems to make the identification explicit in so many words when he proclaims 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God' (I Cor. 1:24; also 1:30).⁶

And Larry Hurtado points out the parallel structure of word and wisdom in *Wisdom of Solomon* 9:1-2 as an illustration of this process.⁷

Yet it is significant that Irenaeus, the greatest Biblical theologian of the second century, does not use Proverbs 8:22 to point to Christ, nor does Cyril of Alexandria, the great theologian of the fourth century. One has to study other passages than Proverbs 8 to answer such questions.⁸

Two Adams

The Old Testament sets forth Adam as head of the human race (cf. Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18-25, and possibly Hosea 6:7, if one translates 'Adam' as the lower generation, but Begotten in respect of the first and more incomprehensible?

5. B. B. Warfield, 'The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity' in *Biblical Foundations*, 91. Yet, as he points out, as the Old Testament advanced over the years, there was increasingly a 'hypostatization' or 'personification' of such realities as word, breath, and wisdom, in which God and some of his activities (or attributes) are to some degree both identified and distinguished.

6. James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (Wm B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, [1980] 1996), 167.

7. Larry Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 366.

8. For a study of the relationship of late Jewish concepts of wisdom and Christ's preexistence, see Martin Hengel, *The Son of God: The Origin of Christianity and the History of Jewish-Hellenistic Religion*, transl. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 69-74.

specific person, rather than rendering it as the generic – ‘humankind’). Genesis 3 makes clear that all our true problems – alienation from God and from one another, death and judgment – go back to our first father’s ‘original sin’ (Gen. 3:6-20). This adamic theme is taken up particularly by the Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:21-22, 44-49. He presents Christ as the Last Adam, who recapitulates the fallen person and work of the First Adam. ‘For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ... For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous’ (Rom. 5:17, 19). ‘And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit’ (I Cor. 15:45).

Dunn points out ‘...how Hebrews presents a classic statement of Adam Christology in Heb. 2:6-18... Christ as the one in whom God’s original plan for man finally (or eschatologically) came to fulfillment – that is in Christ the exalted-after-suffering one (the last Adam).’⁹

The comparison and contrast between the two Adams in a soteriological sense was explored more fully by the great second-century theologian, Irenaeus of Lyon, than by any other. Irenaeus says that as the first Adam had led the human race astray, so the Word comes as the last Adam to bring it back to God. Irenaeus writes with a Trinitarian understanding, ‘the Word arranging after a new manner the advent in the flesh, that he might bring back to God that human nature which had departed from God.’¹⁰

For I have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist, being with the Father from the beginning; but when he became incarnate, and was made man, he commenced afresh the long line of human beings, and furnished us, in a brief comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam – namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God – that we might recover in Christ Jesus.¹¹

He had to be true flesh because it was Adam (a fleshly being) who had sinned and whose race needed redemption:

...and because death reigned over the flesh, it was right that through the flesh it should lose its force and let man go free from its oppression. So *the Word was made flesh* that through that very flesh which sin had ruled and domesticated, it should lose its force and be no longer in us.¹²

Irenaeus continues, ‘He [God the Father] sent his creative word, who in coming to deliver us, came to the very place and spot in which we had lost life.... and hallowed our birth and destroyed death, loosing those same fetters in which we were enchained.’¹³

9. Dunn, op. cit., 208.

10. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.10.2.

11. *Ibid.*, 3.18.1.

12. Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 31.

13. *Ibid.* 38.

Dominion

The dominion given by the Lord to Adam over the rest of the created order (Gen. 1:28) is celebrated by David in Psalm 8. Yet Hebrews 2 puts the actual carrying out of this dominion by fallen mankind into a redemptive, Christocentric context (Heb. 2: 5-9).

The Image of God

The original creation by God of humankind in his own image is taken up by the New Testament as really having been in the image of Christ, the Son of God, who, in due season, through his redemptive person and work does all that is necessary to restore us twisted ones back into the beauty of the original divine image (cf. Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10).

Although much of his teaching was rejected by the church, nonetheless many of the Ante-Nicene fathers took the same line as Origen in positing a necessary difference between the original image of God (Christ) and mankind, who are 'in his image':

He [the antichristian philosopher Celsus] failed to see the difference between what is 'in the image of God' (Gen. 1:27) and His image (Col. 1:15). He did not realize that the image of God in the firstborn of all creation, the very Logos and truth, and further, the very wisdom Himself, being 'the image of his goodness' (Wisd. of Sol. vii.26), whereas man was made 'in the image of God,' and furthermore, every man of whom Christ is head is God's image and glory (I Cor. 11:3,7).¹⁴

Hence, Christ is the Father's true and original image, whereas mankind are copies of the Son's likeness. Christ, then, is the only one who is able to restore the original image of God back to those in whom it was twisted by sin.¹⁵

John Calvin denies any substantive difference between 'image' and 'likeness,'¹⁶ but still teaches that Christ is the original image, of which man is the copy. After referring to the image of God having been imparted to the newly created Adam, he adds:

All men unanimously admit that Christ was even then the image of God. Hence whatever excellence was engraved upon Adam, derived from the fact

14. Origen, *Contra Celsum* VI. 63, translated with notes by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1980), 378.

15. Barth, in 3/2 Section 41, seems to interpret the parallelism between 'image' (צֶלֶם) and 'likeness' (דְּמוּת) of Genesis 1:26 in this fashion:

But this is more simply expressed if we go back immediately to the object of this copy and pattern of this imitation, to God Himself, and therefore translate *tselem* as 'original' and *Demuth* as 'prototype.' At any rate, the point of the text is that God willed to create man as a being corresponding to His own being – in such a way that He Himself (even if in His knowledge of Himself) is the original and prototype, and man the copy and imitation.

Whether the parallelism between 'image' and 'likeness' actually carries this difference, I am not sure, but at least his overall point is well taken that Christ is the true and original image of God, and mankind are copies or likenesses of that image of him 'through whom all things were created' (cf. John 1:3).

16. Calvin, *Institutes* I.xv.3.

that he approached the glory of his Creator through the only-begotten Son. 'So man was created in the image of God' [Gen. 1:27]; in him the Creator himself willed that his own glory be seen as in a mirror. Adam was advanced to this degree of honor, thanks to the only-begotten Son.¹⁷

Calvin also teaches the restoration of the effaced image in mankind in and through the redemption of Christ:

There is no doubt that Adam, when he fell from his state, was by this defection alienated from God. Therefore, even though we grant that God's image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him, yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity. Consequently, the beginning of our recovery of salvation is in that restoration which we obtain through Christ, who also is called the Second Adam for the reason that he restores us to true and complete integrity... the end of regeneration is that Christ should reform us to God's image.¹⁸

Saint Thomas Aquinas, however, does not teach that the original image of God is in Christ, but rather, following Saint Augustine, that the whole Trinity is the image.¹⁹

Much of the main thrust of the New Testament is on the divine intention to restore the image (whether one takes it primarily of Christ, or of the whole Trinity). James Dunn puts 'image of God' in an eschatological context, in terms of Christ's appointment as the Last Adam:

More significant is the eschatological thrust of the most closely related passages – the transformation of believers into the image of Christ or of God as the goal of the whole process of salvation which climaxes in resurrection (2 Cor. 3:18-5:5; compare particularly Rom. 8:29; I Cor. 15:49; also Phil. 3:21). In this motif the image which Christ bears (or is) is that of the last Adam, Christ as fulfilling the original purpose God had in making man to be his image (Gen. 1:26).²⁰

Some far-fetched references

For the sake of space, I refrain from mentioning some of the untenable and far-fetched references (in my viewpoint) made by some Church Fathers to Christ in the Old Testament, such as the claim of Justin Martyr and others that the LXX version of Deuteronomy 30:15 (cf. Justin's *First Apology*, c. 32) was speaking of Christ reaching out his hands on the cross, or the *Letter of Clement of Rome*, stating that the scarlet cord of Rahab pointed to the blood

17. *Ibid.*, II.xii.6.

18. *Ibid.*, I.xv.4.

19. Thomas does not actually indicate any awareness that certain Greek Fathers held that man is the image of the divine Son. His reply to this theory is largely a paraphrase of Augustine's refutation of a similar theory whose origin Augustine does not bother to name [*de Trin.* 12.6.7]. Thomas follows Augustine's careful exegesis of Genesis 1:26-27, by which he shows that God the Trinity made man to the image of God the Trinity [Thomas, *S. T.*, q.93, a.5, ad 4m]. See: D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies: Toronto, 1990), 201.

20. James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Westminster/John Knox Press: Louisville, KY, 1990), 97.

of Christ (c. 12), or the bells on the priests' robes prefiguring the movement of the apostles (*Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, xl). There is more than enough substantial material reaching forward to Christ in the Old Testament to keep us from creatively manufacturing allegorical prefigurements of the Lord, much as some of the apologists loved doing so!

Typology and Allegory

What is in view here is the difference between *typology* and *allegory*. In brief, *typology* (as used by the Church Fathers), in discovering an analogy between events or persons in the Old and New Testaments, points out that the same operation of God's providence is displayed in the Old Testament *type* and the New Testament *antitype* (or *archetype*). Paul does this in I Corinthians 10, where he sees a typological analogy between 'the baptism' of the children of Israel in the sea unto Moses (vv. 1, 2) and baptism unto Christ. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws a typological connection between the Old Testament tabernacle and the human nature of Christ, thus explaining the one by the other.

Allegory, however, speaks of one thing in terms of its meaning something else, with very little control over the derivation of the meaning, and at times very little concern for the reality or historicity of that which is allegorized. The Christian apologists did a great deal of this, and, as Jean Daniélou suggests, were probably influenced by the allegorization of the Homeric stories as carried through by the Middle Platonists.²¹ Philo Judaeus used allegory to make biblical stories acceptable in the Hellenistic culture. He was heavily followed by such as Origen of Alexandria, who, rather than relying on the literal meaning of the text, put forward three levels of interpretation: the literal, the moral and the spiritual. These three were supposedly like the human body, soul, and spirit. This methodology gave his imagination free reign in coming up with 'spiritual' meanings. To a lesser degree, Augustine made some use of allegorism. At the time of Augustine's conversion, he had been somewhat influenced by Origen as well.²² Hence, the 'School of Alexandria' tended to allegory, which the rival 'School of Antioch' rejected in favor of typology, in a more sober sort of exegesis. Theodore of Mopsuestia, for instance, argued that '[o]ne ought to learn the sense of what is written... there is only a single sense in all of the divine scriptures' (*Fragments syriaque*, 13/17-18).²³ McLeod explains:

First, Theodore required that a true type had to be acknowledged as such in Scripture... Theodore maintains that it is this that distinguishes a type from an allegory. For an allegory's meaning is derived not from within Scripture, but

21. In the West, Jean Daniélou points out that Hippolytus of Rome always has a pejorative sense when he speaks of allegory. See: Jean Daniélou, *Message évangélique et culture hellénistique* (Paris, 1961), 73-101.

22. György Heidl, *Origen's Influence on the Young Augustine. A Chapter of the history of Origenism* (Gorgias Press: Piscataway, NJ, 2003).

23. Quoted in Frederick G. McLeod, S.J., *The Roles of Christ's Humanity in Salvation: Insights from Theodore of Mopsuestia* (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, DC, 2005), 35.

from the imaginative speculations of the exegete. This indicates, moreover, that the type and its archetype (or its antitype), which constitute the two ends or poles of a relationship, must both be historical realities related in the Scriptures.²⁴

It is not strictly true to history to say that the East followed allegory while the West followed typology in interpreting the Scriptures. That probably became a general tendency, yet the great Western Fathers Hilary, Augustine and Jerome used both typology and allegory, whereas the Eastern Father Cyril of Alexandria was critical of allegory.²⁵ His works *Glaphyra* and *De Adoratione* criticize allegory in favor of typology. Following the Church Fathers, John Calvin rightly states that '[a]llegories ought not to go beyond the limits set by the rule of Scripture, let alone suffice as the foundation of any doctrines.'²⁶ In his *Commentary on Galatians*, Calvin interprets Paul's statement in reference to Abraham's two wives, 'Which things are an allegory' (Gal. 4:24), as really being a *type*, rather than a true allegory: 'Sinai is called Hagar, because it is a type or figure, as the Passover was of Christ.'²⁷

The key point of typology is based on the historical/revelational analogy between what God was already doing in Israel and what he would do in Christ. That is to say, God did things in Israel that were analogous to what he would do in Christ. Exodus and Passover, for instance, were setting forth a pattern in Israel's history in analogy to what would be accomplished in the death and resurrection of Christ. This was not allegory (fictitious stories invented to convey some kind of spiritual truth, which would need to be allegorized), but historical truth that presaged – in its *sensus literalis* – what would literally be accomplished in the Incarnate Christ through his cross and empty tomb. These types were not accidental, but rather were anchored in the long-term providence of God to accomplish redemption for his people.

A historically disconnected 'accidental' allegory, for example, is brought forward by Justin Martyr in his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, where he says that 'the bulls of Bashan' (a reference to Psalm 22:12) referred to the Pharisees of Jesus' day (ciii)! On the contrary, the New Testament itself uses sober typology to show how Christ was foreshadowed in the Old, and fleshed out in the New Testament. Hosea 11:1, which says 'Out of Egypt have I called my son,' is taken by Matthew to refer to the bringing of the Christ child by Joseph and Mary out of Egypt back to Nazareth (Matt. 2:15). The underlying point here is that Israel (who came out of Egypt under Moses) proved to be a false son, whereas the Incarnate Son of God would be the obedient son that the Father always wanted; he would do this on behalf of Israel and the Church.

24. McLeod, *op. cit.*, 49.

25. See A. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria's Interpretation of the Old Testament* (Rome, 1952).

26. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* II. v. 19, Battles translation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, MCMLX), vol. 1, 339.

27. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, Pringle translation (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, MDCCCLIV), 139.

Likewise, the brass serpent in Numbers 21:9 that Moses was instructed to fashion and then put on a pole, so that the snake-bitten sinners who looked to it could be healed, prefigures Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus that those who looked to the one who would be 'lifted up' would receive eternal life (John 3:14-15). This is true typology: anchored in the analogies placed by God in the history of redemption, pointing beyond themselves to something infinitely greater, and yet still historically and literally true. Cyril of Alexandria said that, in his person, Christ transformed types into truth.²⁸

After the sixth century, typological preaching tended increasingly to displace allegorical preaching in the Church, both East and West. A good illustration of this in the West is the famous preacher of the sixth century, Caesarius of Arles, whose Scriptural interpretation is typological rather than allegorical, as was that of the more famous John Chrysostom in the East.²⁹ Yet to this day one still finds some allegorical preaching in Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Evangelical Protestantism; this is the case especially when preachers deal with the Old Testament.

The advantages of typology over allegory have been explored in the Enlightenment period (in the late eighteenth century) by Johann G. Hamann, both critic and friend of Immanuel Kant. Hamann reflected deeply and widely on the difference between typological and allegorical interpretation, and followed the typological mode, as in his comments on how God in Christ fulfills the land purchased by Jacob in Genesis 33:19 (*Biblical Meditations* I. 38), or the entire Mosaic economy as a type of 'transcendent history' (*Golgotha and Scheblimini* III. 308).³⁰ But Christian commentators in most of the Middle Ages neglected typology in favor of allegory, with the notable exception of Saint Thomas Aquinas.³¹

28. Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyra* (PG 69:89).

29. For the preaching of Caesarius, see the three-volume translation by M.M. Mueller: *Saint Caesarius of Arles: Sermons*, 3 vols. (The Catholic University of America Press: Washington, DC: vol. 1, 1956, vol. 2, 1963, vol. 3, 1972). For a helpful analysis of the preaching of Chrysostom, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Preaching of Chrysostom*, (Fortress Press: Philadelphia, PA, 1967).

30. See the study of Hamann's typology by Karlfried Grunder, *Figur une Geschichte: Johann Georg Hamann's 'Biblische Betrachtungen' als Ansatz einer Geschichtsphilosophie* (Freiburg/Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1958), especially pp. 134-143.

31. In the early Medieval period, especially with Saint Jerome, there were several modes of interpretation beyond typological and allegorical, although some of them were seldom used (as compared to the mainstays: typology and allegory). The earlier Fathers, and especially Jerome, at times spoke of 'literal sense,' 'historical sense,' 'spiritual sense,' and (on occasion) 'tropological sense' and 'anagogical.' These senses are discussed in Pierre Jay, *L'Exégèse de Saint Jerome d'Après son 'Commentaire sur Isaie'* (Etudes Augustiniennes: Paris, 1985), chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 127-333). See also *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West From the Fathers to the Reformation*, Edited by G. W. H. Lampe (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1969), where it points out that, with Jerome: 'In general the exegesis proposed is confined to two senses, the literal and the spiritual...The literal is also called the historical,...The spiritual sense also receives other names. It is called *anagoge* and *topologia* but without any precise difference in application' (vol. 2, pp. 89-90).

Christ and the History of Israel

*Broader context in which the history of Israel is to be seen*³²

The context of the establishment of the people of Israel is found in the worldwide sin and cosmic alienation following on from the fall of Adam in Genesis 3, down to the judgment of the flood of Noah in Genesis 6-9, the table of nations in Genesis 10, and the disruption and scattering of humanity at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. Men and women were created social beings in communion with God himself. But sin broke that communion and damaged the social bond, both vertically and horizontally. The bond between male and female was ruptured, as well as the bond of intimate communion with the Lord.³³

Sin can be thought of as rupture between what we ought to be and what we actually are. Even man's relationship with nature was damaged by sin. The massive increase of violence within the descendants of Adam brought the devastating judgment of the universal Flood, whose catastrophic marks remain in the once-pressurized deposits of our oil and coal beds, and in the masses of seashells on top of some of the highest mountains. The consequences of sin are not merely 'spiritual,' but also intensely physical. Human self-rehabilitation efforts such as the Tower of Babel (intended to be the integrating center of a humanist empire) actually led to further disintegration, because mankind's fallen nature always tends towards disruption.

Only God can reverse this disintegration of Babel, for, as Johann Georg Hamann noted, 'The confusion of language was a work of God to disperse man; the gift of the same a work of the Holy Spirit to unite man. We hear not only our tongues, but we hear the miraculous work of God speaking in the same.'³⁴

The only solution to this universal disruption lies in the recreation of the bond between God and mankind, as indicated by the first promise of the Gospel to our first mother, Eve, in Genesis 3:15: 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' The splitting off of humanity from service to Satan would be part of bringing it back into redeeming fellowship with God. God himself would have to accomplish

32. Much of this material is a direct paraphrase of class notes given by Professor T. F. Torrance in the 1960s and 70s at the University of Edinburgh, where I sat under him as a very appreciative student. Years later, after I became a teacher of theology myself, he gave me permission to reprint some of these notes for my own classes year by year. Hence, I am making use of these printed notes here, and I also add in some of my own thoughts. But I wish to point out the recent, happy publication of most of Torrance's printed class notes, plus other material, by his nephew, Dr. Robert T. Walker, in the two grand volumes: *Incarnation: The Person and Work of Christ* (2008), and *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ* (2009). Where I make reference to these two volumes, as I do very frequently, all quotations or paraphrases will be marked and footnoted. But some of this preliminary material is not found in exactly the same form in either of the two books, though the essence of it is to be found in *Incarnation*.

33. Much of this material, in a slightly different form, is found in T. F. Torrance, *The Incarnation*, pp. 39-40.

34. Johann Georg Hamann, *Works* [*Samtliche Werke, historisch-kritische Ausgabe*], ed. Josef Nadler (Vienna: Herder, 1949-1957), I. 220.

this recreating of the bond by providing 'the seed'. Galatians 3 identifies this seed as the descendant of Abraham according to the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 16-20). That is one reason Christ told the woman of Samaria that 'salvation is of the Jews' (John 4:22), and why Paul considered Abraham the father of the faithful (cf. Romans 4 and Galatians 3).

Therefore, in the context of mankind's sin and inability, God himself must condescend to mankind in order to remove the alienation from both sides, thereby restoring humans to communion with God and to loving relationships with one another. For this to happen, '[...] the destruction of the power of evil, and a recreation of the bond between God and man,' is necessary.³⁵ Torrance explains further:

How is mankind to be reconciled to God? There are two possible ways. The way of Cain in which man offers of the fruits of personal labour to God, the way of man is from man to God. Man provides a personal offering, a personal sacrifice. The way of Abel is one in which God provides the sacrifice, the sacrifice of another. Abel followed God in his sacrifice of animals to cover – in Old Testament language to atone for – Adam and Eve's sin and shame. Abel let God provide the sacrifice and offered it to God. So in Abraham, who would offer his best, his only son, we see that his offering is displaced by God who himself provides the lamb (Gen. 22:10-14). Substitution and free grace are identical... That adumbration of God's way of redemption is worked out more fully with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the way in which God comes in pure grace to gather frail humanity into covenant and communion with himself, and even provides for man a covenanted way of response to God's grace.³⁶ Man responds by faith, but in faith relies upon a divinely provided way of approach and response to God in the covenant.³⁷

So the history of Israel is the story of God coming down to lift man up. This history is the pre-history of the Incarnate Word of God. That Word was forming in Israel a womb for the birth of Christ. Torrance mentions three lines of thought in the formation of this matrix for the ultimate birth of Christ, that is, of how the nation of Israel foretold the story of Christ: (1) If one is to make a thing, tools are necessary, (2) There has to be developed a community of reciprocity, and (3) There must be an organic relationship.

(1) If one is to make a thing, one needs tools to give it shape.³⁸

These (conceptual) 'tools' are intellectual analogies or categories to shape the apprehending of the knowledge of God in the human mind. The question is always asked: how can a finite human mind ever grasp the infinite God? Much of the massively influential philosophy of Immanuel Kant taught that God is in the separated, infinite realm of the noumenal, and that since we are in the realm only of the finite and phenomenal,

35. Torrance, *op. cit.*, 39.

36. On 'a covenanted way of response,' see also T. F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ*, revised edition (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), p. 74ff.

37. Torrance, *The Incarnation*, 40.

38. *Ibid.*, 41.

therefore we cannot really know him as he is.³⁹ This separation of the noumenal from the phenomenal was made almost inevitable by the prior separation of the mathematical-mechanical-empirical phenomena from their created reality as phenomena rendered accessible to us by the variety of our qualitative and meaningful sense perceptions. However, Torrance responded as follows:

God refused to allow our limitations and weaknesses to inhibit his purpose of love and redemption. He condescended in incredible humility to find a way of entering within our beggarly weakness and poverty, to find a mode of divine entry into our finite and moral existence, in order from within as creator and saviour to restore us to complete fellowship with himself, both in knowing and in being.⁴⁰

In this wonderful condescension to our finitude, the Lord provided in the order of creation, as reflected in human language, as well as supremely in his self-revelatory Word, creational analogies and categories such as Father, Son, shepherd, sacrifice, etc. One of the chief 'tools' for apprehension of God by all humanity was his choosing the race of Israel in whose life and history he showed his grace.

Hence God selected one race from among all the races of mankind, one of the smallest, and, as Moses said, most beggarly and contemptible of all races, in order to make that race the very instrument of his redemptive purpose to reveal himself to every people and to save all humanity... [the people of Israel] were the most stubborn and stiff-necked people under the sun (Exod. 34:9). They disobeyed God at every moment in his saving purpose...

And so God took this stubborn people, as a potter might take the worst, and lumpiest and most resistant and intractable clay, in order to put it upon the wheel for moulding and shaping into an earthen vessel designed to contain heavenly treasure... He used their very stubbornness in order to train them.⁴¹

Hamann, the famous friend and critic of Kant, wrote along these same lines in his *Biblical Meditations*:

I can recognize my own crimes in the history of the Jewish people, for there I see my own life as I am reading their story, and I keep thanking God for his mercy upon his people, for their example builds me up in the same hope. Above all else, it has been in the Books of Moses where I made this rare discovery that the Israelites, no matter how intractable they appear to us in certain instances, were only waiting upon God for what his divine will would do for them. Hence they recognized with profound ardor their disobedience, as no sinner had ever done. And yet they did not fail very quickly to forget their repentance. Nonetheless, in the anguish of that repentance, they were

39. See chapter 6 of this volume concerning Kant's epistemology, which has a dichotomy between noumenal and phenomenal.

40. T.F. Torrance, op.cit., 40.

41. Ibid., 42.

implored God to send a Saviour, a Mediator, without whom they would never be able to fear and love God as they should.⁴²

Particularly in Luke 2, we see a faithful remnant in Israel who gladly recognized who Jesus was:

...the Son of God come in the flesh, the redeemer of Israel, and the light to lighten the Gentiles – Zechariah, Anna, Simeon, and John the Baptist, and who more than the blessed virgin Mary, and then one after another, the twelve disciples, and many others, who acknowledged that this was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God, the saviour of the world.⁴³

Without the history of Israel, one has no conceptual tools with which to grasp the meaning of the Son of God in the flesh. 'Apart from the context of Israel we could not even begin to understand the bewildering miracle of Jesus.'⁴⁴ How could we understand the cross without the Levitical system and the Day of Atonement? As the accounts of Christ's passion in all four Gospels show, we need the deliverance out of Egypt and the Passover of Exodus, Isaiah 52 and 53, Psalms 22 and 69, and Zechariah 9 to get a handle on what is happening to the Redeemer in our place. We need the prophets, we need King David and the others, we need the High Priests to grasp what the Incarnate Son of God is doing for us as our true prophet, priest, and king.

(2) A Community of Reciprocity

God was working in Israel to create a community of reciprocity, in which his Word evoked a response back to God. This is the basis of how we learn both to hear God speaking to us and to speak to God. A marriage is a relationship of reciprocity, as is the larger family, and Israel is both God's child (as we see in Exodus 4:22-23, which gives us the significance of the death of the firstborn son) and God's covenanted wife (as we see at large in Hosea). This is typical of the loving, giving, and receiving within the ontological Trinity. Through all of Israel's history, God was preparing a people who would hear his Word and respond rightly as a true child. In his mighty providence, he used even the bad responses of Israel to penetrate their life more deeply, so that the Word would come more fully to them, and through them to all nations. In due season, all the families of the earth would come to be blessed in Abraham (Gen. 12:3). This people will be 'a light to the Gentiles... [God's] salvation to the end of the earth' (Isa. 49:6).

(3) An Organic Relationship

This relationship between God and Israel is not only conceptual or intellectual, but also an organic bonding, which ties Israel into sharing in,

42. Pierre Klossowski, *Les Méditations bibliques de Hamann* (Éditions de Minuit: Paris, 1948), 122,123. My translation.

43. Torrance, *op. cit.*, 43.

44. *Ibid.*, 44.

a mode appropriate for humans, the life of God. This organic bonding was a covenanted relationship, profoundly different from the other nations, so that Israel was ‘a peculiar people’, set apart from the other Adamic tribes of the earth. Through God’s Word, with its promises and law, and through the cult (or worship), God worked into their existence a knowledge of the way of response that he would ultimately provide in the One whom he elected to fulfill that covenant, in a way that Israel on its own never could do.

The organic relationship between God and his people is often presented in Scripture in terms of a grapevine. It is significant to study here the connection between the vineyard that did not produce good fruit in Isaiah chapter 5, and Christ who takes that image up and shows himself to be the true vine, with his Father as the husbandman (John 15:1); a vine that brings forth ‘more fruit’ (John 15:2) and ‘much fruit’ (John 15:5), by virtue of its abiding in Christ, the true vine, who gives fruitful sap to the branches.

Christ thus fulfilled the covenant into which Israel had long been called, as (a) head of the new covenant, as (b) prophet, (c) priest, and (d) king/shepherd, all of which offices were adumbrated in the Old Testament. And from the fall of mankind and the first promise of the Gospel, through the experience of patriarchs, kings, and prophets, we find an evil adversary, Satan, the accuser, constantly opposing with his malignant darkness the light of the kingdom of God. Finally, Christ as (e) ‘the coming one’; the Messiah alone, will be able to defeat Satan, and even use Satan’s sinful plots to further the victorious kingdom of God.

This leads us to consider the relationship between God and Israel as illustrated in the following:

(a) The Head of the New Covenant

Covenant is a major concept in the Old Testament. The way it develops within the old economy and the way it is interpreted within the new shows that it is arranged by God. The Triune God carries through the Covenant, but Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8 give special reference to the Head of the New Covenant, who, as its Mediator, is both God and man together at the same time, thereby fulfilling both sides of this covenant.

In the first volume of this series, I briefly surveyed the biblical teaching on covenant from Genesis to Revelation, and need not repeat that here,⁴⁵ except for amplifying two points: (i) The Covenant of Abraham, and (ii) The New Covenant.

(i) The Covenant of Abraham

Let us first note here how the quintessential form of the Covenant of Grace, the Covenant with Abraham (e.g. cf. Genesis 12, 17, 21), requires someone, some ‘head’ of the covenant administration, who will be like Abraham in faith (cf. Gen. 15:6); indeed, who will be the very ‘seed’ of

⁴⁵ cf. Kelly, op. cit., chapter 6, ‘The Triune God Makes Himself Known in the Covenant of Grace,’ pp. 387-444.

Abraham (cf. Gal. 3), but also greater than Abraham, e.g. John 8:53: 'Art thou greater than our father Abraham...?', in answer to which Christ says: 'Before Abraham was, I am' (v. 58). Paul interprets the faith of Abraham in God as a resurrection faith, leading to justification (cf. Rom. 4:24-25). Along similar lines, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions Abraham's faith in God's ability to raise the dead (cf. Heb. 11:17-19). Abraham is placed in a long line of heroes and heroines of the faith, who somehow were 'looking unto Jesus', who was truly 'the author and the finisher of the faith' as the ultimate head of the covenant of faith, which is the covenant of grace (cf. Heb. 12:1-2), rather than of works (cf. Gal. 3).

As G. Vos explains the connection between Abraham and Christ:

[Abraham's faith]... trusts in [God] for calling the things that are not as though they were. This does not, of course, mean that the objective content of the patriarch's faith was doctrinally identical with that of the New Testament believer. Paul does not commit the anachronism of saying that Abraham's faith had for its object the raising of Christ from the dead. What he means is that the attitude of faith towards the raising of Isaac and the attitude of faith towards the resurrection are identical in point of faith and able to confront and incorporate the supernatural.⁴⁶

Jean-Marc Berthoud, in his recent volume on the Covenant of God throughout Holy Scripture, amplifies this point clearly.⁴⁷ He shows that the judgment of the flood did not solve the true problem of corrupt mankind (cf. Genesis 8:21). He shows that the dispersion of the nations at the tower of Babel still did not solve the problem of human corruption. It would only be Christ in the flesh, the true descendent of Abraham, who would be able to redeem lost humanity from its corruption, death, and judgment. What God did in the covenant with Abraham was a preparation for his glorious reversal of human sin, death, and judgment.⁴⁸

(ii) *The New Covenant*

The New Covenant, which will be the grand fulfillment of all the earlier covenants, both in redeeming lost mankind and binding together in union and communion the Lord and his people, is set forth in Jeremiah 31:31-37 and commented on by Hebrews 8:6-13 and 10:1-18. Having studied these passages in the previous volume, I wish to underscore only one point here in terms of Christology: the head (or 'carrier through') of the New Covenant had not yet arrived when Jeremiah was writing – 'Behold, the days come' (Jer. 31:31). Jeremiah and the pious ones in Judah with him were looking forward to some new, supernatural agent to come. Hebrews 8 and 10, I Corinthians 11, and II Corinthians 3 tell us who this agent was. And what he did in coming was all for the benefit of his church, which in

46. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 85,86.

47. Jean-Marc Berthoud, *L'alliance de Dieu à travers l'Écriture sainte: Une théologie biblique* (Messages: L'Age D'Homme: Lausanne, 2012).

48. *Ibid.*, 162-64.

a mysterious way is somehow in spiritual continuity – notwithstanding temporary disruptions (cf. II Corinthians 3 and Romans 11) – with Old Testament Israel.

Covenant theology has always marked the believing community, and an expectation of covenantal mercy was present before the New Testament era. Matthew Black shows how the concept of New Covenant passed into the Qumran community, as evidenced by the Dead Sea Scrolls:

The name itself ‘New Covenant’ (*berith hadhasha*) occurs at least twice in the Qumran literature [CD viii.15; ix.8]... Again and again the writers dwell on the wonder of the divine forgiveness in God’s ‘Covenant of mercy,’ which brings the whole conception into line with the basis of Jeremiah’s New Covenant, ‘I will forgive their iniquity’ (xxxix.34). Entry into the New Covenant took place at a solemn assembly or convocation of the sect, and the *Manual of Discipline* has preserved two accounts of such a ceremony of ‘entering into the New Covenant.’⁴⁹

Dr. Black does not suggest any direct borrowing from this practice in Qumran by the early Christians, although at least he shows that concepts of a New Covenant were current in various strands of Judaism in the first two centuries before Christ.

In the words of Herman Ridderbos:

It is on account of this fulfillment of the prophecy of the New Covenant in the Christian church that all the privileges of the Old Testament people of God pass over to the church. To it, as the church of Christ, the pre-eminent divine word of the covenant applies: ‘I will be their God, and they shall be my people...’ (II Cor. 6:16ff.)... The more one views the Pauline epistles from this vantage point, the richer the materials prove to be that characterize the New Testament church in its continuity with ancient Israel on the one hand, and as the church of the New Covenant qualified by the forgiveness of sins and gifts of the Spirit on the other.⁵⁰

In other words, the Old Testament is a preparation for the coming of the Mediator of the New Covenant. He fulfills the various covenants of the old economy in his person and work. In him we have both continuity with the old forms of the covenant, and an open door to the fullness of what God is doing in the future of redemption.

(b) Prophet

The exercise of prophecy goes back into the early strands of Israel’s history. Jude 14 tells us that ‘Enoch, the seventh from Adam’ prophesied (of the Lord’s coming). Abraham was considered a prophet (Gen. 20:7). Moses, the chosen mouthpiece of God, through whom the law was given on Sinai, and writer of the five books of Moses, as well as self-sacrificing mediator for a sinning people (cf. Exod. 32), spoke of himself as a prophet

49. Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Thomas Nelson: London, 1961), 91,92.

50. Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology*, translated by John R. deWitt (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.: Grand Rapids, 1975), 336, 337.

(Deut. 18:15). Samuel, 'the seer,' established schools of the prophets before the coming of David to the kingship (see I Samuel at large). From time to time till the end of the Old Testament era, God was raising up prophets to call the priesthood, kings, and people back to true faith and repentance, so that their worship would not be an empty sham, but 'in spirit and in truth' (e.g. Hosea 1 and Isaiah 1).

Moses, in particular, teaches that an ultimately authoritative and 'sealing' prophet was to come, who would be like him: 'The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him' (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19).

Thus, Moses points forward from his own time – the final prophet was to be looked for; he had not come yet. Some passages in the New Testament identify 'that Prophet' with Christ, the Messiah of Israel. John the Baptist was asked if he were 'that prophet,' and he denied it: 'Art thou that Prophet? and he [John the Baptist] answered no... Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph' (John 1:21, 45).

The first-century crowds seem to have discerned (at least for a time) who the prophet was. After the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, they said, 'This is of a truth that Prophet which should come into the world' (John 6:14). Acts 7:37 directly refers to this same text of Deuteronomy 18 and applies it to the risen Christ.

But, though it is not yet our subject in this section on the Old Testament preparation for Christ, Hebrews 1:1-2 shows us that while Christ was *like* the other prophets, more importantly, he was nevertheless *different*: 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoke unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds...' That is to say, the previous holy prophets *spoke* the Word, but Christ Himself *is* the Word (as we shall see in some detail later when considering John 1:1-18).

(c) Priest

Some form of priesthood, at least in the sense of offering sacrifice for sin, goes back to the earliest part of the Old Testament. From the gates of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:21), when the Lord slew animals to provide coats of skins for our first parents, to the time of Noah, with his extra pairs of clean animals for sacrifice (Gen. 7:2, 8:20-22), down through patriarchal times, with sacrifices made by Abraham (Gen. 15:9-18), sacrifices were regularly made to God by his people.

But in the revelation given to Moses by the Lord on Mount Sinai (Exod. 12-13, 24-32, 37-40, and Leviticus, at large, [cf. Hebrews 8-10]),

the priesthood and cult were regularized until the ultimate sacrifice of Calvary, when the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, thus signifying that the way into the holiest was now made open to all of God's people (cf. Matt. 27:51 and Heb. 9:8).

The High Priest of Israel represented God to the people, and the people to God. He bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel upon his breastplate when he went once a year into the holy of holies to confess the sins of the people as their appointed representative, and when he came out, he was authorized to pronounce the Aaronic benediction upon them: 'The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace' (Num. 6:24-26).

As he went into the holy place, he took a bowl of blood, 'first, for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people' (Heb. 9:7). This Aaronic priest 'was a figure for the time then present...that could not make him that did the sacrifice perfect, as pertaining to the conscience' (Heb. 9:9). He was a type, or pointer, to a more perfect priest (not of 'the order of Aaron,' but 'the order of Melchizedek,' the mysterious priest/king of ancient Salem, unto whom Abraham paid tithes; cf. Gen. 14, Ps.110, Heb. 6:19-7:28). His authority did not come from Levitical descent (for he lived long before Levi's birth), but directly from the Lord's providential appointment (Heb 7:1-28). Hence, Melchizedek was a type of the eternal Christ, who came, not of the tribe of Levi, but of Judah (Heb. 7:14-17).

While the Old Testament Levitical priests died *from being priests*, Christ died *as our priest*, and thus his priesthood is unchangeable (cf. Heb. 7:22-24). As John Owen writes: 'He died *as a priest*, they died *from being priests*. He died as a priest because he was also to be a sacrifice; but he abode and continued not only vested with his office, but in the execution of it, in the state of death.... Nor did the apostle say that he did not die, but only that he "abideth always" [Heb. 7:24].'⁵¹

Because of the total sufficiency of his atoning death, God raised him from the dead, so that 'he ever liveth to make intercession for his saints' (Heb. 7:25). He does this not in the earthly tabernacle, but in that highest place of all, in God's immediate presence in heaven, upon which the tabernacle in Israel was originally patterned (Heb. 9:23).

What Owen means is this: Levitical priesthood was, by definition, temporal. When one high priest died, his son or other representative had to take his place to carry on the work. But Christ's supreme priesthood is eternal. His death did not cause him to cease from being priest so that another would have to replace him. Indeed, his death was at the center of his priesthood. He is our eternal priest before, during, and after his death.

The great twelfth-century Western theologian, Peter Lombard, brought out well the connection of the death of the Aaronic high priest and the setting free of unintended killers from the various 'cities of refuge' dotted throughout Israel of old: 'And so great things were granted to us in the

51. John Owen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews vol. 5: Exposition of Hebrews chapters 6:1-7:28* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, [reprint 2010]), 517.

death of the only-begotten, so that we should be allowed to return to the fatherland, just as formerly, at the death of the high priest, those who had fled to the city of refuge could now safely return to their own lands [cf. Num. 35:25-28; Jos. 20:6].⁵²

Wonderful as that Aaronic priesthood is, the endless 'Melchizedek' priesthood of Christ accomplishes even more. He has not merely relieved us from the penalty of the banishment of guilt, but he has actually brought us into the peaceful position of sitting down with the Lord in his kingdom: 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified' (Heb. 10:12-14). And so, believers are, by that miraculous grace, already 'seated with him in heavenly places' (Eph. 2:6).

Athanasius the Great describes the High Priesthood of Christ in this light:

...when He took on Him flesh like ours; which moreover, by Himself offering Himself, He was named and became 'merciful and faithful,'—merciful, because in mercy to us He offered Himself for us, and faithful, not as sharing faith with us, nor as having faith in any one as we have, but as deserving to receive faith in all He says and does, and as offering a faithful sacrifice, one which remains and does not come to naught. For those which were offered according to the Law, had not this faithfulness, passing away with the day and needing a further cleansing; but the Saviour's sacrifice, taking place once, has perfected everything, and is become faithful as remaining for ever. And Aaron had successors, and in a word the priesthood under the Law exchanged its first ministers as time and death went on; but the Lord having a high priesthood without transition and without succession, has become a 'faithful High Priest,' as continuing for ever; and faithful too by promise, that He may hear. Or, answer, and not mislead those who come to Him. This may be also learned from the Epistle of the great Peter, who says, 'Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls to a faithful Creator.' For He is faithful as not changing, but abiding ever, and rendering what He has promised.⁵³

Here we find that Athanasius sees the same truth that John Owen would note thirteen hundred years later: 'the Levites died from being priests, whereas Christ died as our priest.'

(d) King/Shepherd

The kingdom of God, while never limited to the nation of Israel (nor to the church, later), was intimately bound up with its development. Over the strong protest of the noble prophet, Samuel, Israel chose a king (cf. I Sam. 8).⁵⁴ Yet God used their desire to be like the rest of the nations to

52. Peter Lombard, *The Sentences: Book 3: On the Incarnation of the Word*, translated by Giulio Silano (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies: Toronto, Ontario, 2008), 77.

53. Athanasius, *Contra Arianos*, II. 9.

54. The sermon of John Calvin on I Samuel 8 is remarkable in its insight. In 1982, I translated the Latin into English: John Calvin, *Sermon XXVIII*, from 31 July 1562, (on I Samuel 8), published

prepare them in his wise providence for the true king of the kingdom, the ‘king of kings and the lord of lords’ (Rev. 19:16). For God is a king, even THE king, and ‘his kingdom ruleth over all’ (Psalm 103:19). At times, even pagan nations came to see this truth. The greatest pagan king of his own time, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, finally came to this confession: ‘Now I, Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase’ (Daniel 4:37).

Ridderbos, in *The Coming of the Kingdom*, shows the centrality of the saving grace of the covenant God in the history of Israel. He argues that many of the synoptic parables of Jesus are ways of setting forth the ancient Jewish kingdom hope in a renewed, Christological setting (as the ancient symbol of vine or vineyard, the sheep and shepherd, as well as such more contemporary analogies as a steward and master, or a son and a father).⁵⁵

He finds much of Christian apocalyptic language pointing in this same direction:

The ‘Messianic woes’ tradition indicated that this suffering and vindication would be climactic, unique, the one-off moment when Israel’s history and world history would turn their great corner at last, when YHWH’s kingdom would come and his will be done on earth as it was in heaven. The central symbolic act by which Jesus gave meaning to his approaching death suggests strongly that he believed this moment had come. This would be the new exodus, the renewal of the covenant, the forgiveness of sins, the end of exile. It would do for Israel what Israel could not do for herself. It would thereby fulfill Israel’s vocation, that she should be the servant people, the light of the world.⁵⁶

Throughout the Old Testament, in the Psalms and the Prophets, Israel was looking for an ideal king to come, who would accomplish a victorious work for the kingdom, that David and Solomon had – at the best – only been able to foreshadow. To take only two references out of hundreds in the Old Testament, God through the prophet Nathan promises to build King David a house (a line of kingly descent):

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever (II Samuel 7:12-16).

in *Calvin Studies Colloquium*, eds. Charles Raynal and John Leith (Davidson, NC: Davidson College Presbyterian Church, 1982).

55. Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming Kingdom* (Presbyterian and Reformed: Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1962).

56. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology*, 596-597.

Psalm 89 meditates on the future blessings promised to come through a king like David, who will be established in the covenant (vv. 20-37). Amos 9:11 prophesies that the Lord will raise up the fallen tabernacle of David, and this is referred to as the victorious work of the crucified, risen, ascended Christ and his church by James at the apostolic council, in the context of the church's spreading of the good tidings of salvation to the Gentiles:

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things (Acts 15:15-17).

Hence the Old Testament ends without the messianic king, the royal seed of David, having yet to come. But many in Israel had been encouraged by the prophets to look for him. Thus, the last book in the Old Testament, Malachi, portrays this kingly descendant of David in terms of the Lord himself, the messenger of the covenant, suddenly appearing: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts' (Mal. 3:1).

Furthermore, the most frequently quoted Old Testament reference in the New Testament, Psalm 110, speaks of this figure as being both son of David and Lord of David (to be considered in detail later). Jesus tells the Pharisees that it is he who is both son of David and Lord of David (cf. Matt. 22:41-46). But the Pharisees' viewpoint of the coming messianic king was so different from who Christ actually was that it led to his death (which in the predestined providence of God helped to establish his true kingdom forevermore – cf. Acts 4:26-28).

Part of the deep longing for this divine and human figure sprang from Israel's knowledge of the shepherd-like function of the coming king. But this deep desire had been shifted in a military/political direction in the thought of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians before the time of Jesus.

The King as Shepherd

None I have read has expressed more beautifully the Old Testament background of the shepherd-kingdom of Christ than T. F. Torrance:

Behind this of course lies the Old Testament concept of the shepherd king applied to *Yahweh* in his relation to Israel, and the promise of the messianic shepherd when God will set up his servant David over the forsaken and oppressed sheep of his people. The Psalms are full of this concept but also the prophets, and several of the prophetic passages are clearly in the mind of Jesus and the evangelists, especially Ezekiel 13 and 34; Jeremiah 23 and 31; Isaiah 40; Micah 4 and 5; Zephaniah 3 and Zechariah 10–13. In these

passages we find the divine judgment spoken against the false shepherds who do not feed the flock and are no shepherds, and who reject the true shepherds. We also find the picture of the true shepherd whom God will raise up to gather his sheep together as a whole and individually, giving great care to the hurt and weak, and the young and the lost. We also see a picture of the sheep scattered because there is no true shepherd, so that they become a prey to the beasts of the field; and then we see the picture also of a future shepherd whose life will be violently taken away, for the shepherd and the sheep will be smitten and many will perish, though a remnant will be saved by the word of the Lord. All that is undoubtedly in our Lord's mind, and the evangelists see it clearly and draw it out, for example in Matthew's emphasis upon the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas betrayed Jesus [Matt. 26:14-16; cf. 27:3-10], and which has reference to the betrayal and rejection of the good shepherd in Zechariah 11.

That is how Jesus regarded his life and faithfulness toward mankind, as the shepherd of the sheep, the shepherd who calls his sheep by name and leads them into the fold of salvation, the shepherd who does not run when the wolf comes, and who lays down his life for the sheep. As such, Jesus looks upon the multitudes of men and women as the disinherited and lost, and he pours out his life in compassionate service, standing in the gap where there is no shepherd, and taking their hurt and their troubles to himself...⁵⁷

'The Lord [who] is my Shepherd' of Psalm 23 is met most fully in the incarnate person and work of the Good Shepherd in John chapter 10. Peter tells us that this Good Shepherd is also 'the chief shepherd' (I Peter 5:4), and the Epistle to Hebrews calls him 'that great shepherd of the sheep' (Heb. 13:20). Without the Old Testament portrayals of shepherd, as well as king, we could never grasp the crucial New Testament testimony to who our Incarnate Lord is as head of his church, as shepherd and king.

(e) Messiah's victory over Satan, the accuser

From the primeval temptation and fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3), through the murder by Cain of Abel (Gen. 4), through the wickedness and violence that led to the flood (Gen. 6), and the disruption of sinful humanity at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), through Abraham's lies (Gen. 12), Jacob's duplicity (Gen. 27), through the Satanic persecution of Job (Job 1), through the grumbling of the people against Moses (e.g. Exod. 16; Num. 11), through their unbelief that prevented them from entering the Promised Land in the early part of the wilderness journey (Num. 13 and 14 and Deut. 1), and then their orgiastic adultery with the young women of Moab (Num. 25), the time of the Judges, on through Saul's shameful, demonized demise (I Sam. 28–31), and David's fall into adultery and murder (II Sam. 11 and Ps. 51), and his sinful numbering of the people (II Sam. 24), not to mention the idolatrous worship of the split-off Northern Kingdom (I Kings 12 and 13), and the final caving in to idolatry in the once-faithful South (Jeremiah and Ezekiel, at large), through the Seleucid and then Roman occupation of restored Palestine, which was the case in the time of Christ, we discern a dark shadow behind all these

⁵⁷ T. F. Torrance, *The Incarnation*, 130,131.

attempts to destroy the holy Kingdom of God in Israel, so as to replace the worship of God with that of Satan.

The head of the evil kingdom unleashed his attacks in renewed fury with the birth of the Messiah. Although, by divine revelation in a dream, Joseph and Mary and the Christ-child escaped to the safety of Egypt, King Herod had all the children in the region of Bethlehem murdered, so as to wipe out the baby Messiah (Matt. 2:16-18). At the beginning of Christ's ministry, Satan fiercely tempted him to avoid the Father's way of obedience to the cross as the true mode of establishing the kingdom of love and light, and instead to worship Satan, who vainly offered him the entire world (Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4).

The evil one never left Christ alone for very long. He influenced Simon Peter to forbid the Lord from going to the cross (Matt. 16:22-23), and later would 'sift Peter' (Luke 22:3). He entered into Judas Iscariot before his betrayal of the Master (John 13:27), and somehow – all unseen – motivated the enmity and brutality of the Garden of Gethsemane and Cross of Calvary. But God Almighty never allowed the evil being to go any further than to accomplish the divine purposes for salvation of Israel and the world (cf. Acts 4:25-30, quoting Psalm 2, and fulfilling the basic principle of Psalm 76:10: 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain'). And we shall later see how the mission of the seventy sent out by Christ with the good news to Israel began 'the fall of Satan like lightning' (Luke 10:18). Colossians 2:14-15 demonstrates how the instrument so urged on by Satan became his total downfall: 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, [Christ] took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.'

One cannot but admire the quaint saying of Peter Lombard that the Redeemer...

set a mouse-trap for Satan, which was his own cross, and he set his own blood as if bait for him. It was not a debtor's blood that he shed and by which the devil departed from his debtors. Christ shed his own blood so that he might erase our sins... for it was by nothing else than the bonds of our sins that he bound us [he refers to Prov. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:25-26]. These were the captives' chains. Christ came and *bound the strong one* [Matt. 12:29] by the bonds of his passion; he entered *into his house*, that is, in those hearts in which the devil had made his abode, and took out *his vessels*, that is, ourselves, which the devil had filled with his bitterness...⁵⁸

Without employing the figure of a 'mousetrap,' Thomas Boston (of early eighteenth-century Scotland) made a similar point:

...Christ ruined the devil's empire by the very same nature that he had vanquished, and by the very means which he had made use of to establish and confirm it. He took not upon him the nature of angels, which is equal

58. Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, vol. 2, 79.

to Satan in strength and power; but he took part of flesh and blood, that he might the more signally triumph over that proud spirit in the human nature, which was inferior to his, and had been vanquished by him in paradise. For this end he did not immediately exercise omnipotent power to destroy him, but managed our weakness to foil the roaring lion. He did not enter the lists with Satan in the glory of his Deity, but disguised under the human nature which was subject to mortality. And thus the devil was overcome in the same nature over which he first got the victory.... As our ruin was effected by the subtlety of Satan, so our recovery is wrought by the wisdom of God, who takes the wise in their own craftiness.⁵⁹

The Gospel of Mark indicates that the first beings in Christ's ministry to recognize that he was the Son of God were the demons (Mark 1:22-27). These evil beings realized that Christ had come 'to torment them' (Mark 5:7; Matt. 8:29) as part of the battle he was waging, that would ultimately fulfill the longings of Old Testament Israel for deliverance from their true enemy.

Stephen A. Dempster in *Dominion and Dynasty* points out who the real enemy of the people of God is:

Jesus reconstructed the battle which had to be fought as the battle against the real enemy, the accuser, the satan. He renounced the battle that his contemporaries expected a Messiah to fight, and that several would-be Messiahs in that century were only too eager to fight. He faced, instead, what he seems to have conceived as the battle against the forces of darkness, standing behind the visible forces (both Roman and Jewish) ranged against him.⁶⁰

We shall later see how this battle was, and will continue to be, victorious – that 'through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:14-15). Revelation shows the grand denouement of all this age-long battle, with a definite day, divinely appointed, on which the devil, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 13-14).

Saint Symeon the New Theologian shows how this battle is to be won:

The Son and Logos of God did not become man to be believed in, or to be glorified, or that the Holy Trinity and Godhead should be theologized, but 'that he might destroy the works of the devil' (I John 3, 8; cf. Heb. 2:14-15), and when the works of the devil are destroyed in those who believe in him, then the mysteries of theology and of Orthodox dogma are entrusted to him. For if those who have not been liberated from the works of the devil by the manifestation of the Son and Logos of God... are forbidden to enter the temple of the Lord and pray to God, how much more are they forbidden to read and explain Holy Scriptures?⁶¹

59. Thomas Boston, *The Beauties of Boston: A selection of his writings*, Edited by Samuel McMillan (Christian Focus Publications: Inverness, 1979), 76.

60. Stephen A. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty* (InterVarsity Press: Downer's Grove, Ill, 2003), 605.

61. Symeon the New Theologian, *Oration 10*, 3.

Question and Answer 32 of the 1563 Heidelberg Catechism happily convey this point of the Messiah as victor for the Christian life:

Question 32. *But why art thou called a Christian?*

Answer. Because by faith I am a member of Christ, and thus a partaker of his anointing; in order that I also may confess his name, may present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him, and may with free conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life, and hereafter, in eternity, reign with him over all creatures.

The Westminster Larger Catechism shows how in our daily prayers, we are instructed by Christ to call for the continual application of his once-for-all victory over the kingdom of evil to be applied in our own lives and times:

Question 191: 'What do we pray for in the second petition?

Answer: 'In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in; the church furnished with all gospel-officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate; that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.'

This mighty victor over the powers of evil that sought to destroy the universe in general, and humankind in particular, was able to win the battle of the ages, because he possessed in deepest reality and fulfilled, with infinite fullness and efficacy, all the names and titles ascribed to him through the Old and New Testaments. His incarnate life fulfills all these names and titles, and he carries everything to its successful conclusion in unbroken fellowship with the Father, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our next chapter will take us through the most significant ones of these.