

The Prophets in God's Eternal Purpose

The Bible opens with the simple fact of creation. God doing exactly as he planned and each day ending: *"it was good."* Everything in this creation began with flawless perfection, exactly as God desired. But when man exercised his free will and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was like breaking a priceless object of china. All was shattered, ruined and vanity (Ecc 1:1-11; 13-15).

From the perspective of Adam and Eve there was nothing left but to sweep up the pieces, throw them into the trash and begin again. They had no answers. There was no wisdom or power within them to fix what they had done. But God's *"ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts"* (Isa 55:8-9). Often man has no answer and is ready to give up. *"When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred ... he made it again another vessel."* (Jer 18:4). Surely God could simply send Adam and Eve to chains of darkness and begin again with another man and another woman. His flawless creation uncursed and prepared for others more worthy than they. God had done this with angels, for *"God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."* (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)

But he did not! He chose instead to begin the plan he had already devised long before. At the moment, when all was lost and broken, God began to reveal the *"manifold wisdom"* of his *"eternal purpose"* *"which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Eph 3:10-11). He told the serpent (Satan) that the woman's seed would *"bruise your head."* Later he gave more insight to Abraham promising, *"in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed."* (Gen 22:18). Scripture was designed to reveal, prepare, and complete this eternal purpose.

God knew that *"through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,"* and *"through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."* But he had already prepared the solution: *"through one man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."* and *"through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous."* (Rom 5:12, 18-19).

No wonder Paul was so moved with amazement as he ended his theme of justification and righteousness through faith in Christ.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" Rom 11:33

THINK OF IT! It was not after Adam and Eve **ate** of the tree. It was **before** Adam and Eve were even created and placed in the garden, and **before** they were even warned about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's eternal purpose and plan for the salvation of all sinners was made before he ever said *"Let their be light!"* He loved us before we were created and planned to pay the cost of our forgiveness before we sinned!

This sounds hard to believe and if we have never seen this or thought of it before it certainly needs more proof than what has been cited up to now. But God has supplied us with abundant proof. He wants us to know this to understand the depth of his love and the power of his forgiveness.

Paul told the Romans that his preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ was *"according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested."* (Rom 16:25-26). Most of what God had planned was hidden not only from the creation until the preaching of the gospel. It was before times eternal (i.e. even before the creation). In speaking of parables Jesus quoted one of the prophets. *"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world"* (Mt 13:35). All that Jesus revealed in his parables was God's eternal purpose. Peter also spoke of this eternal purpose when he said *"him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay."* (Acts 2:23). God revealed these plans hundreds of years before they happened in Isaiah 53.

Paul told Timothy that God “*saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal*” (2 Tim 1:8-10) The gift of Jesus was not a plan devised after Adam sinned. This gift was given to us “*in Christ before times eternal*”(i.e before the foundation of the world).

He told Titus that our “*hope of eternal life*” was “*promised before times eternal*” (Titus 1:1-2). Think about that. God’s promise of eternal life to those of us who had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God had already been promised before times eternal(i.e before the foundation of the world).

So all these plans and purposes were “*kept in silence,*” “*hidden,*” “*given,*” and “*promised,*” before times eternal.

So what period of time is “*times eternal?*” Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that “*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:3-5). Thus the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation. So the plan clearly precedes the events in the first chapter of Genesis. How much further is not something would can understand or need to know.

God’s eternal purpose through the church began long before the creation. Though Adam and Eve had no plans beyond the moment they made the wrong choice, God had already thought out all possibilities and prepared for it. The prophets and the gospel are simply the revelation of these plans.

Messianic Prophecies

The most important passage concerning the prophecies concerning Jesus is found in the letters of Peter wrote. He explained that while the prophets in the Old Testament spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit, they did not always understand what they were writing and speaking. Yet Peter makes one thing very clear. The salvation we are now awaiting at the last time is the end of our faith. This is the same salvation that the OT prophets inquired and searched diligently about. It was tied to the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow. Although they wanted to know about these things, it was revealed that the portions of Scripture that they did not understand concerning “*the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow,*” were not part of their Scriptures or the Old Covenant. These were things that they were ministering to us in the new covenant, and they are the same things “*reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.*”

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 8 Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19-21

For many years, I have been cautious about this conclusion, but after further study of other passages in the New Testament it is the only conclusion possible. The prophecies we call Messianic are not part of the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant. These were the things that God “*foretold by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ would suffer.*”

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” Acts 3:17-19

When Moses told the people another prophet would rise up like him, he was speaking of the days of Peter and the apostles. This passage is just as much a part of the New Covenant as it foretold the end of the Old.

For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Acts 3:22-23

Not only does this include Moses, but all the prophets from Samuel. As Peter later wrote, so now he states that “*all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many have spoken*” what they were writing “*foretold these days.*” Hence these same prophets who “*testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,*” are the ones who foretold of these days.

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:24-25

The Jews and their rulers asked for Jesus to be crucified for two reasons. First, because “*they did not know Him,*” and second because they did not hear “*the voices of the prophets read every Sabbath.*”

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. Acts 13:27

Paul also preached these things both in his letters as well as his sermons in Acts. In Romans he revealed that the gospel was “*promised before through the prophets,*” “*concerning His Son Jesus Christ.*”

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom 1:1-4

Not long after writing these words He told Agrippa that all that he was preaching was “*no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come.*” So these writings were given as much for us as for them. Specifically, Paul states that these prophets revealed that “*Christ would suffer,*” “*rise from the dead,*” and “*proclaim light*” both to Jews and Gentiles.

Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." Acts 26:22-23

When Paul went to Rome, and spoke to the Jews there, he “*he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and prophets.*” Hence, both the teachings of the kingdom of God and Jesus are clearly found in the writings of the Old Testament.

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. Acts 28:23-25

After His resurrection, Jesus also used “*the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*” He revealed that contained with them are “*all things must be fulfilled which were written about Me.*” Jesus then “*opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*”

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the

“Psalms concerning Me.” 45 *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.* 46 *Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,* 47 *and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Luke 24:44-48

With all these Scriptures it is evident that the Old Testament prophecies that were written about Jesus, the glories that would follow, His suffering, resurrection, were just as much a part of the Old Testament as the New.

Considering all the places where God’s eternal purpose was fully developed and completed before the foundation of the world (Rom. 16:25-26; 2Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-2; Eph. 1:3-5; 3:10-11).

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 *So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.* Gal 3:8

Knowing the end from the beginning, God gave the glimpses necessary to allow Paul to say that everything he preached was “*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 26:22). God revealed enough to give the shadow and outline of all Paul preached and wrote. These prophets, selected by God, laid the foundation to give those preaching the gospel what they needed to validate their preaching. God revealed enough of his eternal purpose that the apostles only needed to complete the details. Thus the revelation of God’s eternal purpose was seamless.

These prophecies gave the scriptural proof needed to convince Israel and save souls. They also revealed enough information for the apostles to make pithy doctrinal points using the prophecies to give the extra information to make it clear. Even today we use these prophecies to gain a clearer perspective and clarify things in the NT. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is still read today as one of the most comprehensive summations of the life and death of the Messiah. Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34 offer additional insight about elders working as shepherds. Jesus ascension and reign are seen more clearly after reading Psalm 2 and Daniel 9:7-14. Finally, prophecy is often the foundation for important NT revelation. For example the Hebrew writer used the order of Melchizedek to help us better see our Messiah as a priest reigning on his throne(Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5-7).

We are greatly indebted to these prophets. They give us admonition(1 Cor 10), make us wise unto salvation, and help us be complete unto every good work(2 Tim 3:15-18).

How the OT Prophets were “*ministering to us.*”

Review:

Peter revealed that some of the words of the prophets who lived under the Old Covenant “**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**” Clearly these writings, though found in the Old Testament Scriptures can be used to further explain and elaborate on the grace we are enjoying today. Though they wanted to better understand this period of time when “**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,**” it was revealed to them that the information contained in these prophecies were not designed for those living then. The Spirit revealed to them that it was “**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things.**” So these prophecies were not a part of the Old Covenant. These writings were written to minister to those of us who live under the New Covenant. The same things they wrote “**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**” The apostles and prophets of the New Covenant were “*reporting*” or preaching the same things these OT prophets had revealed long ago.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

When Paul summed up all that he preached as “*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 25:22-23), he made it clear that their inspired preaching was simply building upon what God had already revealed to the prophets.

having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

Other Passages that Speak on the Importance of these Writings.

But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Matt 26:56

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight." 4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:1-5

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: Luke 1:70-73

"We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:45

But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Acts 3:18-19

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21-22

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24-25

To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. Acts 10:43

And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** Acts 15:15

separated to **the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,** Rom 1:1-2

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, **being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,** 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. Rom 3:21-22

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 **that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior,** 2Pet. 3:1-3

How the Apostles reported “what the Prophets had Prophesied.”

In Peter’s first sermon, he stated that the tongues of fire and the speaking in the languages in which they were born “*is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel,*” making it clear that the words of Joel had not been written for them but for us.

Thus “*the last days*” started with this event. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, he filled all of them and they began to speak with other tongues. This was the answer that the prophets sought and searched diligently to understand. Although it began with the apostles, Peter here revealed that Joel had said He would be poured out on others as well.

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 ‘**And it shall come to pass in the last days,** says God, **That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.** Acts 2:16-18

Jesus of Nazareth a Man Approved of God ... You Killed

Peter then combined the recent history they all knew so well with the prophecies that had also spoken about these days. Jesus was approved by God by all the miracles He had performed, but they had rejected him, just as Isaiah had warned. Peter summed up Isaiah 53 and the second Psalm with the statement:

being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:23-24

Those who wanted to go back into the the Old Testament need go no further than Isa 53 where this entire event was described.

3 He is **despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.** And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was **despised, and we did not esteem Him.** ... 5 The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ... 8 For **He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.** 9 And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death, ... 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, **Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.** Isa 53:12

More than that, after the first persecution, Peter uses Psalm 2 to show that the entire event had been explained in detail. David, had long ago revealed exactly what was going to occur.

who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.’ 27 “For **truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You**

anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Acts 4:25-29

Paul later said. That those in Jerusalem and their rulers did not know “*even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath.*” The very things they did fulfilled exactly what the prophets had said would happen.

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Acts 13:27-28

God Raised Him from the Dead

Peter clearly states that David spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. David was speaking about Jesus when he gave this prophesy in Psalms 16:8-11. “*David says concerning Him.*” This was a clear statement about the Messiah and David knew it when he wrote it. He knew it was not talking about him, so “*foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.*”

For David says concerning Him: ‘I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ... 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ... 29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. Acts 2:25-32

Not only did David speak about His resurrection, but also spoke clearly about the ascension and glory that was given to Him.

“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Acts 2:34-35

There are other prophecies that further elaborate on this moment.

6 “Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.” 7 “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’” Ps 2:6-9

13 “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. Dan 7:13-14

The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Ps 110:1-2

The Hebrew writer ties a lot of this together with his own use of these prophecies. He quotes Ps 2 and 45

upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? 8 But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” Heb 1:3-5; 8-9

After healing the lame man, Peter preaches his second sermon, he revealed the events of Jesus death as *“things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets,”* and the remaining time until the second coming are *“the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old.”* He quoted Moses and revealed it was Jesus who was *“A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you.”* All who refuse obedience would be *“utterly destroyed from the people.”* Finally, *“all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days”* (Acts 3:12-26).

17 *“Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ... 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”* Acts 3:17-18; 22-26

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David(Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing. *“The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass.”* (Acts 4:23-31).

Phillip joined the Eunuch using the words of Isaiah 53 and *“beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.”* (Acts 8:35).

Peter preached to Cornelius saying *“to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins”* (10:43).

In Paul’s first recorded sermon he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and *“of this man’s seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”* All who lived in Jerusalem *“because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.”* His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, *“when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.”* Through the gospel the apostles *“bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers,”* for *“in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption.”* Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, *“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets.”* (Acts 13:23-41)

When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles, James said the prophets had already revealed God’s will. *“Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written...”* It was the prophets who were used by *“the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old”* (Acts 15:14-18).

In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa Paul summed up his service to God with *“so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets”* (Acts 24:14), and *“I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come,”*(Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was *“testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading*

them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, "*And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.*" (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets “ministered to us and “gospel preachers reported it”

Review:

The prophets who lived under the Old Covenant “**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**” They were describing “**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**” These things were given “**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering.**”

It was given to the apostles to complete the process as they were “**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**”

Peter’s 2nd Sermon

After healing the lame man, Peter preached his second sermon. He began with the basic historical facts they all knew, ending with explanation of the healing of the lame man. Which the Sanhedrin later admitted: men? “*For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.* (Acts 4:16).

God glorified His Servant Jesus

You delivered up

You denied in the presence of Pilate

Pilate was determined to let Him go.

You denied the Holy One and the Just

You asked for a murderer be granted to you

You killed the Prince of life

God raised from the dead, — We are witnesses

Peter offers some consolation with their ignorance. Yet now that the gospel being preached, it was all being revealed. **Even the apostles were learning it for the first time.** God was actually fulfilling the things foretold by all the prophets. They needed to repent and be converted for three reasons.

1. *Receive the remission of sins,*
2. *Time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*
- 3a. *God can send Jesus Christ (His Second Coming)*
- 3b. *Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things,*
- 3c. *God has spoken by mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

The last three points are an amazing revelation. They reveal that there was still more that the Old Testament had revealed that was yet to be fulfilled.

17 “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:17-21

As Jesus had revealed, heaven and earth cannot pass away (which will occur when Jesus returns (2Pet. 3:10-13).

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matt 5:17-19

The conversion of the Jews would lead to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the tabernacle of David that had fallen down. This prophecy was first spoken by Amos and then clearly applied by James at the Jerusalem conference. It was preached first to them and God expected them to obey it and help fulfill all these things.

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:11-12

James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** 16 'After! this I will return And **will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,** Says the Lord who does all these things.' Acts 15:13-17

Peter then quoted Moses and revealed that it was Jesus who was "a Prophet like me from your brethren." Jesus was the one Moses had made direct reference to. It was Jesus whom they must "hear in all things, whatever He says to you." The apostles had heard these very things from Jesus not long before:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.** 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;** and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20

They were in grave danger of violating the very thing Moses had strictly charged against. If they refused to obey, they will be "utterly destroyed from the people."

22 **For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'**

Peter concluded by revealing something very similar to what he revealed years later in his letter. All the prophets have foretold of these days. "sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (1Pet. 1:11). He then reminds them that they are the heirs of the covenant God made with Abraham. This is why God had allowed them to hear the gospel first.

Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.** 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, '**And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'** 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:22-26

During the trial that followed Peter made another reference to the restoration of all things, and the role God had hoped the Jews would have in all of it. But the leaders had rejected the role, Just as God had foretold.

If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 **This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'** 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:9-12

Peter also returns to this theme in his first letter.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "**Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.**" 7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "**The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,**" 8 and "**A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.**" They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal

priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.** 1 Peter 2:4-10

The three prophecies Peter refers to are found in Ps. 118:19-26; Isa. 28:16-17 and Hos. 1:6-11

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord. 20 This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter. 21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation. 22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. 25 Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Ps 118:19-26

Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. 17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; Isa 28:16-17

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "**Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them away.** ... 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: "**Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.** 10 **'Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'** 11 Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel! (Hos. 1:6-11)

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David(Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing.

"The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass." Acts 4:23-31

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." Ps 2:1-6

Phillip joined the Eunuch using the words of Isaiah 53 and “beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.” (Acts 8:35).

Peter preached to Cornelius saying “to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins” (10:43).

In Paul’s first recorded sermon he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and “of this man’s seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.” All who lived in Jerusalem “because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.” His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, “when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.” Through the gospel the apostles “bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers,” for “in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption.” Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets.” (Acts 13:23-41)

When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles, James said the prophets had already revealed God’s will. “Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written...” It was the prophets who were used by “the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old” (Acts 15:14-18).

In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa Paul summed up his service to God with “so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets” (Acts 24:14), and “I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come,” (Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was “testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.”

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, “And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets “ministered to us & “gospel preachers reported it” (2)

From several passages in the NT, God revealed that His eternal purpose was fully prepared and planned before the creation. God knew everything He was going to do and how man was going to respond to it. It also makes it clear that this eternal purpose was not simply for what we see and understand in this creation, but that it was also intended to accomplish some very important things in God’s creation as well.

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to **make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God,** Eph. 3:8-10*

*according to **the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested.** Rom. 16:25-26*

*I will open my mouth in parables; I will **utter things hidden from the foundation of the world** Mt. 13:35*

*Him, being delivered up by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,** Acts 2:23*

*For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together **to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.** Acts 4:27-29*

*saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... **according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal** 2Tim. 1:8-10*

*“In hope of eternal life” was **“promised before times eternal”** Titus 1:1-2*

*“He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**” Eph. 1:3-5*

Hence, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God were “*kept in silence,*” “*hidden,*” “*given,*” and “*promised,*” before times eternal. What exactly is meant by the concept of *eternal*? Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that “*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:3-5). Thus all the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation.

Using the formula Peter revealed in the title, we will begin with what the prophet said and then see how those who preach the gospel used them.

*To them it was revealed that, **not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven** — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12*

The Plans for Evangelism

God revealed many things in the prophets that explain how the book of Acts unfolded. James summed all this up in the discussion over how the Gentiles would enter the church in Acts 15.

*And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** 16 'After! this I will return And will **rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,** Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. Acts 15:15-19*

When all these things Come upon you the Blessing and the Curse.

The concept of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David is first mentioned by Moses. After describing all the blessings God would begin to give them and the curses that would follow upon their disobedience, God revealed what would happen after both Israel (ten tribes taken by Assyria)

and Judah (residue taken by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon). After they are driven into all these nations, God made a promise to those who “*return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,*” that He would “*bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.*”

“Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Deut 30:1-6

Although this had a minor fulfillment when Cyrus sent a small remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, it’s main fulfillment was described in the great commission by Jesus Himself and “was reported by those who preached the gospel to us.”

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matt 28:18-20*

***Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.** 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-17*

*Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** Luke 24:46-48*

*you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **even to the remotest part of the earth** Acts 1:8*

Within these passages we see the fulfillment of Moses words: “*If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.*”

Yet there is more than this in Moses’ words. We also see the plan of salvation unfolded in the words: “*the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*” Jesus’ discussion of baptism is later revealed by Paul to be this “*circumcision of the heart.*”

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col 2:11-14

The Second Gathering

Isaiah takes the words of Moses and combines them with the “*tabernacle of David that has fallen*” that James described. At his call, Isaiah asked how long he would preach and God told him it would be until “*As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump.*” (Isa 6:13). He begins by describing the state of the tabernacle of David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isa 11:1-2

Isaiah then takes all these thoughts and weaves them together. At the time that "**the root comes from the stump of Jesse (Jesus),**" He will be a banner to both the people (Jews) and the Gentiles will also seek Him. It will be in that day "**that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left.**" Again it will be in that day, as described by Jesus in the great commission that God "**will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.**" That this is a summation of the entire book of Acts is obvious.

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. ... 16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt. Isa 11:10-12, 16

The words so closely match. Even the highway is described as something that John the Baptist would begin.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; Isa 40:3-4

A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. Isa 35:8

The Shepherd Will Search for His Sheep

In the midst of condemning the shepherds of Israel who had been responsible for the destruction of the sheep, God returns to this theme, describing the work revealed in Acts as a shepherd seeking for the lost sheep. He begins by promising "**Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep.**" The book of Acts revealed how "**I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land.**"

'For thus says the Lord God: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord God. 16 "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment." Ezek 34:11-16

A little later in this prophesy, God makes it clear that He is again speaking of the time of the Messiah. All of this will occur when "**I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David.**" Hence at the very moment that Acts began and Jesus became their shepherd and prince, all of these things would occur. There is no other time except in the book of Acts that "**I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.**

22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between

sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. Ezek 34:11-16

I will Gather My Flock out of all the Countries I have Driven Them

God also used Jeremiah to describe the conditions as they were fulfilled in Acts. He again condemned the shepherds of Israel as Ezekiel had done. This time not only does God promise that: **“I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds.”** but also revealed that it would be at that same time **“I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking.”** Even the growth and development of the eldership to shepherd the flock is described here.

"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord. 3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord. Jer. 23:1-4

The time date for all these events takes us right back to the words of James, **“I will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up.”** God promised that: **“I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper.”**

5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer 23:1-8

I will Take you from Among the Nations, Gather you out of All Countries

Ezekiel gives us one more prophecy to tie all these things together. This would not be done for their sake, because they had profaned God's name. It would be done for God's Holy name. He promised: **“I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.”** This too is described Hebrews 10:19-24: **“having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.**

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 Not for your sake do I do this,"

says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" Ezek. 36:22-32

Messianic Prophecies - 5: Prophets Ministering to Us

Introduction: A small portion of the writings of the Old Covenant were not written for those then living. They were placed in the Scriptures for the purpose of giving those who would live under the New Covenant an additional rock upon which to build their faith. Many of these prophecies were accurate descriptions of events that would occur hundreds and even thousands of years in the future. Many of these passages were used by the apostles and prophets in the New Covenant age to give assurance to those hearing their preaching that what they were saying was true. Other prophecies were given to give a clearer understanding to obscure things that would occur in the future. The eternal purpose of God is so infinitely complex that often it takes both pictures, shadows and types to help us understand them.

As the apostles and elders gathered together to discuss the relationship of the Gentiles to the Jews under the New Covenant, it was such an unexpected and amazing thing that many had great difficulty understanding that the law was simply a middle wall of partition and once it was done away, there would no longer be any distinction. To soothe and calm some of the more zealous Jews, James quoted one of them.

*And with this **the words of the prophets agree**, just as it is written: 16 **'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the Lord who does all these things.'** 18 **"Known to God from eternity are all His works.** 19 **Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,** Acts 15:15-20*

The context of Amos is as important as the few passages the James quotes. It began with God's proclamation that the decision to destroy the entire house of Israel had already been made even at this early date. Everything that God had previously condemned in the 10 tribes of Israel was also being done in Judah. So God gives Amos a vision of God standing by the altar in Jerusalem, proclaiming that the temple would be destroyed and all of them destroyed along with it. This is a very accurate picture of what Nebchadnezzar did long after the 10 tribes had been destroyed and removed.

I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: "Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, And break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered. 2 *"Though they dig into hell, From there My hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, From there I will bring them down;" Amos 9:1-2*

God continued by revealing that He has had His eyes on the sinful kingdom, just as Moses had revealed:

*"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27 for **I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord, then how much more after my death?** 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 **For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."** Deut. 31:26-29*

The time for judgment was nearing and God was very clear exactly what He would do. Once again, God reveals exactly what the book of Acts was written to reveal. Through the gospel, "as grain is sifted in the sieve, not the smallest grain will fall to the ground."

***"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob," Says the Lord. 9 "For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.** Amos 9:8-9*

Even as James was speaking the words of fulfillment, a portion he had omitted was also drawing nearer for the second time.

All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.' 11 **"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,"** Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:8-11

The fall of that tabernacle was accurately described by Jeremiah as He strictly warned Israel that at that moment their fate was still in their own hands and if they would stop violating the Sabbath, they could keep the tabernacle of David.

"And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the Lord, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. ... 27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."" Jer 17:24-25, 27

Later is Jeremiah, He returns to this moment that came and promises the same thing He did in Amos.

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. 8 'For it shall come to pass in that day, 'Says the Lord of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob, 'says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.' Jer 30:7-11

The Rod from the Stem of Jesse and Branch from his Roots

Changing the figure from a tabernacle (dwelling place) to a tree that has been cut down, Jesus is depicted as the branch that has grown out of the stump of David to become the tree that would fulfill all of God's promises given to David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. Isa 11:1-5

At the same time that this Branch grows from his roots, He will stand as a banner to the people. At that time two things will happen that completely explain what James is describing. He will be a banner. The Gentiles will seek Him and God will set his hand the second time to call the remnant of his people back to Him.

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. Isa. 11:10-11

Jeremiah also described the Messiah as a branch. In this prophesy, God adds a few more details.

What had fallen was God's promise about a man being on the throne of David. Israel had forfeited that blessing when they refused to heed Jeremiah regarding the Sabbath. But God would find a better way to fulfill the promise by finding a descendant who would be faithful for all eternity. Once again, God also promises that it will be at that day that all of God's promises to Israel and Judah would be fulfilled. God also introduces something new. The Priests and the Levites would also be restored.

'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: 15 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' 17 "For thus says the Lord: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'" Jer 33:14-18

God continues this prophesy by comparing it to the covenant God made with day and night. This covenant was tied to the promise God made to Noah after he left the ark and offered a sacrifice to the Lord (Gen. 8:20-22). Just as the covenant could not be broken, neither can the covenant that David would lack a son to reign. That promise had only been suspended because of the wickedness of Israel and His descendants, which God had even made a part of the promise as Solomon had pointed out: that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, "If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul," He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'" (1Kings 2:4).

God again mentions the Levites and priests as His ministers. He will multiply the descendants of David like the sand of the sea. Since this promise is the same one God gave to Abraham, it appears that God's promise to Abraham also came through David. Yet not only through David, but also through Levi. This has created some difficulty for some, but is the only logical conclusion when we look at the passages in the NT.

And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the Lord: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'" Jer 33:19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and (having) a great priest over the house of God; 22 let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, Heb 10:19-22

Through him then **let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16**

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. Heb 13:10

unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, 5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, **to be a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Pet 2:4-5

But ye are a elect race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for (God's) own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pet 2:9-10

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, (who is) the

faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and **he made us (to be) kings, (to be) priests unto his God and Father; to him (be) the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.** 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. 9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in tribulation and kingdom and patience (which are) in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Rev 1:4-9

And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them (to be) **unto our God kings and priests;** and they reign upon earth. Rev 5:9-10

Zechariah gives us all there is the picture of the Righteous branch.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, **For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.** 9 For behold, the stone That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the Lord of hosts, '**And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.** 10 **In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree.'**" Zech 3:8-10

Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 Then speak to him, saying, '**Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord; 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."**' 14 "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." Zech 6:11-15

A more literal explanation was given in Isaiah.

For **unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;** And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called **Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** 7 **Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.** The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:6-7