

MISSION OF JESUS

We begin the presentation on Jesus on the foundation of an entire historical providence that unfolds in primary and secondary dimensions. This two-fold manifestation is a reflection of the centrality of human responsibility in the affairs of God.

We have also been able to categorically establish that the primary branch of God's dispensation is his original will and is predestined to be realized at some eventual point in time. This fulfillment, however, requires man's cooperation. The secondary branch is only necessitated as a consequence of man's failure to fulfill that providential role.

It is the path of "dispensational time-identity" that seeks to accomplish a re-creation of events, circumstances and figures. Once erected, the new central figure attempts to fulfill God's original will.

The providence, centering on Jesus, is likewise established with primary and secondary objectives. Unlike the traditional Christian view that divides Christ's mission into two advents separated by 2000 years, Jesus seeks to accomplish all in a single primary mission that requires the faithful response of contemporary Israel.

This primary objective is what is meant by the term "The Kingdom of God."

JESUS CALLS FOR FAITH AND THE KINGDOM

Mark 1:15

"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Matthew 4:17

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

John 6:28–29

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Clearly the Kingdom was an immediate objective in Jesus’ view. He said the “time has come, the Kingdom is near.” He is asking them, at that moment, to repent. If they do, the unfolding of the Kingdom will be the consequence of that repentance. How more explicit can it be than the clear answer of **John 6:28–29**? It is to believe in him, whom God has sent.

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

Matthew 23:37 is significant because Jesus is describing the two branches of God’s providence. Jerusalem, “killing and stoning the prophets” is reflective of Jeremiah 25:4–7. Jeremiah tells Israel that they were inexorably locked on the secondary path; however, they could have remained in the land had they heeded the prophets.

Jesus is indicating that their rejection of him falls into that same secondary category and is contrary to his own expressed desire “to gather Israel together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” Jesus’ desire is reflective of Isaiah 65:17, which stated “a new Heaven and new Earth” would come to Jerusalem, the primary plan.

Jesus indicates, “You were not willing,” that is, Israel was not willing. Jesus wanted it, God wanted it, but it was Israel’s responsibility. In failing to respond in faith to Jesus, Jeremiah’s admonition of 600 years earlier, “you have brought harm to yourselves,” is, sadly, realized once again.

Could it be possible that Jesus had a personal desire that was contrary to the primary will of God? Could the faithless people be in greater focus with what God really wanted than Jesus himself? I think not! In John 8:37–42, Jesus clearly explains the proper conduct of “the descendants of Abraham.”

John 8:37–42

I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have

seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father. "

"Abraham is our father," they answered. **"If you were Abraham's children,"** said Jesus, **"then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me,** a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. **Abraham did not do such things.**

You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, **"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me."**

Jesus establishes that the people *are* the descendants of Abraham, "yet you are ready to kill me." Jesus is affirming that killing the messiah is inconsistent with the purpose for Abraham's descendants. Jesus goes on to explain even more emphatically, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the things Abraham did; as it is, you are determined to kill me . . . *Abraham did not do such things.*"

Matthew 21:35-37

"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.

Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said."

Here Jesus reveals the motive of God in sending the son, *"They will respect my son."* In fact, this parable (Matthew 21:35-43) "samples" from Isaiah chapter 5 "Song of the Vineyard" in which God laments *"what more could I have done for my vineyard that I did not already do? And yet, when I looked for good fruit, why did I find only bad?"* Jesus indicates that the bad tradition of Israel rejecting their prophets is one that God seeks to reverse in sending His son, *"surely they will respect my son."*

THE KINGDOM WAS MEANT TO UNFOLD IN ISRAEL

Here are some Bible verses that indicate that the Kingdom *was* meant to unfold at that time:

Comment:

At this point, we have offered some Bible verses that plainly express Jesus' desire for a providential path other than the way of the cross. "Its undeniable," you may be thinking. Well, guess what? It's deniable! And here is a couple of scripture that you can bet will be in the minds of ministers at this point. This is the silent rebuttal that must be constantly anticipated and planned for.

Luke 24:25–26 *He (Jesus) said to them, "How foolish you are and how slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **Did not Christ have to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?**" And beginning with **Moses and all the Prophets**, he explained to them what was said in **all the scripture** concerning himself.*

John 18:36 *Jesus said, "**My kingdom is not of this world.** If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

John 12:37–41 *Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. **This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:** "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"*

*For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: "**He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn and I would heal them.**" Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.*

These verses that strongly suggest a single destiny to the cross should not be ignored. We should not pretend that they aren't there and instead only recite the verses that clearly support our view. Remember, the more complete description of the issue that we are addressing is that there seem to be two *conflicting views in scripture* with regard to Jesus' objective.

Get the issue on the table.

If we boldly get the issue on the table we can then be in a position to offer a *unique* comprehensive explanation that can define the relationship of the two distinct views. If it isn't an expression of a predetermined first coming-second coming sequence, then, what is it?

DON'T EVER THINK THE SILENT REBUTTAL IS NOT GOING ON and then avoid the issue. In other words, we should not fall into the bad habit of merely reciting Bible verses that support the Principle view and ignoring the verses that seem to strongly suggest otherwise. That's what they do! Christians formulate and maintain whole doctrines on a single Bible verse. Once a doctrine is established, they will simply ignore any Bible verse that is inconsistent with that official doctrine. Therefore, our methodology should, instead, reflect the reality that we are bringing a much greater and comprehensive light to the study of the Bible.

Testimony: Overcoming Objections

One thing I have learned in sales is you must get to the customer's objection. An "objection" is the reason a customer doesn't buy. If you can get the customer to honestly share his objection, you have a much better chance to "close the sale." Here's an example:

Salesman: "Mrs. Jones our factory direct suggested retail price is \$13,785 and we will be able to get that to you this weekend, discounted to \$12,000, for a nice savings of \$1785.00. Mrs. Jones we could take 25 percent today and then handle the balance in 48 easy payments of \$225.00." The salesman slides the paper to her side of the table and is quiet.

Mrs. Jones: (tapping her finger and thinking)

There is a saying in sales, the first one to speak, at this moment in the sales process, is the loser!

Mrs. Jones: "Well, I'm going to need some time to think it over."

This is the classic customer stall tactic. It's never true. They never are going to think it over. As soon as you leave they are going to turn on the TV and forget all about it. The truth is that Mrs. Jones has an objection to buying that she doesn't feel she can tell the salesman.

A good salesman is able to build rapport with his customer. This starts the minute he walks into the house. The benefit of having built rapport is displayed at the time of the close. A good salesman can build trust so that the customer will confess to him the true reason he or she is not buying. I say "confess" because it truly is a confession and, like all confessions, it requires a degree of trust. Once the objection is out in the open you've got a chance to solve the problem and make the sale. This is what I would do in the case of Mrs. Jones:

Salesman: "Yes ma'am, I'm happy to hear that you want to think it over because I know that means you're seriously considering going forward with our product. Is that right, Mrs. Jones?"

Mrs. Jones: Oh yes

Salesman: Mrs. Jones, as you consider purchasing our product, how would you rate the quality of the product that I've shown you here today?

Mrs. Jones: Very high, yes, I really feel good about the quality of your product. It is excellent. That's not an issue.

Salesman: Mrs. Jones, is this the quality that you want?

Mrs. Jones: Well, yes. . .if it's affordable.

Salesman: Mrs. Jones, if we can make it affordable for you, is there any other reason you would not go forward today?

Mrs. Jones: No, that's the only reason.

Done! The objection is on the table. Solve her problem and you've got yourself a sale!

The key statement is that she wanted the quality of the product. Once she admitted that and revealed the money objection everything was funneled down to working out affordable terms. We can go no money down, we can extend the payments to 60 payments and lower your monthly, we can do 90 day deferred so your first payment isn't due until after you get your tax refund. It was fun!

The point of this exercise is that ministers have objections! Lots of them! Go ahead and get those objections out. The key, as in sales, is to build rapport and trust. Don't make the mistake of pretending that everything is going well, the ministers are positive and they agree with everything! So I don't need to bring up those sticky issues. If the minister doesn't bring it up, I won't, right? Wrong! Don't pretend he hasn't heard about it and isn't thinking about it. In sales, it is called, demo, no sale.

Demo, no sale! This means you gave a great presentation, they responded positively and enthusiastically, but I could not close the sale.

It was a great discipline after every demo, no sale, to be prepared to give a report to my sales manager about why I did not close the sale. I noticed he was not interested in my report about how great my presentation was or how inspired I was. Not interested. He was not interested that the customer loved our product and promised me, absolutely promised me, that he was going to get back to me next week. Not interested! I could have told him about dreams, visions, angels break dancing and spinning like tops. Not interested. He was only interested in one thing: "Kevin, why-did-you-not-close-the-sale?"

Amazingly, the answer for why salespeople don't close the sale is: they did not ask for the sale. Objections can only start to come out when you ask for the sale. One main reason people don't ask for the sale is because *they want to avoid the objections*. They don't feel confident to handle the objection.

It is human nature to avoid problems. We like to imagine that everything is going well and we tend to overlook signs that things are not going as well as we would have them. Every organization struggles with this human tendency. Sometimes, however, we can fool ourselves into exalting this behavior to the level of virtue. In our church life, we call this "being positive." The person who sees problems is "negative."

Nevertheless, the person who refuses to see problems will never be able to solve the problem and "close the sale." We need to see the problem, get the objection out into the open and have confidence that we can fix the problem. That's true faith and positivity.

Matthew 21:43

"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit."

Notice that Jesus says, "the Kingdom of God will be *taken away* from you." This indicates that the Kingdom *was* theirs, *was* to be set up at that time and, therefore, all prophecy of "glory" *was* relevant for that time. However, some mitigating circumstance has intervened and altered that destiny. What could it possibly be? Perhaps God's warning through Jeremiah is the answer:

And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted, and IF it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it. Jeremiah 18:9-10

The contemporary relevance of the Kingdom is also expressed in:

Matthew 23:13

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You **shut the kingdom of heaven** in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."*

Notice, first of all, Jesus' great frustration and sense of loss because of the actions of the religious leaders. Second, notice that he indicates that they are engaged in "shutting" the gates to the Kingdom. This, of course, means that the gates "were open" because now "was the time." Jesus didn't say that their hypocrisy failed to "open" the gates; he indicated, instead, that the gates were already wide open.

The sense of Jesus' frustration, then, is that a great potential for good is being postponed. Thus, the Kingdom must be given to others who can produce the fruits in their season.

This will give even greater impetus to Jesus' words later when he says, "the harvest is great, but the laborers are few." The problem wasn't "the time" or that the "fruits were not in season." The problem was that "the laborers were few." This will reflect back on the job performance of the man who was to "make a people ready for the Lord" (John the Baptist).

Luke 19:41-44

*As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, **he wept over it** and said, "If you, even you, had only known **on this day what would bring***

you peace but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Here again, we see Jesus' sorrow and frustration. Notice that he again pinpoints "on this day" the potential of his contemporary age to "bring you peace." Later, we will examine what Jesus means by "peace." Also noteworthy is that Jesus pins a bleak future upon Israel as a result of their failure to recognize "God's coming to you."

THE DISPENSATION TURNS FROM 'PRIMARY' TO 'SECONDARY'

Consistent with the covenant-centered flow of history, the providence shifts from primary to secondary whenever Israel fails to respond in timely fashion. Typically, the people are unable to understand and they react defensively to the change of focus from "blessing" to "curse." We see an example of this in the book of Jeremiah. After Jeremiah announces the 70 years of exile, he is considered to be a traitor. They do not understand what he is talking about in **Jeremiah 26:8-9**:

But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, "You must die! Why do you prophesy in the Lord's name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted?"

We see the same phenomenon in the mission of Jesus. After roughly two years of calling for faith and repentance, Israel is unrepentant and unresponsive. As a result of this faithless stance, Jesus announces the dispensational shift from primary to secondary in **Matthew 16:21**: *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things.*

From that time Jesus began. This is the shift from the Kingdom to the Cross, from primary to secondary, from blessing to curse, from glorious destiny for Israel to bleak destiny for Israel, from Lord of Glory to Lord of Suffering. This is 6 days before the Mount

of Transfiguration and roughly the beginning of the last year of Jesus' ministry.

We can also examine the disciples' confusion at this sudden shift of focus.

Luke 18:34

"The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about."

Why were they so confused? Were they just not paying attention for two years or was this message categorically different from Jesus teaching of the first two years? We can see evidence that the apostles, even after the crucifixion and resurrection, still clung to the idea that "the Kingdom" was going to be erected in their lifetime. After all, in **Matthew 13:11–16**, Jesus affirms that the "knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven" had been given to his disciples.

We can see their attitude after the crucifixion of Jesus in **Luke 24:21**. Their faces are "downcast." In the King James Version, Jesus asks them, *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*

Most interesting is the disciples' answer: *we had hoped that he was the one who was going to **redeem Israel**.*

To what were they referring by the term "redeem Israel." It is the vision of the Kingdom with Israel as "the head" and not "the tail." It is the primary work of "the messiah" to restore the glory of Solomon's era. Consider **Zechariah 8:21–23**:

And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also.

*Yea, **many people and strong nations** shall come to seek the LORD of hosts **in Jerusalem**, and to pray before the LORD.*

*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even **shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew**, saying, We will go with you: **for we have heard that God is with you.***

This vision is what the apostles "had hoped" for. Notice that they describe their hope in past tense. Clearly, Jesus death closed the door on an expectation laid down in scripture and reaffirmed by Jesus in the first two years of his ministry. Thus, they were saddened and disheartened by Jesus' crucifixion.

Even in their last meeting with Jesus before his ascension into heaven, they ask: “*So when they met together, they asked him, ‘Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?’*” **Acts 1:6**

They just can’t fully accept that the providence had shifted. This is probably one reason Jesus said, “I’m coming soon.” If they knew that they were beginning a 2,000-year prolongation, they would really have been disheartened.

FROM ‘BLESSING’ TO ‘CURSE’

With the shift from primary to secondary, we also see a change in the description of Israel’s destiny from “blessing” to “curse.”

Luke 23:28–31

Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’”

Jesus recites Hosea 10:8: “they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, Cover us!” These were the words of sinful Israel carried away by the Assyrians. Jesus is indicating that his rejection and crucifixion represents the same turning point in the destiny for Israel of that period. He is predicting hard times ahead for Israel. This is very significant in relation to God’s promise in Deuteronomy 29:24; Israel will only be destroyed if it violates the laws, decrees and commandments of God.

In the 34th verse of the same 23rd chapter of Luke, Jesus says, “*Father forgive them they know not what they do.*”

Of course, the implication is that had they known what they were doing, they would not proceed to do it, i.e., crucify Jesus.

We also see a gloomy description of Israel’s future in Luke 19:41–44

Luke 19:41–44

*As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known **on this day what would bring you peace**—but now it is hidden from your eyes. **THE DAYS WILL COME UPON YOU WHEN YOUR ENEMIES WILL BUILD AN EMBANKMENT AGAINST***

YOU AND ENCIRCLE YOU AND HEM YOU IN ON EVERY SIDE. THEY WILL DASH YOU TO THE GROUND, YOU AND THE CHILDREN WITHIN YOUR WALLS. THEY WILL NOT LEAVE ONE STONE ON ANOTHER, *because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.*"

In fact, in 70 A.D., Rome destroyed Israel as a nation and the Jews were scattered until 1948.

JESUS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

As we mentioned, on the one hand we can find words of Jesus that seem to state that the Old Testament writings declare, solely, that Jesus should die (referenced in Luke 24:25) while on the other hand we find verses that equally as vividly proclaim the opposite.

We can now explain why we see both. There was a providential shift from primary to secondary, from blessing to curse, as prescribed by the covenant agreement. Thus, we can pinpoint a radical change in focus after Matthew 16:21. As a result, Jesus' scriptural focus is on the suffering-curse side of the ledger. In the last year of his ministry Jesus is faced with the approaching course of blood atonement. This does not mean, however, that Jesus will not accept repentance even up to the last minute. Consider, for example, in Jeremiah's time, that even after he has announced the 70-year exile period, God tells him in **Jeremiah 26:3**: "*Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done.*"

In a similar way, even though the cross became the announced objective in his last year, Jesus still clung to the flickering hope that his chosen people would still repent and in the 11th hour fulfill their (and his) original destiny.

This is the substance of his sorrowful prayer in Gethsemane, "if it be possible, let this cup pass. . ." Christians are shut out of Gethsemane because it is a perfect articulation of Jesus grappling with primary and secondary purpose. How could the Lord himself express reluctance to go to the cross if that were the only course of action, "from the foundation of the world"?

In the last year of his ministry, Jesus' struggle is rooted in his desire, on the one hand, to maintain his focus on the possibility that the Kingdom could still come at that time. After all, Nineveh repented in the final moment.

Comment:

In fact, there is a dramatic example of God seeking intervention in the final moment. We see the amazing story recorded in

Matthew 27:19:

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message; "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

Think of it, on the single day out of the year a Jewish prisoner is to be released, Jesus stands before Pilate to be judged. Pilate's wife, on that very same day, has a dream of Jesus and his innocence is revealed to her. The reason Pilate is trying to bargain for Jesus' life is because of the prodding of his wife. It had already been decided that Barabbas would be the prisoner to be released. However, Pilate suggests releasing Jesus in order to satisfy his wife's sudden and most irregular request.

On the other hand, faced with the reality of no faith in Israel, he had to also address the providential meaning of his impending death. Most important, the apostles would need to understand the significance of his death were it to come. That understanding, as well as the understanding of the coming Kingdom, was implicit within the voice of the Old Testament.

We can see that after his crucifixion, the followers of Jesus were depressed and disheartened. Jesus had to convince them that what took place was not just a failure or defeat. He had to show them that, though less preferred, the prolongation of the way of indemnity is also a course that culminates in great hope. And thus, "beginning with Moses and all of the prophets, he explained to them what had been said in all the scriptures concerning himself."

In the first two years of his ministry, however, Jesus' view of the meaning of the Old Testament is quite different.

John 5:39–40

*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that **testify about me**, yet you **refuse to come to me** to have life.*

Here Jesus affirms that the intent of the scripture is to convince the chosen people that they *should* come to Jesus. He goes on to express even more emphatically:

John 5:45-47

*"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. **Your accuser is Moses**, on whom your hopes are set. **If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.** But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"*

When did Moses write of Jesus? It is **Deuteronomy 18:15**: *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. **You must listen to him.**"*

How can it be unequivocally asserted that Moses is referring to Jesus? See **Acts 3:21-22**:

*"He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For **Moses said, 'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM AMONG YOUR OWN PEOPLE; YOU MUST LISTEN TO EVERYTHING HE TELLS YOU.'**"* (Acts 3:21-22 recites Moses words from Deuteronomy 18:15)

From this viewpoint, the Old Testament is testifying that Israel should receive its King.

Jesus and Prophecy of Glory

According to the idea that all prophecy of glory is referring to the Second Coming of Christ, we should not see any evidence of Jesus in Israel linking those scriptures with his contemporary role. After all, he is only there to fulfill the prophecy of suffering, right? Well, in fact, Jesus makes several references to prophecy of glory and indicates that indeed they do pertain to his work in Israel. Let's first examine **Luke 4:16-21**:

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and

he began by saying to them, ***“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”***

Jesus himself chooses to recite Isaiah chapter 61. “The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed him. Unrolling it, *he found* the place where it is written.” What a perfect time to recite Isaiah 53, “by his stripes we are healed.” Yet Jesus bypasses Isaiah 53 (a prophecy of suffering) and goes straight to Isaiah 61 (a prophecy of glory).

Here is a sampling of the “blessing” tone of the chapter.

Isaiah 61:4–6,9

They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. Aliens will shepherd your flocks; foreigners will work your fields and vineyards. And you will be called priests of the LORD, you will be named ministers of our God. You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

Their descendants will be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge that they are a people the LORD has blessed.

Jesus recites the opening verses of the 61 chapter and concludes, ***“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”***

“Today” is fulfilled. Also significant is the 8th verse mention of the establishment of a new, everlasting covenant. We see mention of a “new covenant” in other scripture:

Jeremiah 31:31–34

“The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

Jeremiah is describing the unfolding of the Kingdom in Israel "if" Israel receives the messiah when he comes. Because this did not happen, Christians assume this is referring to the Second Coming and the eventual salvation of the Jews with no relevance to Jesus in his first coming.

What it actually reveals is that a "new covenant" was to be set up if Israel accepted Christ when he came. It provided for forgiveness of sins without having to *require his path to the cross*. Remember, his suffering would only be required "if" no faith was found in Israel.

We see another example in **Ezekiel 37:24-27**:

"My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever.

***I will make a covenant of peace with them;** it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

"The covenant of peace" is the same "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 61. Recall Jesus' words in **Luke 19:41**:

*As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known **ON THIS DAY WHAT WOULD BRING YOU PEACE**—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, **because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.**"*

"What would bring you peace" = the covenant of peace = the new covenant. It was to be received in Israel through faith in Jesus. It would not require Jesus to suffer and die. Jesus had to suffer and die because "it was hidden from their eyes and they did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." Thus the curse in the law was invoked. The "New Heaven and New Earth" could not be implemented in Jerusalem. The Kingdom then, "is taken from them and given to another nation that can produce the fruits in their seasons." A "New Jerusalem" is set up for future fulfillment, a fulfillment that could have been realized at that time.

But the most amazing and explicit of all is Jesus' words in **Matthew 10:5 and Matthew 15:24**.

Matthew 10:5-6

*These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the **Gentiles** or enter any town of the **Samaritans**. Go rather to **the lost sheep of Israel**. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'"*

Matthew 15:24

*He answered, "I was sent only to **the lost sheep of Israel**."*

Why did Jesus show such a startling preference toward the blood descendants of the house of Israel? Was it because he only cared for his fellow Jews? Of course not! The reason is simple. It was only the blood descendants of the house of Israel who were given the responsibility in the covenant. In other words, it was only the Jews whose faith in Christ or lack thereof would determine the outcome of the Kingdom or the cross. It was *their* faith or lack thereof that would swing the providence toward primary or secondary.

When Jesus uses the term "lost sheep of the house of Israel," he is alluding to another prophecy of glory in **Ezekiel: 34:23-29**

I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

*I will place over them **one shepherd, my servant David**, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the LORD have spoken.*

***I will make a covenant of peace** with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety. **I will bless them** and the places surrounding my hill. I will send down showers in season; there will be **showers of blessing**. The trees of the field will yield their fruit and the ground will yield its crops; the people will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid.*

Again, this new covenant, if received in faith by Israel would transform the world. All prophecy of glory would be fulfilled at that time. Jesus would not have had to go the way of the cross and there would be no need for the return of Christ 2,000 years later. We would all be speaking Aramaic today. The nations would have "beaten their swords into plowshares" many years ago. The "Kingdom" would have been established and the vision of **Zechariah 8:21-23** would have been realized:

*Yea, **many people and strong nations** shall come to seek the LORD of hosts **in Jerusalem**, and to pray before the LORD.*

*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even **shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew**, saying, We will go with you: **for we have heard that God is with you.***

And Isaiah 65:17:

*Behold, I will create **new heavens and a new earth**. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create **Jerusalem** to be a delight and its people a joy.*

This Kingdom would have an earthly manifestation. It would not just be an earthly Kingdom but would follow the parameters of "what is sown on earth is reaped in heaven."

This, then, forms the basis to understand the role and method of the Second Coming of Christ. We see this reflected in **Hebrew 9:28:**

Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ returns to the moment, position and function that Jesus leaves behind when he turns from this primary objective to the secondary course of blood atonement.

Christ returns to accomplish Jesus' primary mission, that is, the bringing of a salvation that will manifest visibly in the world and will not require his shedding of blood. What could that mission entail?

THE NEED FOR BLOOD ATONEMENT

No blood! Excuse me; did he say “no blood”?

I just said Jesus came to bring the Kingdom and salvation in such a way that it would not have required him to shed his blood. However, he could not do this because there was no faith. So the Second Coming will accomplish this goal and will do it without shedding his blood.

“Yes, Reverend, no blood.”

Welcome to the genetic code of Christian faith. We are now restructuring their DNA helix. They will not be very happy now. This is why we should help them here. Remind them that we are at this point not to *redefine the root of Christian faith*. Jesus *did* shed his blood and it *was* his shed blood that *did* atone for our sin. Salvation through Jesus Christ is valid and is what they believe it to be. We are examining the undone aspect of his mission because this is the true measure of evaluation with regard to the “fruit” of Christian faith, that is, the return of Christ and the nature of his mission. By the way, the issue of Christ’s return and the nature of his mission just happens to be the most divisive issue of Christian faith.

Let’s have a look at some questions:

How can you say that if the chosen people had received Jesus the need for the shed blood of Christ would not be invoked, especially in view of Hebrews 9:22, which states. . . “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin”? Rev. A.G., Holiness

Answer:

You are overlooking a very important part of Hebrews 9:22 that states “. . . and almost all things are purged by blood; and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” What all of Hebrews 9:22 is saying is that there is not remission, except by blood, for those things required under law to be cleansed by blood.

The word “almost” doesn’t mean something cannot be cleansed by blood, but rather, that the law requirement for blood atonement is not absolute in all cases. Thus, we see scripture such as Hosea 6:6, 1 Samuel 15:22, Micah 6:7–8 which stress the superior quality of belief in Jesus, and therefore, would have superseded the law requirement of blood. Because the condition of belief was not found, Jesus,

in order to satisfy the requirements, had to shed his blood. Hebrews 9:22 would not contradict this view.

Adam sinned in Eden, Eve was deceived. The sacrificial system, demonstrating how the problem of sin would be solved, was established outside the Garden. Each sacrificial lamb showed Adam and his descendant that a "Lamb of God" would eventually save them or redeem them. Thus, Hebrews 9:22 and Revelation 13:8 are valid. Jesus had to die or Adam and Eve and those ancient ones were given an incorrect symbol by God.

Rev F.S., Adventist

Answer:

Jesus as the Lamb of God does not absolutely imply the course of blood atonement. You will note that Jesus refers to all believers as "his lambs." The lamb is a symbol of absolute obedience and innocence. With regard to Hebrews 9:22, the sentence structure of the original Greek text places the word "almost" as a qualifier for the blood. It indicates that blood atonement in the Old Testament is not an absolute tradition or the sole preferred process of atonement. We see evidence of this in Hosea 6:6, Proverbs 16:6, Leviticus 16:10, 1 Samuel 15:22. By the way, blood as a covenant ratifier is also not the sole way of covenant ratification in the Old Testament. Covenants could be ratified in a number of ways: building a monument, having a feast, salting, loosing the shoe, the giving of gifts, etc.

Modern exegesis of Revelation 13:8 casts serious doubt upon the rendering that attaches the phrase "from the foundations of the world" to the term "the lamb that was slain." It should be properly attached to "all the names not appearing in the Book of Life" and not to the "lamb that was slain." If you'll look at Revelation 17:8, the phrase appears again, but this time the term, "the lamb who was slain" is not mentioned. If the phrase "from the foundation of the world" was indeed indelibly linked to describing the lamb, why does it appear when the "lamb" is not mentioned? It is because in both instances, Revelation 17:8 **and** Revelation 13:8, it is describing the "names" and not the lamb. "The names not appearing in the Book of Life" is mentioned both times. RSV has the proper form, the NIV has it as a footnote.

All in all, it would not be enough on which to hang a whole doctrine and in the process deny the overwhelming scriptural evidence, spoken by God to His people, that states that they, by faith or faithlessness, will play a role in their destiny.

All of this being said, once Israel's lack of faith in Jesus was established, beginning in the last year of his ministry, the precious blood of Christ became the only means of atonement for man. How much more deep should our repentance be in the knowledge that had we only done our part, our beloved Lord would not have had to go the way of humiliation on Calvary.

*Because of the first man's sin, sin entered into the world and death by sin. David said: "I was born in sin and shaped in iniquity." Paul said: "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin." In view of this, how can you say then there would be no need for a blood sacrifice if they just believe? **Rev. M.F., Pentecostal***

(I think I must have had a long day when this question was asked. I noticed that my answer is a little edgy. I must have been asked this same question a thousand times. Here I decide to start asking a few question of my own.)

Answer:

Well, let's put it another way. When Jesus called for repentance, do you believe he knew it was not going to come and that there was no possibility for it to come? If really there was no possibility for Israel to believe, why did God promise blessing to them "if" they did believe, did God forget there was no possibility for this? Why did Jesus urge his disciples to pray for laborers for the harvest, if he knew there was to be no harvest in Israel? Why did Jesus say he wanted to gather the people together as a hen gathers her brood if this was not supposed to happen?

Why was Jesus sorrowing in Gethsemane? Why did he pray not to go to the cross (let this cup pass from me)? How did Jesus forgive the sin of those who had faith in him? Were they actually not forgiven in that very moment? Did Jesus not actually have the authority to do that? If he did, what would have happened if all of Israel had repented to him and washed his feet with their tears begging his forgiveness? Why did Jesus tell his apostles not to go to the Gentiles, for he had come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel? (Matthew 10:5; 15:24.)

In the absence of Israel's faith, Christ's blood was the only acceptable offering for sin. Galatians 3:13, Jesus died to break the curse of the law. Why was the curse invoked? "If" faith, then blessing. "If" no faith, curse.

*The faithless and wicked generation requires a sign . . . the sign that will be given will be the sign of Jonah (his death and resurrection) . . . a **faithful** generation would not need this sign.*

As you can tell from these questions, ministers are greatly influenced by **Hebrews 9:22**,

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (King James version)

A slightly different wording is in the New International Version: *In fact, the law requires that **nearly everything** be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

Christians will only emphasize the last part of Hebrews 9:22, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." They overlook the most important first part that indicates that blood atonement, even in the Old Testament, is not an absolute standard. "Almost" and "nearly everything" is not indicative of an absolute.

Keep in mind, we are not arguing against the atoning quality of Christ's shed blood, nor are we suggesting that there is no scriptural basis for Jesus' path to the cross. We are seeking to examine the nature of Jesus' primary plan for salvation because this will be the purpose for which he returns. He is returning, "not to bear sin, but to bring salvation."

THE BIBLE ON ATONEMENT

There are many biblical examples of other methods of atonement for sin:

Hosea 6:6:

*For I desire **mercy**, not **sacrifice**, and **acknowledgment of God** **RATHER** than **burnt offerings**.*

In other words, faith trumps blood atonement

Proverbs 16:6:

Through love and faithfulness, sin is atoned.

Faith accomplishes atonement.

In the Old Testament, another method of atonement that did not involve bloodshed was the tradition of the "scapegoat," in **Leviticus 16:10**:

But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat.

Compare this to what Jesus was trying to accomplish in the early part of his ministry:

Matthew 4:1–11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

The heart of Christian faith is the "substitutionary atonement" of Christ's death. However, Jesus also established in the wilderness a "substitutionary atonement" through being "tempted in every way just as we are," yet without sinning (**Hebrews 4:15**). In being tempted and not sinning, Jesus atoned for sin, in our stead, by his love and faithfulness in front of God. Thus **Luke 5:24**:

*"But that you may know that the **Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.**"*

Jesus declares that he has the authority to forgive sins ON EARTH! In fact, when anyone linked to Jesus in love and faith, Jesus would apply that authority to forgive them of their sins.

Luke 5:20:

*When Jesus saw their **faith** he said, "**your sins are forgiven.**"*

Luke 7:47:

*Therefore, I tell you, **her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much.** But he who has been forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "**Your faith has saved you; go in peace.**"*

He didn't say, "Your sins will be forgiven after I die." He didn't have to make any sort of blood offering on the spot. He already had the authority via his wilderness course.

Thus, if the whole nation had "done the work of God to believe

in him who He has sent," would not Jesus be able to apply the forgiveness of sin to the nation and world at that time? Would not being prevented from doing that because of Israel's faithlessness cause him an immeasurable "sorrow unto death"?

FAITH IS PRIMARY WHILE BLOOD ATONEMENT IS SECONDARY

We are going to see a consistent placement of the tradition of blood atonement in a secondary, less preferred context. God's primary requirement is for the condition of faith. Where that condition of faith is established, the need for blood atonement is waived.

Hosea 6:6:

*For I desire **mercy**, not **sacrifice**, and **acknowledgment of God** **RATHER** than **burnt offerings**.*

1 Samuel 15:21-22

The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

*But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in **burnt offerings and sacrifices** as much as in **obeying the voice of the LORD**? To **obey is better than sacrifice**, and to **heed is better than the fat of rams**.*

Micah 6:6-8:

*With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with **burnt offerings**, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with **thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil**? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? **He has showed you, O man, what is good.** And what does the LORD require of you? **TO ACT JUSTLY AND TO LOVE MERCY AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.***

The Mount of Blessing and the Mount of Curses

When the Children of Israel were given the law covenant, God asked them (Deuteronomy 27) to divided into two groups. One group was to go stand on top of Mount Gerizim and proclaim all the bless-

ings in the law. The other group was to stand atop Mount Ebal and proclaim all the curses in the law. God asked Moses to erect an altar for burnt offerings on one of the two mountains. Can you guess which one will have the altar? Read the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy and see.

Jesus came to “redeem us from the curse in the law.” (**Galatians 3:13**) The curse “in the law” was called up, however, because there was no faith in Israel. In our next section on the mission of Jesus we must answer the question: If Jesus was to be received in faith in Israel, what, then, were the actual reasons that the nation was unable to recognize Jesus as the coming Lord. Certainly Israel was in a high state of anticipation for the arrival of the messiah, but something prevented them from coming to Jesus. If it was not the “primary will” of God, than what were the practical reasons Jesus could not be recognized in Israel?

*The Old Testament sacrificial system only has meaning as it finds its fulfillment in the ultimate sacrifice of the lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world. The central theme of the book of Hebrews is the absolute necessity of the cross for: (Hebrews 1:23) the purging of sin; (Hebrews 9:12) remission of sin; (Hebrews 9:26) the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself; (Hebrews 10:19) the access into the “Holiest.” By extension, no cross, then: no remission of sin, no purging of sin, no putting away of sin, no access into the presence of God. Jesus was the lamb of God “slain from the foundation of the world.” The heart of historical Christian faith is the “substitutionary atonement” of Christ’s death. **Rev. R.G., Baptist***

Answer:

The Divine Principle fully affirms the atoning work of Christ as the rightful heart of Christian faith and that the cross was the predestined, pre-planned dispensation of God through which sin was cleansed. There are important differences that I would like to clarify. Though we recognize the predestined nature of the cross, we would not agree that the nature of that predestination was absolute. We would see the cross as a limited or conditional predestined providence, which was announced and begun in the last year of the ministry of Jesus.

The limited predestination centers on the condition of faith in Israel toward Jesus. The responsibility to produce the condition of faith is in the hands of the chosen people and it is for this reason

that God uses the word "if" when declaring the ultimate destiny of Israel (in the law of covenant). Though God declares a twofold potential for Israel with regard to their role and destiny, it is the unmistakable primary will of God that Israel fulfill the destiny of "blessing" as expressed in Deuteronomy 30:19.

Also, we see that the cross, as a dispensation of God, would only be invoked as a consequence of Israel's faithlessness, and thus, a primary dispensation, other than the way of the cross, would be fulfilled "if" Israel fulfilled, in faith, toward Jesus. The accomplishment of that primary dispensation is, therefore, the central purpose for which Christ comes. This purpose was promised as a central theme of the law covenant's declaration that blessing would be the destiny of Israel on the condition of faith.

The vision laid out in Old Testament scripture of a "blessed" Israel is one who accepts the king and establishes his kingdom from sea to sea. Jesus calling for faith and repentance, stating that "now is the time, the Kingdom is at hand" indicates that God's primary will was to establish His Kingdom at that time and not to divide the fulfillment of Christ's coming into two comings separated by some 2,000 years. But, again, to establish His Kingdom providentially required the faithful response of the chosen people towards Jesus.

When that faith was not forthcoming, just as in the time of Jeremiah, the dispensation turns from the destiny of blessing to one of curse, that is, from the vision of the Kingdom to the dispensation of the cross and a future return of Christ and the establishing of His Kingdom. That turn represents, also, a turn from the primary will to the consequential will and plan of God. It was "from that time" that Jesus began to explain his suffering and death to come, as it was "from that time," resultant of Israel's faithlessness toward Jesus, that the cross becomes the determination of God and the only course of salvation.

This would not be inconsistent with the Old Testament sacrificial system, in that God states that the tradition of blood atonement is less preferred and superseded by the condition of faith in Israel. God desires mercy and acknowledgment of God rather than blood, as expressed in Hosea 6:6 and 1 Samuel 15:22. Faith in Jesus in Israel would effectively supersede the requirement of blood "under the law" for atonement. Whenever sinners, in Israel at the

time of Jesus, fulfilled that condition (Luke 5:22, 7:27), forgiveness from Jesus, was bequeathed to them. It is also why Hebrews 9:22 cannot declare an absolute Old Testament tradition of blood atonement as the sole means of atonement (and thus, "almost" by blood all things are atoned).

We would not see John's declaration of Jesus as "the lamb of God" to be an emphatic prediction of the cross, anymore than Jesus declaration in John 21:15, that we are "his lambs" is a prediction that believers will shed their blood. The purpose of the Divine Principle revelation from God is not to change the heart of Christian faith but rather to make clear the providential failure of the first Israel and the true purpose for which the chosen nation was called.

In that realization comes also the acute awareness that Jesus' heart in Gethsemane was broken because of the lost providential opportunity. It is the desire to comfort that heart that is the true power and impetus driving Reverend Moon. Just as the failure of Cain and Abel returned to be unbound by Jacob and Esau, the failures of the first Israel have returned to be unbound by today's generation of Christians.