BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
• Biblical theology is principally concerned with the overall theological message of the whole Bible.
• It attempts to summarize and synthesize the main threads of the diverse theological assumptions and affirmations of the Bible.
• It seeks to put individual texts in their historical context and try to understand the parts/individual text in relation to the whole biblical teachings.
• It works inductively from the diverse texts of the Bible, seeks to uncover and articulate the unity of all the biblical texts taken together.
• Biblical theology studies the Bible from the perspective of understanding the progressive history of God revealing Himself to humanity following the Fall and throughout the Old Testament and New Testament.
• It seeks to understand how a given theme or subject progressively developed throughout redemption history
• It particularly focuses on the epochs of the Old Testament in order to understand how each part of it ultimately points forward to fulfillment in the life mission of Jesus Christ.

TASK OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
• The first task of biblical theology is to learn simply what the various biblical authors thought and asserted about divine matters in their various contexts.
  ➢ This was to be accomplished by means of a purely grammatical and historical exegesis.
• The second task of biblical theology was to sift these various biblical concepts and claims in terms of their universal and abiding value and to deduce some general concepts and ideas from these which could serve as a basis for the construction of a dogmatic theology.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY VS SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

| BT tries to understand & organize the theological message of the Bible unit by unit according to its own vocabulary & categories. | ST is a way of approaching theological issues using logic, reason & scripture with an attempts to answer modern theological questions |
| BT studies revelation in the progressive sequence in which it was given | ST is concerned with a total approach to theology. It attempts to organize, to systematize, theological reflection. |
| BT finds its source material in the Bible. | It is not limited by text, but instead can interact with other disciplines such as philosophy, science, etc. |
| BT is concerned with what the biblical texts meant in the past | ST is concerned with what it means today |
| The method of BT is rooted solely in trying to understand the text. | ST is trying to explain or understand today’s problem by using the Bible, philosophical Ideas, tradition, science, etc |
| The methodology of BT is exegetical and theological | ST is theological and philosophical |

HISTORY OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

1. REFORMATION & PROTESTANT ORTHODOXY (1550-1650)
   ➢ The Reformers’ emphasize on Scripture as the sole source and norm for all matters of faith (against scholastic theology and ecclesiastical tradition)
   ➢ They call for the self-interpretation of Scripture the source for the subsequent development of Biblical theology.
   ➢ Biblical theology meant a systematic theology which was biblical in character, that is, for which the Bible was the primary source and norm.
Protestant Orthodoxy
- The Bible came to be viewed as a uniform sourcebook of quotations whose primary task was to support the dogmas/doctrines of Protestant orthodoxy against the dogmas of Roman Catholicism.
- The understanding of biblical theology reflected in Protestant orthodoxy may be characterized as "dogmatic Biblicism" or proof-texting.

2. EMANCIPATION FROM DOGMATICS (1650-1800): PIETISM & ENLIGHTENMENT

Pietism
- Pietism was a revolt within the German Church against Protestant scholasticism, for being excessively preoccupied with dogmatic speculations and dry concepts.
- Pietism stressed personal experience and awareness of the presence of God, as nourished through a life of prayer, personal devotion, Bible reading, and moral living.
- Pietism's emphasis on the reading and study of Scripture by all brought about a greater familiarity with the contents of the Bible.
- The back-to-the-Bible emphasis of Pietism brought about a changing direction for Biblical theology.
- "As early as 1745 “Biblical theology” is clearly separated from dogmatic (systematic) theology where biblical theology is conceived of as being the foundation of systematic theology.
* Now Biblical theology can become the rival of dogmatics and turn into a completely separate and independent discipline.

Enlightenment
- Rejection of any form of supernaturalism
- Human reason was set up as the final criterion and chief source of knowledge
- The authority of the Bible as the infallible record of divine revelation was rejected.
- The development of a new hermeneutic, the historical-critical method’s.
- The Bible simply became one of the ancient documents, to be studied as any other ancient document.
- The Bible is a purely historical document and is to be investigated with a purely historical and thus critical methodology.
- As a result Biblical theology can be nothing else but a historical discipline which stands in antithesis to traditional dogmatics.

Johann Philipp Gabler and the Division of Biblical Theology and Dogmatic Theology (1753-1826)
- Biblical theology is historical in character; that is, it sets forth what the sacred writers thought about divine matters.
- Dogmatic theology is didactic in character, teaching what a given theologian thinks about divine matters in accordance with his ability, his particular circumstances, age, locale, religious and intellectual tradition, and similar conditioning factors.

Task of Biblical Theology
- The first task of biblical theology was to learn simply what the various biblical authors thought and asserted about divine matters in their various contexts. This was to be accomplished by means of a purely grammatical and historical exegesis.
- The second task of biblical theology was to sift these various biblical concepts and claims in terms of their universal and abiding value and to deduce some general concepts and ideas from these which could serve as a basis for the construction of a dogmatic theology.

3. INFLUENCE OF RATIONALISM (1750-1875)
- The Bible was now understood in terms of an evolutionary religious process leading from lower forms of religion to the absolute or universal religion.
- It was usually defined as a religion of reason (deism) or morality (Kant).
- Only those teachings of Scripture which were in accord with reason, were of abiding value.
G. L. Bauer & the Division of OT and NT Theology (1797)
- The increasing recognition of the diversity of Scripture: especially the distinct differences in content, historical context, and outlook between the testaments, which made it more difficult to treat them as homogenous documents
- The sheer increase in data and new discoveries pertaining to the Bible made it more difficult for anyone to master the entire field of biblical studies. Thus, specialization became a necessity.
- The rationalistic devaluation of the OT in favor of the NT undoubtedly contributed to this bifurcation in biblical theology.

The Task of OT Theology
- To trace the religious ideas of the Hebrews in their historical development and against the background of other ANE religions with whom the Hebrews came into contact.
- Historical interpretation must trace the development of those ideas and interpret them in independence from dogmatic theology's definitions.
- In the course of their development, in the Old Testament as in history generally, ideas move from particular to universal, and it is these universal religious ideas that are most important for the present.
- OT & NT deserve to be heard on their own terms before their ideas are incorporated into dogmatic theology.

Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette
- Old Testament theologians must seek to understand the feelings and universal truths behind the myths.
- He adopted the Hegelian philosophy of thesis (nature religion) – antithesis (spiritual religion = Hebrew religion) – synthesis (absolute or universal religion = Christianity)
- Result: Old Testament was a lower religious state that had to be completed for the New Testament to emerge

4. REACTIONS AGAINST RATIONALISM
G. F. Oehler
- Oehler accepts the division of OT and NT theology, but views that OT theology can function properly only within the larger canonical context.
- OT theology is a "historical science which is based upon grammatical-historical exegesis whose task is to reproduce the content of the Biblical writings according to the rules of language under consideration of the historical circumstances during which the writings originated and the individual conditions of the sacred writers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXODUS EVENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
The Exodus is an amazing series of events that provide a key for interpreting the Pentateuch. More pointedly, God's deliverance in the exodus occasioned the beginning of writing Scripture. No other OT motif is as crucial as to understand than the exodus. No other event is so basic to the fabric of both Testaments. Our concepts of deliverance and atonement, of God dwelling with his people, of God taking a people for himself and so forth have their roots in this complex of events. The motif of the exodus is one of the unifying images of the Bible. It sums up the story of OT redemption. In the NT this literal deliverance is metaphorically and spiritually fulfilled in the atonement of Christ. As a result, for Christians, it is the background to understand the death of Christ as the Lamb that was slain.

The text of Exodus is the culmination of many recitations of the story for generations as instructed by God with institution of Passover celebration (Exodus 12:24-27). The text is a faithful retelling of the story. It concerned primarily to give theological meaning to the story of the people of Israel.

2. MOTIFIC LANGUAGE
The following sub plots and images seem to be used as motifs in the Bible with reference to the exodus: tabernacle, altar, desert, wilderness, wandering, forty years, mountain of God, dark cloud,
pillar of fire/cloud, divine warrior, arm/hand of the Lord, leading, shepherding, carrying, highway in the wilderness, oppression, deliverance from oppression, dividing waters, plagues, judgments, miracles, mighty deeds, Passover, firstborn spared, banquet (Ex 24), the rock in the wilderness, water from the rock, manna, riding on eagles’ wings, theophany, mediator, voice of God, covenant, and images related to law and lawgiving.

3. METAPHORIC MEANINGS
The central meaning of the exodus is deliverance or salvation. For this reason the exodus became the ground or rationale for Israel’s obedience, identity and belief. Concerning obedience, the exodus is the basis on which God calls Israel to enter into covenant relationship with him (Ex 20:2; Deut 5:6); and it is also the basis on which Israel is to treat aliens, slaves and others with deference (Deut 15:12–18). Concerning identity, the exodus is that moment in which God forged Israel as his people (Ex 19:5), a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6) and a nation independent of the dominion and rule of other nations. Concerning belief, the exodus is the evidence for trusting in the power, lordship, righteousness and love of God. He is able to deliver by means of great power (Deut 4:32–35), he acts for the oppressed (Deut 10:12–22), and he acts out of love (Deut 7:7–8). The exodus motif was used by prophets and poetic writers to transfer the significance of the original exodus to new situations requiring deliverance, obedience, identity or belief. For example, Isaiah uses exodus imagery to evoke in his listeners faith and hope that God will lead a second exodus and bring the Israelites out from exile with the same wondrous deeds and power he displayed in the exodus from Egypt (Is 40:1–11).

4. THE EXODUS MOTIFS IN OT
The first motific use of the exodus is found in Joshua 4:19–24, where the parting of the Red Sea is explicitly likened to the parting of the river Jordan. The broad strokes of the use and development of the exodus motif in the OT might go something like this: The entry into and conquest of the Promised Land in Joshua is the exodus experience of the next generation. The book of Judges is structured around cycles of oppression and deliverance for Israel by the hand of the Lord as they cried out for help. The books of Samuel-Kings can be seen as a movement from the impermanence of the exodus wanderings to a stable situation with king and temple and then the ultimate reversion back to an oppressive situation. The prophets transform the original exodus into a new exodus. In the same way that God delivered Israel from Egypt in the past, he will deliver Israel in the future from bondage in the exile.

5. EXODUS MOTIFS IN NT
The NT borrows the exodus motif in a number of instances: John the Baptist’s ministry is summarized in the words of Isaiah 40:3–4 as the one “preparing the way in the wilderness.” Jesus is the new Moses, who spent forty days in the wilderness without eating and who gives a sermon on the mountain to bring new light to the law. Indeed, when Jesus speaks of his resurrection, he speaks of leading an exodus (Lk 9:31). 1 Corinthians 10:1–5 says that Christ is the rock that was there in the wilderness of the exodus. Hebrews links Moses and Jesus (Heb 3:1–18), the Israelite and the Christian (Heb 4:1–3), the tabernacle and the heavenly temple (Heb 9:1–10), and the high priest and Jesus (Heb 6:20). Moreover, Hebrews 12:18–24 suggests a move from Mt. Sinai to Mt. Zion (similar to what the prophet Isaiah is doing with his transformation of the exodus motif and his focus on Zion). Finally, the book of Revelation has numerous examples of the use of the exodus motif (e.g., the plagues, a woman delivered on eagle’s wings to the desert [Rev 12:14]).

6. IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCES
6.1. Theology of Creation
The God who created leads Israel out of Egypt. God is a life-giving, life-preserving, life blessing God (Ex. 1:7). The deliverance of Israel is ultimately for the sake of all creation (Ex. 9:16). God’s intention for Israel to embody the creational blessing is directly opposed by Pharaoh. God’s redemptive activity is cosmic in its effects. Exodus 15 confesses that God’s victory at the sea is not simply a local or historical phenomenon but a cosmic one. God’s defeat of the powers of chaos results not simply in
Israel’s liberation, but in the reign of God over the entire cosmos (Ex. 15:18). The plagues are in effect a reversal of God’s created order. They are the punishment and eventual destruction of the enemies of God by unleashing the chaotic forces of creation: water is affected (first plague); darkness returns where there had once been light (ninth plague; esp. 10:21); animals and other creatures suffer (e.g., fifth plague); even humans die (tenth plague). In the end the Egyptians are destroyed by water as the waters that God had once tamed at creation are unleashed. The Israelites, however, are immune from this creation reversal. They are, in fact, “created” by being brought through the parted waters (as were the waters in Gen 1:6–10) and are formed into a holy nation.

6.2. Knowledge of God
The identity of Yahweh is set from the beginning and only needs to be unfolded. God does not remain unchanged by all that happens. God does some things that God has never done before; the interaction with other characters also shapes the divine identity. God is not only one who is; God is also one who in some sense becomes.

6.3. Images for God
God is the Lord God who gives the law and demands obedience. He is judge for both Egyptians and Israelites. He is king (Ex. 15:18) and whose sovereignty distinct form that exercised by Pharaoh. It is Pharaoh who is the unmoved mover. The God of Israel is a suffering God who feels the pain at the suffering of his people. God is a divine warrior who wages war on behalf of his people (Ex. 15:3). God is the ruler of the cosmic order. It is demonstrated by his activity: Natural world does not resist God; human being does. God is a compassionate sovereign who suffers with his people (Ex. 3:7). God accomplishes his purposes through people, including the Hebrew midwives and Moses. God is willing to go with what is possible for human being.

6.4. Exodus as the Paradigm of Liberation
Throughout history, Exodus has become the example of God bringing liberation to the oppressed. It is a basis for liberation theology. According to this Salvation becomes holistic; not merely for the conversion of individuals, but of society. It is God himself who hears the cry of his people and is determined to deliver them (Ex 3:7–10). He is ready to bring them across the sea despite apparent failure (Ex 14:10–14). The dominant motif used to describe God’s role in this deliverance is that of divine warrior. Despite the fact that Israel was “armed for battle” (Ex 13:18), the battle to deliver the Israelites is God’s battle: “The LORD will fight for you” (Ex 14:14). The angel of God leads the Israelites to the sea and stands as a buffer between them and the Egyptian army at night (Ex 14:15–20). After crossing the sea, the Israelites recount in song the glorious deeds of their warrior God: “The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name” (Ex 15:3).

6.5. Israel’s Worship &Yahweh’s Presence
Israelites moves from slaves of Pharaoh to worshipping Yahweh. Liturgical forms of Passover and hymn of Exodus 15 are central to meaning of Exodus. The tabernacle depicts the presence of Yahweh with and in the midst of his people Israel. It is here that the Lord’s abiding presence with his people is seen. The simple fact of the mobility of the tabernacle further highlights its function as God’s abiding dwelling place with his people. Moreover, it is God’s holy presence with his people that is the issue. The Presence of Yahweh/Elohim guides the people in the proper route of Exodus (Exod 13:3, 17–18, 21–22). The presence of Yahweh cleaves the sea to make way for Israel to cross it dry-footed, then brings the waters rushing in upon the Egyptians following (14:21–31). The Presence of Yahweh provides for Israel’s need in the wilderness (15:22–27; 16:4, 9–16; 17:4–7). The Presence of Yahweh gives the principles by which Israel is to live in covenant (20:1–18). The Presence of Yahweh is at the center of the elaborate instructions for the media of worship in Exod 25–31 and of the account of their construction and consecration in Exod 35–40.

6.6. Law, Covenant, and Israel’s Identity
Exodus tells the story of a people instead of the family story of Genesis. God saves the Israelites from slavery before he gives them the law. The law is a gift to an already redeemed community. The law is not the means by which the relationship with God is established; God redeems quite apart from human
obedience. Law requires worship of God alone. Only God’s gracious forgiveness allows continuity of the relationship after the golden calf incident. The reception of the law on Mt. Sinai is the central focus of the Israelite emigration from Egypt. The law is not a burden; rather, it is God’s declaration of the people’s proper response to his presence to insure that it would remain. It is because the Israelites were to become God’s “kingdom of priests” and “holy nation” that they received special instructions indicating their responsibility in this relationship (Ex 19:5–6).

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**GOD: GOD’S SELF-REVELATION**

The focal point of God’s revelation in the OT is his self-revelation to his people; the revelation of his person and character precedes and explains the revelation of his purposes. He revealed himself through his mighty works, through events which are interpreted through the prophets. Rolf Rendtorff writes: Yahweh (the Hebrew name for God) himself becomes visible in his powerful acts of salvation. He becomes revealed in them.” God’s self-revelation always aimed to bring about a personal relationship between God and his people. If communion is to be possible, we must know the character of God, through his self-disclosure.

**Some Instances of God’s Self-Revelation**

**Genesis 12:** It presents the call of Abraham. He is asked to leave his country and his people and go to the land that God would show him. God does not identify himself here. This command is immediately followed by a promise, (v.2) – “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you. This blessing is for all people but it begins with the establishment of a relationship with Abraham.

**Genesis 15 and 17:** In Gen 15:1, God once again appears to Abraham and promises to be his shield and in 17:1, He identifies Himself with the name El Shaddai (presents the mightiness of God against the frailty of humanity). God further gives these instruction: “Walk before me, and be blameless” (17:1). The response God requires is a moral one; from the start the relationship between God and his people has a moral dimension. In Gen 17:4-6, Abram becomes Abraham, that is “Exalted father” becomes “father of a multitude”.

**Genesis 28:13:** In this passage, God reveals himself to Jacob in a dream and identifies himself as God of Abraham and Isaac. He repeats covenant promise, “I will give you this land.” In Gen 32:29, Jacob asks the name of the one wrestling with him. God does not answer this, but rather blesses him. In this case God withheld it in his freedom. Time and again, God revealed himself to the Patriarchs and called them for special mission. Their lives took on significance far above that of their neighbours. God wishes this people to be unique possession. He had chosen them as a object and vehicle of his blessing and presence in the world. God promised them earthly land and progressively revealed himself to them.

**Exodus 3:2:** Here we come to one of the most striking and decisive moments in God’s self-revelation. In 3:2 God appears as the “angel of the Lord.” God sometimes appears through an intermediary and sometimes rather more directly, though because of sin perfect face to face encounter is impossible in this life (Ex 33:20) God says, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob,” and then promises to deliver the people from Egypt. Moses – the shepherd become leader – is to be chosen instrument. Then Moses asks (Ex 3:13) what name he is to give to the children of Israel. It is clear the people will want to know who this is. What sort of person promises to deliver them? He has been the God of their Fathers. What will he be to them now? God’s answer is: I AM WHAT I AM, OR I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE.

**Exodus 6:1-2:** When Pharaoh does not respond to Moses’ request God again assures him of his deliverance, and as if to support his promises, identifies himself: “I am the Lord (Yahweh). I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, as God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name the Lord (Yahweh) I did not make myself known to them.

The name Yahweh means the covenanted God, the God sustaining faithful relations with his people.

**Exodus 19:4:** God says to Moses: “You have seen what I did”. This emphasis has led some to see a change in the way God appears from a direct communication – a person-to-person encounter – to
revelation through his works. Deeds in the OT are proofs, tokens and elaborations of God’s presence and cannot be understood apart from this background.

**Exodus 33:18-23**: In these verses Moses asks that God show him his glory. Moses is at another point of decision and wishes a more complete vision of God. God refuses a more complete manifestation, not because God must be invisible, but because man in his sinful condition cannot see him and live (v.20) But he does promise to make his goodness pass before him (v.19) and proclaims his name Yahweh. God wishes to show himself “in terms of his attributes rather than his appearances”. God does not refuse absolutely to reveal himself but wishes to make known his character, his goodness. As if to illustrate this need he passes by Moses and covers him with his hand (v.22) to protect him from his immediate presence, which Moses in his sin would have to experience as wrath. In this very covering, then, God is not hiding his glory but showing it in a form that his sinful people can appreciate.

**Other References to God’s Self-Revelations**

- **I Sam. 3:10-14** - God calls Samuel and without introducing himself announces that he is about to do a new thing in Israel: he will judge the house of Eli.
- **Isaiah 6:1-5** - It is the revelation of the person and character of God that precedes Isaiah’s call as a prophet.
- **Amos 3:7** – He explains that God does nothing without revealing it to his prophets.

In all these appearances one is struck by the fact that while God appears to people he is at the same time transcendent, having his person above the limits of the world. Though, he is high and lifted up in his character and his being; the world itself cannot contain him.

**THE NATURE OF GOD: Media of Revelation**

1. **The Angel of the Lord**
   In the OT, the angel of the Lord might be only a messenger of God (the Hebrew word itself means messenger), distinct from God himself (2 Sam.24:16), or he might be identified with the Lord himself speaking in the first person (Gen.16:7-14, Jud.2:1, 4; 6:20-23, et al). He could be a bringer of blessing (Ex.32:34) or of judgment (2 Sam.24:16).

2. **The Face of God**
   In the account of Moses’ request to see the glory of God, the face of God appears as the presence of God without restriction (Ex.33:20).
   God wishes to show himself “in terms of his attributes rather than his appearances”. God does not refuse absolutely to reveal himself but wishes to make known his character, his goodness. As if to illustrate this need he passes by Moses and covers him with his hand (v.22) to protect him from his immediate presence, which Moses in his sin would have to experience as wrath. In this very covering, then, God is not hiding his glory but showing it in a form that his sinful people can appreciate.

3. **Anthropomorphisms**
   While not a medium of God’s presence, this is perhaps the place to consider the use of anthropomorphisms in the OT. Often God is spoken of (and refers to himself) in human terms. God speaks (Gen.1:3), converses (Lev.4:1), hears (Ex.16:12), sees (Gen.1:4), smells (I Sam.26:19,) has a face (Nu,6:25), a back (Ex.33:23) hands (Isa,14:27) and so forth.

**The Nature of God**

1. **God is personal**
   God is personal in that he is the God who gives himself a name. God’s giving himself names serves to emphasize three things. First, a name stresses God’s presence among his people apart from any material or visible aspect to this presence. God’s majesty and love are manifest clearly in his names, but his people are given no exhaustive knowledge of his essence. Secondly, the use of various names reflects his dynamic intervention in the life of Israel. He is a restless activity. One name does not exhaust the character of God or the possibility of his care. Finally, all the names have to do with God’s relation with his people. They do not identify God with any part of nature. He is actively involved in the life of his people in various ways.
a) El
El (often appearing in compound names) is perhaps the oldest Semitic designation for God. The basic meaning is a mighty leader or governor and stresses the distance between God and man, as well as his power over nature.

**El Shaddai:** It stresses the exalted and mighty character of God (Gen 17:1 and forty times in Job)

**El Alion:** The Most High God (Gen. 14-18-19)

**El Olam:** God of ancient of Days, Everlasting God (Gen. 21:33; Isa. 40:28)

**El Roeh:** God of seeing (Gen. 16:13)

**Elohim:** It is very common, plural form of God (Gen. 1:1). It sums up the whole divine power in a personal unity. Can also be associated with Trinity

b) Yahweh
This name is connected with the verb “to be” (Ex. 3:14 and Hos. 1:9) and is specifically Israel’s designation for God. After the time of Moses (Ex. 6:3), this becomes the name by which the worship of Israel is marked off from all the other nations. It is the particular name of the covenant relationship and thus speaks of God’s nearness and concern for his people (Deut. 3:4). The implications of this fullness will one day be fully seen when God will be immediately present (Ezek. 37: 26-28).

c) Lord Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts)
The idea of this name is probably connected with God as a warrior as explained in I Sam.17:45. The name may have been originally associated with God as a leader and deliverer of his people in battle. However, later this name was used simply as a designation for God’s exaltedness and omnipotence (especially in the prophets: Isa. 23:9; 24:23; Zech. 3:10).

d) Melek (King)
Exodus 15:18 speaks of the Lord reigning forever. God’s kingship is implicit in the covenant form of the early books of the Old Testament (Num. 23:21). The prophets of the 8th century avoid it with the exception of Isaiah (6:5; 41:21; 44:6; 52:7). It is probable that they avoid it because of the false worship of the melek cult in the 7th and 8th century. In the post-exilic thought the title king is associated with God’s salvation at the last days (Zech. 14:16)

2. God is Spirit
This definition of God which becomes so important in the NT is for the most part absent from the OT. Why is this so? We have noted already that the characteristic revelation of God lends itself to anthropomorphisms and focuses on the giving of his name. But it is important to note that spirit, whose basic meaning is wind or breath, had a concrete connotation in the OT.

Some of the ways God is expressed in the OT are:
- He is the source of life (Ps.36:90)
- He does not sleep (Ps.121:4)
- He is the searcher of hearts (1 Sam16.7)
- There can be no limiting, materialistic expressions of him (Ex.20:4)
- He is supreme over all creatures (Isa.31:3)
- He is distinct from man (Hos.11:9).

3. God is One: Monotheism
- The patriarchs’ practical experience was of God as supreme and alone, but we have no indication of their denial of the existence of other gods.
- The highest statement of pure monotheism comes with the major prophets. For them other gods are all as nothing (Isa.44:10; Jer 2:5). But even here the stress is on their worthlessness rather than on their nonexistence: they cannot hear or answer prayer; therefore, they are no gods at all. Among all the wise ones there is none like the Lord; all others are stupid and foolish (Jer.10:8); they are impotent (Jer.14:22). The classic defense of monotheisms found in Isa. 44-46. There all the idols are contrasted with the Lord who made heaven and earth: “I am the Lord, and there is no other: (Isa.45:18).
The Nature of God: The Character and Activity of God

1. The Power of God
All the words of God display his power, but it is never a naked or arbitrary power. “Or God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases (Ps.115:3). But this confession was born of particular instances of his deliverance. In any case, along with his lordship in history, they believed fully in his intimate care of nature Ps.89:9 and 104. Associated with his power is the idea of God as terrible. God’s power was experienced in judgment as well as blessing. The enemies of Israel knew the Lord as a “dread warrior” who protects his own (Jer.20:11) Just as he is mighty in his faithfulness toward those who love him (Ps.89:8), so his wrath is terrible to those who have turned against him Ps.59:13 and Deut. 29:28.

2. The Holiness of God
The etymology of the Hebrew word is “to cut off” or “mark off”. It was used to denote that which is separated from regular, everyday use for sacred service. For example, in Gen.2:3 the seventh day is “marked off” or “holy” unto the Lord. In the first place, holiness is primarily associated with God himself and only secondarily (and by his instruction) with objects and places (Ex.15:11). Objects and places are marked off by God as holy, not because they are places of fear or terror, but because he himself is present or has identified himself with that place. Very early the idea of holiness was associated with moral purity. It is misreading of the record to make this connection a later one. By extension, the holiness of the Lord had also to do with the people he had called to himself; the covenant is a unique expression of God’s holiness.

3. The Righteousness of God
Closely related to holiness is righteousness. The root of the Hebrew is lost, but its usage denotes right behavior or right disposition: straightness, conformity to a norm. In the OT God’s righteousness is shown especially in his intervention on behalf of his people and in the maintenance of the rights of the covenant people. Two associated concepts of righteousness – the first is judgment of God. This concept is very closely related to idea of “rightwising” This will was revealed at Sinai and the law became the basis of all legal decisions. As ruler God, He judges rightly (Gen 18:25). God did judge his people when they were guilty (Jer. 2 and Hos. 6), however, he did not forget his people and therefore showed them mercy and grace (Isa. 30:18).

CREATION

1. INTRODUCTION
The Old Testament reflection on creator-creation is many sided and hence presents not only one but many creation accounts. The creation account in Gen 1&2 itself differs (where in the former account God acts by forming man from clay and woman from the rib of the man, whereas creation is by the word of God in the latter account). There is a whole series of passages from other parts of the Old Testament, especially from the Psalms, Job, Isaiah, and Wisdom literature, which enables us to reconstruct the history of the tradition of the reflection on creator-creation. Through the course of study one will see that the creation stories in the Old Testament are much related to their (Israelites) own understanding of their own history, identity, and their relationship with Yahweh.

2. CREATION IN ANCIENT NEAR EAST TRADITION
ANE, including Israel, understands nature, culture, and history as aspects of one, all-encompassing, cosmic order. Their texts are characterized by polytheism in which gods are identified with powers, parts, or aspects of cosmos and culture. ANE myths often involve a combined theogony-cosmogony
out of primordial matter. Moreover, primeval conflict in the divine-cosmic world can imbue reality itself with an ambiguous, good-evil character. In Enuma Elish, Marduk, a younger god slays and separates the water deity and genetrix Tiamat into heaven and earth. Egyptian myth, Heaven and earth are the fertile female-male pair Nut and Geb. It is within this backdrop that Gen 1:1 appears as a thunderbolt: Israel’s god is exclusive creator and sovereign of the entire cosmos and is fundamentally distinguished from his non divine creation.

3. THEOLOGY OF CREATION IN OLD TESTAMENT

3.1. Creation as counter experience in worship

The affirmation that God is Creator arose originally out of the worship experience of Israel, not out of the reflections of a systematic theologian or a philosopher. The Genesis creation story which reaches its climax in the observance of the Sabbath is a clear witness to the existential foundation of the creation faith in the Israelite cultus. In other words, the atmosphere pervading the first chapter of Genesis is that of the community of worship. During the exodus event and the exile, Creation became a crucial claim of Israel’s faith, when Gen 1:1-2:4a is commonly noted. This setting for creation faith suggests that affirmation of creation as an ordered, reliable arena of generosity is a treasured counter to the disordered experience of chaos in exile. Creation then is enactment done in worship, in order to resist the negation of the world of exile. As a consequence, creation is not to be understood as a theory or as an intellectual, speculative notion, but as a concrete life-or-death discipline and practice, whereby the peculiar claims of Yahweh were mediated on and to Israel.

3.2. Creation as Revelation

The fact that all things find their origin in the creative work of God means that everything, in some way, bears witness to the creation and is revelatory of the Creator. According to the Psalmist every rock and tree and creature can be said to testify of God, declare his glory and show forth his handiwork (Ps 8:1; 19:1; 104; 148). The book of Proverbs develops this motif and describes the Lord created the earth and its foundations established in wisdom (Prov 8:22–31). The Wisdom Literature thus surrounds the creation with images of knowledge and wisdom. The voice from the whirlwind at the end of the book of Job adduces the order and power of the creation as evidence of God’s superior knowledge (Job 38:2) and power. In the Psalms we find references to how God “by strength … established the mountains” (Ps 65:6), “in wisdom” made all creatures (Ps 104:24) and “by understanding made the heavens” (Ps 136:5). Furthermore, the creation itself “declares knowledge” (Ps 19:2).

3.3. Creation and Meaning

The creation affirms that God alone is the author of the meaning that supports all human history and the natural world. The primeval creation story (Gen 1-2) has been linked with the history of the people of Israel. So the activity of the God of Israel is extended to an activity in the history of the nations and beyond to creation, preservation, and blessing throughout the universe. When the Psalmist sing the praise for the God whom Israel had experienced in her history as the God who liberated and saves, and this praise is extended to the lord of the history of the nations and to the creator of everything created. Genesis 2-11 claims that Yahweh, who spoke to Moses and delivered Israel from Egypt is none another than the God of primeval times. The one who created the community Israel is the creator of humankind. The great affirmation of the Bible is that the meaning of human history, first disclosed in the events of Israel’s history, is the meaning upon which the world is founded. The redemptive word, by which Israel was created as the people of God, is none other than the creative word, by which the heavens were made (Ps 33:6). The bible creation is not an independent doctrine but is inseparably related to the basic story of the people in which Yahweh is presented as the actor and redeemer.

3.4. Creation and Continuity

Creation stories in the Old Testament continually affirm a total dependence of the world upon God the creator who sustains it so that it would not lapse back to primeval chaos. The unforgettable events of Israel history chiefly the deliverance from Egyptian bondage and the giving of the covenant were impressed upon the people’s experience as signs of Yahweh’s lordship over them. From this stand
point of present faith, Israel looked back to the creation and affirmed that the world itself depends on the same sovereign will. The earth being established upon the primeval sea (Ps 24:1) “the earth was a formless void and darkness covered over the face of the sea (Gen 1:2). Here creation is seen related to chaos (Even the Psalmist [24:1-3] also marvels that Yahweh has established the earth on the primeval deep). His continuing power is necessary to uphold and renew the creatures (Ps 104: 29-30).

3.5. Creation and Order
God’s creation is characterized by order. Out of Chaotic situation God delivered order and systematized things. When the creator commands for creation he not only brings a creature into being but also designates its peculiar nature and assigns to it a specific task. Every creature is assigned a place in God’s plan in order that it may perform its appointed role in serving and glorifying the creator. The creator stands in personal relationship to the creation. It is the divine decree that determines order (Job 38:33; Ps 104:9; 148:6; Jer 5:24), and it can even be said that Yahweh has made a covenant with the day and the night (Jer 33:20).

3.6. The Sovereignty of the Creator
The creation story affirms that God’s word, mighty in history, is also the very power that brought the creation into being. The creation stories in Genesis chapter 1 shows that Yahweh is the Lord of the entire cosmos and gods and is fundamentally distinguished from the other creation. The great ‘creatures of the sea are not divine monsters, but merely beast made to sport (Ps 104:26) in the sea. Likewise, the sun and moon, which were considered as gods by other nations, are created only on the fourth day and not even mentioned by name. The deep, is not the divine monster Tiamat, but the amorphous and unruly sea, upon which God places cosmic limits by commands of separation. OT freely uses the imagery of ANE combat myths to portray Yahweh’s sovereignty over nature and history. Sea and related monsters can symbolize evil (Job 3:8; Ps 74:13-17). Such explicit use of ANE combat myth imagery serves to assert the sole sovereignty of Yahweh or to represent the chaos of human evil, which rise up against Yahweh and his people. The point is that Yahweh, who in creation defeated the cosmic monsters, can surely defeat Israel’s foes and restore the human world to order.

3.7. Creation of Man
The Priestly writer does not say that God created man by his word but by the dust of the earth (Gen 2:7). Numerous passages in the other writings strongly support this view (Job 10:8, “your hands fashioned me and made me”; 4:19 “human beings as house of clay” Ps. 90:3; 103:14; 104:29; Isa 29:16). Man receives his existence from God; human existence is nothing else but created existence. However, human beings are elevated to the highest place among all creations. The completion of creation after the creation of human being shows that the creation of human is at the climax of creation story. Or we can say that creation is complete when human are created.

3.8. Creation and Sabbath
What is peculiar to the holy day in the course of everyday happening is that it posts to the goal of the creature which God has created in his image. The work which has been laid upon man is not his goal. His goal is the eternal rest which has been suggested in the rest of the seventh day. The works of creation are fitted into an overall time scheme, part of which is the procession of the days of work into a day of rest. The sanctification of the seventh day forms part of the time established with creation: the days of work have their goal in a day which is different from them.

3.9. Renewed Creation or New Creation
Just as Israel traced a historical line back to creation so also Israel looked forward in hope toward the end when creator’s purpose would finally be realized. Creation is basically an eschatological doctrine in the sense that it has a future horizon. There is a movement from creation to the new beginning after the flood. According to Hos. 2:2-23, Yahweh will make a covenant with animals, the birds of the air and the creeping things of the ground (2:18). The result of that restoration of relationship is the resumption of the processes of fruitfulness in creation. Whatever is amiss in creation will now be restored and made whole. The new creation now promised not only concerns Israel not only the entire humanity, but all of creation so that hostilities at every level and in every dimension of creation will be
overcome. The creation of new heaven and earth includes a New Jerusalem and a new humanity within its walls.

5. CONCLUSION
Creation stories in the Old Testament acknowledge Yahweh as the lord of the entire universe who is ought to be praised and worshipped. He established the universe solely by his sovereign power, his task unaided by any helpers, and unhindered by any opposing forces. These stories of his deeds in the context of creation were adjusted to the minds of the prophets and the biblical writers and were declared and expressed in the context of their worship. All the metaphors and imageries used in the Bible cannot be taken at face value because of man’s expanding comprehension of the universe but must be recurrently interpreted in line with new discoveries.

ELECTION

1. Introduction
Election is a concept which was implicit in the stories Israel told of its origins and vocation. God chose Abraham and his seed, by taking Abraham out of Ur and bringing him to the promised land of Canaan, making there an everlasting covenant with him and his descendants, and promising him that his seed should be a blessing to all the earth (Gn. 11:31-12:7; 15; 17; 22:15-18; Ne. 9:7; Is. 41:8). He chose Abraham’s seed by redeeming them from slavery in Egypt, bringing them out of bondage under Moses, renewing the Abrahamic covenant with them in an amplified form at Sinai and setting them in the promised land as their national home (Ex. 3:6-10; Dt. 6:21-23; Ps. 105).

2. The Objects of Election
The objects of divine election fall into three categories: things/places, individuals, and corporate entities. Things/places: God chose Aaron's rod (Num. 17:5), Shiloh (Psa. 78:60; Jer. 7:12), the city of Jerusalem (1 Kgs. 8:44, 48), the temple (2 Chr. 7:16; 33:7), and Mt. Zion (Psa. 78:68; 132:13). Numerous individuals, some of which may be grouped by classes, are the objects of God's choice: The Patriarchs, Judges, Kings, Prophets, Messiah, etc. Within the category of corporate entities, God chose the whole humanity in the Noachian covenant (Gen. 9:9-17); (2) the nation of Israel - elected in God's choice of Abraham's seed (Gen. 17:7-8), Isaac's seed (Gen. 17:19), and Jacob's seed (Gen. 28:13-15); (3) the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:12ff; 16:5, 7; Deut. 18:1-5; 21:5); (3) the Aaronic line (Exo. 28:1-2; Num. 16:40); (5) the Davidic line (2 Sam. 7:8ff).

God’s promise to Abraham was the basis for the election of Israel to be God’s people. Israel became a nation after it was delivered from Egypt and established a covenant with God at Sinai. The belief that Israel was the special people of God is affirmed throughout the Old Testament.

2.1. The Call of Abraham
Among all the creatures under heaven Yahweh selected one family to belong to him in a special way. Abraham and his descendants are promised the power of fruitfulness and renowned (12:2), and divine support in their competition with other peoples for existence (12:3a). These blessings might be said to equip Abraham and his descendants to fulfill their destiny. The nature of that destiny is, “all the families of the earth will bless themselves by you,” or, “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” The first of these would mean simply that other families and nations would be so impressed by Israel’s success and happiness that they would say, “May you be blessed like Abraham/Israel.” The second would mean that Israel’s very existence would mediate a “blessing” to all the families on earth. God is achieving a universal purpose in Israel’s history.

2.2. The Exodus from Egypt
YHWH’s election of Abraham and his descendants is manifested in his great deeds for them, particularly his deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. YHWH was true to the solemn promise he had made to the patriarchs, confirming his election by a great deliverance. The Exodus was the moment in Israel’s history in which God’s loyalty to the people he had attached to himself coincided with his justice for the oppressed.
2.3. The Corporate Election of Israel
When the covenant is offered to Israel on Mount Horeb/Sinai, YHWH initially recalls his demonstrations of power and concern for Israel in the deliverance from Egypt (Exod 19:4), then offers them the opportunity to choose to be a “holy nation” and “unique value” to YHWH by agreeing to “obey my voice and keep my covenant” (19:5). Israel becomes YHWH’s people by formally pledging to obey him (as they do in 19:8 and 24:3, 7–8) by singing the covenant.

2.4. Election in Prophetic Promises of Salvation
Occasionally we receive hints in the classical prophets that the distinction between Israel and the nations is only provisional, and that at the denouement of history the nations will be incorporated into the people of God. One such passage (Isa 19:19–25) speaks of the conversion of Egypt and by implication Assyria, the two great powers of Isaiah’s day, to YHWH, concluding with an explicit reference to election language. Second Isaiah, also announces the conversion and incorporation of all peoples into Israel in Isa 45:20–25. In Cyrus’ conquest of the entire known world, the nations will discover that their gods are impotent and that it is YHWH who rules human destiny (vv 20–21). Once YHWH wins his “debate” with the gods of the nations, he offers his salvation to the peoples and insists that they will all accept it (vv 22–23). They will become the “offspring of Israel” (vv 24–25).

The language of election is repeated frequently in Isaiah 40–55. The exiled people of YHWH are called his chosen (41:8, 9; 43:10, 20; 44:1–2; 45:4). Israel has been chosen out by YHWH to be his servant. Their suffering is due to their failure to “walk in his ways and obey his law” (42:24, cf. v 21; also 43:24), in a word, to serve YHWH. However, he intends to revive them and make them messengers (42:19) and witnesses (43:10) to the nations. As a servant Israel is to “bring forth justice from the nations” (42:1, cf. v 4) without the use of force; the performance of this prophetic task (49:1–6; 50:4–9) leads to suffering, and finally to a sacrificial death (52:13–53:12). Here we have one answer to the question of how Abraham and his seed will be a blessing to the nations.

In postexilic prophetic literature: the people of God themselves are divided between righteous and wicked, the elect and the reprobate. Isaiah 65 thrice speaks of a group within Israel as “my chosen” (vv 9, 15, 22), parallel with another title of election, “my servants” (vv 8, 9, 13–15). Over against this group is another which has proven faithless and arrogant (65:1–7); the entire chapter threatens the latter group with judgment, while promising salvation to the elect. The chosen servants will “inherit” YHWH’s land and be blessed with the blessings promised Abraham, while the rejected “shall leave your name to my chosen people for a curse, and Lord YHWH will kill you, but his servants he will call by a different name” (v 15).

2.5. The Distinctive Identity of Israel
YHWH’s election of Israel is manifested in the people’s distinctive identity as well as God’s deeds. This distinctive identity is articulated in two allusive expressions in Deut 7:6: “you are a people holy to YHWH your God”—“. . . a people of unique value to Him.” They are precious in the sight of Yahweh and Israel will stand out from other nations by the marvel-working presence of the holy God in its midst. The other expression derives from the language of ownership. Israel is YHWH’s private treasure, in distinction from the peoples of the earth; a “unique value” or “treasure” to him (Ex 19:5). Other texts use another word ownership, which is “possession” or “inheritance,” for Israel’s unique position of belonging to YHWH (Exod 34:9; Deut 4:20; 32:8–9, etc.). Israel is being compared to a plot of land that belongs to a family in perpetuity, passed on from generation to generation by inheritance.

3. The Grounds of Election
The basis for God's choice is frequently unmentioned in the OT, however, those grounds of divine election that are revealed fall into two categories: merited and unmerited election. To designate election as merited means that God's choice was based on some good found in the elected person. Examples of merited election are Noah who "found grace" in God's sight (Gen. 6:8), and the Levites, whose steadfast loyalty to the covenant during the golden calf incident, appears to be the grounds of God's choice (Deut. 33:8-10). The clearest examples of unmerited election involve Abraham, Jacob,
and Israel. God's revelation that Abraham was an idolater highlights the unmerited nature of his election (Jos. 24:2). God's choice of Jacob prior to his birth excludes all possibility of merit (Gen. 25:23). The grounds for God's choice of Israel were, negatively, not because of their numbers (Deut. 7:7) or righteousness/uprightness of heart (Deut. 9:5) and in spite of their smallness (7:7), stubbornness (Deut. 9:6), and rebellion (Deut. 9:7). Positively, God chose Israel because of love for them (Deut. 7:8; 13:5), for their fathers (Deut. 4:37), and because of His oath to the fathers (Deut. 9:5).

4. The Purposes of Election
The OT reveals four purposes for which God elects individuals or groups: service, salvation, blessing, and reflection of God's character. Service and salvation, as purposes of election, blend in the election of Abraham and his seed. Abraham was chosen to be a blessing to all nations (Gen. 12:3; 18:18) and in order that he should instruct his children to walk in Yahweh's way (Gen. 18:19). The nation of Israel was the elect instrument through which God intended to mediate the promised Abrahamic blessing (salvation) to the whole world; thus Yahweh calls them "a kingdom of priests" (Exo. 19:6), "witnesses" ( Isa. 43:10, 12), and "My servant" ( Isa. 44:1). Isaiah 43:10 contains the most explicit statement of God's salvific purpose in the election of national Israel: "You are my witnesses, said the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he." Election's salvific purpose climaxes in the person of the Servant of Yahweh. He is chosen to bring Jacob back to Yahweh ( Isa. 49:5), to be a light to the Gentiles (49:6), to be a covenant for the people (49:8), to set captives free (49:9) and to suffer for man's salvation ( Isa. 52:13-53:12). Divine election may also have as its purpose the bestowment of blessing. Jeremiah 18:9-10 speaks of God's choice to build, plant, and bless a nation or kingdom without any specific task attending that choice. Reflection of God's character is the final purpose for election that is explicitly mentioned in Scripture. God chose Israel to be a holy nation (Exo. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2) and to show forth His glory ( Isa. 43:7).

5. The Consequences of Election
The consequences of election may be summarized in terms of privilege and responsibility. To be chosen by God, whether merited or not, is to receive one of the highest conceivable honors. David expresses the magnitude of this honor in his prayer acknowledging God's election of him and his seed (2 Sam. 7:18-29; cp. Psa. 65:4). The privileges attending Israel's election were many: they became God's special possession (Exo. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Psa. 135:4; Mal. 3:17), they were the recipients of God's law (Deut. 4:8), God's special presence dwelt in their midst (Exo. 40:34-38; Lev. 26:11ff.; Deut. 4:7), they were God's "inheritance" (Deut. 4:20; 32:9), they received God's unique care and protection (Deut. 32:10-11), and God promised to bless them (Deut. 28:1-14).

Privilege brings responsibility, and one of the responsibilities attending divine election is the obligation to respond to that election in faith and obedience (Deut. 4:37, 40; 7:6, 11). On several occasions Israel is summoned to respond to God's election by choosing to serve the Lord (Exo. 19:4-8; Deut. 10:15-16; 30:19; Jos. 24:14, 22) and to love Him (Deut. 10:15; 11:1). Election demands righteousness of conduct (Amos 3:2; 9:7; Jer. 18:7-10), loyalty to God's law (Lev. 18:4ff.), and "resolute non-conformity" to the surrounding world (Lev. 18:2; 20:22; Deut. 14:1ff.; Eze. 20:5-7). Failure in the responsibilities of election had two observable results in the OT: chastisement (Lev. 26:14-39; Deut. 28:15-68; Amos 3:2) and/or revocation of the election. Examples of God's reversal of His election span all three types of election: things - the chosen place of His dwelling: Shiloh (Psa. 78:60), the temple (Jer. 7:14; 26:6), and Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 23:37); individuals - Saul (1 Sam. 15:23, 26), Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 14:7ff), and Baasha (2 Kgs. 16:2); corporate entities - Eli's house as part of the Aaronic priesthood (2 Sam. 2:31-33), Northern Israel (2 Kgs. 17:15-20; Jer. 3:8; cp. Hos. 11:8), and the "nation or kingdom" of Jeremiah 18:7-10.

There are a handful of NT references of God choosing an individual for a particular ministry. The apostle Paul had a firm sense of God's choice of him to be the apostle to the gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:47). The election of Jesus to fulfill the divine plan, who would suffer and die, rise again, and rule
over creation (e.g., see Acts 3:20; Eph 1:9–10; 1 Pet 1:20; Rev 13:8) is the most significant one when we talk about individual election. Jesus Christ was the chosen one, through whom all the believers are chosen is the main teaching of the New Testament. Paul argues that the remnant of Israel (of which he is a part, Rom 11:1–2) is now turning to Christ in belief through the preaching of the Gospel (Rom 11:7). This remnant is “chosen by grace” (Rom 11:5) and was foreknown (Rom 11:2). Paul asserts that after the gentile elect enter into salvation, “all Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26). Paul is following the line of reasoning found in the OT that salvation is for the elect remnant. In Pauline thought, the OT doctrine of the remnant points to personal election, that God has elected both Jews and gentiles to be saved. The corporate election of the Church, is also highlighted in the NT where the Church is called “a chosen race . . . a holy nation, God’s own people,” reminiscent of biblical titles for the nation of Israel (1 Pet 2:9). Christian congregations are possibly called “elect” in 2 John: the “elect lady” of 2 John 1 and “elect sister” in 2 John 13 (see the commentaries).

7. Conclusion
Israelite faith was founded on the belief that Israel was God’s chosen people. There was nothing about Israel that made it more worthy of YHWH’s favor than other nations. The election of Israel as God’s special people is attributed to Yahweh’s love. God’s love for Israel preceded his choosing them. Indeed, his love is the reason he chose Israel to be his own. The covenant is the seal of this calling and election. This special election demands loyalty and obedience to observe the statute of Yahweh on their part. The concept of divine election made explicit the unique value of belonging to this people. No other nation had been so favored by the one universal God (Deut 10:14–15, etc.). However, the call of Abraham, of course, is not merely individual. God promises Abraham land, seed, and universal blessing (Gen. 12:1–3), and these promises are confirmed to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:3–4; 28:13–15; 35:11–12). By choosing Abraham God is choosing a people whom he would save and through whom he would bring salvation to all peoples (Gen. 12:3). Under the power of YHWH’s blessing, Israel would multiply in numbers and increase in might. People will learn from Israel and be drawn to Him. Israel was the servant by whom Yahweh would fulfill his promise to bless all nations. They are chosen nation and royal priests, mediating on behalf of the nations.

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COVENANT

1. Introduction
A covenant is an agreement between two parties. In the Bible it is the major metaphor used to describe the relation between God and Israel (the people of God). There are two types of covenants: conditional and unconditional. A conditional or bilateral covenant is an agreement that is binding on both parties for its fulfillment. Both parties agree to fulfill certain conditions. If either party fails to meet their responsibilities, the covenant is broken and neither party has to fulfill the expectations of the covenant. An unconditional or unilateral covenant is an agreement between two parties, but only one of the two parties has to do something. Nothing is required of the other party.

2. Adamic Covenant
The Adamic Covenant can be thought of in two parts: the Edenic Covenant (innocence) and the Adamic Covenant (grace). The Edenic Covenant is found in Genesis 1:26-30; 2:16-17. The details of this covenant include the following: Mankind (male and female) created in God’s image; Mankind’s dominion (rule) over the animal kingdom; Divine directive for mankind to reproduce and inhabit the entire Earth; Mankind to be vegetarian (eating of meat established in the Noahic covenant: Genesis 9:3); Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil forbidden (with death as the stated penalty).

The Adamic Covenant is found in Genesis 3:16-19. As the result of Adam’s sin, the following curses were pronounced: Enmity between Satan and Eve and her descendants; Painful childbirth for women; Marital strife; The soil cursed; Introduction of thorns and thistles; Survival to be a struggle; Death introduced; Death will be the inescapable fate of all living things. Although these curses are severe and inescapable, a wonderful promise of grace was also included in the Adamic Covenant. Genesis
3:15 is often referred to as the “Proto-Gospel” or “First Gospel.” Speaking to Satan, God says, “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.” Here God promises that one born of a woman would be wounded in the process of destroying Satan. The “seed” of the woman who would crush the Serpent’s head is none other than Jesus Christ (see Galatians 4:4 and 1 John 3:8). Even in the midst of the curse, God’s gracious provision of salvation shines through.

3. Noahic Covenant
The Noahic Covenant, found in Genesis 9:8-17, is the promise that God made to Noah and his descendants after the flood which destroyed the world. First, Noahic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. Second, it was made to Noah and all his descendants as well as “every living creature” and the earth in general (Genesis 9:8-10). Third, it was sealed with a sign, the rainbow.

The Noahic Covenant is an unconditional covenant because it does not depend upon anything Noah or his descendants had to do to fulfill the covenant. The promise is based upon God’s faithfulness alone. Because of God’s faithfulness to always do what He says He will do, we can know today with certainty that there will never be another worldwide flood as there was in the days of Noah, no matter how wicked mankind becomes. After the flood God promised that He would never again send a worldwide flood to destroy the earth as an act of His divine judgment for sin. As a sign to remind Noah and his descendants of His covenantal promise, God “set the rainbow in the cloud” (Genesis 9:12-13). Just as circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, the rainbow is the sign of the Noahic Covenant. The lesson to us is that when we see a rainbow we should always be reminded of God’s faithfulness and His amazing grace. Also, just as God provided a way for Noah and his family to be saved in the ark, He also has provided a way for us to be saved through Jesus Christ. Noah and his family were saved from the wrath of God that came in the flood, just as those who are in Christ are saved from the “wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

4. Abrahamic Covenant
The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional covenant. God made promises to Abraham that required nothing of Abraham. There are no conditions attached to it (no “if” clauses, suggesting its fulfillment is dependent on man), God determined to call out a special people for Himself through whom He would bring blessing to all the nations. The actual Abrahamic Covenant is found in Genesis 12:1-3. The ceremony recorded in Genesis 15 indicates the unconditional nature of the covenant. The only time that both parties of a covenant would pass between the pieces of animals was when the fulfillment of the covenant was dependent upon both parties keeping commitments. Concerning the significance of God alone moving between the halves of the animals, it is to be noted that it is a smoking furnace and a flaming torch, representing God, not Abraham, which passed between the pieces. Such an act, it would seem, should be shared by both parties, but in this case it is doubtless to be explained by the fact that the covenant is principally a promise by God. He is the one who binds Himself. God caused a sleep to fall upon Abraham so that he would not be able to pass between the two halves of the animals. Fulfillment of the Covenant fell to God alone.

4.1. The promise of land (Genesis 12:1). God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees to a land that He would give him (Genesis 12:1). This promise is reiterated in Genesis 13:14–18 where it is confirmed by a shoe covenant; its dimensions are given in Genesis 15:18–21 (precluding any notion of this being fulfilled in heaven). The land aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant is also expanded in Deuteronomy 30.

4.2. The promise of descendants (Genesis 12:2). God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation out of him. Abraham, who was 75 years old and childless (Genesis 12:4), was promised many descendants. This promise is amplified in Genesis 17:6 where God promised that nations and kings would descend from the aged patriarch. This promise (which is expanded in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7:12–16) would eventuate in the Davidic throne with Messiah’s kingdom rule over the Hebrew people.

4.3. The promise of blessing and redemption (Genesis 12:3). God promised to bless Abraham and the families of the earth through him. This promise is amplified in the New
Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31–34; cf. Hebrews 8:6–13) and has to do with “Israel’s spiritual blessing and redemption.” Jeremiah 31:34 anticipates the forgiveness of sin. The unconditional and eternal nature of the covenant is seen in that the covenant is reaffirmed to Isaac (Genesis 21:12; 26:3–4). The “I will” promises suggest the unconditional aspect of the covenant. The covenant is further confirmed to Jacob (Genesis 28:14–15). It is noteworthy that God reaffirmed these promises amid the sins of the patriarchs, which fact further emphasizes the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant.

God’s method of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant is literal, inasmuch as God partially fulfilled the covenant in history: God blessed Abraham by giving him the land (Genesis 13:14–17); God blessed him spiritually (Genesis 13:8, 18; 14:22, 23; 21:22); God gave him numerous descendants (Genesis 22:17; 49:3–28). The important element of the Abrahamic Covenant, however, demands a future fulfillment with the future messiah’s kingdom rule. The greatest purpose of the Abrahamic covenant was the promise of the Messiah, in whom all the people of this earth will be blessed through his saving act on the cross. It says “in you, all the family of the earth will be blessed” (Gen 12:3).

5. Sinai Covenant
The relationship between the Hittite Suzerain-Vassal treaty and the Sinai covenant traditions are historically significant, and one could justifiably conclude that the Sinai covenant was conceived to be a type of “suzerainty treaty” establishing Yahweh as king and Israel as vassal. Here it should be stated clearly that all of the various elements of the suzerainty treaties (presented above) in one way or another are either present or reflected in biblical traditions associated with the premonarchic (Sinai) covenant.

a. Identification and Historical Prologue. The identification of the covenant giver and the historical prologue is fused together in the two forms of the Decalogue (The Ten Commandment) preserved in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 6. At the very beginning God was identified in terms of what God had done: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exod 20:2).

b. Stipulations. According to the Exodus 20 tradition, the Decalogue were written on two tablets of stone. The Ten Words are simple future indicative verbs that indicate the future action that is the expected consequence of the preceding prologue: “I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt . . . , (and therefore) you will have no other gods before me . . . ,” etc.

c. Deposit and Public Reading, Witnesses. It is true that the Exodus 20 text does not include the provision for deposit and periodic public reading, the list of witnesses, or the curses and blessings. However, it did happen during the time of Joshua (Josh 24). Here the stone is a witness.

d. Blessings and Curses The blessings and curses were enormously elaborated in Deuteronomy 28. Though the text of the Decalogue (Exod 20:1–17) does not refer to either blessings or curses, the latter are implied in the narrative accounts that refer to sacrificed animals (“oxen” according to a later embellishment—inappropriate to a desert environment) and to a common covenant meal with Yahweh (Exod 24:4–8, 11).

e. The Ratification Ceremony. This seems to have two elements, the first a verbal assent to the covenant (“All that the Lord has spoken we will do,” Exod 19:8; 24:3; cf. Josh 24:24 for a quite different formula), and the second a ritual act involving the sacrifice of an animal, the blood of which is thrown upon an altar and upon the people (Exod 24:5–8). The latter was a symbolic action in which the people were identified with the sacrificed animal, so that the fate of the latter is presented as the fate to be expected by the people if they violated their sacred promise (i.e., it is a form of self-curse). Thus the ratification ceremony was, in effect, the pledging of their lives as a guarantee of obedience to the divine will. Traces of other ratification ceremonies or covenant enactments have been preserved in later biblical traditions.

f. Formal Procedures for Violation of Covenant. The narratives of Exodus and Numbers give many illustrations of procedures taken against such violators during the lifetime of Moses himself. Yahweh is not only portrayed as soliciting a relationship by multiplying favors that could potentially be listed in a covenant’s historical prologue; he is now depicted taking punitive measures against those who have violated their covenant obligations.
The basic description of the making of the Mosaic covenant is found in Exodus 19–24. The account contains three elements: (1) Yahweh’s action; (2) Israel’s response; and (3) Israel’s obligation.

1. **Yahweh’s Action.** Facing certain death at the sea at the hands of the Egyptians, the fleeing Israelites were gifted by Yahweh with new and unexpected life. Guided by Yahweh through the wilderness, they came to Sinai where they had another experience of Yahweh.

2. **Israel’s Response.** God had delivered Israel at the sea, led them through the wilderness, and appeared to them at Sinai. Israel recognized Yahweh’s special care on their behalf and sealed a covenant which expressed this realization. The sealing ceremonies are described in Exodus 24 where two ritual actions are significant: (a) a blood ritual (Exod 24:6–8); and (b) a meal ritual (Exod 24:11).

3. **Obligation.** These rituals are preceded in the text by a recitation of the words and ordinances of the Lord to which the people promise obedience. Covenant involved obligation. Israel was gifted with life by Yahweh; the covenant expressed that shared life. New behavior flowed from new covenant life. Freed from the slavery of Egypt, Israel now belonged to Yahweh; they must live as Yahweh’s people and special possession (Exod 19:4–6). Their deliverance from Egypt was not just a freedom from, but also a freedom for. The goal of the liberation from Egypt is Israel’s service of Yahweh (Exod 4:23; 5:1,3; 7:16, 26; 8:16; 9:1, 13; 10:3). Israel’s first obligation is to worship only Yahweh (Exod 20:2–3); the first and basic sin, therefore, against covenant is idolatry. The second area of new covenant life involves the horizontal relationship with others. In saving Israel from the Egyptians, Yahweh was involved in social behavior; the covenant at Sinai revealed an intrinsic connection between the nature of Yahweh and the demands of social justice. How Israel treated each other would be a sign of how seriously they were devoted to Yahweh. A special area of concern here is the treatment of the poor, the oppressed, the alien. A motive frequently found in covenant law (e.g., Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:34; Deut 15:1–11) for not oppressing the weak is “because you were once strangers (aliens) in the land of Egypt.”

6. **The DAVIDIC Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-16; 1Chron. 17:3-15)**

God promised David an unending, royal lineage, throne, and kingdom. Though God reserved the right to interrupt the actual reign of David’s sons for chastisement, the perpetuity of the covenant cannot be broken. He sons will be given the title son of God. The Abrahamic covenant guaranteed the nation and the land. The Davidic covenant guarantees an everlasting Throne, King and Kingdom connected to that people (the Jews) and the land. The Davidic Covenant is a renewal of both Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant (“I will be to you a God and you shall be to me a people.” 2 Samuel 7:4; cf. Genesis 17:7-8; 28:21; Exodus 6:7; 29:4). All the nations shall be blessed through the seed of David (“I will make you a great name” 2 Sam. 7:9; cf. Genesis 12:2, etc.). Jesus Christ, the Son of David, is the rightful heir of this promised Throne (Matt. 2:2; Lk. 1:32-33) and on it He will reign over this literal, promised, earthly, future Messianic Kingdom from Jerusalem at His second advent.

7. **The NEW COVENANT Jer. 31:31-40**

It is a new covenant with Israel in contrast with the old (Mosaic, "which they broke,” Jer. 31:32). Christ Jesus is the Mediator (in His blood) of this new covenant which was inaugurated at the cross and is described in Scripture as, "enacted on better promises" (Heb. 8:6). The Mediator of this covenant has become, for all mankind, "the source of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) to all who obey Him; as well as the cornerstone and Head of the Church (Eph. 2:20-22; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23) which is being built during this dispensation; individuals called out from both Jews and Gentiles alike. Ultimately and literally, this new covenant with its unconditional and eternal blessings will be established with NATIONAL Israel at Christ’s second advent to earth.

The new covenant is an unconditional, grace covenant resting on the “I will” of God (Jer. 31:31-34, Ezek 16:60-62)

- The new covenant is an everlasting covenant(Isa 61:2, Ezek 37:26, Jer 31:35-37)
- The new covenant promises a renewed mind and heart. (Isa.59:21, Jer 31:33)
The new covenant provides for restoration to the favor and blessing of God. (Hos 2:19-20, Isa61:9)
Forgiveness of sin is also included in the covenant. (Jer 31:34b)
The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is in the new covenant. (Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:27)
The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit will be manifested, and the will of God will be known by obedient hearts. (Jer 31:34)
Israel will be in the land and be materially blessed (Jer. 32:41, Isa. 61:8, Ezek 34:25-27)
The sanctuary will be rebuilt in Jerusalem (Ezek 37:26-27a).
War shall cease and peace shall reign according to Hosea 2:18, Isa 2:4

8. Conclusion
Israelites understanding of their relationship with God and particularly of their knowledge of him and them as the people of God were the Covenant. The covenant is the Israelite experience of God, the factual nature of God. It is from the covenant that God disclose himself to his people. His divine will become discernible and also his solidarity with his people. The covenant manifests His unique position, His dominance influence. The Israelite experience his divine will and encounters the divine activity in the fortunes of the nation. the whole course of Israelite history was bound up with the Sinai tradition or the covenant (Judge 5:4, 9, 23; 6:13; 11:16; 1 Sam. 2:27; 4:8; 10:18; 15:6; Ex. 15:1, 22; Num. 23:22; 24:8.

LAW
INTRODUCTION
God made covenant with Israel at Sinai, setting out obligation which have often been understood as “laws.” These laws were among Israel’s most precious possessions. Obedience to them distinguished them from other nations. They covered all aspects of life, regulating relationships and dealing with both personal and economics matters. They laid down guidelines for the way Israel should relate to other nations. Above all, the laws regulated the cult and its sacrifices through which the Israelites related to God, and by which they maintain their identity as God’s people.

TERMINOLOGY
The basic word for law is torah. The term has been translated as “instruction, education, teaching,” though not ruling out the contextual meaning or nuances. Torah, therefore, denote an instruction or behavioral norm whose authority and bindings depends on its source. The basic meaning is instruction, but primarily it means the commandments given by God through Moses as the mediator (2 Chro 33:8). In the book of Deuteronomy the word torah refers to the law book itself, consisting of the stipulations, decrees and laws Moses gave to Israel (cf. Duet 4:44ff). Psalm 119 shows the range of specific words by which the law is called: testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, ways, and word. In general the Old Testament laws can be classified into two: Apodictic law and Casuistic law. Apodictic laws are command or must do, whereas casuistic laws are conditional.

THE DIFFERENT ISRAELITE LAW CODES
There are different Law Codes in the Old Testament such as the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code, and the Holiness Code etc.
The Covenant Code is by far the oldest code of Hebrew law; its core goes back to the time of Moses. It is even possible that some of the casuistic material might go back to the time of the patriarchs while they were in Mesopotamia. In Exodus this code is placed in a definite historical framework, viz. the forming of the covenant at Sinai. These laws are, thus, intended as the stipulations of the covenant. The most important characteristic of the Covenant code is that it is sanctioned by the Lord as his law for his people.
The Deuteronomic Code is to be found in Dt. 12-25. Here we have the codification of old Hebrew laws in later times, possibly in the time of Josiah (c. 622 BC). Many of the laws have an archaic character and some of them are similar to the laws in the Covenant code (cf. e.g. Ex. 23:15-16 and Dt.
The Deuteronomic Code shows that old laws were then adapted to new circumstances and new laws added according to the need of later times.

The Holiness Code is found in Lv. 17-26. This compilation of laws is called the Holiness code on account of the phrase “for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy” (Lv. 21:8). The contents of this code mainly comprise stipulations in connection with the sanctuary, the priests and the covenant community. Although these laws could have been compiled in later times, the archaic character of some of them is obvious and they might go back to the time of the Exodus. In the final compilation of laws, many of the legal compilations were not in the exact form as we have them in the Pentateuch. After the exile compilations were made, some laws were readjusted to new situation and other laws added. The different codes were then placed in the broad framework of the Pentateuch as we have it today. The final form of the Pentateuch was reached only in c. 450 BC, in the time of Ezra, when it was promulgated by being publicly read (cf. Ne. 8).

**LAW IN THE PENTATEUCH**

**The patriarchal period**

The patriarchs, living well before the giving of the law at the time of Moses, appear to have observed the local customs in place at the time. However, when Genesis was written, Abraham’s faith response to God was described, not only in terms of keeping the way of the Lord by doing what is right (Gen. 18:19), but also in terms of his obedience to God’s commandments: in Genesis 26:5 God is said to have fulfilled his promises because Abraham ‘obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws’. It was in fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that he brought the Israelites out of Egypt (Gen. 50:24) and led them to Sinai, where he entered into a covenant with them and gave them his laws.

**The Sinai covenant**

At Sinai God made a formal covenant with the Israelites and provided them with laws and instructions by which they were to order their lives in covenant relationship with him (Exod. 19:3–9). The laws and instructions given by God to Israel at Sinai represented one of their greatest possessions. No other nation had ‘such righteous decrees and laws’ as those Moses set before them at Sinai (Deut. 4:5–8). These laws were to govern the Israelites’ relationship to God, with one another, and with the peoples living around them. The laws regulated the cult by which they approached God and by which forgiveness for their sins could be obtained. Obedience to the laws, by which the Israelites’ covenant relationship with God was sustained, ensured that the blessing of God would continue to be experienced, while willful disobedience to the laws was equivalent to an abrogation of the covenant.

**Covenant obligations**

The covenant obligations of Israel are set out in several passages in the Pentateuch: 1. the Decalogue (Exod. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:6–21), both forms of which begin with a prologue in which God, who gives the law, is described as the one who brought them out of Egypt; 2. The Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:23–23:19), comprised mostly of an assortment of commandments, case laws and responsibilities, but including some moral imperatives (Exod. 22:21–23:9); and 3. The Deuteronomic Code (Deut. 12–26), possibly the ‘law’ found in the temple in Josiah’s time (2 Kgs. 22:8–23:3), which comprises cultic laws, regulations regarding the appointment of judges, kings, priests, and other miscellaneous laws. (The contents of Leviticus, which includes cultic matters, qualifications for priests, regulations regarding festivals [see Sacred meals], sabbatical years and jubilee etc., do not appear to have been included in the covenant making ceremony of Exodus 34 or the covenant renewal ceremony of Deuteronomy 29–30.)

**Two significant passages from Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy 6 is particularly significant for an understanding of the status and function of God’s laws and instructions within Israel. God, who led the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, gave them his laws, and obedience to the laws would ensure their prosperity in the land of Canaan (Deut. 6:3, 12). Central to these obligations was the command to love God with all one’s heart, soul and strength (Deut. 6:4–5). Deuteronomy 30 looks into the future. It foreshadows the Israelites’ failure to observe
God’s laws which would result in their dispersion among the nations. But afterwards God would bring them back to their promised land. He would circumcise their hearts and they would again obey his commandments and prosper (Deut. 30:1–6). In the OT legal material the principles for forming a vassal-treaty are given in Dt. 20:10-14. The Israelites must offer the enemy peace (shalom) which means a peaceful co-existence in which the enemy as minor partner must have certain obligations, e.g. to serve the major partner and to pay tax to him. We know from vassal-treaties that the major partner is also obliged to defend the minor partner when he is attacked by an enemy.

**The Decalogue**

The Decalogue is particularly significant because it forms the moral and spiritual basis of Israel’s covenant relationship with God. It opens with a brief description of the relationship between God and his people, followed by the ‘ten words’ setting out what was expected of them in their relationship with him. The first four ‘words’ deal with the Israelites’ relationship with God; the last six with their relationships with one another. The commands are *apodictic* in nature, i.e. they are absolute commands, which are mostly, but not entirely, negative in nature. The Decalogue differs from other sets of ‘legal’ material in the Pentateuch in a number of ways. First, the words of the Decalogue are spoken directly by God to Israel, whereas all the other laws are given through Moses as mediator. Secondly, only the Decalogue is inscribed in stone by the finger of God. Thirdly, unlike many of the other laws the Decalogue does not include prescribed punishments for disobedience. Whilst the Decalogue can be distinguished in these ways from the other ‘legal’ material in the Pentateuch, it is nevertheless connected to it in so far as it provides the moral and spiritual background for the more detailed covenant obligations laid upon Israel elsewhere.

**THE PURPOSE OF GIVING THE LAW**

First, just as ancient treaties formalized a preexisting relationship, the giving of law presumes that mutual love and loyalty have been established between Israel and her divine suzerain. The Ten Commandments come to Israel after God redeems her from Egypt (Ex 20:1–17). In the covenantal framework the law is never intended to be a way of earning good standing before God. It is a response to God’s grace, not a prerequisite to it. The proper motivation for obedience to the law is to show loyal love for God (Deut 6:1–25; Mt 22:37–40), not to earn the love of God.

Second, the law is designed to bring benefits to God’s vassals – Israel. Just as ancient emperors promised to care for their people, God demonstrates his benevolence by giving his law. Rather than a burden or curse, God gives the law for Israel’s well-being. Obedience to the law will bring prosperity (Deut 8:1; Josh 1:7) and make Israel the envy of all nations (Deut 4:8).

Third, the stipulations and sanctions of the law also test the loyalties of Israel to her divine suzerain. Blessings are promised to those who prove their love for God by obedience to the law (Deut 11:13). Violations of the law reveal hearts of rebellion and eventually bring severe covenant curses on the nation (Deut 27:14–26). Throughout the Scriptures this basic covenantal framework shapes the imagery of law.

Lastly, the law never stands on its own; it always functions as an aspect of God’s covenant with his people. Obedience to these laws was to be the distinguishing mark of the people of God and sustaining the covenantal relationship.

**THE PSALMS: CELEBRATION OF THE LAW**

If the books of Moses give us the actual law, the psalms give us a glimpse of how the OT believer felt about God’s law. The dominant motif is celebration and gratitude. In the psalms the law is considered so precious that it is treasured in the heart (Ps 37:31; 40:8). It is to be taught to future generations for their protection and well-being (Ps 78:5–8). The one who learns God’s law is considered blessed (Ps 94:12). The Law is ‘undefiled,’ the Law gives light, it is clean and everlasting, it is ‘sweet.’ No one can improve on this and nothing can more fully admit us to the old Jewish feeling about the Law; luminous, severe, disinfectant, exultant.” These conceptions of the law depict the positive outlook on the law as God’s benevolent covenant gift to Israel.
LAW IN THE PROPHETS
Repeatedly the prophets appeal to the original covenantal relationship, with the law as the human obligation and response to God’s favor, as something the nation has disregarded. Failure to live up to the duties required by the law is the constant regret within the prophetic books, and the law emerges as the prosecutor in a covenant lawsuit of God against his people. The prophets themselves are covenant representatives who bear messages of judgment in reaction to Israel’s response to the law. The prophetic message is often negative, pointing to violations of the law and their consequences. At times specific aspects of the law are addressed (Is 44:6–20). At other times the people of God are accused of neglecting the law in general terms (Jer 11:1–13). In all events, the prophets warn God’s people that their violations of the law are bringing covenant curses (Hos 5:1–15). Unfortunately, Israel and Judah refused to heed the prophetic warnings and eventually suffered the curse of defeat and exile from the land.

Despite the severity of the curse of exile, the prophets also bring a positive message of hope regarding the law. The covenant under Moses had established that God’s people would not be forsaken to exile forever (Lev 26:40–45; Deut 4:29–31; 30:1–10). The prophets remind the nation of God’s promise that repentance will eventually lead to restoration and tremendous blessings in their land (Amos 5:1–15; Is 40:1–11). The prophetic assurance of restoration forms an important element of the imagery of law. After the exile, God promises to renew his people to the ideal of the law written “upon their hearts” (Jer 31:33) as something that everyone will obey (Mic 4:2; Is 51:4). As a result, the future of the people of God is pictured as a time of wondrous covenant blessings, culminating in victory over enemies (Is 49:23–26; 60:12) and the eventual renovation of all creation (Is 65:17–25). The law of God holds a central place in the eschatological hopes of OT prophecy. The future age of restoration will be a time of inward renewal resulting in delight in the law. It will be a revival of attitudes toward the law established earlier in Moses’ original covenant and celebrated in the Psalms (Jer 31:31–34).

CONCLUSION
The laws and instructions given by God to Israel at Sinai represented one of their greatest possessions. These laws were to govern Israelites’ relationship to God, with one another, and with people living around them. The law regulated the cult (worship & Sacrifice) by which they should approached God and by which forgiveness for their sins could be obtained. Obedience to the laws, by which the Israelites’ covenantal relationship with God was sustained, ensured that the blessing of God would continue to be experienced, while willful disobedience to the laws was tantamount to an abrogation of the covenant. The law is an expression of the covenant and is secondary to it. That is, the law is to express the character of life in the covenant. The giving of the law is a part of God’s giving of himself to his people in the covenant. In other words, law was given to maintain covenant relationship of Yahweh and the people of Israel. As initiator and guarantor of the covenant, Yahweh continually reminds the people of the conditions necessary for its maintenance. Israel does not keep the law in order to become God’s people, but because they are already they have to keep the law. Therefore, the basic purpose of the giving of the law is then for the Israelites to know the will of the Lord and remain obedient to Yahweh.

INTRODUCTION
Land is one of the prominent theological themes in the Old Testament and a central pillar of ancient Israel’s own self-understanding. Land is fundamental to the people of Israel specifically in their existence as people in history. Beginning with God’s initial call to Abraham (Gen. 12), the land of Israel becomes the geographic centre of biblical literature that deals with the unique relationship between God and the chosen People. This land is bestowed as a legacy to all subsequent generations, an indispensable component of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. And this is characterized by a triangular relationship of land, God and Israel.
Yahweh as the Owner of the Land

In the Old Testament, Yahweh is identified as the owner of the land. In the priestly tradition, it is understood by the term nahala “inheritance” and ahuzza “land holding” or “possession”. The clearest expression of Yahweh’s ownership of the land is found in Lev 25:23, basing the regulation for inalienability and redemption of family land on the affirmation “for the land is mine”. In many other books, the land of Israel is called “the Lord’s land” (Isa 14:2; Josh. 22:19), “my land” (2 Chron 7:20, Isa 14:25), “his land” (Deut 32:43), “his heritage” (1 Sam 26:19; 2 Sam 14:16; Jer. 2:7; 16:18; Ps. 135:11f), etc. In Lev. 25:23, this divine claim of possession is emphasized so strongly that the Israelites are regarded as strangers and foreigners (“the land shall not be sold, for the land is mine, for you are strangers and sojourners with me”). The regulation for the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee in Lev. 25 can be understood only on the assumption that the land is actually the possession of Yahweh.

Yahweh cannot tolerate the encroachment of His land. He spoke jealously against Edom and other nations “who gave my land to themselves a possession” (Ezk. 36:5; Joel 2:18). Moreover, the concept of Canaan as the land of Yahweh makes him a God of the land. Num 35:34 states that He lives in the land in the midst of His people. Thus land, people and God belong together. In particular, Israel’s whole economic system, including the equitable division of land to the tribes, clans, and families, the institution of redemption of land and of sabbatical and jubilee years, and all the mechanisms for the reign of poverty and restoration of the poor to participation in the blessings of the land, was based on Yahweh’s moral sovereignty in the economic spheres as the ultimate landlord.

Land as Divine Gift

The OT emphasizes that Israel did not obtain the land because of her merit, but received it as a gift from God (Deut 1:36). Because of their wickedness, Yahweh drove out the former inhabitants and gave the land to the Israelites (1:8). The other side of the coin of Yahweh’s ownership of the land is that He gifted it to Israel in the great historical-redemptive tradition: From the original promise of the land to Abraham and to its possession under Joshua and the extension during the monarchy. As a result, the gift of the land becomes a tangible proof of Yahweh’s faithfulness and dependability and therefore called forth the response of gratitude and worship (Deut 26:1-11). In the prophets, the great historical land-gift tradition puts Israel’s oppressive and exploitative behavior in a bad light (Amos 2:9-10; Mic 6:1-5). So much of the moral, didactic rhetoric of Deuteronomy is predicated on the gift of the land and of the need to flow an ethical lifestyle both in response to the gift and in order to prolong the enjoyment of it. In a few passages (e.g., Deut 6:17-18) it appears as if keeping the law is already a precondition for receiving the land. The ownership of them is subordinate to and dependant of Yahweh’s ownership of the land and its function for human life.

The most frequent designation of the land is also a reminder that it did not belong to Israel originally: “land of Canaan/the Canaanites”. Israel is to go (go up, enter) into the land, go over [the Jordan] into the land, possess the land, receive the land as inheritance, divide the land, and dwell in the land. Thus Israel receives a land not originally her own. Israel’s relationship to this land is further characterized by the nouns “inheritance”, “possession”, and “rest”, together with their respective verbal stems. “Inheritance” designates the land transferred to Israel by God without the right of sale. The emphasis falls on God as the one who has authority to dispose of land belonging to him, and on Israel’s inalienable right to retain such land as God confers. Another term defining Israel’s relationship to the land as acquired ownership is “possession”. Its verbal root “seize, grasp, take hold” suggests again that the land, now Israel’s “possession,” had once been in other hands. The land of Canaan was given by God to Israel as its possession (e.g., Lev 14:34; Deut 32:49). The land is also the destination of Israel’s wandering, and as such, its place of rest. There God grants rest to his people in stages, beginning with the conquest (Josh 1:13, 15; 14:15; 22:4; 23:1) and culminating in the era of David and Solomon (2 Sam 7:1, 11; 1 Kgs 5:4; 8:56).

Land as Fulcrum in the Covenantal Relationship

As a suzerain, Yahweh gave the land of Canaan to his vassal nation, Israel. This in return expects absolute loyalty manifested through purity in worship and wholeheartedly obedience to the covenant
stipulations (the phrase ‘that you may live long in the land’ demonstrate the close connection between obedience and longevity and blessing in the land). This also concerns the Israelites continue enjoyment of the land. The phrase like ‘crops of your land’ stresses the agricultural aspect of Yahweh covenental blessings. He promised to bless their crops and curse their crops (Deut 28:18). The ultimate penalty for covenental treachery is removal from the land. They would be perished, carried away, be destroyed be uprooted from the land of promised if they failed to keep his covenant stipulations. He would not remove them from their land if they would only obey him (2 Kings 21: 8; 2 Chron 33:8). This shows that Israel’s behavior on the land determines Yahweh’s response to Israel in the land and the land will respond to both.

Part of the threat of the covenant curses include exile from the land and scattering among the nations (Lev 26:32ff; Deut 28:63). Amos predicted such disaster of the land (Amos 5:1-2; 7:110). Jeremiah likewise rejected any automatic security in the land tradition and threatened Jerusalem, the temple, and the land with destruction (Jer 7). Again and again it is emphasized that people are to learn the law, that they should do it in the land Yahweh is giving them (Deut 4:5, 14; 5:31; 6:1). The series of blessing and curse in Deut 28 pronounces a blessing upon the land and its fruits and a curse upon the fruit of the land. Chapter 4:26 speaks of total destruction from the land as a consequences of disobedience. As a result, Ezekiel knows that the land is full of bloodshed and that people say, Yahweh has forsaken the land (9-9). Furthermore, beyond the judgment of land-loss the future of a return to the land was also mentioned. Restoration of land in the prophetic period is connected with the call for repentance, obedience and renewed covenant. And Yahweh will bring them back to the land which he had given to their father. The deuteronomistic history preserves and kept the Israel’s hope alive in the integrity of this promise by maintaining from a historic-theological perspective that the land would be restored to God’s people if they would return to him.

Cultic aspect of Land
God’s presence made the land of Israel to be holy ground. Only Yahweh’s land is holy; in it no native cultic songs will be sung. Foreign land is the same as an unclean land (Ps 137:4). The holy land is distinguished from the unclean land. Cultic purity is threatened by not burying a slain person properly (Dt. 21:1-8) and is destroyed by sinful conduct (Lev. 18:28; Ezk. 36:17). The story of Namaan shows that the influence of God is limited to his land and he can be worshipped only on Israel soil (1 Sam. 26:19; 1 Kings 20:23 2 Kings 7:26). In harmony with the relationship between cult and culture, the farmer brings an offering of the fruit of the ground (Gen. 4:3).

Symbiosis of Yahweh-Land-Israel
There is an integral relationship between Yahweh and land, Yahweh and Israel, and Israel and land. Land is the middle term between Israel and Yahweh. Yahweh is the owner of both land and Israel. The divine grant of Canaan for Israel served to demonstrate the unity of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant. The land constituted the marrying together of nation and land. Land was given to the people through a covenant and it demands a moral response. So, a willingness to obey Yahweh’s statutes and ordinances is required to land tenure, the evil such as harlotry, shedding of blood, worshipping other gods pollute the land (Lev. 18:24-25). It was because of the pagan cults the land was defiled, and the Canaanites were vomited out from the land. Israel’s behavior on the land determines Yahweh’s response to Israel in the land and the land will respond to both. Christopher J.H. Wright opines that the sabbatical year can be discerned as a socio-economic institution. The major aspects of it are legislation concerning land debt and slavery. Likewise, Jubilee year concerns about returning of family property to the original owner that had been sold. This institution emphasizes the faith of the ancient Israel that the land in which they live belongs to Yahweh. As a result, the sabbatical and Jubilee institutions are more comprehensive legislations to prevent the accumulation of land. It affirms that Yahweh is the owner of both land and people. He expected his people to live a life in harmonious relationship with one another, with land and with Yahweh.

CONCLUSION
Land of Israel is a fundamental aspect of Old Testament theology. Indeed one could make a strong case for the assertion that the triangular relationship between God, land, and people constitutes the
heart of the Hebrew Bible. Israel’s relationship with Yahweh determines the blessing of the land and their treatment on the land determines their future relationship with Yahweh and their destiny. This affirms the covenantal aspect of the land and Yahweh as the true owner of the land. Moreover, the theology of land in the OT has lots to talk about the socio-religious, political and economical agenda of Yahweh for his people and our own times. One must obey the possessor of the sacral character of the land (Jer 2:7; 16:18). Furthermore, there is no doubt that the concept of “the promise of land” has been exploited through the ages to legitimate the hegemonic policies of several tribes and rulers. Taking into consideration the present geo-political scenario of our time it will be healthier to accept this very concept as God’s concern for every people and every land, rather than any particular tribe or nation.

OLD TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION
The term has been prominent in theological discourse as a reference to the last things and it can simply mean “the doctrine of end”. However, the OT does not speak of the end of the world, of time, or of history. It promises the end of sin, of war, of human infirmity, of hunger, of killing or harming of any living things. Another alternative for eschatology in the OT is the “doctrine of hope”. It has been the hope of the OT people that radical changes would take place to make things right. This change will indeed occur in “that day”, that is, in some time known only to God where he will act and reverse the world order. These sorts of expectations are prominent in the prophetic writings and as a result any eschatological discussion in the OT is normally based on the unfulfilled predictions of Israel’s prophets.

2. DYNAMICS IN OLD TESTAMENT ESCHATOLOGY
First, Old Testament eschatology is best understood as a complex of traditions evolving out of earlier and discrete Israelite traditions. And since Israel’s eschatological expectations changed considerably over time, OT eschatology can be best discussed within the context of historical development. Second, not all Israelites shared OT eschatological expectations. That means eschatology was not an all-Israelite phenomenon but was one important way of perceiving reality. Third, OT eschatology, namely, the development of a certain tradition complex, seemed to evolve and intensify in particular historical conditions, conditions in which all Israel or even certain groups in Israel were not flourishing.

3. MAJOR ESCHATOLOGICAL THEMES AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE OT
The OT eschatological expectation is heavily dependent upon the notion of Yahweh’s divine kingship and rule. Yahweh is expected to arrive again and act decisively in the future so as to effect the institution of his realm.

3.1. Zion
Jerusalem plays a very important role in OT future expectations. The post exilic text provides sufficient teachings on the past, present, and future of Jerusalem. Prophet Zechariah clearly mentioned that Yahweh will return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem and also about the good life that the city dwellers will enjoy in the future (8:3). And the good life that Zechariah projects for the inhabitants of Jerusalem is a mixture of the material and the spiritual. Peace, prosperity, and security are dominant themes. Though Isaiah and Micah did not speak much about the dramatic intervention of God in order to produce the new era, they acknowledge that Mount Zion would become the highest mountain on earth (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4). In the same manner, Isaiah 4 speaks about the coming of the new era- the cleansing of Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning (4:4) and Zephaniah speaks about restoration and exaltation of Zion’s people (3:20). Zephaniah foresee the reversal of fortune, where Yahweh will make right all that has gone wrong with this world and human life. He speaks about the gathering of God’s people in the city where the unfortunate individual (lame and outcast) will have shame turned into praise and there will be no more cause to rear evil, for God will cast out their enemies. Since Zion has become a symbol for the people themselves, the prophet’s
impressive assurance of the intimate relationship that exists between God and his city represents another way of promising a permanent relationship between God and his people in the days to come.

3.2. Restoration and Re-establishment
Most of the eschatological material in the OT presupposes the re-establishment of the people of God in their home land. Even in the re-establishment the exodus event are contemplated, waiting for the mighty, redemptive act of God. However, it will be much greater than the former that the fundamental expression of Israel faith “as the Lord lives who brought up people of Israel out of the land of Egypt”, will be replaced by a new one that celebrates the return of the Diaspora to the Promised Land (Hosea 11). The vision of the valley of the dry bones and its accompanying interpretations in Ezekiel 37 contain most of the important concepts associated with the theme of return to the land in OT eschatology. Hosea speaks about how God would reverse the process of saving history and take Israel out of the Promised Land and back to the wilderness (2: 14-15) or all the way back to Egypt (8:13; 11:5). Having threatened return to the land of bondage in 11:5 the prophet speaks of the possibility of restoration in v. 11. This concept of a new exodus as a way of projecting how God might work out a positive future for Jews in exile had as its natural conclusion a purely material outcome. Deutero-Isaiah’s extensive use of new exodus theme carries different spiritual conations. For him new exodus will be a triumphal procession across a transformed land (Isa 49:10-11). This includes vindication of Israel in the sight of the nations, who will acknowledge the supremacy of Yahweh by assisting in the restoration (45: 14-17; 49:22-23), and completeness of the gathering of the dispersed (43:5-7). For Zechariah the Temple will play a very important role in the restoration (8:9-13). People from east and west will come to the city of God.

3.3. The Righteous King (Messiah)
Isaiah 9:2-7, 11:1-5 talks about a shoot that will come forth from the stump of Jesse, referring presumably to a time when the tree that is the Davidic dynasty has been cut down. The passage in Mic 5:1 announces the birth of a ruler from a renowned family of old (that of David) in Bethlehem. According to Micah the Messiah will feed his flock and make them dwell securely, as a good shepherd. He will be great to the ends of the earth, strengthened by the Lord and reflecting God’s glory. In Jer 23:1–4, the shepherds are accused of neglecting their duty and scattering the flock. However, the Lord will bring his people back and appoint new and more responsible shepherds. In vv 5–6 the coming of a righteous “Branch” for David is announced where he will reign as king and execute justice and righteousness, and Judah and Israel will dwell together securely. The verses in Ezek 17:22–24 portray how the Lord will take a young twig from the lofty cedar and plant it on a high mountain in Israel where birds of all sorts will gather in the shade of its branches.

3.4. The Nations
Prophet Isaiah speaks about the elimination of the old rivalry between the northern and southern kingdoms and a series of campaigns of the new united kingdom against the old enemies: Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon (11:14). The occupation of those neighboring territories by a victorious Israel is also contemplated in Zephaniah 2 and Zechariah 9. The final, decisive battle between God and the nations will occur in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Ezekiel speaks about the fate of all those nations that work in opposition to the will of God (Ezekiel 38-39). He announced the judgment on Egypt (Eze 29:8-9) concerning their complicity in the fall of Judah and condemning the king from a sin against Yahweh. He also speaks about the restoration of Egypt, where Egypt will know that Yahweh is the Lord God (29:16). Second Isaiah introduced gentiles into the history of salvation, identifying King Cyrus of Persian as Yahweh’s shepherd, his anointed one (Isa 44:28; 45:1). And as the nations carried Israel into exile, so they will carry them back to their home land. And as the nation removed the wealth of Israel, including the temple treasures, so the day will come when the world’s treasures will be lavished on Jerusalem (Isa 45: 14; 49: 23). Israel will be a light to the nations (Isa 60:2-3) and hence will fulfill the promise of blessing to all the families of the earth through the offspring of Abraham.
3.5. Forgiveness of Sins
In Jeremiah 29:10- the Lord says through Jeremiah that he intends to visit them, fulfill his promise and bring them back. On that day Israel will call upon the Lord and the Lord will hear them (29:12). For Ezekiel, God’s re-establishment of the covenant will lead Jerusalem to remember her ways and be ashamed and confounded (Eze 16: 49-63), and that the restoration of Israel to the promised land will finally lead them to remember and to loathe themselves for all the evils they have committed (20: 43). In this way forgiveness means to leave the past behind and enter into a new era. The corporate sin of Israel will be washed away (Jer. 33:7-9; Eze 36: 24-25; 37:23), where Israel will be will saved from all the backslidings in which they have sinned”(Eze 37:23). He will no longer deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, (Zech 8:11) and no one will be found with sin in Judah (Jer. 50:20).

3.6. New Heart, New Spirit, New Covenant
The transformation of human being will include a re-creation of their presently distorted condition by acquiring a new heart and a new spirit. And will further establish a new relationship with God by entering into a new covenant (Jer 24:7). Then they will know that He is the Lord and they shall be his people and He will be their God. The new covenant will be written in their heart (Jer 31:31-34). According to Ezekiel 36: 24-32- the Lord will take away the heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. And give them new heart and new Spirit. This will make it possible to walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord. Isaiah 59: 21 talks about putting God’s word in their mouth forever. The universality of the work of the spirit in the last days is emphasized in Joel 2: 28-29, internalizing the will of God. No one will longer depend on someone to know the will of God.

3.7. New Humanity
Knowledge of God and obedience to God are the most frequently mentioned results of the re-creation of humanity. The text concerning the gift of the spirit (Eze 39:28-29) is associated with terms concerning one’s relationship with God: knowledge and no more alienation. The book of Joel also speaks of the knowledge of God in the last days (Joel 2:26-27; 3:16-17). He promised to restore their fortunes (Eze 39:25), and to settle them securely in their land, after which they will forget their shame (39:26-27). Isaiah 54: 13 also talks about the knowledge of God that “all their sons shall be taught by the Lord”. The emotional effect of the knowledge of God through the spirit is rejoicing (Jer. 31:13, “I will turn their mourning into joy”). Jeremiah 33:6 talks about health, wealth and prosperity and Isaiah about healing of the lame and the blind and long lives in Jerusalem (Isa 35; 65:20).

3.8. Life after Death
Though there are some vague hints of resurrection like in the story of Enoch and Elijah, but for most of the OT this present life is enough. Job considered in chapter 14 whether hope for life after death might provide a solution for his dilemma, but concluded he could not count on it. Ecclesiastes also dismissed the possibility on the ground of lack of evidence (Eccl 3:19-22; 6:6). However, there are three passages in the Old Testament where a hope for a resurrection from death is stated clearly: Ezekiel 37:1-14, Isaiah 26:13f., 19, and Daniel 12:2. However, on would say that both Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Isaiah refers to the restoration of the people. Daniel 12:2 however, states clearly a belief in the resurrection of the dead, some for reward and others for punishment. And in the Apocalyptic Isaiah it is mentioned that death will be swallowed forever (25:8).

3.9. Transformation of Nature
The promised of the renewal of fertility and the return of the exiles are interwoven in Ezekiel 36. Hosea also talks about a covenant that involves the animals (Hos 2:18) which will reverse what he said in the earlier verse that the beast will devour them (Hos 12:12). Isaiah speaks about the transformation of the heavens and the earth where there will be New heavens and new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22). The wilderness will bloom and the dry land will become a place of abundant water, with streams and pools to emphasize the radical nature of the change (35:6-7). The host of heaven and the kings of the earth will be defeated (Isaiah 24:21-23); mourning will be abolished and there will be abundance of rain and food (Isa 30:19-26). In the new city of Zion a stream will flow both east and west which will provide a better weather to the city (Zech 14:6).
3.10. The Day of the Lord
The Day of the Lord is a special term in the Bible used to refer to a period of time when God directly intervenes in human affairs—either in judgment or in blessing. According to Amos (5:18-20), it meant the day when Yahweh would intervene to put Israel at the head of the nations, irrespective of Israel’s faithfulness to him. Amos declares that the Day means judgment for Israel. Because of their sins and brutalities the Day will come on individual nations as a punishment (e.g., Babylon, Is. 13:6; 9; Egypt, Je. 46:10; Edom, Ob. 15; many nations, Joel 2:31; 3:14; Ob. 15). The Day of the Lord is thus the occasion when Yahweh actively intervenes to punish sin that has come to a climax. This punishment may come through an invasion (Am. 5-6; Is. 13; Ezk. 13:5), or through some natural disaster, such as a locust invasion (Joel 1-2). At this Day there are truly repentant believers who are saved (Joel 2:28-32), while those who remain enemies of the Lord, whether Jews or Gentiles, are punished. There are also physical effects on the world of nature (Is. 2). Some 60 occurrences of “the Day of Yahweh” and similar expressions refer to the future time when Yahweh would reestablish the fortunes of Israel/Judah or the Jewish people.

4. CONCLUSION
The OT vision of the future deals throughout with the world in which we now live. It does not ignore, or abandon the kind of life which human beings experience in this world in favor of speculation concerning some other, better place or form of existence. It understands the future to be completely in the hands of God. He is going to transform human person by giving a new heart; transform human society by restoring Israel into the Promised Land and transform nature by making the produce of the land abundant. The transformation of the human person comes about through eschatological forgiveness, the kind that truly erases the past and never has to be repeated; through an act of recreation, giving a new heart and spirit, to produce a truly new person whose most obvious improvement is the ability to obey God. The transformation of human society must first bring Israel back to the Promised Land and glorify God in Jerusalem, the center of all hope for the future. A righteous king will provide for good governance in the new society and ways will be found for all nations to live together in peace. The transformation of nature calls for two essentials, the elimination of hunger and creation of a new order in which they shall not hurt each other anymore. Therefore, the basis for hope in the OT is not faith in human progress, but the assurance of a coming divine intervention that will introduce a new thing that people have failed and will fail to accomplish. OT eschatology emphasizes human society more than personal salvation. This stands in contrast to a strong emphasis in Christian teaching and to modern individualism. The concern for the fate of the individual after death, which has tended to dominate Christian eschatology, is almost completely missing from the OT.

JEWISH HISTORY OF THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

SECOND TEMPLE
- The invasion and fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE marked the end of Jewish Monarchy.
- Most of the able Jewish were brought into captivity. Most of the books of the OT were collected and edited.
- With the overthrow of the Babylonian kingdom by the Persian (the Edict of Cyrus, 538 BCE), the Jews once again had the privilege to return to their native land.
- The first returnees started rebuilding the Temple eighteen years after their return from Babylon (Ezra 6:13-18).

JEWISH REFORMATION DURING THE PERSIAN
- Nehemiah, the political agent of king Artaxerxes I and Ezra the scribe (515-450 BCE) were the main figure during this reformation.
- Nehemiah reorganized the community and rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem. Foreign spouses were divorced, Sabbath strictly observed.
• Ezra armed with a copy of the law with a specific mission of regulating Jewish religious practices, reconstructed the community on the basis of the law.

PALESTINE UNDER THE GREEKS
• In the later part of the fourth century, Alexander the Great crushed almost all the kingdoms in the Mediterranean world and Asia.
• After his death his kingdom was divided between his two able Generals: Ptolemy controls Egypt and made Alexandria as his capital whereas Seleucid controls from Syria to Iran.
• The High Priest was both spiritual head of the community and the secular prince (priestly aristocracy).
• As long as tributes were paid and order maintained, the Ptolemies apparently did not interfere in the internal affairs of Judah.

PALESTINE UNDER THE SELEUCIDS
• Antiochus III started military campaign towards different direction including driving out the Egyptians from Asia and also annexed Palestine (198 BCE).
• He was compelled to rob the Temple treasure to get money to pay the Romans for a ransom of his son and his own men.

HELLINIZATION UNDER THE SELEUCIDS
• Antiochus IV imposed a cultural warfare towards his vassal states
• The worship of Zeus and other Greek gods was introduced within his empire
• A gymnasium was established, all sorts of Greek sports were fostered, and Greek fashions of dress.
• Both the Jews in the Diaspora and those who were in Palestine were strongly influenced by the Greek language and culture, and Greek way of thinking and thoughts.

INTERNAL RIVALRY
• During the absence of the legitimate priest Onias III, his brother Joshua offered the king a large sum of money in exchange for the high-priestly office.
• Mileneus from a Hellenizing party ousted Joshua (who is also called Jason), took the office of the high priest.
• Antiochus appointed a royal commissioner to assist the high priest in Hellenizing the people. Later on he sent his army commander Apollonius in 167 BCE.

PERSECUTION UNDER APOLLONIUS
• Apollonius treated Jerusalem as his enemy and butchered many citizens of Jerusalem.
• In the old Davidic palace the citadel called Accra was installed with a military garrison.
• The Jerusalem Temple ceased to be the property of the Jews. The cult of Olympian Zeus was introduced into the Temple, and swine were sacrificed in the temple.
• Regular sacrifices were suspended, together with the observance of the Sabbath and traditional feast
• Copies of law were destroyed, and circumcisions of children were forbidden.
• Pagans altar were erected throughout the land and unclean animals offered on them. Jews were forced to eat swine’s flesh on pain of death, they were forced to participate in idolatry.
• Because of severe threat many Jews forsook the religion of their fathers. However, many prefer to die than violate the teachings of the law.

MACCABEAN REVOLUTION AND THE EXISTENCE OF THE HASMONEAN STATE
• In Modein, Mattathias (Priest) killed the Greek officials who came to forced him to take the lead in offering sacrifices to the pagan god.
• This revolution continued over the period of thirty five years and after the death of Mattathias. His son Judas who is also called Maccabees led the rebellion.
• Finally the temple was once again consecrated and rededicated with feasting and great joy in December 164 BCE.
• In 152 the first Hasmonean High priest, Jonathan was installed to the throne.

JEWISH PEOPLE UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE
• Power struggle between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II opened the way for Roman intervention (63 BCE).
• By 37 BCE, Herod became undisputed king of Judea, and was approved by Octavian in 31/30 BCE.
• Herod replaced the priestly aristocratic families and appointed personnel of his choice to the high priestly office.
• After the death of Herod the Great, his territories were divided among his three sons. Herod Antipas was made the tetrarch of Galilee (and Perea) and Archelaus as the ethnarch of Judea and Samaria (and also Idumea) and Herod Philip was made tetrarch over Batanaea, Trachonitis, and Aurantis.

SOCIO-POLITICAL PROBLEM IN THE 1ST CENTURY
• Tension between City and Country
• Problem of tenancy, debts crisis and heavy Taxation(Lk 12:18) (Matt 6:9-13; Lk 11:1-4)
• Power Crisis & and governance problem(Lk 19:21)
• Revolutionary Movement: Zealots & Sicariis
• Titus and the fall of Jerusalem 70 CE.

JUDAISM
• Temple establishment: The High Priest had absolute authority over Temple affairs. High Priests were appointed (sometimes quite frequently) by Herod the Great and later by the Roman prefects and procurators. The plural, “chief priests,” refers to groups of priests and laity who were in charge of Temple services.
• Sanhedrin: The Sanhedrin was made up of 70 members. It was a parliament. It consisted of priests, nobility, and laity. There were also scribes.
• Synagogue: The Synagogue functioned in some ways as the local “Temple.” It took care of social matters, including discipline and settling disputes.

JEWISH POLITICAL/RELIGIOUS PARTIES
• Sadducees (the “righteous ones”?): rejected oral traditions, landed aristocracy, harsh, not liked by people, did not believe in resurrection
• Pharisees (the “separate ones” or “examiners”): more involved in Temple than previous thought, accepted and developed oral traditions, believe in resurrection
• Essenes (the “doers” of the Law, or “healers”?): probably founded by Teacher of Righteousness as protest against ruling priests (Ant. 18.1.5 §18-22).
• The Resistance (or “Fourth Philosophy”): Founded by Judas the Galilean, and supported by Sadok the Pharisee teacher, members of the Fourth Philosophy had a passion for liberty and were unwilling to call any man “master” (Ant. 18.1.6 §23-25).

Jewish Interpretation of Scripture
• Peshat (“simple,” i.e. literal meaning)
• Midrash (“search,” i.e. probing for detailed meaning, further application): practiced primarily by rabbis (Midrashim = commentaries)
• Pesher (“solution,” i.e. resolution of prophetic mystery): practiced at Qumran
• Allegorical (symbolic interpretation) practiced by Philo and Origen

Inter-testamental Doctrines
• Resurrection (2 Esdras 7:32; 2 Macc 7:9, 11, 14, 23, 29)
• Martyrology (2 Maccabees 6–7)
• Intercession of the Saints (or “holy ones”) (2 Macc 15:11-16; cf. 12:43-35)
• Atonement ideas (Tob 12:9; Sir 3:3; 2 Esdras 8:28-30; 4 Macc 6:28-29)
- Messianic Kingdom (400 years, 2 Esdras 7:29-31; 1000 years, 2 Enoch 33)
- Messiah (Pss Sol 17–18; hidden until time of judgment, 2 Esdras 12:32-35)
- Angels (Tobit; 1 Enoch; 2 Enoch; 3 Enoch)
- Duality of human nature (“spirit of truth”/”wickedness,” 1QS 3:13–4:26)
- Canon of Scripture (“94 books,” 2 Esdras 14:44); inspiration (2 Esdras 14:37-44)

**JEWISH/CHRISTIANS IN THE DIASPORA**
- Minority and prone to be persecuted
- Strongly influenced by Hellenist thoughts & culture
- Stuck between Emperor worship & Jesus Christ
- The Roman policy of Pax Romana & Patron Client relationship

**RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND (Greco-Roman)**
- Mystery religions (e.g. Isis, Apollo, Dionysius—cf. Eph 5:18). The Mystery Religions grew out of the older fertility cults. The hope for a good harvest eventually was translated into a hope for personal salvation or life after death.

**PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND**

**Classical Philosophy**

*Plato* taught that the physical world was nothing more than a crude image of heavenly perfection and reality. True knowledge was not acquired through the senses by what can be observed, but truth was to be acquired through thought. His distinction between the mundane world and a heavenly world of perfection influenced much religious and philosophical thought down through the centuries.

*Aristotle*, a pupil of Plato, disagreed with his teacher and taught that the mundane world was the real world of knowledge and that this knowledge was to be acquired through the senses. The approach is described as *empiricism*.

**Stoicism**

Founded by Zeno (336-264 BCE) who lectured on the stoas (or porches) along the colonnades. He taught serenity, quiet joy, and that one should accept suffering and tragedy with calmness. One should not pursue pleasures and excesses. He differed with Plato. He believed that the world is real and that it is a single organism energized by a cosmic soul. This soul fills all things. History has a goal. See Eph 1:23 and Col 1:17 for the idea of divinity filling all things. See Phil 4:11 for the idea of contentment and Rom 8:28 for the idea of history having a goal. It is quite likely on the basis of these parallels and numerous others (Paul’s likening of the Church to the “Body of Christ”) that Paul’s education was somewhat indebted to Stoicism.

**Cynicism**

Founded by Diogenes of Sinope (c. 400–320 BCE). The “Cynics” (which in Greek means “dogs”), called such because of their unkempt appearance (and smell) believed that there was no purpose in life. Nothing had dignity, all was vanity. Since life was meaningless, why have any cares or any goals? See Phil 3:2. No body of doctrine has been left behind. Idealized portraits of so-called “Cynic-Stoics” are probably misleading (e.g. Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.22). Crossan’s suggestion that Jewish was a “Jewish Cynic” is quite problematic.

**Epicureanism**

Founded by Epicurus (341–270 BC). Very similar to 17th and 18th century Deism in Europe and America. Epicurus taught that the gods were distant and completely indifferent to human affairs. Men should be free from the anxiety of death and the terror of hell. We should stop worrying about death and trying to appease the gods in order to avoid punishment. Because the Epicureans taught that fasting and abstinence were of no value, since the gods did not care anyway, Epicureanism is often thought of as teaching self-indulgence (“Eat, drink, and be merry . . .” cf. Luke 12:19). Actually, however, the expression originally meant that it was not necessary to fast, abstain from wine and pleasure, and be gloomy on account of the gods.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

- **Education:** Few were literate in Roman Empire. Literacy rate in Palestine was probably much higher (among men, anyway).
- **Politics:** The Roman Empire was interested primarily in power. The Roman government was virtually a military dictatorship.
- **Economics:** Not capitalist; redistributionist (take from farmers and give to the landowners and ruling class).

NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

CHRISTOLOGY: MESSIAH

Jesus Christ (Terminology)

- “Jesus Christ” is a composite name made up of the personal name “Jesus” and the title “Christ” assimilated to Jesus by the early Christians.
- “Jesus” is taken from Greek word Ἰησοῦς, which transliterates Aramaic Yesu (a late form of Hebrew יeshua), meaning “YHWH is salvation” or “YHWH saves/has saved”
- “Christ” is taken from Greek word Χριστός, which translates Hebrew מashiach and Aramaic ΜesModule, signifying “anointed” and referring in the context of eschatological expectation to the royal “son of David”
- The name “Jesus Christ” thus binds together the historic figure Jesus with the messianic role and status that early Christian faith attributed to him.

Development of Messianic Ideas in Israel

- Isaiah 9:5f: A new ruler of David’s house will be born; the new son of David will be a final and perfect ruler; He will be Yahweh’s representative on earth.
- Jer 23:1–5: The Lord will bring his people back and appoint new and more responsible shepherds. Here the prophet awaits the ideal, a wise and righteous ruler of David’s line.
- Ezek 17:22–24: The Lord will take a young twig from the lofty cedar and plant it on a high mountain in Israel where birds of all sorts will gather in the shade of its branches (Messianic blessings for all nations).
- Micah 5:1-3; Eze 17:22ff: the messiah is characterized by permanent possession of the Spirit. This makes it possible for the messianic ruler to reign in piety, wisdom and righteousness.
- Zechariah 9:9–10 talks about a humble king riding on an ass, righteous and bringing salvation because God has shown his righteousness to him and given him protection

“Anointed Ones” in Early Judaism (200 b.c.–a.d. 100)

- *The Dead Sea Scrolls:* The people at Qumran looked forward to the times when the meaning of the Law would be fully clear and when God’s will would be obeyed completely. They anticipate for two messiahs: “the anointed one of Aaron” (priestly messiah) and “the anointed one of Israel” (princely messiah).
- *The Psalms of Solomon:* The authors anticipate God’s deliverance through a Davidic king. In 17:32 and 18:5, the king is called “anointed” and “the Anointed of the Lord.”
- 1 Enoch conveys another image, in which the messianic figure (“the elect one,” “the son of man”) is pictured in quite exalted terms in heavenly glory and seems to be identified as Enoch (cf. Gen 5:21–24).
- Messianism emerges into the clear light of history in latter centuries, not merely as a trend that has just arisen in Judaism, but as a movement with hundreds of years of history behind.

Summary

In the Hebrew Bible, the term “anointed” is mostly connected with a royal figure. The messianic psalms anticipate the hope for an ideal Davidic king. The prophecies listed above announce a decisive and lasting change in the plight of the people, brought about by God: War will end, peace and plenty will be restored, Israel and Judah will be reunited, people in Exile will return; salvation has worldwide dimensions. Aspiration for the freedom of the Jewish people from Gentile domination, and/or the
triumph of a particular religious vision of the divine will (e.g., at Qumran), and/or a more general longing for God’s kingdom or triumph over unrighteousness and injustice. The emphasis is not only on the person of the future king but more on the fact that, at last, the Davidic ideal, which no historical king ever fulfilled, will be realized. A new era is inaugurated that will never end.

Jewish Expectation and the life of Jesus

- Jewish people anticipates the threefold work of Messiah: As Prophet (Deut. 18:15), as Priest (Ps. 110:4), and as King (Zech. 9:9)
- Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee (Jn 6:14)
- Jesus the high priest (Jn 17; 1 John 2:1; Rom 8:34; Hebrew 8:1-6: 9)
- Jesus as the king of the Jew (Hebrew 5:1-1; 9:1-6; Phil 2:5-11; Mt. 21:1-11; Mk. 11:1-10; Lk. 19:29-44; Jn. 12:12-19)

Messiah/Christ in the New Testament

- The Greek word translated “Christ” (Christos) appears 531 times in the NT.
- Of the 531 occurrences of the term, 383 are in the Pauline writings.
- Other parts of NT: 1 Peter (22); 1 John (8); Jude (6); Heb (12); Rev (7); Matthew (16); Mark (7); Luke (12, plus 25 occurrences in Acts); John (19).

The distribution of Christos in the NT shows three things:

- First, the variation in the frequency of the term may indicate differences in the importance attached to it by the different NT authors.
- Second, the heavy concentration of occurrences of Christos in Paul’s letters (the earliest NT writings) suggests that the term very early became an important part of the vocabulary of Christian faith.
- Third, the strikingly small share of the total NT occurrences of Christos in the Gospels, make it appropriate to question the meaning and role of the term in these specific writings.

Pauline Usage (50-60 AD/CE)

- 72% of “Christos” are in the writings attributed to Paul in the NT.
- Two things relevant to Christos are evident:
  (1) Christos is by far Paul’s favorite of early Christian titles for Jesus;
  (2) On the basis of the early date of Paul’s letters, Paul’s frequent and easy use of the term reflects a well-established Christian usage and is strong evidence that Christos was a part of the religious vocabulary of Christian groups within the very first few years (A.D. 30–50).
- Paul uses the term almost as a name, or as part of the name for Jesus, and not characteristically as a title- “Christ Jesus”, “Jesus Christ”, “the Lord Jesus Christ”, and sometimes simply “Christ.”
- Paul characteristically uses Christos (either alone or in connection with “Jesus”) in passages that refer to Jesus’ death and resurrection (1 Cor 15; Rom 3:23; 5:6–7; Gal 3:13). These passages reflect Paul’s familiarity with an emphasis on the early Christian conviction that Jesus’ crucifixion was part of his mission as the “Messiah.”
- We might say Paul, as a Jew familiar with his ancestral tradition (Gal 1:13–14), knew the significance of Christos in connection with Jewish messianic expectations. However, it is more likely that his Damascus Road experience and his understanding of the life and death of Jesus forced him to think what it meant for someone to be the Davidic Messiah.
- Paul uses the term Christos and its variants against the back drop of the eschatological significance of Christ’s death, resurrection and parousia. These epochal events are the primary reason Paul is willing to call Jesus Christos.
- Paul saw the Christ as not only assuming divine functions in heaven but in some sense properly being called God (Rom 9:5 - “according to the flesh, comes the Christ who is over all God blessed forever;” Phil 2:11, where Jesus Christ is called by the divine name used in the LXX, kyrions (“Lord”); Colossians 1:19 - “for in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.”
- Paul’s use of Christos in the salutations of his letters points to an exalted view of Jesus.
- He uses Christ to characterize his preaching: “Christ crucified” (1 Cor 1:23)
Use of “Christos” in Other NT Writings

- 1 Peter uses the term *Christos* 22 times, often in connection with the theme of suffering (1:11; 2:21; 3:18; 4:1; 5:1; cf. 4:13). This connection between the term *Christos* and suffering probably reflects the early Christian emphasis that—Jesus’ crucifixion was a messianic event. It also shows how the idea of Jesus the suffering Messiah was used to inspire Christians to endure sufferings in his name.
- In Revelation, the term *Christos* is used as a title, “messiah” (11:15 “our Lord and his Christ”; 12:10 “the authority of his Christ”) in relation with the eschatological triumph of God, drawn from Jewish messianic expectation. This confirms the continuing awareness in Christian circles of the late first century A.D. that “Christ” is a messianic designation.
- Likewise, in 1 John 2:22 and 5:1, the confession that Jesus is “the Christ” reflects the messianic claim.

Gospels: Mark

- Mark1:1, the author indicates familiarity and acceptance of the term as applied to Jesus (“the gospel of Jesus Christ”)
- The warning in 13:21–22 about the coming times of crisis when some will say, “Look, here is the Christ!,” and the caution about “false Christ” show that for Mark the title belongs properly to Jesus alone, whose coming with glory will need no such announcement (The warning about deceivers probably reflects a conflict between early Christian claims about Jesus as Messiah and other messianic hopes circulating among Jewish groups).
- In most of the cases, *Christos* appears in the material describing Jesus’ final confrontation with Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, which culminates in his execution.
- Mark and the Messianic Secret (8:29–30: Peter acclaims Jesus as “the Christ” and is immediately ordered by Jesus “to tell no one about him”): Mark insists that *Christos* receives its true meaning as a title for Jesus only in light of Jesus himself, his divinely ordained suffering and his transcendent significance as “Son of God.”

Matthew

- Matthew used the term *Christos* to connect Jesus to the history and religious hopes of Israel: The opening words of Matthew (1:1) refer to “Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”
- “Christ” as a royal connotations: the Magi ask about the birth of the “king of the Jews” and Herod responds by inquiring about OT prophecies of the birthplace of “the Christ” (2:1–4).
- “Christ” and “Son of God” as Jesus’ exalted status, and emphasizes that this divine Son fulfills all messianic hopes (Peter’s confession Mt 16:16)
- Jewish expectations about Messiah are not adequate for considering Jesus’ messianic claims. Thus, Jesus the Christ is “Son of the living God,” and his rejection and crucifixion form an important part of his messianic claim.

Luke

- Luke’s birth narrative (Luke 1–2), shows that the author regarded Jesus as Messiah from the time of his miraculous conception onward
- Jesus is explicitly connected with ancient Jewish messianic hopes (2:26): Simeon, awaited the “consolation of Israel” and he had been promised by God that he would live to see “the Lord’s Christ”
- In 4:41 the demons’ knowledge of Jesus has to do explicitly with his messianic status: “they knew that he [Jesus] was the Christ.”
- Jewish and Roman trials as considerations of Jesus’ messiahship: the priest demands simply whether Jesus claims to be “the Christ” (22:67), and “the Son of God” (22:70); the charges against Jesus before Pilate in 23:2, which includes the statement that Jesus claimed to be “Christ a king.”
- For Luke the claim that Jesus is “Christ” is not simply an identification of him with Jewish expectations but is a redefining of the meaning of messiahship (the suffering messiah).
The titles “Lord and Christ” (*Kyrios* and *Christos*) in Acts 2:36 represent quite an exalted view of Jesus, and the passage simply asserts that Jesus holds such an exalted status by God’s will.

**John**
- The author presents John the Baptist as a true witness to Jesus, and the Baptist’s acclamations refer both to Jesus’ divine sonship and his messianic status (1:19-34).
- In 1:41 Andrew refers to Jesus as “the Messiah”
- In 7:25–44 Jewish messianic speculations are played off against the messianic identity of Jesus: “when the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from”(7:27); “the Christ remains forever” (12:34).
- John considers Jewish messianic speculations inadequate for a proper understanding of who Messiah is, and he regards the Jewish authorities as incapable of accepting the proper definition of Messiah and the divine Son. He prefers the combination of “Christ” and “Son of God” as the way of confessing Jesus properly.
- In 9:22 it is the confession of Jesus as “the Christ” that leads to synagogue expulsion

**Conclusion**
- The Gospels show that early Christians tied their confession of Jesus as “the Christ” or “the Messiah” to the biblical heritage and to Israel’s hopes for a redeemer. Moreover, their understanding of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ redefined the old concept of “the Messiah.”
- The early Christian conviction about the nature of Jesus makes the Messiah much more exalted in nature and more centrally important for religious life than the Jewish tradition. Jesus Christ or Jesus the Messiah is also the Son of God.
- The crucifixion of Jesus was a major obstacle to Jewish acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. However, Jesus’ crucifixion is presented as a decisive aspect of his messianic work.

**JESUS AS SON OF GOD**

**Terminology: Greek/Hellenists Usage**
- Heroes, Philosophers, Rulers, Kings and Miracle workers were designated sons of god
  - Apollon and Hermes were sons of Zeus
- Heroic miracle-workers were considered as Divine Man (god man)
- Problem of looking at Jesus’ divine sonship in light of Hellenistic usage
  - the divine sonship of Jesus involves primarily suffering and death rather than the performance of miracles
  - there is no explicit connection in Hellenistic sources between “divine man” and persons held to be “sons of the gods.”

**Son of God in Jewish Tradition**
- *Angels* were called sons of God (Gen 6:2; Job 1:6; Dan 3:25)
- *Israel:* the righteous individual, righteous Jews collectively and Israel as sons of God (God’s “firstborn” Ex 4:22–23; Hos 11:1 “son”), God is the “Father” of the people (Deut 32:6)
- *Kings* (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26–27):
  - the king as son of God exercises authority over both the people of Israel and the nations (Ps 2).
  - the divine sonship of the king has its basis in the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7:4–17 (cf. Ps 89:19–45)
  - Belonging in a special way to God, election to perform the service of God and the experience of God’s love, mercy, protection and gifts.
- *Messiah/ David’s descendant:*
  - Dead Sea Scrolls: Messiah as God’s Son (4QFlorilegium cf. 2 Samuel 7:11–14)
  - *4 Ezra:* God refers to the Messiah as “My Son” ;
  - “1 Enoch: God calls the Messiah “My Son.”
Jesus as Son of God in the New Testament

- Son of God is connected with Messianic connotation (Mt 16:16)
- Heavenly Messiah (1 Thess 1:10; Mark 14:61).

**Personal Intimacy with the Father:**
- Jesus addressed God in prayer almost exclusively as “Father”
- baptism account the divine voice addresses Jesus directly in the second person: “You are my beloved Son” (Mk 1:11).

**Obedience to the Will of God:**
- Absolute obedience to the will of God understood in terms of the Suffering Servant.
- The divine speech at the baptism accentuates obedience: “With you I am well pleased.”

**The Unique Son of God:**
- Jesus consistently distinguishes between the sonship of disciples and his own sonship. He speaks of “my Father” and “your Father,” but never “our Father”
- In John, Jesus’ claim to be God’s Son amounts to a claim to divinity, as illustrated by the charges of blasphemy from Jewish characters in the story (Jn 5:18; 10:36; 19:7).
- The inauguration of Jesus’ status as Son of God goes back to the Crucifixion-Transfiguration-Baptism-and finally to either virginal conception or pre-existence.

**Mark**
- The title “Son of God” is a clue to the identity of Jesus
  - Only God and demons recognize Jesus’ divine sonship before his death (Mk 1:11; v3:11; 5:7; 9:7;)
  - His true identity as Son of God was recognized at his death in (“Truly this man was the Son of God.” Mk 15:39)
- The title “Son of God” is related to:
  - Jesus’ earthly mission
  - His resurrection (Mk 16:6; 12:10–11)
  - His Second Coming (Mk 8:38; 13:32; 14:61–62)

**Matthew**
- Son of God is the only adequate Christological confession, and one can come to this understanding of Jesus only through divine revelation (Mt 16:13–17; cf. 27:51–54).
- Son of God Jesus is condemned to death on the charge that he claimed to be the Son of God (Mt 26:63).
- Jesus as a Son of God now reigns as Son (Mt 28:19; 24:36), and will return in that capacity (Mt 10:32; 16:27; 25:31–46).
- Jesus is Son of God primarily in the sense that
  - He perfectly obeys the will of his Father, especially the will of God that the Messiah must suffer and die. Jesus submits to baptism “to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15).
  - He knows the Father and his will and has unique authority to interpret that will (Mt 5:17–48; 7:28–29; 11:25–27).

**Luke**
- Jesus is Son of God as one who has been conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35).
- Jesus as the Son of God inherits the kingdom which God promised to the Son of David, thus pointing to transcendent rule and authority (Lk 22:28–30).
- As Son of God Jesus is holy, set apart for the special service of bringing salvation to the people of God (Lk 1:68–69; 2:11; 19:9–10).

**John**
- Jesus as the pre-existent Son of God (Jn 1:1–18; 8:56–58; 17:5, 24).
- He come from the Father (Jn 3:31; 6:33–42)
- He was sent into the world (Jn 3:17; 10:36; 17:18)
- He will return back to the Father (Jn 13:1–3; 14:28; 16:28; 20:17).
- As Son of God Jesus perfectly obeys the will of his Father (Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 7:28; 8:29, 42).
- As Son of God Jesus shares the work of the Father (Jn 5:19-29; 9:4; 10:37)
Jesus says nothing except what he has heard from the Father (Jn 3:32–34; 12:49–50; 15:15). As Son of God Jesus enjoys intimate fellowship with the Father. “knowing” the Father and his will (Jn 4:22–23; 6:45–47; 8:55; 15:15); sharing in all that the Father has (Jn 16:15); enjoying special access and influence with the Father (Jn 14:13–16).

The relationship between the Father and the Son is characterized by love:
- The Father loves the Son (Jn 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 17:23) and the Son loves the Father (Jn 14:31). The Father expresses his love for the Son by giving to the Son all things (Jn 3:35; 13:3).

Pauline Writings
- Paul’s references to Jesus as the “Son” of God meant that Jesus possessed a unique standing, status and favor with God.
- Jesus’ divine sonship as the pattern for Christians as “sons of God.”
- Jesus was “begotten” as Son of God at the resurrection (Acts 13:33 cf. Romans 1:3–4).
- God’s Son:
  - As the one sent forth to provide the standing with God.
  - As the one participating in God’s attributes and roles
  - As the one sharing in the divine glory
  - As the one who is worthy to receive formal reverence with God in Christian assemblies

Conclusion
- Son of God as a Messianic connotation
- Personal Intimacy with the Father
- Obedience to the Will of God
- Jesus Christ as the Unique Son of God
- Jesus as the pre-existent Son of God

SON OF MAN

OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND
- Ezekiel: 93 times in Ezekiel, God addresses the prophet as “son of man”
  - his privilege as the one singled out from the rest of the people and to be sent as the divine messenger
- Daniel: The Son of Man is presented to the Ancient One
  - He is given eternal and an everlasting “dominion, glory, and kingship” over “all peoples, nations, and languages” (Daniel 7: 13–14).
  - Although the Son of Man has the appearance of a human being, it is, in fact, a heavenly figure (Dan10:5).
  - A symbol of eschatological dominion conferred on him by God

LATER JEWISH BACKGROUND (AFTER 200 BC)
- 1 Enoch 37–71: Son of Man is a transcendent figure who is also known as “the righteous one,” “the chosen one,” “the anointed one,” who functions as champion of “the righteous and the chosen” and as judge of their enemies.
  - He is the heavenly one, the son of man, like the Davidic king, and Isaiah’s servant of the Lord (cf. Dan 7; Isa 11 and Ps 2; Isa 42, and 52–53)
- Wisdom of Solomon 1–6: An unnamed righteous one, a typical figure who is persecuted and put to death by rich and powerful opponents, but vindicated in the heavenly court, where he stands among the angels and condemns his persecutors.
- 4 Ezra 11–13: The Son of Man is a royal figure.

SON OF MAN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT
- The term “son of man” occurs in the NT, with four exceptions (Acts 7, Hebrew 2, and Revelation 1, 14), only in the gospels, and there always on the lips of Jesus.
- Jesus: As a simple man (Mt 2:1-12; Luke 7:45)
As an apocalyptic judge (Mt 24:27-39; Luke 17:22–37), and normally related with his Parousia.

As a transcendent and pre existent figure (Jn 6:62)

The Son of Man sayings are mainly connected with the teachings on:
- Expectation of Christ return, in a messianic sense, who is to come again
- Jesus vicarious sufferings predictions and with Jesus eschatological ‘I’ sayings (John).
- Signs of end time, his coming and final judgment

SON OF MAN IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Mark
- The Present Authority of Jesus: Jesus speaks of his authority to forgive sins (Mk 2:10) and of his lordship of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28).
- The Suffering and Resurrection of Jesus: Jesus speaks of the impending suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of man in a series of predictions which emphasize that this must happen in accordance with the Scriptures.
- The Future Coming of Jesus: This coming is associated with Jesus being seated on the right hand of God (Mk 8:38; 13:26; 14:62). Mark 13:26 and 14:62 are clearly reminiscent of Daniel 7:13–14 where a figure “like a son of man” comes with the clouds of heaven, appears before God and is given everlasting sovereign power and dominion.
- Mark uses “son of man” both as a designation for the human Jesus and in its traditional specific sense to denote his future status as the exalted messianic judge.

Matthew
- Son of man is especially understood as the coming savior and judge (Mt 13:41; 19:28).
- The son of man is a royal figure who is seated on “the throne of his glory” for the purpose of judgment (Mt 25:31–46 cf. 1 Enoch 37-71)
- The Son of Man Exalted before the Parousia (Mt 26:64; 28:16–20).
  - Jesus informs Caiaphas that “hereafter you will see the son of man”.
  - By the time he commissions the eleven in Galilee, the resurrected Jesus has already been “given all authority in heaven and on earth” (28:16–20 cf. Dan 7:14).
- The future coming of the Son of man will be unexpected and catastrophic for those who are not ready for him (Mt 24:27-44 cf. Dan 7)
- In Matthew, Son of Man is a references to Jesus’ earthly activity, Jesus’ post resurrection exaltation and, notably, his future function as judge.

- Luke depicts Jesus’ ministry as the activity of the Son of Man which leads to opposition and rejection (6:22; 9:21, 58).
- Jesus’ mission as the Son of Man is to seek and save the lost (19:10).
- Stephen’s vision reveals that Jesus’ enthronement as Son of Man is an accomplished fact (Acts 7:55).
- Son of Man is also related with his betrayal by Judas (Lk 22:48) and his sufferings and resurrection (Lk 24:7), and of his future coming (Lk 17:22; 18:8; 21:36).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION
- In 1:7 the Son of Man is presented in the imagery of Daniel 7:14, but “the glorious one” who will come with the clouds is “the persecuted one.”
- His status as the son of God will rule the nations with a rod of iron (2:18, 27)
- He is the Lamb who was slain (5:6, 12).
- He is seated, not on a throne, but on a horse, ready for battle against the kings of the earth (19:11–21, cf. Psalm 2 and Isaiah 11).

SUMMARY
- The Son of Man is an apocalyptic figure, an agent of God, who will carry out God’s justice in the end time
Son of Man is both Divine and Human
Son of Man is a Self-Designation of Jesus
The title is used in related to the Humanity and suffering of Christ
The title is used in related to the transcendent nature of Christ
It is the Magisterial -Designation of the exalted Christ

JESUS AS LORD

“Lord” in greeco-roman culture: both in religious and secular contexts
- Gods and Rulers are called Kyrios/Lord:
  - Roman emperors were called kyrios with the sense of divinity (“God and Lord Kaisar Augustus”; “our Lord and our God Domitian”)
  - Kyrios as someone who is in authority and who has the ability and the right to exercise authority and power
  - Kyrios can be used to refer to the lord or owner of some property or estate, owner of slaves
  - Kyrie frequently was just a polite form of address like the English term “sir.”

Jewish Background
In the Septuagint (LXX) the term Kyrios is used in place of the proper name of God, Yahweh.
- Josephus’ remark that early Jews refused to call the emperor Kyrios because they regarded it as a name reserved for God.
- Kyrios also refers to men who were lords or commanders in some sense.
- The Qumran community addressed God “Mare/ My Lord.”
- Daniel 2:47; 5:23 used Aramaic word Mare, or Mari, to refer to God as Lord.

Kyrios in NT
- God is primarily called Kyrios in the NT in OT quotations or allusions
- In 1 Cor 16:22, Jesus is referred to as Lord by the earliest Aramaic-speaking Christians, using the phrase marana tha: (1) “Lord come”; (2) “Our Lord has come” or (3) “Come our Lord.”
- Lord or owner of some property or estate, owner of slaves
- Someone who is highly respected in the community

Jesus As Kyrios
- Jesus as Lord in the sense of owner and master:
  - the relationship between Jesus and his disciples (Jn 15:15, 20)
- As Master/Teacher (Jn 13:13–16; cf. 20:13-16)
- As the one who has authority and power (Romans 1:3–4)
- As the one who exercises God’s sovereignty in relation to the world (1 Cor 11:3- Christ the head of every man).
- To whom all the world bows the knees (Phil 2:6-11), the only Lord on whom Christians depend (1 Cor 4:19; 14:37; 16:7-)
- From and through whom all things are made, and through whom God has come into the world to work and save (Jn 1:3; 1 Cor 15:28)
- Through resurrection God has made him both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36)
- Through resurrection Jesus has now been highly exalted and given the name which is above all names (Philippians 2:6–11)
- The confession of Jesus’ lordship with the lips and faith of the heart is connected with the fact that God has raised Him from the dead (Rom 10:9)
- Confession of the Lordship of Jesus is necessitated by the work of the Holy Spirit
  - No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3)

JESUS AS OT YAHWEH
- Paul uses the OT concept of “the day of the Lord [Yahweh]” to refer to the eschatological victory of Christ (1 Thess 5:2, 2 Thess 2:2 and 1 Cor 5:5).
- Paul refers the Lord of OT with Christ in his teaching on the Lord’s Supper
  - 1 Cor 10:21-22 comparing with Mal 1:7,12; Deut 32:21
  - Other examples: 2 Cor3:16 (Ex 34:34); 1 Thes3:13 (Zech 14:5); 4:6 (Ps 94:2); 2 Thes1:7–8 (Is 66:15); 1:9 (Is 2:10, 19, 21); 1:12 (Is 66:5).
- **Kyrios in Matthew.** In the First Gospel strangers, enemies and Judas Iscariot (see Judas Iscariot) always greet Jesus with *didaskale or rabbi*, but never with *kyrie*.
  - Matthew 3:3 (following Mark 1:3) he quotes Isaiah 40:3 (“… prepare the way of the Lord …”) and implicitly applies to Jesus a title originally referring to Yahweh.
  - **Kyrios in Acts:** Yahweh as Lord is applied to Jesus (Acts 2:25 using Ps 16:8–11).

**The Worship of Jesus**
- Jesus was already understood to be risen and exalted to God’s right hand in heaven, active in the community by his Spirit, and coming in the future as ruler and judge of the world.
- Jesus was the source of the experience of eschatological salvation, the focus of all Christian relationship, the main focus in their gatherings.
- They understood that Jesus was the personification of God himself
  - In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell (Col 1:19; 2:9)
  - He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being (Heb 1:3)
  - He was in the form of God (Phil 2:6)
- Acts 13:2 portrays the prophets and teachers at Antioch “worshipping the Lord [Jesus].”
- Matthew uses the verb *proskynein / to worship* with Jesus as object 10 times (Matt 2:2, 8, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20 28:9, 17)
- The Aramaic cry *Maranatha* (“Our Lord, come!”; 1 Cor 16:22; Did. 10:6; cf. Rev 22:20), implies not only the expectation of the parousia, but present religious relationship with the one who is to come.

**More Evidences**

**Prayers:** The NT evidence for personal prayer to Jesus as a regular feature of early Christianity:
- Christians are those who “call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:2; cf. Rom 10:12–14; Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16; 2 Tim 2:22).
- **Hymns:** The singing of hymns “to the Lord” [i.e., to Christ] is already attested in Eph 5:19 (Pliny reports [Roman historian] that Christians habitually, in their morning worship, sang a hymn to Christ as God).
- Earliest hymns celebrated the saving death and heavenly exaltation of Jesus as the one who now shares the divine throne and as God’s representative receives the homage of all creation (Phil 2:6-11)
- The praise of Jesus Christ is being sung (1 Cor 14:26; Phil 4:4; Col 3:16; Eph 5:19)

**Doxologies:** “To whom/him/you (be/is) the glory forever. Amen.” By the addition of the phrase “through Jesus Christ” (Rom 16:27; Jude 25; 2 Cor 1:20; 1 Pet 4:10)

- **The Book of Revelation:** Revelation portrays the worship of Christ in heaven, quite explicitly as *divine* worship (5:8–12).
- The heavenly worship of God the Creator (4:9–11) is followed by the heavenly worship of the Lamb (5:8–12)
- The heavenly worship of the Lamb (5:8–12) leads to the worship of God and the Lamb together by the whole creation (5:13).

**Persecution and Martyrdom:** Martyrdom resulted from refusal to worship the emperor or the traditional Roman state gods who were understood to guarantee the well-being of the empire.

**CONCLUSION**
- The early church deliberately and polemically ascribed to Jesus titles that had already been applied to the emperor.
The Lord of NT is the Lord of OT: Jesus as the Lord of OT
Resurrection and the subsequent exaltation of Jesus make Him the Lord of Lords.
Jesus as the Lord was the source of the experience of eschatological salvation, the focus of all Christian relationship, the focus in their gatherings.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. INTRODUCTION
Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven is the central message and an integral part of Jesus’ Ministry in the Synoptic Gospel. It serves as the leading image of Jesus’ mission. The Gospels use three terms to express the idea of the kingdom of God: “the kingdom of God”, “the kingdom of Heaven” and the absolute “the kingdom.” Though the phrases are common in the context of Judeo-Palestine, the understanding of the meaning differs according to time in its Jewish background and eventually developed more than one connotation during the time of Jesus’ ministry. In the Gospel, the term could simply means the reign of God, the intervention of God in history on behalf of his people, the act of God to bring salvation to mankind, the renewal of covenant and the reversal of man’s worldview. In this way the gospel writers portray Jesus’ life and ministry as the fulfillment of the Jewish expectation of the Kingdom of God.

2. TERMINOLOGY
2.1. Kingdom of God in Old Testament
The phrase “Kingdom of Yahweh” is rarely found in the Old Testament. However, there are many passages which refer to YHWH as “king” or as “reigning”. In those passages God was imagined as the reigning king over Israel, all peoples, and, indeed, nature itself. Therefore, the idea of the Kingdom of God in the Hebrew Scriptures has been usually related to God creating the world, God acted as a primordial king, sacral king who defeated the evil powers, etc. However, YHWH reigned as king is not only over nature, but also over history where he redeemed and sustained his people (Exod. 15; Isa. 30:7; 41:9; Ps.87:4; 89:11; 136). His kingship or kingdom is the prevailing pattern in the fabric of Israel’s identity. Whenever the prophets were critical about the monarchy, a hope for a better Kingdom of God in the future is developed (Isa. 33:22; 52:7–11). Israel under the judgment of exile longs for God to “be king” again, to renew his people and bring to full expression the visions of renewal unfurled in the prophets. Isaiah’s visions of renewal are intimately tied to the reassertion of God’s kingship in Israel and on Zion. In Isaiah 52:7–10 the return from exile is imaged as a day in which a fleet-footed messenger will carry good news across the mountains of Judah, announcing salvation to Zion. The establishment of God’s kingship in Israel is a near synonym for salvation. It is the good news that Israel longs to hear.

2.2. Kingdom of God in Judaism
The Psalms of Solomon speaks of the God as “king of the heavens, judging even kings and rulers” (Pss. Sol. 2:30), and as an eternal Lord (17:1). The Kingdom has also been interpreted apocalyptically in this psalms where God as king will judge over nations and rule over earthly kingdoms (17:3; 17:7, 22–25). The Dead Sea Scrolls also mention the eschatological kingdom of Israel in Jerusalem, a kingdom established by the priestly Prince of the Congregation. The term “kingdom” is also associated with peace, justice, and a purified cult in a renewed temple. The uses of kingdom of God in some text (1QM 6:6 and 12:7) express the expectation of God’s intervention in the holy war. In Targum, the future revelation of God’s power was to be identified with his ‘kingdom’. Therefore, God’s kingdom in ancient Judaism refers, not only to a realm over which God rules, nor to the specific regime over which God rules, but also to the anticipated fact of his intervention on behalf of his people. Yahweh as their king is committed to Israel by an unbreakable covenant. The phrase ‘kingdom of God’, therefore, carried unambiguously the hope that Yahweh would act, thus within history, to vindicate Israel. Therefore, for the Jews in the village in the first half of the first century, God’s kingdom meant, the coming vindication of Israel, victory over the pagans, the eventual gift of peace,
justice and prosperity. Thus the first century Judaism saw God as their king, the all powerful ruler who chose Israel, and would intervene on behalf of Israel and vindicate them from all kinds of oppression.

3. JESUS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the teaching of Jesus the discussion of the kingdom of God revolves around two questions: (1) the character and (2) the imminence of the kingdom of God.

3.1. Jesus’ Dynamic View. Jesus’ conception of the kingdom of God had continuity with the OT promise as well as shared certain features with apocalyptic Judaism, particularly Daniel, but went beyond them in certain important respects: (1) the kingdom of God was primarily dynamic rather than a geographical entity; (2) it was connected with the destiny of the Son of man; (3) entrance into it was not based on the covenant or confined to Jewish participation and (4) whereas in apocalypticism it was a vague future hope, in Jesus it is definite and imminent; in fact it demands immediate response. Jesus held that the kingdom of God was no human achievement but an act of God. However, unlike them he did not expect the kingdom of God to follow on upheavals and catastrophes, but to appear in a gentle, quiet and unobtrusive manner.

3.2. The Kingdom As Present or Future—The Modern Debate

In the past hundred years since the work of A. Ritschl and J. Weiss the kingdom of God has been at the center of discussion and the three questions above have received a variety of answers. Ritschl, conceived of the kingdom of God primarily ethical terms as the organization of redeemed humanity, whose actions are inspired by love. This gave rise to several interpretations of the kingdom of God, principally: (1) the individualistic, spiritual and non-eschatological interpretation (2) the Social Gospel movement in Germany and especially in America with its emphasis on a present social order based on love and solidarity. J. Weiss reacted strongly against Ritschl’s interpretation, emphasizing the future, eschatological and apocalyptic character of the kingdom of God which is opposed by the kingdom of Satan. The kingdom of God would erupt suddenly, be solely the work of God and sweep away the present order.¹

3.3. The Kingdom in Jesus’ Teaching. The Synoptics present Jesus from the start as charged with one message, compelling and irresistible, the message that the kingdom of God was at hand. The impression is that the eschaton has drawn near, the long-promised kingdom of God is about to appear, and the hour of decision has come. The kingdom of God is presented in two ways: (1) it forms the heart of Jesus’ teaching and (2) it is confirmed by his mighty works (Mt 4:23; 9:35). A third component is that the kingdom of God is inextricably connected with Jesus’ person as Son of man.

¹ Albert Schweitzer (The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 1910) interpreted Jesus’ whole ministry in is an eschatological term. Jesus was understood as an apocalyptic figure who expected the end to come during the mission of the Twelve (Mk 6:7–13) and laying down his own life in order to heighten the coming of the Kingdom. In a similar line, R. Bultmann thought that Jesus expected the kingdom of God to begin at his death and went up to Jerusalem to purify the Temple in preparation for it. The kingdom of God is conceived by Bultmann as a future, eschatological, supra-historical and supernatural entity, which places a person at the position of decision. Since the decision is a continual decision, the kingdom of God is not an event in time. Bultmann sees the kingdom of God primarily in existentialist fashion as the hour for the individual’s decision.

A radical shift has taken place since the publication of the Parables of the Kingdom (1935) by C.H. Dodd. Here C. H. Dodd argues that the kingdom of God was already a present reality during Jesus’ ministry. The decisive event had occurred in the coming of Jesus. Jesus’ healings, particularly his casting out of demons were proof that in Jesus’ person and works the divine sovereignty had dealt the decisive blow to the kingdom of Satan (Lk 11:19-20). This opened the way to viewing the kingdom of God as a timeless reality.

J. Jeremias and Kümmel while agreeing in the present reality also argues about the future aspect of the kingdom. They speak of the kingdom of God as ‘eschatology in process of realization.’ For them the future kingdom has been already realized in the life and ministry of Christ since he who was to usher in salvation at the end was already present. Similarly, Schnackenburg maintains that the present kingdom functions as a forerunner of the coming, perfected kingdom of God. In the same way D. C. Allison and G. E. Ladd agree that the kingdom of God is both present and future. When Jesus announced that the kingdom of God has come and is coming, this means that the last act has begun but has not yet reached its climax; the last things have come and will come.”

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The Coming of the Kingdom

Jesus himself claims that the ministry of John the Baptist as the epoch of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 16:16: “The law and the prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and every one enters it violently”). According to this statement the “law and the prophets” mark out the old era of Israel and the Baptist marks a transition to the new era of the Kingdom proclamation (“since then”). However, it is the ministry of Jesus that actualized the coming of the Kingdom of God. In his ministry of healing and exorcism, Jesus provides concrete evidences for the presence of the in-breaking kingdom of God (“If I cast out demons by the power of God, then the kingdom of God has already come”,11:20). He understood his healing and exorcisms not simple as ‘bringing good new to the poor’, but as inaugurating the long-awaited epoch of salvation.

The coming of the kingdom of God surely means the despoiling of the kingdom of Satan. When Jesus sends his disciples out on their own mission, he draws an equation between healing and announcing the drawing near of the kingdom of God (Lk. 10:9, 11). Joel B. Green remarks that Luke recognized that all diseases are expressions of evil, and Jesus healing ministry as the conflict between two worlds, the world over which the devil claims of sovereignty (4:6) and the new world of God’s reign. Jesus’ healing, indeed, conform in general to the prophecies in Isaiah (Isa. 35: 5f; 61:1f) about the new age. Thus both the cure and exorcisms point in the same direction: the new age. Therefore, what Jesus claimed in 11.20 is that his exorcizing activity is nothing less than an aspect of the arrival of this hoped for kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed (Lk.17:20). The kingdom of God is always present in the ministry of Jesus (“The kingdom of God is in the midst of you”, 17:21). The saving benefit of the kingdom of God is now available to them. Or in other words because of the personal presence of its King, the kingdom was actually “in the midst” of men.

The Parables of the Kingdom

Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God also through the medium of parables. The parables of the kingdom in the gospels illustrate different aspects of the kingdom of God.

Binding the Strong Man: The coming of the Kingdom (Lk 11: 19 ff)
The Sower: people’s response to the message of the kingdom of God (Mk 4:3–9; Mt 13:3–9).
The seed growing quietly: the unremarkable character of the kingdom of God as contrasted with the apocalyptic expectation of upheaval (Mk 4:26–29).
The mustard-seed and the leaven: the immense growth of the kingdom from an insignificant beginning (Mk 4:30–32; Mt 13:31–32, Mt 13:33).
The weeds: the mixed nature of those presently involved in the kingdom of God, who will be separated at the end (Mt 13:24–30)
The treasure and the pearl: the inestimable value of the kingdom of God, for which people must be prepared to give up everything (Mt 13:44–46).

The Kingdom of God in the future

The clearest indication of the futurist character of the kingdom is found in the settings of the Last Supper where Jesus mentions that he will neither ‘drink’ nor ‘eat’ until the day when he drink and eat in the new kingdom of God (Lk 22:16). It has also been observed that the Lord’s Prayer ‘Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done’ has both a present as well as future implication. This means Jesus’ listener understood that while the force behind the kingdom was the force of God, the reality of the kingdom was something to be achieved on earth which is futurist in its sense. The kingdom will involve a decisive future event which will result in a recognizable social order including Jesus’ disciples and himself. The 12 disciples are the judges of the tribes of Israel (22:28-30). There are also several parables that point the expected as well as the unexpected irruption of the kingdom of God. Just as when the fig-tree puts out leaves summer is known to be near, so the events of the present guarantee that God’s rule will soon break in on the world (21:29 ff). On the other hand, it will be like the sudden coming of the flood (17:26 ff), the unexpected entrance of the burglar (12:39 f.), the surprise of the doorkeeper and the servant at the homecoming of their master (12:42-6). All these are
pictures of the sudden irruption of the catastrophe, of the eschatological crisis. In chapter 21:3-31, Kingdom of God is described as an apocalyptic judgment or the end of the world. Its advent is introduced by the coming of the Son of Man.

4. NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Kingdom of God and Salvation: In Luke, the kingdom of God is his activity in bringing salvation to men and the sphere which is thereby created. In the OT the Israelite continually remembered the saving activity of God on their behalf and think historically. Their historical thinking was not concerned with a stretch of linear time, but with a series of time-events in which God had acted to save his people. The Kingdom of God concept *malkuth shamayim*: kingly activity of God; they are used specifically of that final intervention of God in history and human experience which is determinative for the salvation of men. God is eternal king (Ex. 15:18; Ps. 145:11ff). Psalms of Solomon 17:3: salvation: “kingdom of our God is forever over the nations in judgment”.

Kingdom of God event as the final state of the redeemed: Psalms of Solomon 5:18 and 1 QSb 3:5, 4:25f states the kingdom as the final blessed state of his people. The beatitudes in Luke 6:20-23 can be read in the light of 4QpPs 37, where the Qumran Community looked forward to the future blessed state and the reversal of worldly status. Likewise the Eschatological banquet of Luke is a parallel to Qumran teachings (14:15ff). The eschatological banquet as a symbol of participation in the final blessed communion with God is used here in an apocalyptic (Isaiah 25:6-8).

Kingdom of God as restoration of Israel: For N. T. Wright the message of the kingdom of God is all about the Restoration of Israel. Jesus’ announcement of the Kingdom of God is best seen as evoking the story of Israel and her destiny, in which that destiny was now rapidly approaching its fulfillment.

Kingdom of God as Salvation-as-reversal: For Joel B. Green Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus is the announcement and activity of God’s undertaking: salvation-as-reversal (“he has brought down the powerful… and lifted up the lowly” 1:52). Sinners are excluded from the company of the faithful by their sin, but in Jesus’ ministry they are forgiven (5:17-26) and invited into the community of discipleship (5:1-11; 27-32). Lepers are excluded from association with other people because of their disease and unclean status before God, but in Jesus’ ministry they are cleansed (5:12-16). For him the beatitudes and woes in chapter 6 are clear indication of this reversal. These are the indications that points the ministry of Jesus marks the arrival of God’s own benefaction.

Kingdom in the sense of covenant: Sander sees Jesus’ teaching on entering the kingdom in Lk. 18:24 as entering into the new covenant. According to him Kingdom in the sense of covenant is a usage which is well known in Jewish literature (Berakoth 2:2; Sifra Ahare Mot peeq Exod. 13:3- Israel is said to have accepted the kingdom of God at Mt. Sinai). This may be either to a daily renewal of commitment to God’s covenant with Israel, or to the fresh commitment which one makes at the point of entry into the covenantal community.

Kingdom of God as other worldly kingdom: There are some references in the Gospel where the kingdom is coming in an otherworldly manner. The disciples’ imagination in Luke 22: 18; 9: 46 and Jesus’ statement in the Last Supper (Lk 22:18) fits this situation. Apart from these there are some other references where the kingdom is coming in an otherworldly manner and unexpected events in which the righteous will be separate from the wicked (21:7), when the Son of Man comes.

CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

• Several images, metaphors and terminologies are used in the New Testament to describe God’s people
• Several activities are said to characterize Christian believers
• The absence of the word Church does not mean the absence of the people of God in that particular book
Problems
- Whether Jesus intends to form his church during his life time
- No evidence of church in the Gospels
- The concept of church was a later development after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus
- Jesus’ teachings was dominated by the imminent end of the world and the coming of the Kingdom of God
- Identifying the Church with the Kingdom of God has been questioned by many scholars

CHURCH
- Its origins lie in God’s desire to have a people of his own (Deut. 7:6).
- It is a community of those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3).
- It is a fellowship where the Holy Spirit lives (1 Cor. 3:16), directing and energizing its community life.

The ekklesia Sayings and the Concept of Community
- ekklesia is the Old Testament Hebrew qahal which literally means “a summons to an assembly or the act of assembling”.
- The assembly of the people or a judicial assembly (e.g. Deut. 9:10; 23:3 ff.; Jdg. 21:5, 8; Mic. 2:5)
- The political body (e.g., the returned exiles Ezr. 10:8, 12; Neh. 8:2, 17).
- The assembly of the people for worship (e.g. 2 Chr. 6:3 at the consecration of the temple; 30:2, 4, 13, 17)
- The early Christian community or the new community that gathered under the Lordship of Jesus

COMMUNITY IN OT/THE PEOPLE OF GOD
- The election of Abraham and Israel
- The formation of new community of God at Sinai
- The new community as God’s covenantal people
  - The church has entered a new covenant with God (2 Cor. 3:4–18).
  - This covenant is sealed by the blood of Jesus (1 Cor. 11:25) and instituted by his sacrifice as a great high priest (Heb. 8–10).

A Holy priesthood
- As priests, they were to worship God, to live holy lives (Lev. 19:1–2; 20:7–8), and to be intermediaries between God and the world.
- A collective priestly responsibility remained with all the people even after the consecration of the Levites for the priesthood
  - The calling to be ‘a royal priesthood’ (1 Pet. 2:9) has passed to the church of Christ where the concept of ‘the priesthood of all believers’ has assumed a richer significance.
  - The purifying effect of the blood of Christ qualifies them to do so (Heb. 9:14; 10:19–22; 1 Tim. 2:5).

A Remnant
- Though Israel’s sin led to series of tribulations and testing, the true remnants or the faithful ones will be gathered again (Is. 10:20–22; 37:31–32; Mic. 2:12; 5:7–8; Zeph. 3:12–13; Zech. 8:11–12)
- Israel’s future lay in the remnants.
  - Paul adopted this vision when he asserted that ‘not all who are descended from Israel are Israel’ (Rom. 9:6)
  - claimed that the church is the true Israel of God and comprises the real descendants of Abraham, the man of faith (Gal. 6:16).
  - There are many other allusions to the church as the true successor of Israel (Matt. 3:9–10; 19:28; John 15:1–8; Eph. 2:11–22; Jas. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1).
The Crucial Significance of Jesus Christ

- The plan of God was not completely fulfilled under the old covenant but came to full realization in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3–10; 2:11–22).
- The church of the new covenant is entered by faith in him (Gal. 3:1–14; Eph. 2:1–10).
- The church is his body on earth, and he is the head (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12–31; Col. 1:18).
- The church takes its alignment from him as a building takes its alignment from the cornerstone (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20–21).
- It derives its unity and growth from him (Eph. 2:19–22; 4:15–16).
- The life of the church is maintained by its vital union with him (Rom. 6:1–4; Eph. 2:21–22; 4:15–16, and by contrast, Col. 2:19) and exists only insofar as it is ‘in him’.

The Church in the Synoptic Gospels

- John the Baptist laid the foundation for the formation of this new community by inviting people to repent from their sins.
- A new community finally came into being through the announcement of the Kingdom of God and the call for discipleship.
- Disciples are a family (Mark 10:29–31; Luke 8:19–21); a fraternity (Matt. 23:8); a little flock (Luke 12:32); and a city (Matt. 5:14).
- The new community was not to be based on national descent (Lk 3:8).
- The Twelve are to be the new patriarchs who will judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28) reconstituting the old Israel.
- Luke 2:31-32 clearly states that the community would comprise of both the Gentiles and Jews.
- The makeup of the new community is to know no boundaries (poor, sinners, tax collectors, zealots).

John’s Gospel

- The disciples are portrayed as a flock led by a shepherd (10:1–18); guests in the Father’s house (14:1–3); branches of a vine (15:5) and chosen and intimate friends (15:15–16).
- John explores the quality of relationships required of disciples. They are to be characterized by love and servanthood (13:1–17, 34; 15:9–17), as well as by obedience to Christ’s commands (14:15–24).
- They are the community of the Paraclete – the Holy Spirit (14:15–31; 16:5–16), and are taught and sanctified by him.
- John depicts the disciples in sharp contrast to the world. He especially emphasizes the hostility which will be shown by the Jews (9:1–41; 15:18–16:4).

The Writings of Paul

- Of the 114 references to ekklesia in the NT, sixty-two are to be found in Paul.
- with reference to the gathering of the local congregation (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 2:1; Philem. 2), which usually meets in someone’s home.
- When he wants to describe more than one local congregation he uses the plural (1 Cor. 16:1, 19; Gal. 1:2; 1 Thess. 2:14).).
- Is international in membership and allows no ethnic, gender or social divisions (Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11–22; Col. 3:11).
- In Colossians and Ephesians his concept of church is more developed and applies to something wider than the local congregation.
- There is a connection between the church on earth and the heavenly realm, which should determine the nature of the church in the present age.
- The church was local and universal.

Imagery for the church

- The church is the temple of the living God and so should be neither destroyed nor defiled (1 Cor. 3:16–17; 2 Cor. 6:16–18; Eph. 2:21).
• It is a new humanity, taking its origin from the second Adam rather than the first (Rom. 5:12–17; Eph. 2:15).
• It is a body where each member is significant and which must keep closely in touch with its head (Rom. 12:4–5; 1 Cor. 12:12–31; Col. 1:18).
• As a body it can grow and mature (Col 2:19; Eph 4:16).
• It is the household of God (1 Tim. 3:15) where certain rules of conduct apply.
• the church as God’s field (1 Cor. 3:9), the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), an army of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25–6:5), the pillar and foundation of truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

Later NT Writings

Hebrews: the church as the worshipping community of the New Covenant;

- Brought into being through the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus as the great High Priest.
- Stressing the importance of meeting together (10:25),
- it contrasts the worship of the new community with that of the old and relates it to heavenly worship (12:18–29).

James speaks of the church as the scattered twelve tribes (1:1)

- wants it to be an egalitarian community (2:1–13) which values the poor as much as the rich,
- And a healing community which experiences the restorative power of prayer (5:13–16).

1 Peter Christian community as composed of ‘elect strangers’ (1:1)

- Who are constituted as the new Israel (2:9–10) through the liberating work of the suffering Christ.

HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- Ruah – wind breath, life: The Spirit of God, the Spirit
- Foretelling of the gift of the Spirit to an individual (Eze36:26-27; Isa 63:10-11; Ps 51:13)
- the out pouring of the Spirit over the committed Israel as an apocalyptic event (Joel 3:15,2:12,13)
- The out pouring of the Spirit is the expectation of the eschatological community of faith (Zech 12:10 & Eze39:29, Joel 3:1-5)
- Soteriological and Christological connotations of the Spirit (Isa 61:1-2)

Judaism

- Rabbinic Doctrine:
  - After Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, the Spirit abandoned Israel;
  - Ezekiel 9: the Spirit abandoned Israel since the destruction of the 1st temple
  - Ezra is the last inspired prophets
- Qumran Community:-
  - The role of Spirit in creation and regeneration
  - forming the eschatological community
  - there will be massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the end time.

Synoptic Gospel

- Infancy Narrative:
  - Prophecy Restored: Elizabeth & Zechariah prophesied (Lk 1: 41-42; 1:67); Simeon receives charismatic revelation (2:26)
  - John the Baptist is walking in the Spirit of Elijah (Lk 7: 26-28)
  - The Spirit conceives the Son of God; the virgin birth is the creative activity of the Holy Spirt (Lk 1: 32-35)
- The Promise of John the Baptist
  - The lamb of God will Baptist you with the Holy Spirit and fire (eschatological event-cf 4 Ezra; Lk 3:16; Mt. 3:11)
The Ministry of Jesus

- Jesus receives the spirit - dove the herald of peace and a bearer of good news (cf. Isa 42:1-2; Isa 53:7)
- The spirit thrown him out to the wilderness after the baptism
- Jesus’ Temptation as the new exodus (Isaiah 63:10)
- The Spirit and the defeat of Satan (Lk 4:1-13)
- Jesus then returned in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:14)
- Jesus exorcised or healed by the power of God’s finger/spirit (Mt. 12:18)

John

- Jesus endowed with the Spirit (1:32-34; 3:34-36)
- Jesus talks about “born from above” and birth of “water and spirit (Jn 3)
- The offering of the living water is the outpouring of the holy spirit to generate life: symbol of God’s eschatological salvation (refreshing life Prov 13:14; gift of the Spirit DSS; cf. Zechariah 14:8; Isa 55:1; Ezekiel 47:1-2)

Community led by the Holy Spirit

- Promise of the Paracletos (14:16-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15)

The Paraclete as the Spirit of Jesus

- Both are sent from above (3:16 cf. 14:26)
- Both are characterized by truth (14:6 cf. 6:39)
- Both are great teacher (13:13-14 cf. 14:26)
- Both bear witness to God and read all things (4:25-26 cf. 15:26-27; 16:17)
- Will mediate the presence of the father and the glorified son (14:16-26)
- As teacher and revealer (14:26; 16:12-14)
- As advocate in Christian mission (15:26-27; 16:7-11 cf. 1 Jn 2:1)
- Johannine Pentecost Jn 20:22

Acts

- Fulfillment of the OT prophecy (Joel 2-3)
- The birth of the church
- Church as the movement drive by the Sprit or of the Spirit
- Charismatic leaders led by the Spirit

Pauline Writings

- The Spirit reveals the Christ events- the arrival of God’s saving wisdom; leading to repentance (1 Cor 2; Gal 3:1-5; 2 Cor 3:14-16)
- The Spirit lead as to the saving knowledge of Christ (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6)
- God’s love has been poured into the hearts of humans through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5) and provides believers with the prospect of adoption (Rom 8:23).
- Spirit brings ‘life and peace’ (Rom 8:6) to the believers.
- Spirit is the mark of those who belong to Christ and the seal with which God distinguish His own (1 Cor 3:16).
- The one who enables humans to cry in their hearts ‘Abba, Father’ (Gal 4:6).
- The in-dwelling of the Spirit in humans is the result of faith in Christ and none other (Gal 3:1-2).
- The Spirit is known to promote the confession of Jesus as Lord in the church (1 Cor 12:3), in addition to bearing witness to the truth about Jesus (1 Thess 1:6 with 1:8; 4:7-8).
- The Spirit binds all believers to Christ in order that they are ‘one Spirit’ with him (1 Cor 6:17).
- The believers serve the church in the power of the Spirit and at his direction (1 Cor 12:4-13).
- The spirit is essentially transformatory – sanctifying and justifying (1 Cor 6:11)
- It is the ongoing experience of Christ by Christians