

The Blessed Hope!

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;” –(Titus 2:13)

Diamond & Nugget #9

A common statement that comes from the unbelieving element of society when it comes to the Blessed Hope which we anticipate is, *“How can you be so sure that the Bible is Truth, Accurate and Reliable?”* Of all the questions people could ask me to respond to, this is perhaps the easiest to answer.

Readers of the Bible today have an incredible selection of study tools that make understanding and meaning so much easier than when I first entered ministry in June, 1965. In fact, in 1965, pastors had only two choices for a Bible: the King James and the Revised Standard translations that was first published in 1901. In 1965, the Amplified Bible was published and I purchased a copy as quickly as I could. The Amplified used the KJV translation with the archaic words rendered with contemporary meanings in brackets.

I am the sole surviving computer programmer that “computerized” the King James Bible. I was fortunately at the right place at the right time, since the Rockefeller Foundation issued a grant to the American Institute of Research for \$1.5-million dollars to computerize the King James Bible. Two-thirds of that went to purchase the largest IBM main-frame computer for the University of Pittsburgh’s computer center, an IBM 7090. The University of Pittsburgh was one of the first academic institutions in the country to receive IBM’s newest hardware like IBM 360 in 1965.

In the early summer of 1963, work began on computerizing the KJV Bible to computer searchable magnetic tape. Fifty university students were employed on a part-time basis to begin work on the data entry of the English text of the KJV Bible onto IBM cards. Approximately eight programmers worked on the software for the project at any one time. I was working as a computer programmer for Fisher Scientific, Inc. at the time in the uptown area of Pittsburgh when I was recruited by a computer recruiting agency. In those days, computer jobs were plentiful and skilled programmers were hard to find. I even moonlighted for the local office of ADP, Automatic Data Processing. Employment at the University of Pittsburgh offered a big perk for employees in that you could take 6-credit hours a trimester tuition-free. That was how I intended to pay for my B.S. degree in Civil Engineering, but the Lord changed those plans. Although I digress, I do so to point out that students of the Word of God have some of the best tools to dig down deep into the Bible.

With 28% of the entire Bible genre devoted to what we know as prophecy, or history told in advance, it speaks to the content of the 66 books of the Bible. In my eBook: ***“The Inspired Word of God: Mathematically Proven True!”*** I showed in an early chapter how the Old Testament book of Isaiah, was also a “mini”-Bible, an outline of the entire KJV Bible. I first discovered this fact back in late 1963. In our work to computerize the Bible, the text was coded and recorded on magnetic tape reels just under a foot in diameter. A full reel of magnetic tape in most cases held about 2,450-feet per reel. The computer programs were recorded on smaller reels from six to eight inches in diameter. Computer tapes are similar to the old reel-to-reel music tapes, only wider in width and longer in length. The chief weakness of magnetic tape comes with age, and the ferrous iron coating. To prevent loss of data, the tape library would contain multiple backup generations of a program. As an example, I wrote a payroll program for Fisher Scientific. We required the operations section to keep as many as seven back-ups (previous generations) should there ever be an event that lost file records.

Photographs fade, books rot, and even hard drives eventually fester. When you take the long view, preserving humanity's collective culture isn't a marathon, it's a relay — with successive generations passing on information from one slowly-failing storage medium to the next. However, this could soon change. Scientists from the University of Southampton in the UK have created a new data format that encodes information in tiny nanostructures in glass. A standard-sized CD disc can store around 360 terabytes of data, with an estimated lifespan of up to 13.8 billion years even at temperatures of 190°C. That's as old as the Universe, and more than three times the age of the Earth.

The method is called “five-dimensional data storage,” and was first demonstrated in a paper in 2013. Since then, the scientists behind it say they've more or less perfected their technique, and are now looking to move the technology forward and even commercialize it. *“We can encode anything,”* Aabid Patel, a postgraduate student involved in the research tells *‘The Verge’*. *“We’re not limited to anything — just give us the file and we can print it [onto a disc].”*

In order to demonstrate the format's virtues, the team from the University of Southampton has created copies of the King James Bible, Isaac Newton's *Opticks* (the foundational text of the study of light and lenses), and the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was presented to the UN a few years ago.

You might wonder what this has to do with ***“the Blessed Hope”*** of Titus 2:13. You will not find this information in Wikipedia. What I have shared is relative to the preservation of God's Holy Word and why the KJV Bible, and its Greek and Hebrew manuscripts used to translate it can be validated to be 98.2% accurate. Even the 1.8% corrupted portion has been resolved. It deals with the depth and thoroughness that has gone into the preservation of the original manuscripts and their fidelity to the Creator's Word. The very fact that the Holy Spirit inspired the men who were responsible in establishing the Canon, or the collection of 66 books, is a miracle in itself. The criteria used to guide their work in giving us the final form is the subject of larger books.

God has revealed His message for humanity in different literary genre or categories of writings; each and every book is related intrinsically to one or more of the others. When I noted such concepts like **Pattern = Prologue = Prophecy** or the “**Heptadic Design Feature**” or “**God’s Covenantal Number Seven**”, these are unique examples of God’s unique methods of validating His Word and delivering truth and doctrine (hidden in plain sight), discernable nonetheless. These are concepts most people are unaware of and most Bible colleges and seminaries do not study in theology courses.

Another example is that of Bible “**Harmony**” or “**Harmonization**”. The "harmony" of the Gospels is the agreement of the four biblical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The four New Testament Gospels are like the singers in a four-part choir. They each have their distinct parts to sing, yet the parts combine to make a beautiful composition. Each of the four Gospels give testimony of Jesus from a slightly different perspective, but they all tell the same story. Thus, they are all in harmony with one another. There are also books that align the Gospel accounts chronologically which are called harmonies of the Gospels, and some Bibles have a reference section doing the same thing that is referred to as a harmony of the Gospels.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "synoptic" gospels, because they give a synopsis of most of the same events from the life of Jesus. John stands on its own, filling in gaps that the others leave out. Each one of these Gospels was written for a different audience and emphasizes different things about Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew was written primarily for the Jews and emphasized how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of a kingly Messiah. Mark was written primarily for Roman or Gentile Christians, so it includes a few Old Testament prophecies and explains many Jewish words and customs. Jesus is portrayed in Mark as the Divine Servant. Luke was also written primarily for Gentile believers, as it also explains Jewish customs and uses Greek names. Luke set out to write an orderly narrative of the life of Jesus and presented Jesus as the Son of Man, emphasizing His full humanity. John’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus as the Son of God and includes more of Jesus’ revelations about Himself than any of the other Gospels. It also gives a much more detailed picture of the events during Jesus’ last days.

Some people have attempted to discredit the Bible by pointing out the inconsistencies in the Gospel narratives. They point out differences in the order in which the events are presented or minor details within those events. When the four accounts are placed side by side, we see that they do not all follow the same strict chronology. Much of the narrative in the Gospels is arranged in a topical order, where an event brings to mind a similar thought. This is the way most of us carry on conversations every day. The differences in minor details like the angels at Christ’s tomb -(Matthew 28:5; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12) are also answered by allowing the text to speak for itself. The differences are complementary, not contradictory. New information is added, but it does not take away from the veracity of the old information.

Like the rest of Scripture, the four Gospels are a beautiful testimony of God’s revelation to man. Imagine a tax collector (Matthew), an untrained Jewish lad with a history as a quitter (Mark), a Roman doctor (Luke), and a Jewish fisherman (John), all writing

harmonious testimonies about the events in the life of Jesus. There is no way, without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, that they could have written these amazingly accurate accounts -(2 Timothy 3:16). The historical references, the prophetic references, and the personal details all work together to compose one very detailed, very accurate picture of Jesus - the Messiah, the King, the Servant, and the Son of God. There are books on the “**Harmony of The Gospels**” as well as “**Chronologies of the Bible**”. There is a “Harmony of coherence unequalled by the finest Turkish tapestries.

A Biblical harmony is a **hermeneutic method of analyzing parallel and often disparate accounts within the Bible**. They are used in attempts to resolve apparent conflicts in the text, and demonstrate that together they form a consistent text. This will often take the form of a chart or table showing the harmony among the books of the Bible.

The **Harmonization of Scripture** is the process by which a student has obtained an accurate understanding of a passage and compares that passage of Scripture with all other passages of Scripture. This process can be exhausting and seemingly impossible. The Christian can remove a lot of the intimidation by starting first with other passages on the same subject and then comparing the understanding of the passage to the character of God. Where discrepancies arise or seeming contradictions appear the work must be done to find the error in the believer’s way of understanding.

Verse-Mapping is another method of studying the historical context, transliteration, translation, connotation, and theological framework of a verse in the Bible. Theologians draw upon a wide variety of **Lexicons, Grammars**, software such as Logos, and BibleWorks10, which is no longer available.

A lack of scholarship in studying God’s Word is often from a direct lack of respect to esteem it as the very Word of God. Whenever Scripture is studied it should be done with fear and trembling (deep respect or reverence) in the understanding that the sovereign and eternal God of the Universe is the One from whom the text came and not merely a human mind. Maintaining a proper thought process concerning the respect for God’s Word as the very Word of God is the best policy to combat poor scholarship.

The Holy Spirit will not contradict Himself therefore any apparent contradiction is a misunderstanding by the Christian. This misunderstanding must be sorted out until it is cleared up by an accurate understanding of the previously misunderstood passage. Usually when contradictions appear, it is poor scholarship or bias which proves to be the place wherein the discrepancy exists. It is important to point out that the Holy Spirit guided the men who penned the New Testament, as was the Old Testament.

Jesus' followers undertook a creative exegetical enterprise. The New Testament found fulfillment of messianic prophecy by eisegesis (deductive reasoning) of Old Testament texts. Exegesis (inductive reasoning) is the more accurate method of interpretation. The New Testament writers were engaged in "a highly skillful" method of interpretation. This is evidence that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the New Testament.

Throughout the centuries, commentators and theologians have sought to explain the way the New Testament used the Old. The New Testament generally considered the Old Testament to be directly messianic. The identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah relies on His fulfillment of messianic prophecy. For example, when the doubting John the Baptist sent his disciples from prison to ask Jesus: **"Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"** -(Matthew 11:3), Jesus replied by quoting from Isaiah 35 and 61 to show that He was the Messiah because He had indeed fulfilled messianic prophecy. It appears that Jesus believed in an Old Testament messianic hope and He taught that to His disciples.

Jesus considered the central message of the Old Testament to be messianic. Jesus revealed His view of Old Testament messianic prophecy in two post-resurrection encounters: teaching the two disciples on the Emmaus Road -(Luke 24:25-27), and teaching "the Eleven" gathered in Jerusalem -(Luke 24:44-46). On those two occasions, it was Luke's intention to demonstrate that Jesus understood that the Old Testament was pointing to the Messiah.

It is evident in Jesus' emphasis on the word **"all"** in both those encounters that He believed the entire Old Testament predicted the Messiah. Jesus rebuked the men on the road to Emmaus for being slow to believe in **"all that the prophets have spoken"** (**"epi pasin hois elalēsan hoi prophētai."** -(Luke 24:25). He explained the Scriptures about the Messiah beginning with Moses and **"all the Prophets"** (**"pantōn tōn prophētōn,"** -(Luke 24:27). He interpreted the message about the Messiah **"in all the Scriptures"** (**"en pasais tais graphais,"** -(Luke 24:27). He affirmed that He had to fulfill **"everything written about Me"** (**"panta ta gegrammena... peri emou"**) in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings -(Luke 24:44). Jesus' emphasis on **"all"** shows that He saw the Messiah not merely in occasional isolated texts but in all the Scriptures. The whole Old Testament, and not merely an anthology of proof passages, was looked on as referring to Christ Jesus.

In reviewing these two encounters, two concepts become evident. First, Jesus believed that the messianic prophecies were sufficiently clear that the two disciples on the Emmaus Road should have understood their meaning. He chided them, **"How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken!"** - (Luke 24:25). The implication was that the disciples should have recognized the events of the crucifixion and the reports of the resurrection as fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies. The prophecies were not so unclear that the disciples could be excused for their failure to understand. He did not say, *"O poor men of faith, you could not understand what the prophets had spoken of me because they had not yet been given their full sense of meaning, until this very moment as I am explaining them to you!"*

A second truth evident from these two encounters is that Jesus believed spiritual insight was necessary to understand messianic prophecy. **"He opened their mind to understand the Scriptures"** -(Luke 24:45), demonstrating that divine enlightenment was essential to an accurate understanding of messianic prophecy. In addition to diligent study of messianic texts, the disciples could not understand messianic prophecy without divine enablement.

Jesus not only interpreted the Old Testament as a messianic document but He taught the apostles His Old Testament interpretive method. Since the Messiah Himself taught the disciples how the Old Testament relates to the Messiah, we can only interpret it reasonably as a claim that the Church's use of the Old Testament was in fact based on and legitimized by the teaching of its Founder. Despite some who claim that apostles' use of the Old Testament was derived from their own creativity or the rabbinic midrash method, they actually received their training in the hermeneutics of messianic prophecy from the Messiah Himself. You see, the Bible is a Messianic Prophecy, front to back!

With great clarity they show that the sufferings of Jesus Christ, as well as his glory, were predicted in the Old Testament and that all the Old Testament Scriptures are important. They also show that the way the writers of the New Testament used the Old Testament had its origin, not in their own creativity, but in the post-resurrection teachings of Jesus, of which this passage is a paradigm.

Jesus' hermeneutical perspective (that all the Old Testament pointed to the Messiah) is evident in Peter's preaching. In his sermon at the portico of Solomon, recorded in Acts 3:11-26, he asserted that "**all**" the prophets pointed to the Messiah -(Acts 3:18). Moreover, he maintained that the central message of the prophets was indeed eschatological and messianic. He stated, "**All the prophets who have spoken... announced these days**" -(Acts 3:24). This reflects Jesus' earlier emphasis on the word "**all**". It is quite apparent that Peter is only expressing what he previously learned from Jesus -(Luke 24:44-46).

Jesus did not believe that Old Testament authors wrote of the Messiah without understanding the meaning of their own words. Rather, they were conscious of the messianic hope included in their texts of Scripture, as is evident in John 5:45-47. There Jesus told the Jewish leaders who had rejected Him that He was not the one accusing them before the Father but that Moses was. The rationale for this statement is that if they had believed Moses, they would also believe in Jesus, "**because he wrote about Me**" -(John 5:46). It was their failure to believe Moses' writings that caused these leaders to disbelieve Jesus' words.

The significance of John 5:45-47 with regard to messianic prophecy is that Jesus indicated that Moses knew that he was writing about the Messiah. If Moses had not known of whom He was speaking, how could he accuse those who did not believe him? Imagine how illogical that would be - Moses accusing others for failing to understand what he himself did not comprehend. Moses had to understand that he wrote of Messiah in the Torah or he would not be qualified to accuse those who did not correctly interpret the messianic hope in the Torah. Those who posit the view that all we need is the New Testament are wrong, as much as if I said, the only book of importance is the book of Revelation. No one buys a book to read merely the last chapter. That is nonsense and we cannot begin to fully appreciate "**The Blessed Hope**" by reading Revelation 22.

It is clear that Jesus saw Himself as the direct fulfillment of the Old Testament messianic hope. As will be seen, Jesus taught His view to His disciples, who in turn declared their confidence in the messianic theme of the Hebrew Bible.

The apostles both believed in Jesus as Messiah and effectively proclaimed His Messiahship to ancient Jewish audiences because of their confidence in His fulfillment of messianic prophecy. This will be evident through examination of their hermeneutics and their preaching of messianic prophecy.

Jesus' instruction that the Old Testament was inherently messianic affected the apostles - they believed that the Old Testament prophets understood that they were writing about the Messiah as well. Peter, leader of the apostles, spoke to this in two significant passages, Acts 2:29-31 and 1st Peter 1:10-12.

In Acts 2:29-31 Luke wrote of Peter's first sermon, preached at Pentecost. In that passage having quoted Psalm 16:8-11 as a messianic prophecy of the resurrection, Peter argued that David, writing as a prophet, had the Messiah in view and not himself. Peter asserted that David could not possibly have had himself in mind as the subject of Psalm 16 because David died and his flesh was corrupted. Moreover, David was a prophet who had confidence in God's oath -(the Davidic covenant), so **"Seeing this in advance, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: He was not left in Hades, and His flesh did not experience decay"** -(Acts 2:31).

Significantly, Peter's perspective that David was directly speaking of the Messiah, is in **harmony** with David's own understanding of his writings. In 2nd Samuel 23:1-7, David's last words are recorded. As discussed earlier in chapter 3, the Septuagint rendering has a distinct messianic focus. David's last words, as recorded in the Septuagint, claimed that as the man who was raised up by God, He gave prophetic oracles **"concerning the Messiah of the God of Jacob, the Delightful One of the songs of Israel"** -(2nd Samuel 23:1). Furthermore, David claimed that the Spirit of the Lord spoke by him and through him -(2nd Samuel 23:2-3), thereby recognizing his own role as a prophet. Then, David described the righteous reign of the messianic king, recognized his own failure (**"for not so is my house with God"**), and declared his confidence in God to bring salvation because of the everlasting Davidic covenant -(2nd Samuel 23:3-5).

The parallels between Peter's and David's perspectives are highly significant. Both claimed that David's confidence was rooted in the Davidic covenant, and that David's Psalms spoke directly of the Messiah, and that David could write of the Messiah because he was a prophet. It is not surprising, then, that Peter would claim that the Messiah is the subject of Psalm 16 since David, the author of that Psalm, also made that claim.

The second passage supporting the apostolic perspective that the prophets knew they were writing about the Messiah is found in 1st Peter 1:10-12. Although this passage is frequently cited as teaching that the prophets did not understand the messianic significance of their words, this is not the meaning of these verses.

The prophets searched for the time of fulfillment but not the meaning of their own words. According to this view, the prophets knew they were writing about the sufferings and glories of the Messiah, but they did not know when He would come. Although they knew that they were writing of the Messiah, the prophets searched for the identity of the Messiah and the time of his coming.

According to 1st Peter 1:10-12, the prophets were aware of five facts in their prophecies and they knew they were predicting that:

- 1) The Messiah would come.
- 2) The Messiah would suffer.
- 3) The Messiah would be glorified (in kingly splendor).
- 4) The order of events 2 and 3 was that the suffering came first, and then the glorious period followed.
- 5) This message had been revealed to the prophets not only for their own day, but also for a future generation such as the church of Peter's audience -(vs. 12).

Although they knew that they wrote about the Messiah, they did not know when He would come, nor that Jesus of Nazareth would be the historical referent of their prophecies. According to Peter, the prophets knew the meaning of their words (they were writing about the Messiah), but it was the apostles who identified the referent as Jesus of Nazareth.

The apostles understood Jesus to be the primary object of the prophet's predictions and did not view his messianic fulfillment in some secondary way. As a result, this affected the way the apostles used messianic hope in their preaching, proclaiming their full confidence in Jesus as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy.

If the apostles are reliable teachers of Biblical doctrine, then they are reliable instructors in the science of hermeneutics or understanding. And what better way is there to discover their hermeneutics than to investigate their use of the Old Testament Scriptures?

In this segment of ***“The Blessed Hope”*** I am illustrating how God used ***“Harmony”*** of the Biblical message to point man to his only hope, Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. It's like the innate compass that guides the bees to the flowers for pollination.

In the book of Acts, the central message of the apostles to the Jewish people was that Jesus was both Lord and Messiah -(Acts 2:36). The apostles substantiated their claim with two arguments, one from prophecy and the other from miracles. They proclaimed that "the prophetic scriptures which foretold Messiah's coming have been fulfilled by the ministry, suffering and triumph of Jesus, and the mighty works which he performed were so many 'signs' that in Him the messianic age had arrived." Both of these arguments were brought together in their proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus, which was both a mighty work of God and a direct fulfillment of messianic prophecy. A survey of the apostles' use of messianic prophecy when preaching to Jewish people as recorded in the book of Acts will reveal that they viewed the Hebrew Bible as a messianic

document. This is not an easy concept for many to grasp, yet it is how we should be seeing the entire Bible.

Peter was the first to use messianic prophecy in Jewish evangelism. At Pentecost, in his first sermon, Peter proved his central message with messianic prophecy -(Acts 2:22-36). He declared that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead in fulfillment of Psalm 16:8-11 and that he had ascended into heaven in fulfillment of Psalm 110:1.

In Peter's second sermon at Solomon's Colonnade, after the healing of the lame man - (Acts 3:11-26), he argued, **"But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets—that His Messiah would suffer - He has fulfilled in this way"** -(Acts 3:18). Having called on the crowd to believe in Jesus as the eschatological prophet like Moses who was foretold by Moses himself, Peter further claimed that **"all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also announced these days"** -(Acts 3:24).

Later, when Peter made his defense before the Sanhedrin for healing the lame man, he cited messianic prophecy to explain his position -(Acts 4:8-12). He charged the council with rejecting Jesus in fulfillment of Psalm 118:22: **"The stone despised by you builders, which has become the cornerstone"** -(Acts 4:11).

Stephen also made mention of messianic prophecy in his preaching. When he made his case before the Sanhedrin -(Acts 7), Stephen's primary message was about Israel's long history of rebellion against God. However, Stephen's confidence in messianic prophecy became evident when he charged that the rebellious in the nation had killed the prophets **"who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One"** - (Acts 7:52).

Philip also used messianic prophecy in evangelism. When the Ethiopian official -(Acts 8:26-40), who apparently was a proselyte to Judaism, asked of whom the prophet spoke in Isaiah 53, Philip answered that it was Jesus -(Acts 8:34-35). It is obvious that Philip considered Jesus to be the fulfillment of that prophecy. The correspondence between the description of the Servant and the events surrounding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection was so convincing that the Ethiopian believed immediately and was baptized.

Paul was another apostle who used messianic prophecy when preaching to Jewish people. In his sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian in Antioch -(Acts 13:16-41), he proclaimed that Jesus was the Savior God had sent to Israel in fulfillment of the Davidic covenant -(Acts 13:23). Furthermore, Paul claimed that even Jesus' rejection by the leadership of Israel was a fulfillment of the prophets' predictions. They failed to recognize **"the voices of the prophets that are read every Sabbath"** and thus **"have fulfilled their words by condemning Him"** (Acts 13:27). Furthermore, Paul maintained that God raised Jesus from the dead in fulfillment of Psalms 2:7 and 16:10 -(Acts 13:33-37).

Paul's method in Pisidian Antioch was not unique. In fact, when he went to the synagogue in Thessalonica, he **"reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and showing that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, and saying: 'This is the Messiah, Jesus, whom I am proclaiming to you'"** -(Acts 17:1-3). Since this was Paul's custom, he followed the same procedure in Berea -(Acts 17:10-15), although with greater success than in Thessalonica.

Before Agrippa and Festus, Paul maintained that in his testimony about Jesus he was **"saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place - that the Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles"** -(Acts 26:22-23). This message remained the same at Rome while Paul was under house arrest. There, leaders from the Jewish community came to Paul and he "persuaded them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets" -(Acts 28:23).

Apollos also had made his reputation as an exceptional evangelist among Jewish people through his use of messianic prophecy -(Acts 18:24-28). His effectiveness was rooted in his ability to convince Jews of Jesus' Messiahship by "demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah" -(Acts 18:28).

The apostles' confidence was well-founded as seen in the notable success they experienced. At Pentecost, 3,000 Jewish people believed Peter's word about Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy -(Acts 2:41). From those who heard Peter's message on messianic prophecy after the healing of the lame man, five thousand men believed - (Acts 4:4). Later on, **"a large group of priests became obedient to the faith"** -(Acts 6:7). **Moreover, James was able to say to Paul, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed"** -(Acts 21:20). **Pentecost 2020 is a few days away and it just might be our fulfillment of "The Blessed Hope!"** We have historical precedence and substance to hang our hats on this Feast Day!

The apostles consistently used messianic prophecy in Jewish evangelism. They did this primarily because they were convinced of its veracity through the teaching they had received from Jesus Himself -(Luke 24:44-47). The apostles also found it to be an effective strategy with Jewish people because in those days Jewish people regarded the Old Testament as the basis of all religious authority.

The New Testament embraced the idea that the Hebrew Bible was deeply messianic. Further, that Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples believed and taught that Jesus was the fulfillment of the messianic hope of the Old Testament. Johnson rightly maintains this when he asks: What do the New Testament authors think of the Old Testament? Further, what adjectives would they find useful in describing it? I suggest that they held the Old Testament to be historical revelation, strongly messianic in content, often predictive... in its forward look, and always inspired and inerrant in its teaching.

More likely, Jesus and the apostles read the Hebrew Bible in a holistic way, seeing the whole Old Testament as messianic. Thus, by reading the Hebrew Bible according to the compositional strategies of the authors and the final canonical shape of the books,

Jesus and His apostles accurately communicated the messianic theme of the Hebrew Bible. But the point of this Diamond and Nugget illustration of Scriptural **“Harmony”** has been that if asked "Is the Old Testament really messianic?" Jesus and His apostles, based on the New Testament evidence, would answer with a resounding "Yes!"

The doctrinal emphasis now moves from the Incarnation to the Second Advent. Paul calls it ***"that Blessed Hope."*** It is not just a wish but divine assurance for life beyond this life. Paul referred to this event in his other pastoral letters -(see 1st Timothy 6:14; 2nd Timothy 4:1). Here he wrote of the ***"glorious appearing"*** (***epiphaneian***) of Jesus Christ. His first coming was with fullness of grace -(Titus 2:11, compare John 1:14). His second coming will be in the fullness of glory.

This phrase ***"the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"*** can refer to both Father and Son. It can also be translated "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" and focus on the Son's deity. No matter which translation is accepted, the primary sense is that Jesus is coming again, and He will be seen in His true glory and majesty. This is our blessed hope!

People are saved only by God's grace - that loving and merciful attitude of God that freely gives his immeasurable blessings to those who do not deserve them. When people accept the salvation that this grace brings, they learn that their most fitting response is to turn from their former sinful ways and follow the ways of God. They have a desire for holiness, and this desire is increased by their anticipation of Christ's return.

Christ died not merely to save people from the penalty of sin, but to save them from all wickedness. He wants them to be pure in their everyday lives and eager to do good. We are in the realm where doctrine of what a Christian is to be, something that has gone by the wayside in much of the 20th and 21st century, replaced by feelings, and a cafeteria Christian point of view. In Judaism, the ultimate revelation or ***"appearing"*** of God would signal the end of the present age and the beginning of the new one -(cf. Titus 2:12). Diaspora Judaism commonly called God "the great God" and saw Him as a ***"saviour"*** (in Greek religion, the latter term often meant deliverer or benefactor). According to the most likely reading of the grammar here, Paul applies this divine title to Jesus.

Paul expanded the meaning of ***"Saviour"*** -(Titus 2:10) by explaining what was involved in this salvation that we have through Jesus Christ. The emphasis is on grace - God's lavish favor on undeserving sinners. Paul pointed out three wonderful ministries of the grace of God -(Titus 2:11-14). Think of the Prodigal Son in your understanding of what the fullness of God's Grace as it is manifest in your own life!

- Grace redeems us
- Grace reforms us
- Grace rewards us

προσδεχόμενοι as already stated above, describes the glad expectancy which is the ruling and prevailing thought in the lives of men looking for their Lord's return. Our

hearts yearn for the **“Blessed Hope”**, in ways that only a Bride or Bridegroom has. The other day, I took time out to watch again Brent Miller’s DVD *“Before the Wrath”*. The video is the re-enactment of the Hebrew “theme” of the Bride. If you are like me, you are having a hard time containing yourself. It always gets the darkest before the dawn!

Something that few Bible students ever consider or appreciate is that KJV Bible meets the 7 C’s of written communication: **Clarity, Completeness, Coherence, Conciseness, Credibility, Correctness, and Continuity** – these are all the 7 C’s of communication – collectively, this is what is required to achieve more effective communication practices which eventually lead to a more effective learning process. Each C in itself is already an enormous task to maintain but more so when we consider they are not independent of one another, they all work together to help us communicate most efficiently.



Blessings, in the Name of All Names, Jesus Christ of Nazareth,

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