

The Church as Seen by the Old Testament Prophets

Romans 15:4

INTRODUCTION:

A. Lesson Texts:

1. **Romans 15:4** - whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”
2. **John 5:39** – “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” **Note**; The only Scriptures the people of Jesus’ day had were the Old Testament Scriptures.
3. **Luke 24:44** – “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’”

B. Although the Lord’s church was established in the New Testament, and were divinely recorded in Acts 2, the Old Testament prophets saw and described the church of our Lord in symbols and figures of speech, or in language that were within the bounds of their normal day-to-day experiences.

1. Man in every age had been dependent on figurative language.
2. Inspiration enabled Biblical writers to draw upon the things people were familiar with in their day in order to illustrate and teach spiritual lessons.
3. Except for the beauties of nature, a person would be very limited in his concept of the beauty of Heaven.
4. Jesus taught spiritual truths by means of parables. Parables have been defined as
 - a. A parable has been defined as “An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”
 - b. Our Lord use parables that utilized the simple and common affairs and activities of life in order to teach and make His disciples understand the spiritual aspects of His church and kingdom.

C. With respect to the problem of communicating to the prophets spiritual concepts and future events, God often revealed to His prophets His messages of the moment and of the future by means of symbols and figures of speech.

1. The prophets, therefore, in turn spoke in terms of symbols and figures of speech in order to inform their audiences of the nature and blessings that would be characteristic of the church age.

2. In so doing, they wrote or spoke in terms of their past and present historical experience. By way of example: To the Jews
 - a. The term “Egypt” conveyed to the Israelites the concept of bondage.
 - b. The term “Babylon” conveyed the concept of captivity.
 - c. The term “Canaan” conveyed the concept of a delightful land that flowed with milk and honey.
3. God Himself was pleased to condescend to man’s necessity by ascribing to Himself hands feet, eyes, and ears, thereby denoting that He has the power to execute all such acts as are performed by man’s physical senses.

D. Old Testament Prophets

1. In the Old Testament there were two classifications of prophets.
 - a. Oral prophets.
 - b. Writing prophets.
2. There were no “writing prophets” prior to the period of the Divided Kingdom.
3. Of the fourteen prophets who wrote, eight of them wrote about the church by means of symbols and figures of speech.
4. The eight prophets who wrote about the church were:
 - a. Joel
 - b. Amos
 - c. Isaiah
 - d. Micah
 - e. Jeremiah
 - f. Daniel
 - g. Ezekiel
 - h. Zechariah

JOEL

- Was one of the 12 Minor Prophets.
 - Was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Judah
 - Joel’s name means: “Yahweh is God”
 - Prophesied in the 9th century in around 835 B.C.
 - Was perhaps a contemporary of Elisha in Israel.
- A. Many believe Joel to be the earliest of the Writing Prophets. However, there is some possibility that Obadiah was.
 - B. **Joel 2:28** – “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.
 1. Joel saw the church as having its beginning with a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The concept of an “outpouring” or overwhelming of a storm, was a rather common occurrence to both Joel and the people to whom he spoke.

2. When Joel spoke of “all flesh”, the concept was that the Spirit would be poured out without distinction of race Jew and Gentile alike.
 3. When he spoke of “servants and handmaids”, the concept was that the Spirit would be poured out without distinction of social position.
- C. On the memorable Day of Pentecost, the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit.
1. Peter declared in **Acts 2:16** – “But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.”
 2. The Lord’s church had been ushered in by the outpouring of the holy Spirit, and in so doing, Joel’s prophecy had begun to be fulfilled.

AMOS

- Was one of the 12 Minor Prophets.
 - Was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel
 - Amos’ name means: “Burden” or “Burden-Bearer”
 - Prophesied at Bethel about 775 B.C.
 - Was a prophet just after the time of Obadiah, Joel, and Jonah, and just before Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah.
- A. Amos was the country prophet who was dispatched from Tekoah to Bethel to prophesy against Bethel when Jeroboam was King in Israel . . . And prophesy he did.
- B. **Amos 9:11-12** – “On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;
That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,” Says the LORD who does this thing.”
1. Amos saw the church as the restored tabernacle of David.
 2. The Tabernacle, particularly Moses’ tabernacle, was a common object of reference in Amos’ day.
- C. For Amos to speak of the church by the symbol of the tabernacle was so interwoven into Hebrew life.
1. The case was that the tabernacle of David which had been breached, or broken down, was the united kingdom of Israel.
 - a. King Solomon had married many foreign wives, and they had turned his heart away from Jehovah God to the worshipping of idols. **1 Kings 11:3-4** – “And he had seven hundred wives , princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.
 - For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.”
 - b. God warned Solomon that He would surely rend the kingdom from him, but Solomon took no heed.

- c. God raised up adversaries against Solomon to deter him from his idolatrous course, but Solomon continued in his insolence and disobedience.
 - d. Thus in time, Jehovah God caused the prophet Ahijah (not Elijah) to anoint Jereboam as king of the ten northern tribes.
 - e. Only Judah and Benjamin remained to form the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
2. The prophet, Amos, saw this tabernacle of David raised up as in the days of old, the breaches thereof—the division between Israel and Judah—closed up.
- a. Further, he saw the restored nation as it proceeded to possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that were called by the name of Jehovah.
 - b. Some years after the establishment of the Lord’s Church in Acts 2, a conference dealing with the subject of circumcision, was held in Jerusalem to determine as to whether or not the Gentiles should be allowed to be baptized into Christ without their first being circumcised.
 - c. **Acts 5:13-18** – “And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men and brethren, listen to me:
 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.
 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:
 16 After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;
 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.
 18 Known to God from eternity are all His works.’”
 - d. After much questioning, Peter reported how that God had made that choice when:
 1. By his mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.
 2. That God in turn gave them the Holy Spirit, thus bearing witness that God made no distinction between the Gentiles and the Jews.
- D. At the time James quoted from Amos, the prophecy had already been fulfilled. How so?
1. The Tabernacle of David . . . the Church . . . had already been set up, and the breaches, the division between Israel and Judah, had been closed up.
 2. To state the matter in factual language, the gospel had already been preached to both Jews, the Samaritans, and other Gentiles.
 3. Therefore, the restored Tabernacle of David which Amos foresaw was the Church of the living God.

ISAIAH & MICAH (Will be considered together)**ISAIAH**

- Was one of the four Prophets
- Was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Israel
- The name “Isaiah” means: “Yahweh is Salvation.”
- Isaiah has been called:
 - The “Paul of the Old Testament”
 - The “Shakespeare of the prophets”
 - The “Evangelical prophet”
- A long ministry of about sixty years (740-680 B.C.)
- His prophetic ministry lasted some forty years, spanning the reigns of four kings of Judah.
- Isaiah was a contemporary of Hosea and Micah who prophesied in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

MICAH

- One of the 12 Minor Prophets
- Was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel
- Micah’s name means: “Who is like Yahweh?”
- Micah’s prophecies ranged from about 736 B.C. to 710 B.C.
- He was a contemporary of Hosea in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and with Isaiah in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

A. Isaiah & Micah will be considered together.

1. These two great prophets of Judah foresaw the church as a house established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills.
2. Here again the vision turned on a very familiar object . . . A house.

B. Each of the prophets . . . Isaiah in 960 B.C. in [Isaiah 2:2-3](#) . . . and Micah fifty years later in 910 B.C. in [Micah 4:1-2](#), announced: “Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

1. When Isaiah and Micah spoke of the **house of Jehovah**, the concept was that of the “. . . The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” [1 Timothy 3:15](#)

2. When they spoke of **the house as being established on the top of the mountains**, that concept was that the church would occupy the most exalted position of any institution on the earth.
3. When they spoke of how all **nations would flow to it**, the concept was that of a steady stream of men and women, whether Jews or Gentiles, would flow into the Church.
4. When they spoke of how that “**Many people shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,”** the concept was that the church would be characterized by a zealous evangelistic program.
5. When they spoke of how God would “**Teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths,**’ the concept was that the church would be characterized by a dedicated program of edification.
6. And when they spoke of how that “**For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem,”** the concept was that the church would have its beginning in the city of Jerusalem.
 - a. The fact remains that the apostles were assembled in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them in Acts 2.
 - b. It can truthfully be said that this marked the beginning of the blood-bought . . . Spirit filled institution . . . the church of the living God.
- C. Both Isaiah and Micah also spoke of the peaceful non-militant attitude which would pervade the hearts and lives of those who ‘Flow to it.” **Isaiah 2:4-** “. . . They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”
- D. Further, Isaiah saw how that within Jehovah’s house, Jehovah would give(1) a memorial and (2) an everlasting name. **Isaiah 56:5** – “Even to them I will give in My house And within My walls a place and a name Better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name That shall not be cut off.
 1. The “place” or memorial of which Isaiah spoke was instituted by none other than Christ Himself.
 - a. Mark describes the event on the night of our Lord’s betrayal. **Mark 14:22-25** – “Mark And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’
 - 23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.
 - 24 And He said to them, ‘This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.
 - 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

- b. Isaiah also saw that there would be a weekly observance of that memorial. **Isaiah 66:23** – “And it shall come to pass That from one New Moon to another, And from one Sabbath to another (***That is once each week or between one Sabbath and another***), All flesh (***Jews & Gentiles***) shall come to worship before Me,’ says the LORD.”
 - c. The memorial of which Isaiah spoke is observed by faithful Christians every Lord’s Day in God’s House . . . The Church.
2. The everlasting name which was to be given within the walls of Jehovah’s house is the name “Christian.”
 - a. **Isaiah 62:1-2** – “For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, And for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, And her salvation as a lamp that burns.
 2 The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, And all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, Which the mouth of the LORD will name.”
 - b. It appears that the chief point of this prophecy is that the everlasting name which was not to be given until the Gentiles were to be brought into the house of God.
 1. When the people on the day of Pentecost were baptized into Christ, they were believers and they were disciples.
 2. The same was the case when the Samaritans were baptized into Christ.
 3. But after the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Gentiles), we read in **Acts 11:26** – “. . . And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”
 - a. Isaiah further saw how that all nations and tongues would come into the house of Jehovah and of them, Gentiles, “Jehovah would take for priests and Levites.” Isaiah 66:18-21
 - b. **1 Peter 2:9-10** – “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

JEREMIAH

- Was one of the four Major Prophets who wrote two of the five Major Prophet Books.
- Was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- Jeremiah’s name means: “Yahweh throws”
- He prophesied from about 627 B.C. t around 580 B.C.

- He was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel.
- He is known as the “Weeping Prophet.”
- Jeremiah authored two books: Jeremiah & Lamentations.
- He authored by dictating all of his prophecies to his secretary, Baruch, from the beginning of his ministry until he fourth year of Jehoiakim.
 - He was threatened in his hometown of Anathoth.
 - He was tried for his life by the priests and prophets of Jerusalem.
 - He was put in stocks.
 - He was forced to flee from King Jehoiakim.
 - He was publicly humiliated by the false prophet Hananiah.
 - He was thrown into a cistern.
 - He was forced to Egypt against his will.
- He has been called “a heartbroken man with a heartbreaking message.”

A. Jeremiah is known as the weeping prophet.

1. A heartbroken prophet with a heartbreaking message.
2. Jeremiah labored for more than forty years proclaiming a message of doom to the stiff-necked people of Judah.

B. **Jeremiah 31:31-33** – “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah

32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

1. Jeremiah saw the church as a new covenant written on the inward parts of men’s hearts.
2. Covenants were common to all men in Jeremiah’s day.
3. God had made a covenant with the Israelites when he took them by the hand through the agency of Moses, and led them out of Egypt.
4. Jeremiah was not only familiar with the existence of the covenant, but also he was cognizant of the contents of that covenant.
5. Through means of the concept of a covenant, Jeremiah was given considerable details of the concept of a covenant.
6. Unfortunately, time and time again, the Israelites broke God’s covenant with them.
7. Jeremiah lived in a day when Judah had become more evil than Israel had been prior to that nation’s captivity.
8. In fact, Judah had become more evil than Sodom & Gomorrah, and under those circumstances, Jeremiah saw a time and a people who would have God’s law written in their inward parts and in their hearts.

C. The Hebrew writer in the New Testament, when speaking to the point of how there had been change in the high priesthood, which thing required a change in the law also. **Hebrews 8:6-10** – “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

8 Because finding fault with them, He says: ‘Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah —

9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

1. Jeremiah saw the church in a very real sense when he saw it as a covenant written on the inward parts of men’s hearts.
2. There is not a more distinctive and spiritual characterization of the church than the concept with which Jeremiah reflected it.
3. There is an inscribing of Jehovah’s covenant on the inward parts of man, especially on his heart.

DANIEL

- Was one of the four Major Prophets.
- Was a prophet of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- Daniel’s name means: “God is My Judge.”
- Daniel’s life and ministry bridge the entire seventy-year period of Babylonian captivity.
- He was deported to Babylon at the young age of 16.
- While in captivity, he was handpicked for government service.
- He is one of the few well-known Bible characters about whom nothing negative is ever written.
 - His life was characterized by: Faith . . . Prayer . . . Courage . . . Consistency . . . And a lack of compromise.
 - He is mentioned three times by his sixth century contemporary, Ezekiel, as an example of righteousness.
- Daniel is well known for having been put in the den of lions.
- He was a contemporary with both Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- Nine of the twelve chapters of his book center around dreams.

A. Daniel was in the process of setting forth Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the interpretation of it when we read in **Daniel 2:31-35** – “You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome.

32 This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze,

33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay.

34 You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”

B. That small, but hard, stone a familiar object to both Daniel and Neuchadnezzar, was a fitting object with which to convey certain characteristics relative to the Church.

1. That stone was cut without hands, thereby denoting that it was no part of man’s order, arrangement, or design.
2. Even though the stone was very small, it was very hard, thereby denoting its power to break in pieces the terrible image of gold, silver, brass, and iron. In short, the four great world empires (kingdoms), namely the Babylonian . . . the Medo-Persian . . . the Grecian . . . and the Roman Empires.
3. An unusual feature of that stone was the fact that, contrary to nature, it grew and grew and grew until it filled the whole earth.
4. The stone, the church, began on the memorable day of Pentecost (Acts 2) with a small company of men and women who in time conquered and broke the great Roman Empire.
 - a. In fact, it broke it to pieces in less than five centuries.
 - b. Christians endured ten violent persecutions over a period of three centuries, and ultimately conquered, not through physical might and military power, but through sufferings and death for the cause of righteousness.

EZEKIEL

- Was one of the four Major Prophets.
- Was a prophet in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
- Ezekiel’s name means: “God Strengthens” or “Strengthened by God.”
- His active ministry lasted for at least twenty-two years.
- His book was probably completed by 565 B.C.
- He and Daniel were about the same age and both were about twenty years younger than Jeremiah.

- Ezekiel overlapped the end of Jeremiah’s ministry and the beginning of Daniel’s.
 - Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was a priest called to be a prophet of the Lord.
- A. **Ezekiel 34:11; 22-23** – “For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.
- 22 Therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.
- 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.”
1. Ezekiel, the prophet to the captives in Babylon, saw the church as a sheepfold with one shepherd, David, over them.
 2. The sheepfold, with one shepherd over the fold, was a familiar sight in Ezekiel’s day.
 3. It, too, was a fitting object lesson to reveal certain aspects of the church.
- B. Please observe what Jesus said in **John 10:14-16** – “I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.
- 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.
1. Thus, Jesus Christ, the Son of David, was, and is, the fulfillment of Ezekiel’s vision relative to the one sheepfold and the one shepherd.
 2. The sheep following the shepherd is a beautiful picture of the church, made up of Christians, following Christ.

ZECHARIAH

- Was one of the 12 Minor Prophets
 - Zechariah’s name means: “Yahweh Remembers” or “Yahweh Has Remembered.”
 - He was born in Babylon and brought by his grandfather to Palestine when the Jewish exiles returned under Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest.
 - Zechariah was a younger contemporary of Haggai.
 - Zechariah had a series of eight night visions in one troubled night of February 15, 519 B.C.
 - The first five were visions of comfort.
 - The last three were visions of judgment.
- A. Zechariah was the prophet who exercised such a vital role in causing the resumption of the work on Zerubbabel’s temple.
- B. He saw the church as a temple as well as an open fountain.
The temple and the fountain were both very familiar to Zechariah and to the people of his day.

1. The temple and the open fountain were both very familiar to Zechariah and to the people of his day.
 2. Each served well to shed light on pertinent aspects and features of the church.
- C. The work on Zerubbabel’s temple had been stopped as a result of opposition.
1. **Ezra 4:2** – “They (the Samaritans) came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers’ houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here.’”
 2. When those Samaritans were denied their request, they (1) weakened the hands of the people of Judah, hired, (2) hired counselors against them. And (3) frustrated their purpose all the says of Cyrus, king of Persia, even to the reign of Darius, king of Persia . . . an interval of some sixteen years.
- D. The prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, set out to stir up the people of Judah-- particularly Zerubbabel, the governor, and Jeshua, the high priest--to a resumption of the work.
1. The work was resumed in the second year of Darius and it was completed in the sixth year of Darius . . . A period of four years.
 2. Upon the resumption of the work, Zechariah was particularly active in his encouragement of Zerubbabel.
 3. He announced in **Zechariah 4:9** – “The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you”
 4. Although Zerubbabel was face with a great mountain of obstacles, Zechariah asked in **Zechariah 4:7** – “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”
 5. Within this frame of references relative to the Zerubbabel temple, God said to Zechariah in **Zechariah 6:12-15** – “Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD;
 - 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”
- a. From that grand announcement, Zerubbabel was to learn at least four great truths:
1. A spiritual temples was to be built by the Branch (Christ), not Zerubbabel.
 2. The Branch would be both a king and a priest.
 3. The Branch would sit and rule on His throne.
 4. He would be a priest on His throne.

- b. The combination of a priest and a king was an entirely new dimension for the temple, and it necessarily projected a rule and a role which had characterized only one other man . . . Melchisedec, King of Salem and a priest of the God most high during the time of Abraham.
 - c. In short, the Branch, Christ, would sit and rule on His throne, when He was also a Priest on His throne.
6. The vision of the temple which Zechariah saw had its culmination when the Hebrew writer in Hebrews 6:20 stated of Jesus that He had been “. . . Having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.
 7. The point to be emphasized is that Christ is priest now . . . And therefore, He is sitting on His throne now.
 - a. **Hebrews 9:11** – “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.”
 - b. **Revelation 17:14** – “. . . For He (Christ) is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”
 - c. **1 Corinthians 15:25-26** – “For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

- E. In the latter part of Zechariah’s life, and decades after Zerubbabel’s temple had been completed, Zechariah saw the church as an opened fountain.
 1. **Zechariah 13:1** – “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.”
 2. In Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, fountains and springs were quite common.
 3. They were essential for life, and early settlements of that region clustered around such sources of water.
 4. Thus, the opened fountain which Zechariah saw was well within the objects, symbols, and figures of speech of Zechariah’s day.
 5. The fountain which Zechariah saw was not then open . . . But it would be opened “in that day,” or at a particular point and time in the distant future to the time in which he lived.
 - a. The fountain would be opened for “sin and for uncleanness.”
 - b. That is, it would be for the purification of sin and not from bodily or ceremonial uncleanness.
 6. The glorious concept to be considered is that the fountain would flow with the precious blood of the Savior.
 - a. When the Roman soldier used the spear to pierce the Savior’s side, there came out blood and water.
 - b. Then and there the fountain opened for removing sins and uncleanness.

- c. It is no wonder that we as Christians sing
 There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
 And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
 Lose all their guilty stains.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Before we close, three points . . . Beg to be stated . . . Underlined in our minds and stressed for eternal emphasis.
1. **Before God made man, He made a plan . . . A plan of redemption for man even before man had sinned.** God was ready with His love.
 - a. God knew for the outset that if He made man in His own image, that is, an intelligent free moral agent, there would not only be the possibility and probability of sin, but for that matter the certainty of it.
 - b. God loved us enough to plan for us before we were ever were.
 2. **God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world was ever laid.** **Ephesians 1:4** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”
 - a. He made that fact known through the Church. **Ephesians 3:10-11** – “To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - b. What a great responsibility the church has to make known the manifold wisdom of God to the world. Are we doing that?
 3. **Through one means or another, many of the prophets received visions and/or pronouncements relative to the church.**
 - a. Those revelations and pronouncements, however, were necessarily set forth by means of symbols and figures of speech which were within the bounds of the prophets, as well as the people’s day-to-day experiences and activities.
 - b. In so doing, we see something of the careful planning of God for His work.
- B. Thus, the importance of the church is further emphasized and demonstrated by the careful and painstaking preparation for it beginning before the foundation of the world and continued it throughout the Old Testament.
1. No wonder that the Holy Spirit told the apostle Paul to tell us in **Romans 15:4** – “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”

2. God is a God of order and design.

a. He plans His work . . . And He works His plan.

b. The church is a vital part of His plan.

c. May we ever show proper respect and consideration for the Bride of Christ . . . The Church!

d. May we ever be faithful members of it until Heaven becomes our home.

C. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation.**