

## THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM, 7 pgs

### Typology & Prophecy

The NT treats OT history in two basic ways: (1) **TYPologically**<sup>a</sup> where what God did for his people in the past **anticipates and foreshadows** his work in the future – a kind of prophetic symbolism, figure, pattern, exemplar; (2) **PROPHETICALLY** where a **fulfillment formula** is used (as in **Lk.4:21**) or implied (as in **Mt.2:1-6**). There is a certain difficulty in separating the two because they are so intertwined in Scripture.

### UNITY

When *heaven & earth* is used in the Gospels, it may denote the entire universe. But in **Matthew** it is more commonly used to **contrast life according to God's will with life lived in the flesh, according to human standards** [see **Mt.6**]. Matthew emphasizes the breaking into this world of God's heavenly kingdom as the human kingdoms of this earthly realm (**Dan.7**) are invaded by Christ and give way to the kingdom from above **with our coming to Jesus Christ**. Individual salvation is depicted by the song:

*Heaven came down and glory filled my soul, When at the cross the Savior made me whole;  
My sins were washed away and my night was turned to day, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul!*

This is a **prelude to the final state**, the unification of heaven & earth (**Rev.21:1-22:5**) described by the song:

***This is my Father's world. The battle is not done**  
**Jesus who died shall be satisfied and earth and heav'n be one [unified]***

The mystery = Jews and Gentiles (all people on an equal basis) as fellow heirs to the promises of God in Christ, united in one body (Gal.3:6-9, 11-14, 26-29; 5:5-6, 6:15; Eph.3:3-6; 4:4). In Christ the rift between peoples is repaired as symbolized by His reconciling both Jews and non-Jews into the same body. This new peace, a graft contrary to nature (Rom.11:11-14), is a display of God's wisdom to heavenly rulers and authorities (Eph.3:10; Col.1:15-20), marking the reconciling of heaven and earth.

*He made known to us the mystery of his will in keeping with **his good purpose**, which he planned in Christ. This was to be carried out when the time had fully come, in order **to bring all things together [unite]** in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth, Eph.1:9-10.* This is a full unification, the complete resolution of all things. *For [Jesus the Christ] must remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things ... Acts 3:21.* Francis Schaeffer's opening paragraph in chap. 4 of Genesis in Space and Time sums up the **fracturing and ruination** of God's creation in the Fall. His description of things **before the Fall depicts the harmony of everything in it's proper place at REST and in BALANCE.**

Some have spoken of this final state as the **NEW Eden**, and there is language that can be taken to support that. However I think the Holy City [New Jerusalem, **Rev.21:1-2**] combines elements of Jerusalem, the temple, and the Garden. Eden was characterized by innocence on trial. **The new**

Earth/Heaven will be characterized by righteousness, **Rev.19:6-9** – climaxing in a complete resolution of all things like a symphony resolving its moods in the **crescendo of the finale**. Return to Eden would be a recapitulation whereas the coming together of heaven and earth is a NEW union ... like a wedding! [see my essay, The Lord's Return, **note b**] And from the throne I heard a loud voice that said, Look! **God is dwelling is with people** ... God himself will be with them ... **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain**, because the former things have passed away, **Rev.21:3-4**

... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable ... **we will all be changed ... When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality**, then the saying that is written will come true: **Death has been swallowed up in victory ... 1 Cor.15:50-55** [Paul applied a promise to Israel (personified) of redemption from death because of their guilt and sin in worshipping false gods (**Hos.13:1-2**) to our resurrection]

The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat ... The cow and the bear will graze together, and their young ones will lie down together ... The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand into a viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain, for **the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD ... Isa.11:6-9**

These are the kinds of images sprinkled in the OT to represent restoration of harmony in the kingdom of God's dear son.

### Resistance to the Kingdom Begins

<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born ... in the days of Herod the king [Herod the Great died in 4BC, shortly after these events. Jesus was born earlier in 5 or 6 BC ], wise men ... came ... <sup>2</sup>saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? ... <sup>3</sup>this troubled Herod ( **Mt.6** ) and all Jerusalem [upper echelon elite and prominent members of that society] with him; <sup>b</sup> <sup>4</sup>... he inquired of the chief priests and scribes where the Christ was to be born.<sup>5</sup> ... In Bethlehem of Judea ... from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel , **Mt.2:**

### Resistance Revealed

... [Jesus was around 1yr old by this time] <sup>13</sup> ... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said ... **flee to Egypt** , and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him [have him murdered] . <sup>14</sup> And he rose and took the child and his mother by night [secretly] and departed to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, Out of Egypt I called my son, **Mt.2:; Hos.11:1.**<sup>c</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Then Herod ... became furious, and he sent and murdered all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet **Jeremiah**: <sup>18</sup>A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more, **Mt.2:; Jer.31:15.**<sup>d</sup>

This incident is **typologically** depicted in Revelation as an attempt by Satan to stop the Messiah from gaining a foothold on this planet. **These are the unseen events driving and explaining what is going on historically.**

### Resistance Unseen

<sup>1</sup> And **a great sign appeared in heaven**: a woman [representing the Jewish nation] clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant [with a son representing the Messiah] and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup> And **another sign appeared in heaven**: behold, a great **red dragon** [depicting Satan who had been cast out of heaven with his angels] , with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And **the dragon stood before the woman ... so that ... he might devour her child** [representing an early attempt by Satan to thwart God's plans] . <sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, **but he was caught up to God and to his throne** [God thwarted Satan's scheme instead], **Rev.12:**

### Resistance Reasserted

Once Jesus heard that John [the Baptist] had been arrested [by Herod Antipas, the tetrarch], he withdrew into Galilee <sup>e</sup> ... he began to preach saying Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand [has come], **Mt.4:12, 17**. After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee [a predominately Gentile area] proclaiming the gospel of God and saying **The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel, Mk.1:14-15**. Jesus thus proclaimed the **imminence of the kingdom** – the fulfillment of the good news (that God would redeem his people), the day of salvation.

### The Kingdom Presses Forward

This promise reaches back to **Isaiah** where **the good news depicts the new exodus** [return] from Israel's exile to Babylon, **Isa.40:9; 52:7**. Yet the promised return from exile is not here limited to merely a return because Isaiah promised that **God would fulfill all of his saving promises to Israel culminating in a new heavens and a new earth [aka the Jerusalem above, Gal.4:26] where joy will redound and peace will reign, Isa.65:17; 66:22.**<sup>f</sup> **The promise of the Spirit** is tucked into a context in which Yahweh promises a new exodus that will deliver his people from Babylonian exile and return them to their own land. **I will pour water on the thirsty land ... I will pour out my Spirit upon your offspring ... Isa.44:3**. The death and resurrection of Christ inaugurate **the age to come** and the emblem of its advent is the gift of the Spirit. The end-time blessing sworn to Abraham (**Gen.12:1-3**) reaches its fulfillment in that gift. **God's new creative work** is centered in the **reconciling work of Christ** where believers become a new creation, **2 Cor.5:17**. Paul compared the work of conversion to that of creation in which the same God who summoned light out of darkness shines his light in human hearts so they perceive his glory in Jesus Christ, **4:4-6**.

### The Year of the Lord's Favor

Jesus' ministry in Galilee consisted of teaching, healing, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. **The conjunction of new creation and kingdom** appears – the healing of every disease

meant that the old order was passing away. This was what Jesus pointed out to John's disciples to assure John that he was indeed *the one who is to come*, **Mt.11:1-6**. His work among the blind, the lame, the deaf, and the poor revealed that good news of the Gospel was being proclaimed yet not in the way people expected it, *Blessed is the one who is not offended by me*, **v.6**. The kingdom has arrived yet Israel must await the day of vengeance for the completion of all God promised. When he was handed the scroll of **Isaiah** in the synagogue at Nazareth (**Lk.4:16-21**), Jesus read **Isa.61:1** and the first line of **v.2** which proclaims *the year of the Lord's favor [aka the acceptable time, the day of salvation. See Ps.118:24 in Christ the Cornerstone]* but he stopped here saying, **Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (Lk.4:21)** without reading the rest of **v.2**, *and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. [This partial fulfillment is known as the already but not yet nature of the kingdom, see essay Progressive Fulfillment of the Promises in Salvation History]*. In other words Jesus distinguishes between his 1<sup>st</sup> advent to bring salvation from his 2<sup>nd</sup> advent to bring judgment, **Lk.17:20-37**.

### The Kingdom Advances

From the beginning of his ministry Jesus spoke with authority, boldness, and certitude (ie, **Mt.5-7**). He declared the kingdom of God cannot be forecast by observing and interpreting signs. He said *it is among you [Lk.17:20-21, meaning, God's kingdom was working its way through the fabric of their lives and social structures without being recognized for what it was]*. The kingdom of God has been advancing forcefully into the world, calling for repentance since John began to preach, **Mt.11:12**. Demons were cast out, the sick healed, and the needy transformed by the good news of salvation (**Isa.35:4-6**) demonstrating the authority of Jesus in anticipation of the New Covenant signaling the onset of *the new age* as a harbinger of *the new creation*. *The Law and the prophets were until John; since then the kingdom of God has been preached ... Lk.16:16*.

### Mysteries of the Kingdom

At this time Jesus both revealed and concealed [see my Progressive Fulfillment of the Promises in Salvation History **NOTES**] the secrets or *mysteries* of the kingdom by speaking about them in parables, **Mt.13:10-17**.<sup>9</sup> One cannot force his way into this kingdom for God holds the keys to open a person's eyes and ears – to believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The already and not yet tensions of the kingdom are a feature of the progressive fulfillment of the promises throughout salvation history. The world is filled with ambiguity between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom. Even though the kingdom is present and active in the world, our struggles with evil continue. Our allegiance to Christ is constantly tested and we are asked to believe in him not just initially, but to walk with him [remain faithful to him] through the difficulties and uncertainties of life (**Phil.2:15**) as well through the temptations of success, prosperity, fame, wealth, power, etc. We, like all people, face life that holds uncertainty of the next moment in tension with the certainty that there will inevitably come a final moment to our lives here ... and judgment (**Phil.2:14-16; Dan.12:1-3**), though believers have already been judged in Christ. The "poor" [synonymous with "believer"] will be exalted at the judgment, whereas the "rich" will perish, **Jas.1:9-11**.

Part of Jesus' work is classified as miracles, signs, and wonders. His miracles signify the in-breaking of God's kingdom – the arrival of *the age to come* in the midst of *this present evil age*. Christians live between the times as *the present evil age* lingers while *the new age* invades history. His miracles also identify Jesus as the Messiah. John's Gospel designates Jesus' miracles as **signs that point to something beyond themselves**.<sup>a</sup> The signs and wonders of the apostles are manifestations of the kingdom and **represent** the continuation of Jesus' accreditation, teaching, and ministry (**Acts 1:1, 3**) that played a vital role in the spread of the Gospel [see *The Message of Acts* below].

### End notes

<sup>a</sup> God offered **king Ahaz** of Judah a sign to confirm that the alliance between Syria and Israel would not succeed in installing another king in Judah. The **sign** was to be the birth of a son to a young woman of marriageable age [normally a virgin, **Isa.7:14**. The Septuagint (Gk translation of the OT about 150 BC) uses a word specifically meaning "virgin."] to be called **Immanuel** (God with us). God also gave him a **second name** that meant quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil, **8:3**. The 2 names **signified** 2 realities: the judgment from Assyria would come quickly; yet God would be present with his people. **This episode functions symbolically by anticipating and foreshadowing God's work in the future**. In fact it is doubly certified by a **fulfillment formula** as well, **Mt.1:22-23**. Notice the escalation between the **type** and its fulfillment. If God was present with his people in saving them from Assyria, how much greater will be the **sign** of salvation in the days of final fulfillment? In fact **here is a theme that frames the entire book**, *I am with you always, to the end of the age*, **Mt.28:20**.

<sup>b</sup> Herod and the elite Jews comprised the upper echelon of their society. These are people who had found their niche and resisted anything that would upset the status quo. **They represent the political swamp of their day**.

<sup>c</sup> The passage refers to **an historic event with prophetic implications** - God's redeeming Israel out of Egypt pointing to Jesus, the true Son of God. Nevertheless **Hos.11 engages in a typological discussion** of Israel's history beginning with its exodus from Egypt, yet they did not respond to **God's tender love by cleaving to him**. Instead they turned to idols and sacrificed to Baals despite being liberated by Yahweh and nurtured by his love, **v.2-4**. Therefore the Lord pledged that he would send them as captives to Assyria, not Egypt (**v.5-7**). So he did in 722 BC when the northern kingdom was exiled. **Verses 8-9** reveal God's anguish, *How can he give up his people, hand them over to their adversaries?* He pledges that he will not destroy them in the same way that he obliterated Admah and Zeboiim when he pulverized Sodom and Gomorrah. Assyria would still capture and deport them, but they would not be utterly wiped out – the Lord would preserve a remnant.

Then he would return his people from exile in Assyria and Egypt and restore them to their homes, **v.10-11**. [He had said they would not return to Egypt, **v.5**. That reference was not literal, but **typological**. The exodus from Egypt functions as a **type** for what God would now do in Hosea's day. As he freed Israel from Egyptian bondage, he would liberate them in a new exodus from Assyria.]



**Matthew** used **typology** as Hosea did – the return from exile promised in Hosea was ultimately a fulfillment of God's saving promises by Jesus the true son of Israel.

<sup>d</sup> In the OT context, **Jeremiah** refers to Israel's exile to Babylon. Rachel wept because her children were removed from the land. But **Matthew** refers to their literal slaying by Herod. Thus **Matthew** drew a **typological connection** between an event in Israelite history and his own day. *Rachel weeping for her children* is drawn from a passage in **Jeremiah** that promised that God would return his people from exile to the land. This was fulfilled in part in Jeremiah's day, though not in the fullness promised in **Jer.30-33**. But **the time for weeping would end with the liberation of the people from their sin through Jesus Christ**.

<sup>e</sup> Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea [**in the southern kingdom**], taken to Egypt to escape Herod's murder of the male children, but he grew up in Nazareth (**Mt.2:23**) near Galilee [**in the Northern kingdom**].

<sup>f</sup> Though Israel returned from exile in 536 BC, the fullness of the promises in **Isa.40-66** did not become a reality – **the new creation did not commence nor was the rule of evil shattered**.

<sup>g</sup> **The parables of the kingdom (Mk.4:26-29; Mt.13)** tell us things like the word of the kingdom will not immediately have overwhelming success in this world; God fulfilled his saving promises in unexpected ways. The Jews expected the kingdom to arrive in apocalyptic power sweeping away all opponents. As it turns out, **the world became a battleground between children of God and children of the devil**. The NT reveals a certain disappointment brought on by the **discrepancy** between what people had come to expect and the way things seemed to be working out. Very few had a proper understanding of the OT to inform their expectations. Even John the Baptist became uncertain that Jesus was the Christ (**Mt.11:1-6**) and Jesus' own disciples didn't understand the necessity for his crucifixion, **Mt.16:21-23**.

**The figure of the tiny mustard seed** becoming a tree probably depicts the kingdom of God slowly growing unobtrusively throughout the NT period. **The parable of the leaven** makes basically the same point. The kingdom does not arrive manifestly and clearly, but is nearly invisible like leaven in flower as it infiltrates societies and cultures of the world and transforms them, **Mt.6**. **The watching world does not perceive the presence of the kingdom but is greatly influenced by it**. The permeation of the flower by leaven **signifies** gradual growth of the kingdom perceptible only to the eye of faith for **this kingdom does not advance by crushing God's enemies**.

Several parables such as the **four soils**, **weeds**, and **net** show that the children of the kingdom grow up among the children of the world and wait for Christ's return at the end of the age to be sorted out and receive their rewards, **Phil.2:14-16**. **The parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl** stress the overwhelming greater value of seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness over all other endeavors in this life, **Mt.6:33**.

Jesus concluded the parables in **Mt.13** by comparing the kingdom of heaven to a scribe *who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old*, **v.52**. **The wise disciple grasps the meaning of the**

OT prophecies under the Old Covenant and discerns their fulfillment in Jesus by interpreting them in light of the New Covenant.

<sup>h</sup> **The miracle at Cana** anticipates the day when God will fulfill all his promises, **Jn.2:1-11**; **Amos 9:13**; the healing on the Sabbath points to our eternal state, **Jn.5:1-18**; etc

