

SOME MESSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Jesus Christ and his redemptive mission

I will not attempt to be exhaustive in my coverage of this subject, for there are many relevant scriptures. However, I want to make sure to use sufficient scriptures to properly illustrate the point. I shall first look at prophecies concerning the mission of Christ. Then I will point out some of the many persons, things, and events in the Old Testament who were types of Christ.

Prophecies of Christ's coming:

Moses' prophecy: Perhaps the best-known Old Testament prophecy concerning the future mission of Jesus Christ was spoken by Moses and is found in **Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19**. Because the children of Israel were afraid to come into his (Moses') presence on Mt. Horeb (Sinai), Moses told them:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken,"

Then the Lord, responding to Moses' prophecy, said that He would...

"raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [i.e., Moses], and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

In **Acts 3:22** in the New Testament, the Apostle Peter—while preaching repentance to the Jews for rejecting Jesus as their Savior—said:

"For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities [emphasis added]."

Genesis: There are also two widely known prophecies in the book of Genesis concerning the future mission of the Savior. God himself spoke the first of these to the serpent after the serpent had tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In addition to other curses that He placed upon the serpent, God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [he] shall

bruise [i.e., crush or grind] thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (**Genesis 3:15**). This is what Julia Ward Howe was referring to in "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" when she wrote, "Let the hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel."

The second Genesis scripture is the one where Jacob or Israel gives blessings to his twelve sons. The blessing of Judah is of note because Jacob blessed Judah that the Messiah would be born through his (i.e., Judah's) lineage. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," said Jacob, "nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (**Genesis 49:10**)." The word Shiloh relates to safety or peacefulness, a reference here to the Prince of Peace.

Psalms: The book of Psalms has many prophecies concerning the coming of the Savior and concerning his mission. Let me note of few of these.

- (2:7) "...Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."
- (22:1) "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?..."
- (22:16) "...[T]hey pierced my hands and my feet."
- (34:20) "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."
- (68:18) "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive..."
- (69:21) "...[I]n my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink..."
- (110:4) "...Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."
- (118:22.) "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."

Isaiah: The prophet Isaiah spoke of the Savior's mission more than any other Old Testament prophet:

- (7:14) "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
- (9:6) "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
- (42:6-7) "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."
- (53:4-12) "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked,

and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

(59:20) "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

(61:1-2) "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn..."

Hosea: The prophet Hosea spoke also of Christ's great mission of redemption: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction... **(13:14)**."

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Micah: Micah also recorded a significant prophecy: "But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting **(5:2)**."

Zechariah: There are three prophecies from Zechariah that I would like to mention:

(9:9) "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

(11:12-13) "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

(13:6) "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Types (or shadows) of Christ:

There are both people and events in the Old Testament that typify, or foreshadow, the Savior and His marvelous Atonement. It is an interesting exercise to identify some of these. In most cases, the symbolism will be apparent.

- * The slaying of the firstborn of Egypt while the blood of the lamb saved the children of Israel.

- * Adam and Eve clothed by Jehovah when they left the Garden of Eden in coats of (lamb) skins, which meant that, if they were obedient, they would be protected through the shedding of the blood of the lamb.

- * The offering of animals in sacrifice that were perfect males—without blemish or spot, as Christ was a perfect male without blemish or spot.

- * As lambs were offered as sacrifices for sin, so Jesus was identified as the Lamb of God and was offered as the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

- * No bones to be broken in the sacrificial lamb, as none of the Savior's bones were broken in the process of crucifixion, contrary to common practice.

- * The manna, the bread of life, provided for Israel in the wilderness, typified Christ who was the Bread of Life, given to us to sustain us as we wander in the wilderness of the world.

- * Water coming forth from the rock, as living water comes forth from Christ, who is the Rock.

- * The brass serpent that Moses raised on a pole in the wilderness that provided healing and life to those of Children of Israel who look upon it (Numbers 21:7-9). Jesus referred to this a type of His own lifting up upon the cross (see John 3:14-15). Jesus' death on the cross is sufficient to heal the sins of those who will "look."

- * Abraham offering his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice, as God offered His Beloved Son as a sacrifice. Isaac willingly submitted to the will of his father, as did Christ.

- * Isaac, the son to sacrificed, carried the wood on which he would be sacrificed—as Christ carried the wood (the cross) on which he would be sacrificed.

- * The scapegoat that was part of Israel's ritual on the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus (6:21-22), as Christ becomes the "scapegoat" for our sins.

- * Joseph was the savior of Israel, preserving their lives during the famine, as Christ is our Savior to preserve us in the spiritual famine of the world.

- * Moses as the savior of God's people, bringing them out of bondage in Egypt, as Christ also delivers us from the bondage of sin.

- * The ritual cleansing of lepers under the law of Moses, as a type of the cleansing of the repentant sinner through Christ's atonement (see Leviticus 14)

- * Jonah in the belly of the fish for three days as Christ was three days in the grave (see Matthew 12:40).

2. God's love for His covenant people

Old Testament examples where punishment appears excessive:

When Jesus spoke to the Jews of His day telling them, "How often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathered her chickens," His declaration related not only to the people of His day, but also to the house of Israel throughout the Old Testament. To fully understand the punishments that God visited upon these people, we must also understand the rest of that statement: "but ye would not"!

Certainly, we can point to many examples in the Old Testament where the punishments of Jehovah seemed excessive as related to the infractions. A classic example of this is the case where a man named Achan from the tribe of Judah was punished because he took spoils from the city of Jericho contrary to Jehovah's commandment. Achan's punishment is described as follows:

"And Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan... and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor... And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones" (**Joshua 7:24-25**).

There are other cases where severe punishment was imposed because of infractions that we do not even understand. Such a case is illustrated by the punishment given to all of Israel because King David took a count of the people of Israel. You will recall that Jehovah, through the prophet Gad, gave David three choices—seven years of famine in the land, to flee for three months before his enemies, or three days of pestilence in the land—allowing him to choose his punishment. David chose the three days of pestilence, and the scripture tells the result of David's choice: "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men (**2 Samuel 24:15**)." This certainly seems to be an excessive punishment for the people of Israel for a sin (which we do not fully understand) committed by their king.

There are other examples that could be cited to show similar patterns, and I make no excuses for any of them except to say that you and I do not understand everything. I cannot help feeling that important facts and/or explanations have been lost and are missing from these accounts. I believe they are incomplete in some way that is critical to complete understanding. And I truly believe that when the day comes, in the eternal worlds, when you and I know all the facts, these situations will be quite different than they appear to us now.

That having been said, let us look at the other side—those cases where Jehovah's love and His willingness to forgive are patently obvious.

Examples of God's love for His children:

When Israel was in the wilderness, Moses explained to the children of Israel how much God loved them, how He had blessed them, and how He would continue to bless them if they would also love Him and keep His commandments:

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (**Deuteronomy 7:6-9**).

During those dark days after Israel had been taken captive and Judah was gravely threatened by King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, Jehovah, through His prophets, pleaded with the people to repent so that He might deliver them from their oppression. Two such cases are found in the book of Ezekiel. In both cases, Jehovah is instructing Ezekiel what he should tell the people:

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye" (**Ezekiel 18:30-32**).

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (**Ezekiel 33: 11**)

Speaking the very words that Jehovah had told him, the prophet Jeremiah also spoke to the people of the love that Jehovah had for them and the promises that would be fulfilled in their behalf if they would repent and be obedient.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place... For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever" (**Jeremiah 7:3, 5-7**).

In other words, He promised the children of Israel that they would not be taken captive if they would but keep His commandments.

The following two scriptures are also from the writings of Jeremiah. The first was God's word to the king of Judah; the second was to all the people. Oh, how He yearned for His beloved people—these children of the covenant—to repent and return unto Him!

"Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people" (**Jeremiah 22:2-4**).

"Thus saith the Lord; Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings" (**Jeremiah 26:2-3**).

The book of **Jonah** provides yet another witness to the love of God for His children, even those who are not His chosen people, if they will repent and turn to Him. Though Jonah was upset and certainly less than pleased when the wicked people of Nineveh repented and avoided the destruction that God had decreed, God was able to put the issue into proper perspective. He asked Jonah, "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?"

Jonah, who had been sheltered from the sun by the gourd vine that was now dead, answered that he did do well by his anger, "even unto death." Upon which Jehovah responded,

"Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (**Jonah 4:10-11**).

If Jonah could love a gourd vine in which he had invested nothing, how much more should God love His children and rejoice when they repent of their sins and turn to Him?

Miraculous deliverance as evidence of God's love:

As further evidence of God's love for His children, the Old Testament contains numerous accounts of miraculous deliverance of His people from their enemies. And it is not difficult to understand that the righteous always had preference over the wicked (especially when it was His chosen people who were righteous).

Consider the following accounts of deliverance:

* The deliverance of Jacob and his family from the seven-year famine and into Egypt (**Genesis 41-47**).

- * The deliverance of the children of Israel out of their Egyptian bondage (**Exodus 2-14**).
- * The deliverance of the Amorites and their five kings into Israel's hands (with a great hailstorm and the sun being turned to blood) when Joshua and the army of Israel went to the aid of the Gibeonites (**Joshua 10**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from bondage to the Mesopotamians by Othniel, Caleb's nephew (**Judges 3**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from bondage to the Ammonites and Amalekites by Ehud (**Judges 3**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from bondage to the Canaanites by Deborah and Barak (**Judges 4**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from bondage to the Midianites by Gideon and his 300-man army (**Judges 6-8**).
- * The deliverance of Israel, under Jephthah, from threatened destruction by the Ammonites (**Judges 10-11**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from Philistine oppression through the mighty, miraculous, strength of Samson (**Judges 13-16**).
- * The deliverance of Israel, under the prophet Samuel, from the Philistines, through means of a great storm (**1 Samuel 7**).
- * The deliverance of the Philistine army into the hands of Jonathan and the army of Israel (**1 Samuel 14**).
- * The deliverance of the Philistine giant, Goliath, into the hands of David (**1 Samuel 17**).
- * The deliverance of the Syrian army into the hands of King Ahab's much smaller army of Israel (twice) (**1 Kings 20**). Here the Lord used a wicked King (Ahab) to overthrow the might of the more wicked Syrians.
- * The deliverance of the Moabites into the hands of Israel, Judah, and Edom (**2 Kings 3**).
- * The deliverance of Israel from the Syrian siege of Samaria (**2 Kings 7**).
- * The deliverance of King Jehoshaphat and Judah (without so much as lifting their swords) from the invading armies of the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir (**2 Chronicles 19-20**).
- * The deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem, under King Hezekiah, from the siege of the Assyrians and King Sennacherib against Jerusalem (**2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 32; Isaiah 36-37**)

Can there be any doubt about God's love for His children, especially about His love for His chosen people, the children of the covenant? And perhaps the greatest affirmation we have of God's love for His children comes as we combine the first two great Old Testament messages of the foretelling of the Savior's great redemptive mission and of God's love for His children. The result of this combination is declared in the gospel of John in the New Testament:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son

into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
(John 3:16-17).

The world, in all the time of its existence, has received no greater message and no greater blessing than this!

I should also note the many prophecies telling of scattered Israel's latter-day gathering from their long dispersion (discussed as message number 4, below) also bear a powerful witness of Jehovah's love for His chosen people.

Jehovah's characterization of himself as the husband and Israel as His wife

Can there be a greater or more perfect love in the experience of mortals than the love of a husband for his wife, or of a wife for her husband. Jehovah often spoke of himself as Israel's husband—sometime even as the husband of the wayward wife (see, for example, **Isaiah 54:4-7**, **Ezekiel 16**, and **Jeremiah 3:14**).

3. The scattering of Israel (Diaspora)

With regard to the scattering of Israel, the Old Testament contains both prophecies of that scattering as well as much of the actual fulfillment of many (but certainly far from all) of those prophecies.

Prophecies concerning the dispersion of God's chosen people were made very early. In the book of Leviticus, Moses wrote the following words, which were spoken to him by Jehovah on Mount Sinai:

"And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins... And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste" (**Leviticus 26:21, 33**).

In Deuteronomy, Moses also delivered this message to the people of Israel as he spoke to them of the rebellion of future generations:

"And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you" (**Deuteronomy 4:27**).

And further:

"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone." (**Deuteronomy 28:63-64**).

When the kingdoms of Syria and Israel combined their forces in an attempt to overthrow Judah and establish a puppet kingdom, the prophet Isaiah spoke to Ahaz, the wicked king of Judah, and made the following prophecy:

"Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim [i.e., the kingdom of Israel] be broken, that it be not a people" (**Isaiah 7:7-8**).

Partial fulfillment of Isaiah prophecy is related in 2 Kings:

"In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria" (**2 Kings 15:29**).

Final fulfillment of this prophecy came in the days of King Hoshea. The fulfillment of this prophecy, and some of the sins which brought it about, are also recorded in 2 Kings:

"Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made" (**2 Kings 17:5-8**).

Isaiah also prophesied of Judah being taken captive to Babylon. This prophecy is recorded in both 2 Kings 20:16-18 and Isaiah 39:5-7. I quote from 2 Kings:

"And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (**2 Kings 20:16-18**).

The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in **2 Kings 25**:

"And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth

day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

"And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

"And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away" (**2 Kings 25:1-11**).

There are many other prophecies of the scattering of Israel. I give a few of them here:

"And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours" (**Jeremiah 5:19**).

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord" (**Jeremiah 29:17-19**).

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee in the sight of the nations. And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds" (**Ezekiel 5:8-10**).

"Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that

escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord, and that I have not said in vain that I would do this evil unto them" (**Ezekiel 6:8-10**).

"My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations" (**Hosea 9:17**).

"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (**Amos 9:9**).

4. The latter-day gathering of Israel and Second Coming of Christ

The scattering of wayward Israel was, and is, significant. However, the glorious prophecies of Israel's return and restoration loom even larger for us because we are seeing fulfillment of these prophecies in our day.

There are so many scriptures foretelling the gathering of Israel that one scarcely knows where to begin. Jehovah and His prophets continually declared this message—together with its companion message of the Second Coming of the Savior to rule and reign over His people. In most cases, both of these marvelous messages are combined. Let us look at a few of the scriptures.

Even in the days of **Moses**, this wonderful message was declared:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (**Deuteronomy 30:1-6**).

Isaiah made many prophecies relating to Israel's gathering. Here are some:

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover

the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (**Isaiah 11:10-16**).

Here are some interesting prophecies from **Jeremiah**:

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me" (**Jeremiah 3:14-19**).

"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (**Jeremiah 31:10**).

From **Ezekiel**:

"...Thus saith the Lord God: Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a

new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God " (**Ezekiel 11:16-20**).

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God " (**Ezekiel 34:11-15**).

"...Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (**Ezekiel 37:21-28**).

And there were also other prophets who wrote of this latter-day gathering.

Amos made this prophecy at the close of his writings:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.

And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God" (**Amos 9:11-15**)"

One of my favorite prophecies comes from the book of **Joel**:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (**Joel 2:29-32**).

The prophet **Micah** also spoke of the latter-day gathering:

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

“And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever" (**Micah 4:1-7**).

Zephaniah also prophesied of this wonderful time:

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD" (**Zephaniah 3:14-20**).

There are, of course, many more Old Testament prophecies that testify that Israel will be gathered from her long dispersion and that Jehovah will be their God and their shepherd. This latter-day gathering of Israel is indeed a marvelous, exciting, and far-reaching Old Testament message.