

# **“Unbelief - The Point of Reckoning”**

## **Part 4**

In the last segment readers were encouraged to consider the value of studying the Bible by “theme” or “pattern”. When reading the word of God, people all too often begin with no plan at all in mind. So it happens that when one fails to plan they are actually planning to fail. As it is with life in general, this rule of thumb also applies to studying the Bible.

We find another pattern similar to the one presented in Part 3 that discusses the **prophecies of the Messiah coming to earth**.

- **Enoch** - the Lord coming with ten thousands of His saints -(Jude 14). The prediction will have a preliminary and partial fulfillment when the Lord Jesus returns to earth after the Tribulation to destroy His foes and to reign as King. It will have its complete and final fulfillment at the end of the Millennium when the wicked dead are judged at the Great White Throne.<sup>(a)</sup>
- **David** - the Lord builds up Zion, then He will appear in glory -(Psalms 102:16) This would be the time when the nation of Israel, now set aside, would be brought back into favor again. While waiting for this restoration, the people of Israel hold the stones of Zion dear and show favor to her dust. This is seen, for example, in the deep regard they have for the Western Wall, formerly called the Wailing Wall, and their tremendous sentimental attachment for the old city of Jerusalem. When Zion welcomes back her King, the Gentile nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all earth's rulers shall pay homage to Him.<sup>(a)</sup>
- **Zechariah** - His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives in the east - (Zechariah 14:4). It is certain that he will stand in the latter day on the earth, at the time of the resurrection, and will come down from heaven in like manner as he went up; it seems very probable that he will descend upon that very spot of ground from whence he ascended, Job 19:25.<sup>(b)</sup>
- **Zechariah** - The Lord shall be King over all the earth -(Zechariah 14:9) The Lord is not simply the “God” of the earth, in that day He will also be the king over all the earth. Zechariah is referring to something more than God’s inherent sovereignty over His creation. God has always been the God over the earth. In this day, the Lord will become the king over all the earth. **He will be the primary political leader of Israel and the nations of the earth.**<sup>(1)</sup> There will be great conversions in all places; Gospel churches will be set up and ordinances administered everywhere; the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; his kingdom will be from sea to sea, from the eastern to the western one, and his dominion will reach to the ends of the earth.<sup>(b)</sup>

Since the focus of this series is “Unbelief – The Point of Reckoning” let’s look at this **general theme of Jesus return.**

- Israel will be reborn suddenly ***“Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? Saith thy God.”*** –(Isaiah 66:8-9).
- The land will blossom and fill the world with fruit ***“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.”*** –(Isaiah 35:1) ***“He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”*** –(Isaiah 27:6).
- The Jews will return from the four corners of the world to rebuild ***“And 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, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”*** –(Isaiah 11:11-12).
- Jerusalem will be a controversy among the nations ***“Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.”*** –(Zechariah 12:2-3).
- The enemies of Israel will attempt to destroy her –(read Ezekiel 38 and 39).
- The Messiah will return to save Israel from destruction –(Zechariah 12:4-10).

The primary revelation in these passages is that the Messiah would come from heaven and set up His kingdom on earth. Both the Messiah’s appearance and the establishment of His kingdom rule was revealed in the Old Testament. This coming was known by the Hebrew people for over 1,500 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. **But the Messiah’s appearance for the church was hidden from the prophets.** They had

no knowledge of a coming church. The word “church” is explicitly found only twice in the Gospels. Matthew 16:18 and 18:17 are the only two direct references to an entity known as the “church” (twice in 18:17). The “Church” is birthed at Pentecost in Acts 2, and is only noted **77X** times in 76 verses. As an aside note that the covenant number “seven” is repeated twice when referencing the “Church” in Scripture.

The return of the Messiah to gather His people (at the Rapture) was **a hidden mystery, even though the term is found in the Hebrew text.** The “mystery” of the Rapture and other truths were only made known to the Apostle Paul.

- ***“Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret until the world began”.*** -(Romans 16:25).
- ***“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory”.*** - (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:7).
- ***“Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself.”*** - (Ephesians 1:9).
- ***“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ”.*** -(Ephesians 3:9).

### **Three major mysteries that were hidden include:**

1. The church’s birth was hidden -(Ephesians 3:10-21).
2. The Gentile’s blessing of redemption was hidden -(Galatians 3:13-14).
3. The catching away of believers was a hidden mystery -(1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16-18).

### **This “Mystery” was hidden in three parts:**

1. God would form a new nation and a spiritual house. -(Deuteronomy 32:21). This new nation **is the Church** -(Romans 9:24-25; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9-10).
2. The **Gentiles** would compose this new nation and new spiritual house. - (Isaiah 11:10; 42:6) The **Gentiles** would receive the light of God -(Isaiah 60:3; 60:5; Malachi 1:11).

3. After completing the times of the Gentiles, God will open Israel's eyes. - (Isaiah 42:6-7; confirmed in Romans 11:25). Luke 21:24 is our clue that the times of the Gentiles must first conclude before the Messiah returns.

At this juncture in this progressive revelation we discover that both Jesus Christ and angels **announced His coming back.**

- Jesus said He would return -(John 14:1-3).
- Angels said he would return -(Acts 1:11).

### **We can now safely conclude the following:**

- The disciples thought Jesus Christ would restore the kingdom -(Acts 1:11).
- Jesus Christ had another plan - to birth the Church -(Matthew 24:14).
- The Church was a **Mystery** hidden from the Old Testament prophets.
- God chose a Jew named Saul (later named Paul) to receive a special revelation.

Paul was a chosen vessel to minister to the Gentiles, and wrote 13 books of the New Testament: Romans, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. These epistles (books) bear Paul's signature. The book of Hebrews is considered to be written by an anonymous author, but it bears Paul's style and farewell salutation; thus many scholars perceive it to be written by Paul.

Those possessing a Dispensational understanding of the Bible consider the apostle Paul with great esteem and have high regard for his writings. Those spiritualizing the Bible or allegorizing the Bible do not give Paul due respect. There are some books written about the Apostle Paul that contain almost as many pages as the Bible itself. Perhaps for people today, Paul is the most important major teacher on the Rapture, particularly the Pre-Tribulation Rapture since it was a revelation given directly to Paul by God.

### **Paul was a chosen vessel to minister to the Gentiles.**

1. He was a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin -(Romans 11:1).
2. He was educated under Rabbi Gamaliel as a Pharisee -(Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5).
3. He was converted while traveling to Damascus -(Acts 9:5-8).
4. He went into Arabia to be mentored and tutored by Jesus Christ - (Galatians 1:12 and 17).

***“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace. To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus”.*** -(Galatians 1:15-17). ***“For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem from above is free, who is the mother of us all.”*** -(Galatians 4:25-26). **“Agar”** is the Hebrew word for “Hagar”. Hagar and Ishmael were not part of God’s Covenant plan. The covenant given at Sinai produced slavery; thus Hagar, a slave-girl, was a fitting type of the law. Hagar represents Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish nation, and the center for the unsaved Israelites who were still seeking to obtain righteousness by keeping the law. These, together with their children, their followers, are “in bondage with her”. For Paul to link unbelieving Israelites with Hagar rather than with Sarah, with Ishmael rather than with Isaac, was a stinging characterization.<sup>(a)</sup> She represents the covenant of the Law, given at Mt. Sinai. Because the Jews misunderstood its purpose and expected to be justified by works, they became in bondage to the Law.

The **“Jerusalem which now is”** represents the **present state of the Jews today**, still in bondage to the Law. The **“Jerusalem which is above”** represents the new covenant of grace. Sarah represents the heavenly Jerusalem, the promise of faith and freedom. Sarah was mother of the promised miracle-child, Isaac, and corresponds to the covenant of Abraham (inferred in Galatians 4:24). This covenant promised **a future “new covenant”** that would begin at the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Paul used the concept she is our mother to show that faith, not adherence to the law, is the source of our salvation. Paul was offering the Galatians the opportunity to claim that they were descendants of Abraham through faith, and that they possessed citizenship in the spiritual Jerusalem. For Gentiles to be included in this way would be as miraculous as the birth of Isaac.<sup>(c)</sup> Paul’s readers would soon understand how this bondage was true of the Pharisees and those who followed them.

The importance in differentiating between the terms “Law” and “Grace” has to do with the Arabian link or the Mount Sinai connection in that **Paul and Moses both received special revelation from God in Arabia:**

- Moses received the Torah on Mount Sinai -(Exodus 24:16).
- Mount Sinai is located in Arabia -(Galatians 4:25).
- Paul went there after his conversion -(Galatians 1:15-17).

Pastor Bob

**Notes:**

1. <https://samuelwhitefield.com/1630/was-zechariah-14-fulfilled-in-ad-70>

**Commentaries:**

- a. Believer's Bible Commentary
- b. John Gill's Exposition of the Bible
- c. Life Application New Testament Commentary