

Session 3: Biblical Hope

I. The Hope of Biblical Christology (cf. Rom. 2:5; 8:18; 1 Cor. 1:7; 15:23; 2 Cor. 4:17; Eph. 1:18; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 1:10; 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2:1; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:18; 1 Pe. 1:13; 1 Jn. 2:28)

It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,¹³ while we wait for *the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.* (NIV Titus 2:12-13)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you *when Jesus Christ is revealed.* (NIV 1 Peter 1:13)

A. The Christ as the Divine Agent

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against *his Anointed One* [Hb. *mashiach*]...⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.⁵ Then he rebukes them *in his anger* and terrifies them *in his wrath*, saying,⁶ "I have *installed my King* on Zion, my holy hill...⁸ Ask of me, and

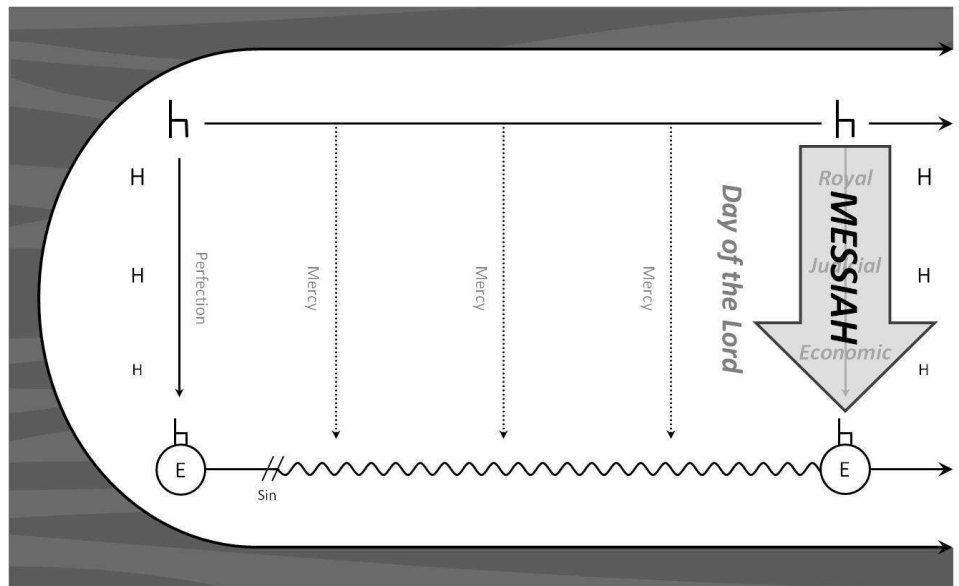


Fig. 3A – Messiah as the Executioner of the Day of the Lord

I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.⁹ *You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.*" (NIV Psalm 2:2-9)

The LORD [Hb. *YHVH*] says to my Lord [Hb. *adonay*]: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies *a footstool for your feet.*"² The LORD [Hb. *YHVH*] will extend your [cf. *adonay*] mighty scepter from Zion; you [cf. *adonay*] will rule in the midst of your enemies...⁵ The Lord [Hb. *adonay*] is at your [cf. *YHVH*] right hand; he [cf. *adonay*] will *crush kings on the day of his wrath.*⁶ He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and *crushing the rulers of the whole earth.* (NIV Psalm 110:1-6)

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and *he will separate people* one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats...³⁴ Then *the King will say* to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed *by my Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world." ... ⁴¹ Then *he will say* to those on his left, "Depart from me, *you cursed* [by my Father], into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (^{ESV} Matthew 25:31-41)

The Father judges no one, but *has given all judgment to the Son*, ²³ that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has *eternal life*... ²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has *given him authority to execute judgment*, because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to *the resurrection of life*, and those who have done evil to *the resurrection of judgment*. (^{ESV} John 5:22-29)

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that *he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead*. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (^{NIV} Acts 10:34-43)

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when *he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed*. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead. (^{NIV} Acts 17:29-31)

B. The Genesis of Messianic Hope

So the LORD God said to the serpent... ¹⁵ "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between *your offspring* [Hb. *zera*, "seed" KJV/NKJV/NASB] and hers; *he will crush your head*, and you will strike his heel." ... ¹⁷ To Adam he said... ¹⁹ "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; *for dust you are and to dust you will return*." (^{NIV} Genesis 3:14-19)

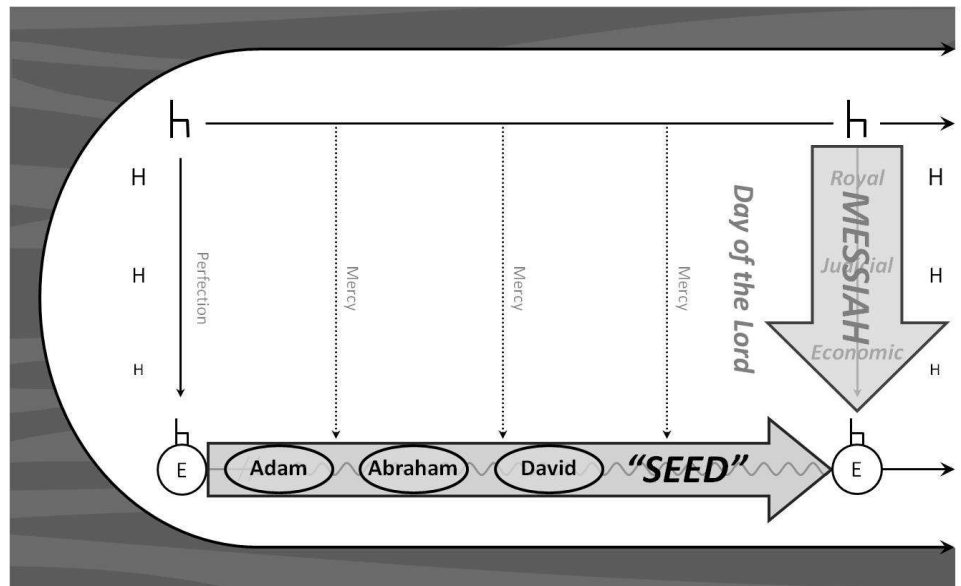


Fig. 3B – The Biblical Centrality of the Messianic "Seed"

And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ *to be put into effect* [Gk. *oikonomia*] when the times will have reached their fulfillment - *to bring* all things in heaven and on earth *together under one head* [Gk. *anakephalaionmai*], even Christ. (^{NIV} Ephesians 1:9-10)

For since *death came through a man*, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For *as in Adam all die*, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign *until he has put all his enemies under his feet*. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For he "has put everything under his feet." [Ps. 8:6] (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 15:21-27)

C. The Abrahamic Messianic Hope

I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, ¹⁸ and *in your offspring* [Hb. *zera*] *shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, because you have obeyed my voice. (^{ESV} Genesis 22:17-18)

Behold, my covenant is with you, and you *shall be* the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I *have made you* the father of a multitude of nations... ⁷ I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you... ¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you *shall be circumcised*. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be *a sign of the covenant* between me and you. (^{ESV} Genesis 17:4-11)

Now the promises were spoken *to Abraham and to his seed*. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. (^{NASB} Galatians 3:8-16)

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received *the promise that he would be heir of the world*, but through the righteousness that comes by faith... ¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring... He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "*I have made you a father of many nations*." [Gen. 17:5] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed-- the God *who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were*. (^{NIV} Romans 4:13-17)

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God *to restore everything*, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets... ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "*Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed*." [Gen. 22:18] ²⁶ When God raised up *his servant*, he sent him first to you *to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways*. (^{NIV} Acts 3:21-26)

D. The Davidic Messianic Hope

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, *I will raise up your offspring* [Hb. *zera*] to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. (^{NIV} 2 Samuel 7:12-14)

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One...⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." (NIV Psalm 2:2-9)

I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, ⁴ I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations...²³ I shall crush his adversaries before him, and strike those who hate him. ²⁴ My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him, and in My name his horn will be exalted. ²⁵ I shall also set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. ²⁶ He will cry to Me, "You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation." ²⁷ I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. (NASB Psalm 89:3-27)

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (ESV Matthew 3:16-17)

II. The Messianic "Kingdom of God"¹

A. The Transnational Messianic Kingdom

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His

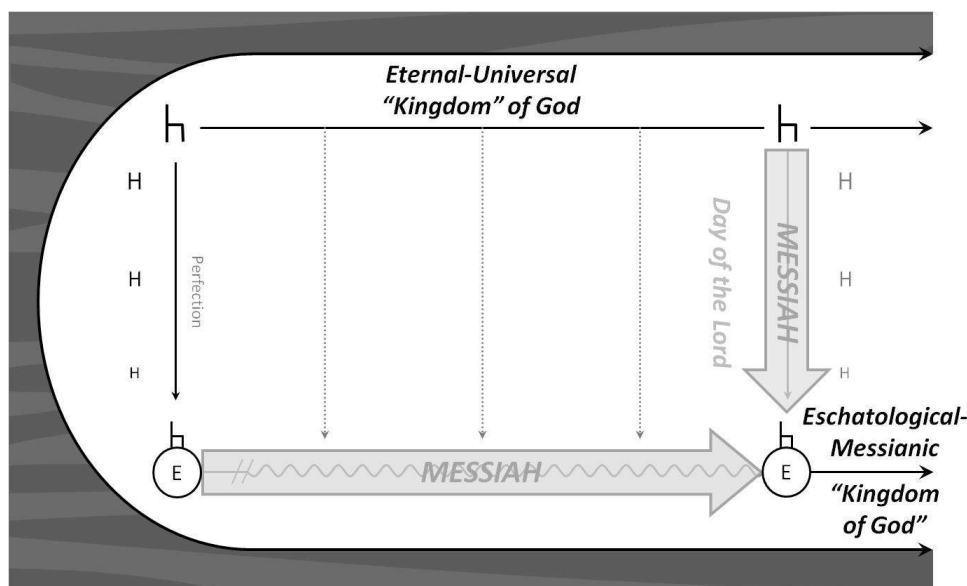


Fig. 3C – Universal Divine Sovereignty vs. Eschatological Messianic Sovereignty

¹ God's "kingdom" is referenced throughout the Old and New Testaments, and it is clearly a kingdom that *presently* rules over *all creation* (cf. 1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 103:19; 145:11ff; Jer. 10:7ff; Dan. 4:3, 34; Jn. 19:11; Acts 17:24; Rev. 4:2ff). However, there are also many messianic references to an *eschatological* kingdom that is established *on the earth* (cf. Ps. 2:6ff; Is. 9:7; Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Mt. 8:11; 20:21; Lk. 22:30; 2 Pe. 1:11; Rev. 11:15). This distinction has been the source of much controversy, which is simply solved by distinguishing between the two primary thrones of creation: one in the height of the heavens (cf. Ps. 2:4; 113:5; Is. 40:22; 66:1) and one delegated to man on the earth (cf. Gen. 1:26ff; Ps. 8:4ff; 115:16). Thus, when referencing the "kingdom", we need to delineate between the "universal kingdom", ruling over all creation from everlasting to everlasting, and the "messianic kingdom", to be established upon the earth at the end of the age restoring the original Adamic order. However, the particular phrase, "Kingdom of God," which only occurs in the New Testament, needs to be understood as Jewish phraseology used during late Second Temple Judaism to refer specifically to the Messianic Kingdom. This was clearly the common Jewish expectation, and it is the plain meaning of the phrase in the *vast majority* of its usage.

dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (NIV Daniel 7:13)

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, *your king comes to you*, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey... ¹⁰ He will

proclaim peace *to the nations*. His rule will extend *from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth*. (NIV Zechariah 9:9-10)

Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; *his right hand and his holy arm* have worked salvation for him. ² The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness *to the nations*. ³ He has remembered his love and his faithfulness *to the house of Israel*; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. ⁴ Shout for joy to the LORD, *all the earth*, burst into jubilant song with music... ⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; ⁹ let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and *the peoples* with equity. (NIV Psalm 98:1-9)

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. ³² *All the nations* will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats... ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, *the kingdom* prepared for you since the creation of the world." (NIV Matthew 25:31-34)

Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ*, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (NKJV Revelation 11:15)

B. The Israelitic Messianic Kingdom

Endow the king with your justice, O God, *the royal son* with your righteousness... ⁸ He will rule from sea to sea and *from the River to the ends of the earth*... ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may it continue as long as the sun. *All nations will be blessed through him*, and they will call him blessed.

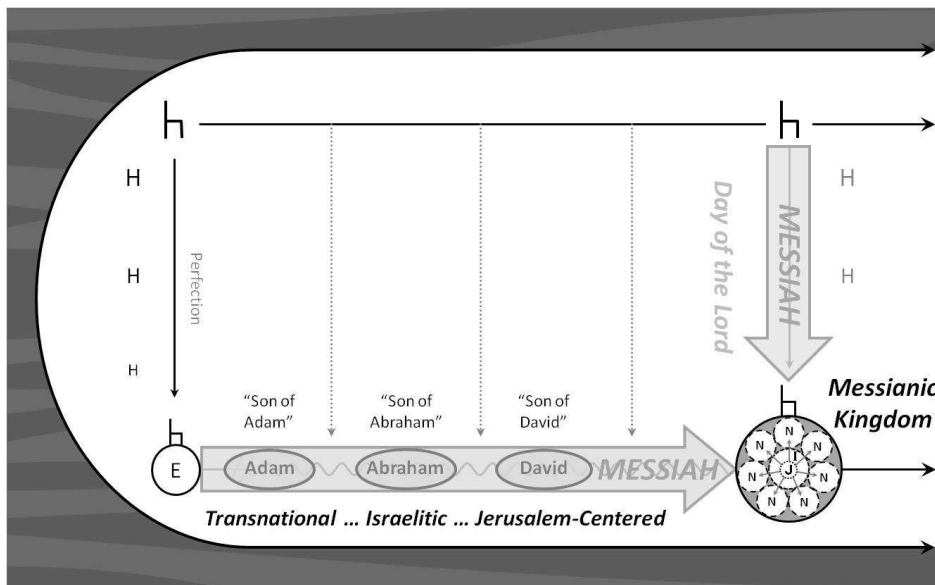


Fig. 3D – The Primary Characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom

¹⁸ Praise be to the LORD God, *the God of Israel*, who alone does marvelous deeds. ¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever; may *the whole earth be filled with his glory*. (^{NIV} Psalm 72:1-19)

A shoot will come up *from the stump of Jesse*; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him... ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for *the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD* as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner *for the peoples; the nations will rally to him*, and his place of rest will be glorious... ¹² He will raise a banner *for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel*; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. (^{NIV} Isaiah 11:1-12)

So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let *the Christ, the King of Israel*, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." (^{ESV} Mark 15:31-32)

You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; ²⁹ and just as My Father has granted Me *a kingdom*, I grant you ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at My table in *My kingdom*, and you will sit on thrones judging *the twelve tribes of Israel*. (^{NASB} Luke 22:25-30)

He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke *about the kingdom of God*... ⁶ So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to *restore the kingdom to Israel*?" (^{NIV} Acts 1:3-6)

C. The Jerusalem-centric Messianic Kingdom

For to us a child is born, to us *a son is given*; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, *on the throne of David and over his kingdom*, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. (^{ESV} Isaiah 9:6-7)

You will arise and have compassion *on Zion*, for it is time to show favor to her; the appointed time has come. ¹⁴ For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity. ¹⁵ The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory. ¹⁶ For the LORD will *rebuild Zion* and appear in his glory... ²¹ So the name of the LORD will be declared *in Zion* and his praise *in Jerusalem* ²² when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD. (^{NIV} Psalm 102:11-22)

In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. ²² They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. ²³ The moon will be abashed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign *on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem*, and before its elders, gloriously. (^{NIV} Isaiah 24:21-23)

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and

will be called *the Son of the Most High*. The Lord God will give him *the throne of his father David*,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; *his kingdom will never end.*" (^{NIV} Luke 1:30-33)

And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"¹⁰ Blessed is *the coming kingdom of our father David!* Hosanna in the highest!" (^{ESV} Mark 11:9-10)

D. The Messianic Temple

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you...¹³ He is the one *who will build a house for my Name*, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. (^{NIV} 2 Samuel 7:11-14)

In the last days the mountain *of the LORD's temple* will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and *all nations will stream to it.*³ Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to *the house of the God of Jacob*. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out *from Zion*, the word of the LORD *from Jerusalem.*⁴ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. (^{NIV} Isaiah 2:2-4)

And behold, *the glory of the God of Israel* was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and *the earth shone with his glory...*⁴ As the glory of the LORD entered the temple by the gate facing east,⁵ the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, *the glory of the LORD filled the temple.*⁶ While the man was standing beside me, I heard one speaking to me out of the temple,⁷ and he said to me, "Son of man, *this is the place of my throne* and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel *forever.*" (^{ESV} Ezekiel 43:2-7)

Here is the man whose name is *the Branch*, and he will branch out from his place and *build the temple of the LORD.*¹³ It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be *a priest on his throne*. And there will be harmony between the two. (^{NIV} Zechariah 6:12-13)

You have wearied the LORD... by asking, "*Where is the God of justice?*"^{3:1} Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek *will suddenly come to his temple*; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, *he is coming*, says the LORD of hosts.² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? (^{ESV} Malachi 2:17-3:2)

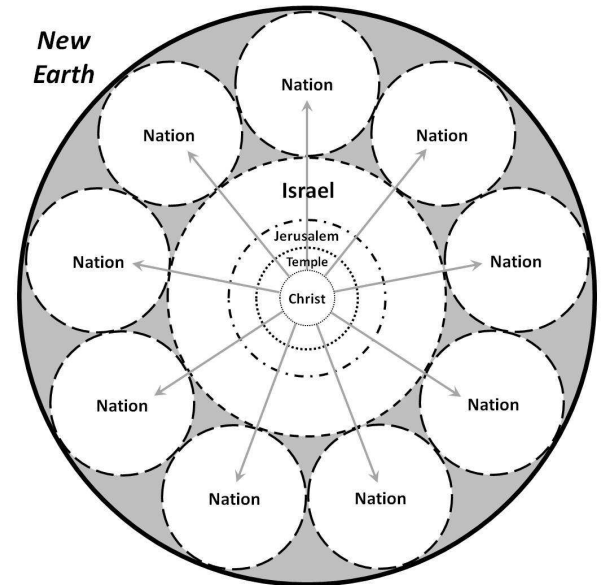


Fig. 3E – Progression of Messianic Glory in the Age to Come

While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (^{NIV} Luke 24:51-53)

III. The Millennial Messianic Kingdom (cf. Gen. 2:7; Ps. 90:4; 2 Pe. 3:8; 2 Enoch 33.1f; Jubilees 4.29f; *Life of Adam and Eve*, 51.1f; *Epistle of Barnabas*, 15.3f; Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, 81; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.28.3, 30.4; Methodius, *Fragments: Extracts*, 9; Commodianus, *Instructions*, 35, 80; Hippolytus, *Fragments: On Daniel*, 2.4; Lactantius, *Epitome*, 70; Augustine, *City of God*, 20.7.1)

And at the end of the nineteenth jubilee in the seventh week, in the sixth year, Adam died. And all of his children buried him in the land of his creation. And he was the first who was buried in the earth. ³⁰ And he lacked seventy years from one thousand years, for a thousand years are like one day in the testimony of heaven and therefore it was written concerning the tree of knowledge, “In the day you eat from it you will die.” Therefore he did not complete the years of this day because he died in it. (*Jubilees* 4.29-30)²

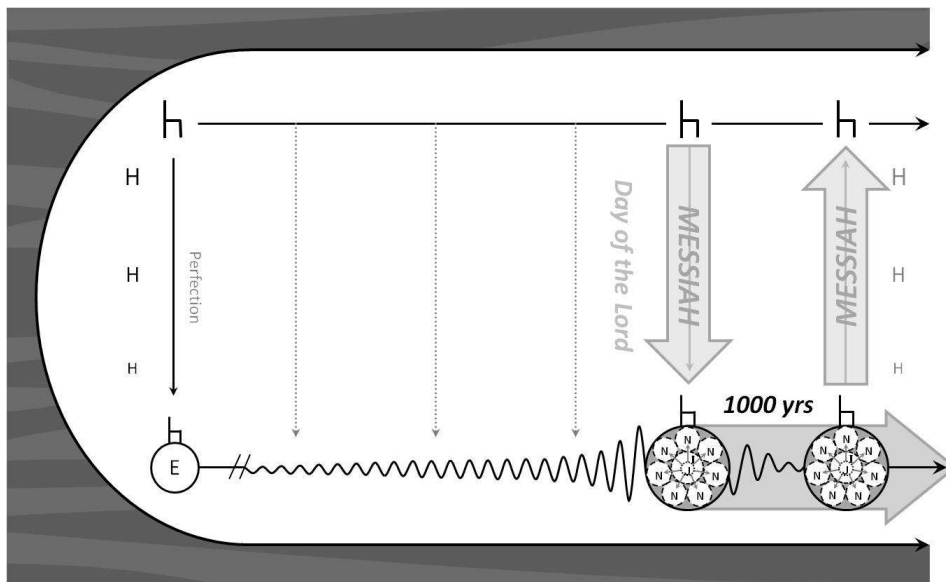


Fig. 3F – The Millennial Transition of the Messianic Kingdom

I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. (^{ESV} Revelation 20:4-5)

IV. The Christoplatonic Hope

A. The Post-Apostolic “Kingdom of God”

The identification of the Kingdom with the Church has led historically to ecclesiastical policies and programs which, even when not positively evil, have been far removed from the original simplicity of the New Testament *ekklēsia*. It is easy to claim that in the “present kingdom of grace” the rule of the saints is wholly “spiritual,” exerted only through moral principles and influence. But practically, once the Church becomes the Kingdom in any realistic theological sense, it is impossible to draw any clear line between principles and their implementation through political and social devices. For the logical implications of a present

² James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 63-64.

ecclesiastical *kingdom* are unmistakable, and historically have always led in only one direction, i.e., political control of the state by the Church. The distances down this road traveled by various religious movements, and the forms of control which were developed, have been widely different. The difference is very great between the Roman Catholic system and modern Protestant efforts to control the state; also between the ecclesiastical rule of Calvin in Geneva and the fanaticism of Münster and the English “fifth-monarchy.” But the basic assumption is always the same: The Church in some sense is the Kingdom, and therefore has a divine right to rule; or it is the business of the Church to “establish” fully the Kingdom of God among men. Thus the Church loses its “pilgrim” character and the sharp edge of its divinely commissioned “witness” is blunted.³

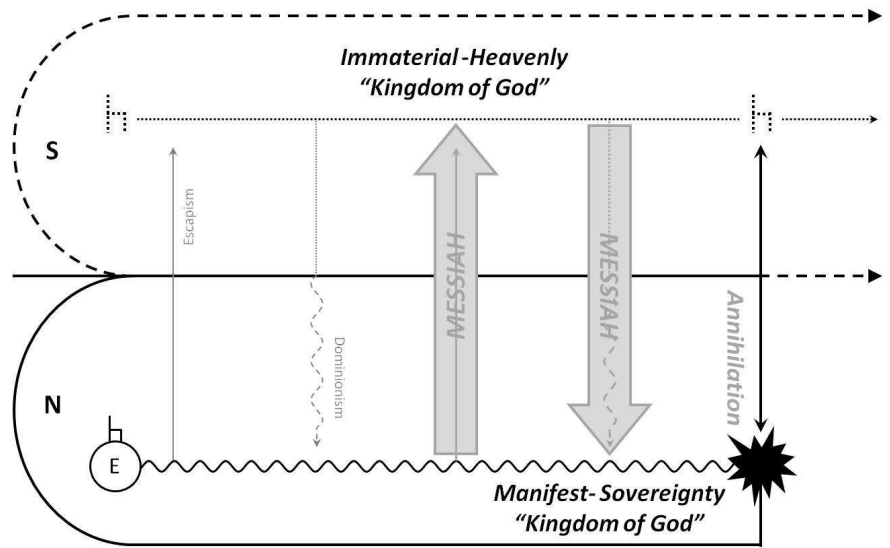


Fig. 3G – The Christoplatonic Immaterial/Material “Kingdom of God”

B. The Dispensational “Kingdom of God”

The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing *two distinct purposes*: one related to *the earth with earthly people* and earthly objectives involved, while the other is related to *heaven with heavenly people* and heavenly objectives involved. Why should this belief be deemed so incredible in the light of the facts that there is a present distinction between earth and heaven which is *preserved even after both are made new*; when the Scriptures so designate an earthly people who go on as such into eternity; and an heavenly people who also abide in their heavenly calling forever? Over against this, the partial dispensationalist, though dimly observing a few obvious distinctions, bases his interpretation on the supposition that *God is doing but one thing*, namely, the general separation of the good from the bad, and, in spite of all the confusion this limited theory creates, contends that the earthly people merge into the heavenly people; that the earthly program must be

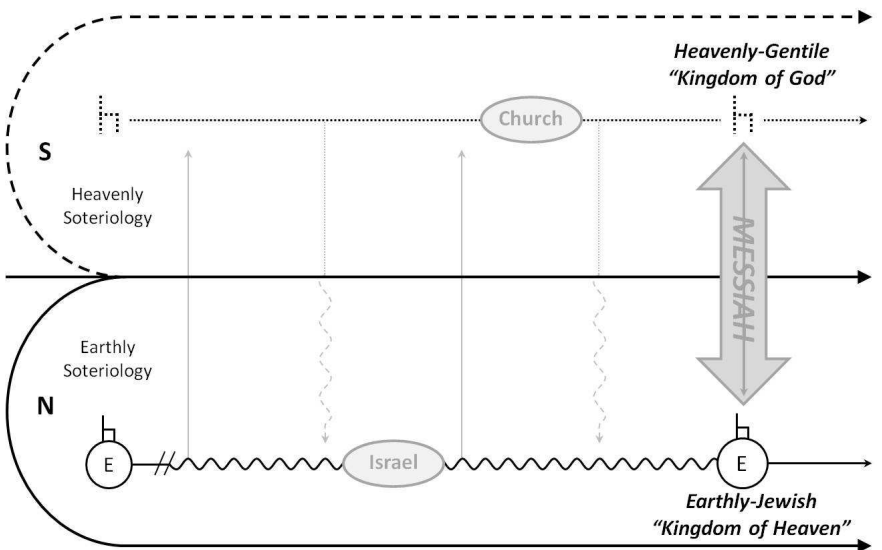


Fig. 3H – The Dualistic “Kingdom of God/Heaven” of Dispensationalism

³ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1959), 438-439.

given a spiritual interpretation or disregarded altogether; and that *there is nothing in eternity but heaven and hell*. The advocates of this interpretation oppose every earthly feature of the divine program. They disregard or ignore the earthly covenants and promises; they spiritualize or vaporize the vast body of Scripture bearing *on the Davidic Throne and Kingdom*; they present no specific reason as to why Christ was born as the Son of David; and they recognize no earthly glory or purpose in His second advent. According to their system, Christ comes again to end the world, but, unfortunately for these conceptions, the world does not end then or ever. May the number, already vast indeed, of those who believe the Bible and are subject to its plain teachings continue to increase!⁴

C. The Inaugurational “Kingdom of God”

The “history” of the kingdom of God is therefore *the history of redemption, viewed from the aspect of God’s sovereign and kingly power*. Before the final and perfect establishment of God’s reign there could be a number of mediatorial stages in which *the manifestation of God’s sovereignty is realized in varying degrees*. God’s reign may be realized less perfectly, partially, but none-the-less really in various realms during the course of this age and before the perfect fulfillment in the age to come. The character of these several *mediatorial manifestations* of God’s kingdom can be determined only by careful exegesis of the Scriptural language.⁵

There is a twofold dualism in the New Testament: God’s will is done in heaven; his Kingdom brings it to earth. In the Age to Come, *heaven descends to earth and lifts historical existence to a new level of redeemed life* (Rev. 21:2-3). This is hinted at, although not elaborated on, in the Gospels... this is the will of God: to conquer evil and to bring his people finally into the blessed immortality of the eternal life of the Age to Come.⁶

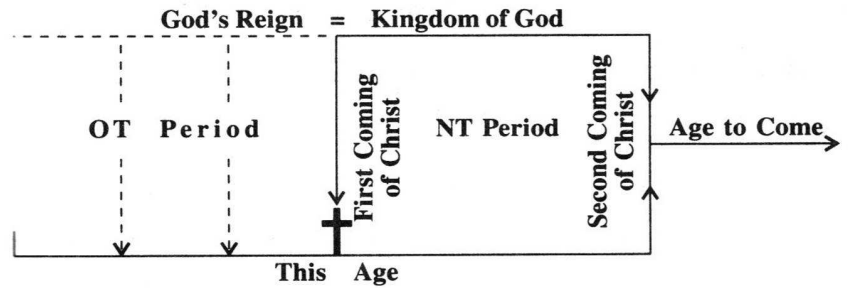


Fig. 3I – Ladd’s Inaugurational Schema (*Theology of the New Testament*, 67)

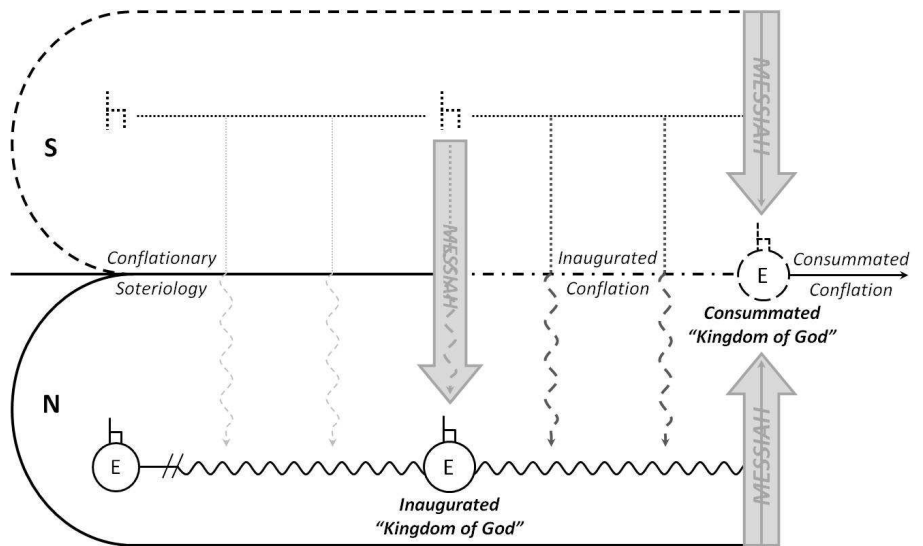


Fig. 6.17 – The Christoplatonic Conflationism of Inauguralism

⁴ Lewis S. Chafer, “Dispensationalism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 93 (1936): 448-49; article reprinted as *Dispensationalism* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1936); see also Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:47-53.

⁵ George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) 84-85; emphasis added.

⁶ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, Revised Edition, ed. D. A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 67; emphasis added.