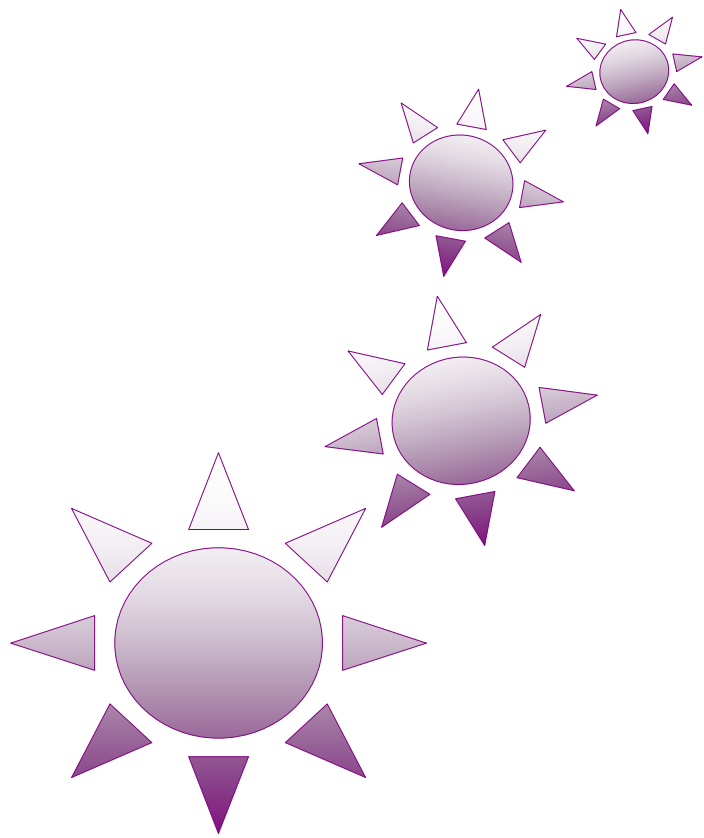


The Storyline and . . .

Waiting for His Arrival

Reading and Understanding the Bible as Story



Advent Devotional

Waukesha Bible Church
Dr. Patrick J. Griffiths

WAITING FOR HIS ARRIVAL AND THE STORYLINE OF THE BIBLE

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Waukesha Bible Church
S53 W24079 Glendale Road
Waukesha, Wisconsin 53189
www.waukeshabible.org

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“The Garden and the Fall Speak to the Hero’s Arrival”



Prayer:

*Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when He shall come again in His glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*¹

Read: Genesis 1:26-30; 2:15-25; 3:8, 15, 21



Fellowship

The Bible is a story written by God with Himself as the lead character. At the core of The Story is the relationship God has within Himself as a Trinity and His desire to share this relationship with that which He creates.

The Story is based on a simple, yet profound idea that within the Trinity there is communion and companionship. This relationship speaks of intimacy and transparency. It is marked by ease and freedom. There is no fear of discovery or exposure, only delight and knowing. There is a freedom within the Trinity that is incomprehensible to our fallen state (we will get to this in just a moment). There is no need of restraint or fear of exposure. There is only love without condition, acceptance without requirement and service without reward. The joy that marks this relationship is a result of complete harmony within oneself and with one another.

This same joy was God’s goal in creating. He created so that His creation might exist in harmony with Him. He chose to share this union, marking the Trinity with His creation. The design of creating humanity was so that they might experience the consequences of unhindered fellowship with one another and with their God.

The opening scenes of Genesis 1 and 2 speak to this. Part of the image and likeness of God (1:26) is the joy of entering into unrestricted union with others. **God transfers this capacity to mankind so that they might know and experience what He already enjoys.** In those opening statements the Creator and created relationship is noted. God speaks and man is to listen and obey. His call for them to fill the earth, subdue it and rule over it (1:28) is a blessing from Him. God, as the Creator, transfers to His people the same rights His position gives Him. Notice how the *Good News Translation* captures this idea.

Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; **they will be like us and resemble us.** They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small." (Genesis 1:26; *Good News Translation*).

Like God, they are to create, subdue and rule over what is created. The Hebrew word for “rule” occurs only twice in Genesis and it means to rule over or to subjugate (1:26, 28). The clear meaning of this word is “to put in charge of.”

And God blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. **I am putting you in charge of** the fish, the birds, and all the wild animals. (8; *Good News Translation*).

All of this speaks to God's desire to share Himself with His people. As much as finite humanity can process the infinite God, God "blesses" them so that they might know Him and enjoy Him forever.

God calls Adam to express his dominion over the animal world and subdue it by naming each of the parts, but by the end of the process there is something that is empty within him (2:18-25). Something appears out of place. It becomes evident that there is nothing created that corresponds to Adam's essence. This deficiency within non-personable creation is notable. God allows Adam to experience this solitude of being so that he will come to comprehend just how wonderful relational intimacy can be. For humanity to fully grasp the degree of intimacy enjoyed within the Trinity, God creates for Adam a counterpart who is like him in every way . . . but uniquely different (2:20). All of this is a shadow of something greater. The shadow gives him a taste of what awaits him in his relationship with God.

The relationship humanity has within the context of marriage and with other image bearers shadows the larger truth. It is to provide a foretaste of something far more glorious. The greater truth and more glorious experience can only be satisfied by and in God. **It is the itch that must be scratched, and only God can do the scratching.** It is what Augustine called, "Restless." Consider the larger context of His statement, "Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

"Great art Thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is Thy power, and of Thy wisdom there is no end. And man, being a part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee, man, who bears about with him his mortality, the witness of his sin, even the witness that Thou "resistest the proud, " - yet man, this part of Thy creation, desires to praise Thee. **Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.** Lord, teach me to know and understand which of these should be first, to call on Thee, or to praise Thee; and likewise to know Thee, or to call upon Thee.

Oh! how shall I find rest in Thee? Who will send Thee into my heart to inebriate it, that I may forget my woes, and embrace Thee my only good? What art Thou to me? Have compassion on me, that I may speak. What am I to Thee that Thou demandest my love, and unless I give it Thee art angry, and threatenest me with great sorrows? Is it, then, a light sorrow not to love Thee? Alas! Alas! tell me of Thy compassion, O Lord my God, what Thou art to me. "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." So speak that I may hear. **Behold, Lord, the ears of my heart are before Thee; open Thou them,** and "say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." **When I hear, may I run and lay hold on Thee. Hide not Thy face from me. Let me die, lest I die, if only I may see Thy face.**" (St. Augustine of Hippo, Confessions, 1,1.5)

It was God's custom to visit Adam and Eve during the day. It is still His custom to visit with us each day. The communion He enjoyed as Trinity was to be enjoyed by His creation. Each day His arrival was looked to with expectancy and joy. Adam and Eve loved His arrival and waited with anticipation and elation. This was something from which they did not hide or fear. Yet something

happened that broke the trust and crushed the innocence. Adam and Eve stopped listening, and rather than enjoy what God gave they chose their own means of “scratching the itch.”

Their rejection of God’s direction and the pursuit of their own severed the once harmonious relationship. It is sin that now marks the relationship between God and His people. Sin becomes the obstacle that is insurmountable by human means. It is only after the fact that Adam and Eve realize that paradise is now lost. Yet it isn’t the paradise of the garden that is lost but rather that of the soul. No longer will they enjoy a relationship with God that is unmarked by fear and anxiety. What God enjoys within Himself mankind will never know again . . . until God sets things right.

God speaks to this in a **promise** and a **picture**. The promise is found in Genesis 3:15.

I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; **he will bruise your head**, and you will bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:15; *The Complete Jewish Bible*).

The picture is found in Genesis 3:21.

ADONAI, God, made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. (Genesis 3:21; *The Complete Jewish Bible*).

Both the promise and the picture speak to something better. From the promise, God gives a picture. What humanity does through their rebellion against and rejection of God, God begins to set aright. Both the promise and the picture are put in play so that His people will long for His arrival. He does still meet with His people, yet there is something more. There is coming a day when His promised seed will fully and finally crush the head of the serpent whereby removing sin and its offspring. But that day had not yet come, thus the promise and the picture.

Like Adam and Eve we have been fashioned in the image and likeness of our God, thus enabling us to enjoy communion with Him and with one another. Tragically so, this fellowship is marred by sin, and it is sin that prohibits us from entering into any and all relationships without fear or anxiety. It is sin that causes us to live protected lives. It is sin that empowers us to be condemnatory and judgmental of others. It is sin that produces within us elements of darkness that exclude and spoil our relationships. Thus we wait for His arrival, when He will purge from us this wickedness so that we might once more enjoy His presence anew.

May our lives be marked by joy at His daily arrival, and may we have an enduring longing for His full and final presence. In Jesus’ name we wait and long. Amen.

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

“The Passover Speaks to the Hero’s Arrival”

2

Prayer:

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.¹



It is impossible to grasp any author writing into His own Story the offering up of His only begotten Son so those who hate Him might become His sons and daughters. This blood offering, made voluntarily by the Son and under the will of the Father, forms the fabric of the entire Story. It defies reason and sensibility; yet it is the nature of the offering and the one who offered that forms the immeasurable essence of the mystery.

Some would decry this as barbaric and abusive, yet its incomprehensibility forms its beauty. The communion for whom we were designed and created is only restorable through God’s initiative and intervention. It is only through the shedding of blood that harmony with God can be restored. And it is no ordinary blood, but the very life-blood of God incarnate. God wrote redemption into The Story thus presupposing and necessitating sin. Redemption is essential because enslavement, debt and bondage exist. Each tyrant speaks to the necessity of redemption. This is seen in Genesis 3:15 and 21. It is seen in the offering brought by Abel. It is seen in all the offerings offered throughout the Book of Genesis. Each speaks to a greater truth. Each one is placed by the author in order to entice and unveil. Each creates anticipation and participation. All of them lead to the defining moment in a nation’s life when God would redeem His people from their enslavement.

God led His people into bondage so they might learn of Him through His words and works. His means of deliverance would come through the shedding of innocent blood. God would require each family to bring a blood offering. It would be the sign whereby the angel of death would spare the family and “Passover” the believing family. God invited His people to believe His promise and to fulfill His word. All who resisted Him and failed in following His desires would taste death in the taking of the first born male. God made good on what He said both in the deliverance and in the damnation.

In the Passover meal, entire families reflected on and celebrated the grace of God in His provision to pass over their iniquity and identify them as His people. The night itself was spent in vigilance and watchful care. It would come to be celebrated annually as a memorial to God’s deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage and as an identifier that they were His people and He was their God. Entire families would mark this moment. Each child within the family partook, and in partaking parents would explain the mystery of who God is and what He did and who they were because of it. Through the visual and imagery His people would be able to remember and retell the “gospel” whereby they were delivered by their God. Parents were to make the event a teachable moment when they could explain to their children, through symbols, the grace and power of God and His eternal truths. This idea is no different than today. As we reflect on God’s Story He has given us the means to remember our deliverance from sin’s debt and adoption into His family through image and

symbol. The Lord's Table forms for us the "Passover Meal" whereby we remember and retell The Story. We should use the Lord's Table as a visual means of teaching our children the great truths of God's "good news of great joy." Just like so also; just like the Israelites partake of the Passover meal as a family, so also are we as families to lead our children to the table so that we might instruct them in God's provision and grace.

We should use all of God's work to remember and retell The Story, but especially the two acts of water baptism and the Lord's Table. Each are means God put in play so that we might never forget and always remember The Great Story of His redemptive activity.

“The Exodus Speaks to the Hero’s Arrival”

3

Prayer:

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation; Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins. [Thank you for saving us from our sins] so that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.²

Read: Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Exodus 12:21-28



God designed us for fellowship with Him as Trinity. What sin ruined, God redeems and restores. Each promise and every picture are invitations to believe, to hope when all appears lost. We are called to trust when everything would argue otherwise. For forty years the nation of Israel followed the counsel of God through Moses. Decades wore thin by unbelief and open rebellion, streams of questions created seas of defiance. Into such a sea, many drowned. Yet within a generation of rejection, the seeds for future pursuit were equally planted. Though some fell, others followed.

Throughout Israel’s wanderings, God met with His people. He called and invited. He wooed and pursued. He never stopped doing what He does. It is impossible for us to fathom why God would yearn for us to share in His eternal and harmonious communion. Yet He desires for His people to experience the joy He has in Himself and to share this joy with one another. It is truly unfathomable. Yet this is the essence of The Story.

Moses was coming to the end of his earthly ministry. The idea that the nation would be without his leadership was unimaginable. Who would speak for God? Who would know what God wants known and lead them in it? Here in Deuteronomy 18:15-22 God promises to rise up another prophet just like Moses — One who will speak for God and lead them in His ways.

The promised prophet, therefore, was to resemble Moses in this respect, that he would act as mediator between Jehovah and the people, and make known the words or the will of the Lord.³

It is not easy for us who have a completed canon to appreciate what life would be like in its absence. The prophet spoke the Word of God. He came with revelation and authority. His word was binding. What would happen in the absence of such an individual? What would happen to us in the absence of the written Word of God? This is the weight of what the nation faced in Deuteronomy. They were about to enter into the promise land. For forty long years they saw the provision of God and heard the persistent grumbling of unbelief. Now the believing remnant sought comfort in a promise. The promise spoke to a future prophet, one like Moses, who would speak for God and lead them into the truth.

Every prophet came as a shadow of something greater. Each spoke in behalf of God; each came with an authority that was alien to them. But one would come. Each, in their turn, would wait and long

for the arrival of the One; the One who was to come. Generations would come and go. One thousand four hundred years would pass before the promise would be fulfilled, but fulfilled it would be.

In the fullness of time God would send His Son, His only begotten Son to be His Prophet, His Priest, and His King (Gal. 4:4). In explaining the Holy Spirit's arrival in dramatic form, Peter would cite Deuteronomy 18:15, 18 when he said,

Moses said, "THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you." (Acts 3:22)

New Testament Scholar, A.T. Robertson, notes how, "Like me, as me, literally; Moses (De 18:14-18) claims that God raised him up as a prophet and that another and greater one will come, the Messiah. The Jews understood Moses to be a type of Christ (John 1:21)."⁴ "This prophecy, therefore, is very properly referred to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as having been fulfilled in Him."⁵

It is for this reason, Philip in speaking to Nathanael says, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (John 1:45).

The Jewish nation was waiting for the prophet's arrival. When John the Baptist began his ministry those who inquired of him asked this very question.

They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "**I am not.**" "**Are you the Prophet?**" And he answered, "No." (John 1:21).

When Stephen was defending his acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, he noted Deuteronomy 18:18 as evidence in his defense.

This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, "GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN." (Acts 7:37)

"Stephen undoubtedly means to argue that Moses was predicting the Messiah as a prophet like himself who is no other than Jesus so that these Pharisees are in reality opposing Moses. It was a neat turn."⁶

With every prophet there was expectancy, a waiting. Those who heard the echo knew the voice behind it. There is also the promise and picture of a greater king and mediating priest. The scepter will not depart from Judah (Gen. 49:8-12) and "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering" (Gen. 22:7, 8). These are the promises, and these are the pictures speaking to larger truths.

What God began in Genesis 3:21 with the slaying of an innocent animal in order for blood to be shed and a covering to be secured, He continued to "image" to the nation. It is seen in Genesis 22 with the offering of the son Isaac by his father Abraham. It is also seen in the Exodus from Egypt by the Israelites in Exodus 12:21-28.

For four hundred and thirty years the nation of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt eventually succumbing to the despotic enslaving power of a Pharaoh.

²³ Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel **sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.** ²⁴ **So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵ **God saw** the sons of Israel, and **God took notice** of them. (Exod. 2:23-25)

⁷ The LORD said, **"I have surely seen** the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have **given heed to their cry** because of their taskmasters, for **I am aware of** their sufferings. ⁸ **So I have come down to deliver them** from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ⁹ Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, **so that you may bring My people**, the sons of Israel, **out of Egypt.**" (Exod. 3:7-10)

It was God who led them into the land of Egypt so that they might learn to wait and yearn for the deliverance that only He could provide. Remember, the "itch," the yearning, the longing can only be "scratched" by God. In Egypt His people would cry out for His deliverance. God would never forget His people, and He would and does take notice of them. The fellowship, the communion that exists within the holy Trinity is what God designed man to share first with Himself and then with one another. He is inviting and calling them into this union of sacred rest.

God is always arriving, and we must always wait for His coming with hope and anticipation. But how? How would God bring His people from the place of bondage into His glorious rest? The one event that would mark the nation forever is the Exodus. The provision is in Exodus 12:21-28.

¹² "For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. ¹³ **The blood shall be a sign for you** on the houses where you live; and **when I see the blood I will pass over you**, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ **Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.** . . ." ²¹ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb. ²² You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts; and none of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. ²³ For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and **when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.** ²⁴ And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. ²⁵ When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this rite. ²⁶ And when your children say to you, **'What does this rite mean to you?'** ²⁷

you shall say, **'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'** And **the people bowed low and worshiped.** ²⁸ Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did." (Exod. 12:12-28)

God is always expanding on a singular idea: "without the shedding of blood there is no atonement for sin" (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Those who obeyed God were saved from the destroying angel. From this event they were carried through the destruction of Egypt's armies. The Passover Lamb speaks to something greater. It is a shadow cast by the divine image. Its significance lies in what it speaks to. It promises and pictures something more. Just as a nation waited for God's arrival, so also must we. There is this hankering that nothing created can address. The Passover Lamb and the Exodus event are both "scratches," but their greater fulfillment happens at Calvary when the final and fullest Lamb is offered up in behalf of His people and He, in offering, delivers His people from their bondage.

Like the nation, we wait for the King who will watch over His people; we wait for the Prophet who will speak to His people and we wait for the Priest who will mediate for His people before their God. We wait for the sacrifice that will put an end to sin "once for all" (Heb. 9:28; 10:10). We wait for a final deliverance from sin's bondage. The end is sure and the outcome inevitable, but we wait . . . and long for Him.

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

² <http://www.bcponline.org/>

³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:15.

⁴ A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Acts 7:37.

⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Deuteronomy 18:15.

⁶ A.T. Robertson's *Word Pictures of the New Testament* on Acts 7:37.

“The Kings Speak to the Hero’s Arrival”

4

Prayer:

*Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.*¹

Read: Genesis 1:26-28; 49:8-12; 2 Samuel 7:8-17; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:32, 33



Throughout The Storyline, God promises He will rule over His people. Each shadow calls us to wait. The King is coming, and we are to await His arrival. But who is this King and how will He rule? God as King speaks to a specific relationship He has with His subjects and to the qualifying characteristics of this rule.

His right to rule is established by who He is as God and what He has done as Creator. An issue within the idea of ruling is whether or not the ruler has power without authority or power with authority, and then how far reaching is the power.

Simply put, “Does God’s rule imply control and if so, how far reaching is His control?”

The relationship God has to His people is described by various metaphors and similes. He is like a husband to his wife, a shepherd to his sheep, a foundation to a building, the creator to that which is created, a king over his subjects and realm, even a branch to its vines. All of this speaks to levels and degrees of intimacy, fellowship, communion, necessity, and economical hierarchy. There is neither abuse nor fear within the context of the relationship. God’s rule is marked by what is right and wrong within the context of mercy and grace. Whatever God is, in what this means as God, is completely amalgamated in the wholeness of who He is. Thus no part of God is independent of the whole. God’s sense of justice (i.e. right and wrong) can never be separated from His sense of grace, mercy, love, and all other knowable virtues. The reason why this is foundational in our understanding of God as King with a reign that is absolute is because we associate abuse and exploitation with power. God does neither. He is similar to the shadow displayed in human government, but His rule is without sin. Again, let me state this point anew, “The exercising of His rule is without sin.” There is nothing negative or harmful marking God’s rule.

This does not negate His justice against sin and those who perpetrate it in rebellion and rejection of Him, but even the outcome of this act by Him is for His glory and our good. No matter how we might process the rule of God, we must always remember that **He is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to be unkind**, even when it would appear otherwise from our perspective and circumstances.

Initially I would like to establish the idea that woven into The Storyline of the Bible God speaks to the idea of Kingship and how this shadow foretells of something greater. We will begin in the Garden and the original creation of mankind and His ordering of him.

First, as those who carry the image and likeness of God, humanity has been given the right by him to subdue the earth and to have dominion over it (Gen. 1:26, 28). In this capacity they are to rule over all things created. In so doing, they are mediating in God's behalf. They become what He is: a creator (i.e. "be fruitful and multiply") and ruler (i.e. "subdue and rule over"). They are, however, mere shadows of the real thing, yet shadows nonetheless. And as shadows they speak to the greater truth that God is both Creator and ruler over all He creates.

From this simple directive and seed comes a much larger plant. In the establishing of the Patriarchs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, comes the twelve tribes of Israel. And from a singular tribe will come promises and pictures of a future king who will rule and reign in behalf of God as Trinity over all things created.

Second, the scepter will not depart from Judah (Gen. 49:8-12). When Jacob was about to die in the land of Egypt he spoke the following prophetic blessing on his son Judah:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (Gen. 49:10)

To what does the scepter speak? "The scepter is the symbol of regal command, and in its earliest form it was a long staff, which the king held in his hand when speaking in public assemblies; and when he sat upon his throne he rested it between his feet, inclining towards himself."²

And how are we to understand the idea of "Shiloh"? "We regard Shiloh, therefore, as a title of the Messiah, in common with the entire Jewish synagogue and the whole Christian Church, in which although there may be uncertainty as to the grammatical interpretation of the word, there is perfect agreement as to the fact that the patriarch is here proclaiming the coming of the Messiah."³ This same idea is present in Numbers 24:17.

This idea of scepter continues throughout the Old Testament text. When the children of Israel were wandering through the wilderness, Balak of Moab sends for Balaam. In his oracles "against" the children of Israel, Balaam the son of Beor said,

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, **A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab**, And tear down all the sons of Sheth. (Num. 24:17)

It can also be seen in Psalm 45 and the use of this text in Hebrews 1:8. The author of Hebrews cites Psalm 45:6 as evidence and proof of the Son's preeminence.

But of the Son He says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE RIGHTEOUS SCEPTER IS THE SCEPTER OF HIS KINGDOM." (Heb. 1:8)

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; **A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom**. (Ps. 45:6)

From the tribe of Judah the shadow will become more distinct and definable.

Third, the offspring offered to King David (2 Sam. 7:8ff) will give us additional substance in clarifying this coming King who is the antitype to all previous types.

- The King will provide a place for His people (v. 10a)
- The King will provide protection for His people (v. 10b)
- The King will provide peace for His people (v. 11)
- The King will provide posterity for His people (vv. 12a, 13, 16)
- The King will provide parenting for His people (v. 14)

From this defining picture, all future pictures will come. Listen to the following thought from the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah preached in the 8th century BC (@722BC). The Assyrian nation is about to destroy the Northern Tribes of Israel. Within this context he provides this picture and promise:

¹ But there will be **no more gloom for her who was in anguish**; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, **but later on He shall make it glorious**, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. ² **The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.** ³ You shall multiply the nation, **You shall increase their gladness; They will be glad in Your presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.** ⁴ **For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,** The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. ⁵ **For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.** ⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; **And the government will rest on His shoulders;** And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ **There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.** (Isa. 9:1-7)

There are at least four salient features.

- The absence of gloom and darkness (vv. 1-2)
- The occasion for celebration because of abundance (v. 3)
- The deliverance from all bondage and breaking (v. 4)
- The absence of war and conflict (v. 5)

Verse six gives the reason why these expressions will be present, “For a child . . .” This child is a gift from God. He is not intrinsically from within but comes from without. He will be a monarch and will exercise rule. He will be called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.” Note verse seven and the connection to 2 Samuel 7 and the promise to King David. In Isaiah the promise made to King David is reiterated, expanded on and driven deeply into the soil of certainty.

The prophet Micah also speaks to this when he said, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, **From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity**" (Micah 5:2 quoted in Matt. 2:6).

When the nation of Israel found itself in captivity to the Babylonians, the prophet Daniel received a vision from God. Within the vision we read the following idea.

In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. (Dan. 2:44)

All kings and kingdoms are mere shadows speaking to something greater. God establishes reigns and rulers (Rom. 13:1ff). Yet all reigns and rulers are always and forever under His reign and rule. They will all bow before Him and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:7).

When the Son of God came through the virgin Mary and took upon Himself the form of a servant, He came in fulfillment of a promise stretching all the way back to Genesis 3:15, "Her seed shall crush his head." He came in "the fullness of the time, [when] God sent forth His Son, [who was] born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that [His people] might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4).

When the angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary he made claim to the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7.

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and **the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;** ³³ **and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.** (Luke 1:32, 33)

Everything found within the Gospels proves His kingship and absolute right to reign over everything created. He has power over death, disease, demons and darkness.

When we come to the epilogue of God's Story in the Revelation, we read of His coming and the full and final setting up of His eternal, tangible, immediate and blessed reign. Although it is a lengthy read, take the time to digest this glorious picture of a promise fulfilled.

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "**Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,** ⁴ **and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.**" (Rev. 21:1-4)

¹ Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ **There will no longer be any curse**; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ **they will see His face**, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. . . ¹² Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. **I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.**" ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. ²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. (Rev. 22:1-21)

When the seed of the woman fully and finally comes, the head of the serpent and his seed will fully and finally be crushed. Every king, kingdom, and citizenship speaks to something more, something greater, and His name is Jesus. Oh may we be empowered to sit still and rest in the finished work of His cross. May we find Him to be so overwhelmingly beautiful that our breathing is arrested and our gaze is fixed; today bow before Him and worship. Give Him all that you are because of all that He is. Even so come Lord Jesus. Thank you God. Amen.

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

² Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Genesis 49:10.

³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Old Testament Commentary*, Genesis 49:10.

“The Prophets Speak to the Hero’s Arrival”

5

Prayer:

We beseech you, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by your daily visitation, [because we are your holy temple. We continue to long for your coming when you will receive us unto yourself for the full and final installment of Your Story]; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.¹

Read: Zechariah 3:8-10; 9:9; 14:6-9



For at least two millennia the people of God have waited for the full and final installment of God’s Story. Prior to humanity’s rebellion against God, they would wait for Him in His Garden. After their rebellion, God stepped in and redeemed them from sin’s debt and once more adopted them as His sons and daughters. From the very beginning God taught them to wait for Him through promises and pictures, and they learned of Him by means of the same.

In every day of every week of every month of every year of every decade of every century, they lived in hope of His arrival bringing with Him deliverance from their internal and external enemies. Centuries became millennia, and still they waited.

Life became routine and mundane, and yet the believing would keep feast days and rituals to remember The Story. They would teach their children The Story through the images and symbols. It is just as true now as it was then. It is through images and rituals that we remind and retell The Story to ourselves and to our families. National calamity would come through inept and evil rulers, yet in the shadows God spoke of something greater and still yet future . . . so they waited. Promises that appeared so real became lost in the passing of time. Pictures became obstacles rather than stimulants. Blindness caused people to stop with the image and fall captive to the shadow.

Yet God remembers. He is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to be unkind. The primary means of God reminding and retelling The Story would come to and through the nation of Israel. Her prophets would be the oracles, the keepers of the dream. They were the sages through whom wisdom would be preserved and perpetuated. Collectively the nation to whom and through whom the promises and pictures came would become idolatrous through spiritual whoredom, yet God would continue to speak. The prophets would often be maligned and martyred, yet they would remain faithful to their charge. Within the nation there was a collective rebellion against God, but He would always have a believing remnant who longed for His arrival. The prophets spoke to this, and to this we will give our attention. The nature of our study prohibits us from venturing too far into the literature, but we will seek to represent what all of them address. Our concentration will rest on the prophet Zechariah. Appropriately, his name means, “The LORD remembers.”

It is always important to put the prophets in their historical, cultural and theological context. “When the Jews reviewed their history, it looked like a long slide downhill. After centuries of warning, punishment had come. Jerusalem was flattened. The survivors marched off in chains toward the

other end of the world. They had not merely lost a battle. They had lost, seemingly, their place in God's heart and their future as his special people. But hope for a new start came in exile. When Persian emperor Cyrus took power, he offered Jews a chance to return to their land and rebuild their temple. Upon their return, they found a disheartening scene. Their once-beautiful city was a ghost town. Everything of value had been destroyed. The temple stayed in a state of disrepair for nearly 20 years [536-516BC], until the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stirred up renewed interest."² From within this context Zechariah, along with Haggai, speak of a future day when the promises of God will find their ultimate fulfillment. His writings are **apocalyptic** in nature. He uses visions and prophecies of things that are to come. He speaks in shadow of something greater. He stands as an **encouragement** to the nation of Judah.

Through the imaging and picturing of Zion's glorification, the overthrow of Israel's enemies and the universal reign of the Messiah, the prophet speaks of hope. Within this rich brew provided by the apocalyptic genre, there is a strong pastoral overtone. Because it speaks to the promises and pictures found throughout Israel's history, "The messianic emphasis of Zechariah accounts for its frequent citation by New Testament authors. [There are approximately] 41 New Testament citations or allusions to Zechariah's book."³

God's Hero sits at center stage. Zechariah proclaims the Hero's arrival and what this "revelation" means to His people. It is fitting for the prophet to bear the name, "YHWH remembers." "**He 'remembers' his covenant promises and takes action to fulfill them.**" In the book of Zechariah God's promised deliverance from Babylonian exile, including a restored kingdom community and a functioning temple (the earthly throne of the divine King), leads into even grander pictures of the salvation and restoration to come through the Messiah."⁴

Consider with me the numerous references to the One who is to come.

- Zechariah 2:10-13 God will dwell among His people
- Zechariah 3:8-10 God's servant, the Branch
- Zechariah 6:12-13 The Branch as the priestly king/kingly priest
- Zechariah 9:9 The triumphal entrance of the King
- Zechariah 10:4 The cornerstone
- Zechariah 11:12-13 Thirty pieces of silver and the potter's field
- Zechariah 12:10 The Messiah's body would be pierced
- Zechariah 13:7 The Shepherd will die for His sheep

It is because God dwells among His people through the Hero's arrival that the day spoken of is distinct. It is a day of global solidarity, whereby all the people of the earth become His people and He will dwell in their midst (Zech. 2:10-13). It is a day when the iniquity of the land shall be removed (Zech. 3:9, 10; 13:1, 2). In that day, His people will be forever protected from their enemies and they shall see Him in His beauty (Zech. 9:14-17; 12:7-9). That day will be a unique day, a day when The Story of God finds its fulfillment (Zech. 14:6-9).

This is the rich tapestry woven for those who wait. Like our believing forefathers, we long for His arrival. Malachi will be the last of the writing prophets, and for 400 years the voice of God will be

found in the written text that remains. He will speak of the forerunner who will prepare the way for the Lord.

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1)

His people will wait. Like Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:25-38) they will “wait for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). Until the one who was promised and pictured in shadow will arrive, we continue to wait; even so, “Come quickly Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20).

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

² *The New Student Bible*

³ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT, 1545.*

⁴ <http://www.ibs.org/niv/studybible/zechariah.php>

In the Fullness of Time

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4, 5).

Prayer:

Almighty God, who has given us your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, being regenerate and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.¹

Read: Matthew 1, 2; Luke 1, 2



It is impossible for Americans to fully grasp the longing created by promise and picture that exists within Hebrew history and current culture. Our existence is marked by 230+ years of development built on a democracy. Their development spans millennia and is built on a theocracy mediated through monarchy.

The first Christmas marks the fulfillment of promises and the final realization of pictures. Shadows give way and are eclipsed by the full noonday rising of the sun. Although Malachi is the last of the canonical prophets, God is not silent. He continues to speak through image and ritual, reminding and retelling The Story to each succeeding generation, until . . . fulfillment. Two of the Gospels provide details that verbalize the culmination of God’s Story.

There are ten stories within the combined narrative that speak directly to The Story’s fulfillment.

First, both Matthew and Luke intentionally trace Jesus back to historical figures that play key roles in The Story. Matthew places Jesus in the lineage of King David and the Patriarch Abraham (Matt. 1:1ff), whereas Luke traces the lineage of Jesus back to Adam (Luke 2:23ff). In Matthew, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Shepherd King made in the Abrahamic Covenant. In Luke, Jesus is the second Adam who will succeed where the first Adam failed.

Second, the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:19) in speaking to Zacharias identifies the naturally born son of Elizabeth as the promised forerunner preceding the Hero’s arrival (Luke 1:16, 17). Likewise, when speaking to Mary, Gabriel will identify her supernaturally born child as the fulfillment of the promises made to and through King David (Luke 1:31-33).

Third, Mary’s praise (i.e. “magnificat”) clearly identifies the child within her as the fulfillment of “the promises spoken to Abraham and his descendants forever” (Luke 1:54, 55).

Fourth, Zacharias’ prophecy sees the birth of his son as the fulfillment of “His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father” (Luke 1:72, 73).

Fifth, the shepherds of Luke 2 speak in shadow and type of the greater antitype found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. They did what God called them to do. They believed the promises and acted on what Gabriel said, “For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Sixth, Joseph and Mary speak to His arrival as one who was born of a woman and born under the Law when they obeyed the Law and circumcised Jesus on the eighth day (Lev. 12:2-4, 6; Luke 2:22; see further Galatians 4:4, 5).

Seventh, Simeon confirms the fulfillment of the promises when he cradled the Christ child and spoke of completion (Luke 2:30-32).

Eighth, the aged Anna in seeing the Christ child spoke of fulfillment “to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).

Ninth, the Magi (i.e. “wise men,” “band of scholars”) from the East sought the one “who has been born King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2). Through their gifting, they confirm the child as “prophet, priest, and king.” They clearly confirm their adoration of the Christ by falling to the ground and worshiping Him (Matt. 2:11).

Finally, King Herod’s response confirms the fulfillment of promise and picture and the arrival of The Story’s Hero. He believed The Story, but in unbelief trembled (James 2:19).

Everything the nation sought would be fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. It is impossible for us to recreate the longing that existed within the heart and mind of the Jewish people. Every element within their daily lives was intentionally placed in The Story by God in order to remember and retell the One Story written by Him. Now the fulfillment of The Story sat at the threshold. The nation would discover the richness of the One Story written by God in the coming of God incarnate. Once more they will ask, “Is He enough?” And once more God will answer by saying, “He is more than enough in this life and in the life to come.”

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

Prayer:

*Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that the same light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*¹

Read: Luke 2:1-38



Inside of eight days, the child Jesus is visited by several shepherds. Then, in fulfillment of the Law, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple for the purpose of circumcision. Surrounding this event are two affirmations of the child's identity, the first by Simeon and then by Anna.

What if someone saw your child and began to speak of him as the fulfillment of all the promises and pictures made to a nation? How would you respond? How do we capture all this part of The Story contains? Why shepherds? Why Simeon? Why Anna? All of this happens within an eight day window of time.

The promises are fulfilled; the picture is clear. Here lies in flesh, "Immanuel, God with us!" "This story excels by reason of its unaffected simplicity. In it we hear throughout the sound of sober, historical truth. In this narrative Luke recounts in a sober and life-like manner, events of a beautiful and miraculous nature, but at the same time actual history."²

Let us for a moment entertain sanctified speculation and creative imagination. I am caught up with the spirit of this unprecedented moment. There has never been, nor will there ever be, another moment such as this moment in all of history. All of the promises are "yes" in Him. Everything woven into The Story's fabric finds fulfillment in the birth of this Child. What were those present thinking? Much is left unanswered and assumed.

I suspect only the shepherds had a chance of being present thirty years later when Jesus began His earthly ministry leading to His death, burial and resurrection. Both Simeon and Anna most likely would have since passed on to their eternal rest. What do you think the shepherds would have thought? Do you think they followed His development? Do you think they listened with attentiveness to anything that might have circulated concerning this unique child? Don't you think word of Mary's virgin birth and the darkened whispers of His "bastard" birth made the rounds? What about His temple encounter at the age of twelve? I do not doubt for one moment word disseminated and those who were "looking" listened attentively to all that was in circulation.

Verse 22 "refers to the provisions of Leviticus 12. A woman was regarded as ceremonially impure for forty days after the birth of a son. After the forty days two 'purification' sacrifices – a lamb as burnt-offering and a pigeon as sin-offering – had to be brought. But in the case of poor persons a pigeon could also be sacrificed in the place of the lamb. Because Joseph and Mary were poor, they brought two pigeons to be sacrificed in the temple at Jerusalem."³

When Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day and the two turtle doves offered in ritual sacrifice for the uncleanness of Mary, what was the religious establishment thinking? I believe many were watching and waiting as faithful shepherds for the visitation of the Christ, but some were indifferent and cold. What do you think were the thoughts of the priests (vv. 21-25) when they heard the utterances of Simeon and Anna? Do you think they marked the moment? Simeon and Anna went out “on a limb.” They put their proverbial heads on the chopping block; yet the story does not tell us what happened to them after the event. I would suspect that some who heard these statements were young enough to be present thirty years later when Jesus began His earthly ministry. I believe they marked this moment and, like Mary, pondered its truths in the years that followed.

I cannot believe life would ever be the same for all those involved or that this truth only impacted the individuals noted in our text. I believe many were present who are left unidentified, but they too were forever changed. When John the Baptist began his work of preparing the way, there must have been significant buildup and electricity in the air. When Jesus was baptized and John identified Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, there was a great guttural groan of buried ecstasy.

The nation shook when John spoke these notable words of identification. John’s words reflect and echo those of Abraham when as an obedient father he said to his son, “God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering” (Gen. 22:8). God did this by the voluntary and substitutionary sacrifice of His only begotten Son.

It is this event, the incarnation, which will change all who encounter it forever. Life will never be the same. Like the angels above, there is a volcanic response to the enormity of what God did and still does. It is impossible for any who encounter the living Christ to live unchanged. It is my continued prayer all who enter into The Story written by God will be forever changed. May we continue to encounter the living Christ.

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>

² Norval Geldenhuys, NICNT, *The Gospel of Luke*, 110.

³ Norval Geldenhuys, NICNT, *The Gospel of Luke*, 117, 118.

The Tale of Two Seeds



Prayer:

O God, who by the leading of a star did manifest your only-begotten Son to the peoples of the earth: Lead us, who know you now by faith, to your presence, where we may behold your glory face to face; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.¹

Read: Matthew 2:1-18



Luke speaks to the events surrounding our Lord's birth, His circumcision and the purifying sacrifice forty days later for ceremonial uncleanness associated with giving birth to a male child. Matthew picks up the narrative inside of a two year window. We can assume life was uneventful for the family of Joseph. There were mysteries pondered and events processed whose full gestation would still elude them, but life had to be lived. Although having the eternal word assumes human nature is anything but typical or ordinary, there was still normality to this young family's existence.

What Matthew endeavors to do is keep his audience in The Story. He will show various aspects of The Story, but primarily he speaks to the tale of two seeds representing two conflicting kingdoms. Let us not forget the wording of Genesis 3:15.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel. (Gen. 3:15)

This element is shadowed throughout Israel's history and here it will once more be repeated. In the writing of His Story, He placed His people in Babylon. He returned them from where they came (i.e. the East). While there, although slaves, many rose to positions of prominence (i.e. Esther, Daniel, etc.). Their influence was felt and many within the pagan empire sought the one true God (Dan. 4:34, 35). Now from the East travelers came who sought the Christ child in fulfillment of promises and prophecies. The magi fully expected God's own people to be wholly aware of what they asked, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews (v. 2)?" Tragically, He came unto His own and His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). In the absence of any reception they went to the governing power and asked of him their questions, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews (v. 2)?"

It was the serpent's seed that sat on David's throne. This alien and illegitimate power found the prophecy and questioned a threat to his "dynasty". He met their questions with dishonesty and secrecy (vv. 7, 8). His interest peaked and he sought answers through the keepers of the promise (v. 4). They were equally aware of the ancient promise. They knew of what and whom the promise spoke (vv. 4-6). The enthusiasm of the magi contrasts with the anxiety of the religious and political establishment. Thrones would topple; humanity would choose. The king's façade was enough to make the magi believe and they went on their holy pursuit accepting the king's kind intentions (vv. 8, 9).

Although they expected all to receive and respond with great joy to the child's arrival, instead they found Him in a context of routine and normalcy. There was nothing spectacular and extravagant in the young family's existence (v. 11). Yet they bowed before Him and gave Him the worship He deserved. Every action expressed communicated His worth and kingship. After their communications and affection, their intent was to return to King Herod and give him their report; such was the extent of his cunning wickedness. God, however, directed them otherwise (v. 12). Likewise the young family was told to leave Bethlehem and flee to Egypt (v. 13). No matter how wicked the intent of the serpent's seed, God knows and He will always win. In time Herod heard of their reciprocal trickery and was enraged. The magi must have grieved at the non-reception given the Christ child. Although not understanding, they obeyed and did exactly what God directed. Herod's rage caused all to tremble. All would wish that such narratives would be exceptions and not the rule; yet the depravity of our hearts is great. We are no better or worse than this wicked king. He destroyed "all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi (v. 16)." Whose heart is so cold and indifferent that they would take the life of children? Consider the agony of their families at the destruction of these young male children. The cry of mourning would echo forever as a testament to the intent of the serpent's seed. Some of the soldiers were past feeling, but others would forever be plagued by the blood of innocent life. Some of those present would still be alive when the Christ began His formal presentation and deliverance of His people from their sins. Some of those soldiers would remember and in remembering live hollow lives. Others would have found repentance and forgiveness for their crimes against God and would know of His healing touch and restoring embrace.

I believe throughout Jesus' life He would be hunted by the serpent's seed, but God the Father and Holy Spirit would keep Him from harm's way until the moment of the great offering. Even after this historical event I believe the serpent's seed continues to wage war against the seed of the woman. Let us be ever vigilant in our pursuit of Christ and His kingdom.

¹ <http://www.bcponline.org/>