

A War Is Coming The Kingdom Already But Not Yet

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Themes

One of the major themes we see developed in the Old Testament regarding the unseen realm is reflected in Psalm 82.

Psalm 82

A PSALM OF ASAPH. God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince." Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!" (ESV)

We have discovered in our brief review of the unseen realm in the Old Testament, that there are two powers in heaven that showed up continuously. We see someone called the Angel of the LORD, the Word of the LORD, the pillar of cloud, the fire by night, goel, or Captain of the LORD's Host just to name a few titles.

We learned that the relationship that the patriarchs had with YAHWEH and the Angel of YAHWEH was so close, that many times they knew who exactly they were talking too simply by hearing His voice.

John 10:27–30

“My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” (NASB 2020)

We saw, through our study, that this second person who shows up, this second power in heaven, is Jesus Christ prior to His incarnation. He is the Captain of the LORD’s Host and as such is involved in spiritual warfare to retake what the enemy has usurped. In the Old Testament, there are glimpse of His final victory.

Zechariah 14:1–5

“A day of the LORD is about to come when your possessions will be divided as plunder in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to wage war; the city will be taken, its houses plundered, and the women raped. Then half of the city will go into exile, but the remainder of the people will not be taken away. Then the LORD will go to battle and fight against those nations, just as he fought battles in ancient days. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley. Half the mountain will move northward and the other half southward. Then you will escape through my mountain valley, for the mountains will extend to Azal. Indeed, you will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come with all his holy ones with him.” (NET)

Isaiah 24:21–23

“So it will happen on that day, That the LORD will punish the rebellious angels of heaven on high, And the kings of the earth on earth. They will be gathered together Like prisoners in the dungeon, And will be confined in prison; And after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be ashamed and the sun be put to shame, For the LORD of armies will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders.” (NASB 2020)

YAHWEH is coming at the Day of the Lord to disarm and defeat the supernatural powers who rebelled as well as those on earth who have sworn allegiance to them.

Revelation 19:11–21

“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.” And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.” (NKJV)

Yahweh will rule before his council—here called elders—having punished both his human foes (“kings of the earth”) and his supernatural enemies (“the host of heaven in heaven”), in order to re-establish his rule in his earthly abode, Mount Zion. (Heiser 2015, 259)

We clearly see what is coming, and so does the enemy. We will find that elements of the first coming of Jesus Christ, including elements of what He was going to do while here, were intentionally grey. By the way, the same can be said of His Second Coming as well.

There is evidence of the message being spread out across the available bandwidth to YAHWEH in order to jam the message from the enemy, Jesus Himself was the key.

Luke 24:25–27

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (ESV)

And thus began the first synthesis of all in the scriptures relating to the first coming of Jesus Christ, done by the LORD Himself in a traveling bible study.

We see the pointing to a kingdom which is coming, and we will discover that when Jesus came to planet earth, the kingdom began. It is already in existence, but not yet.

All of the plans of YAHWEH regarding the restoration of earth to Eden, the Millennial Temple scene in Ezekiel 40 – 48, the Armies of His Holy Ones specified in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19, the events related in Joel 2, all find their nexus in the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of God is reborn at the first coming of Jesus. His arrival marks the beginning of the end of the rule of darkness and the initiation of Yahweh’s reclamation of the nations ruled by the other gods. Jesus is the son of man, and the kingdom is his. Ruling with him will be the holy ones of Yahweh’s (and his) council. (Heiser 2015, 258)

Isaiah 7:14

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (NKJV)

Micah 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” (NKJV)

Isaiah 9:1–2

“But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. In earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He will make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.” (NASB 2020)

Jesus doesn’t just suddenly show up, He has been there all along. The visible YAHWEH has been part of the story since before Eden and Genesis 3. This second person, whose date of appearance in the Temple as the King is specifically predicted by Daniel, must be born, He must become a man. He will be the one who reverses what took place in Genesis 3, 6 and 11.

Only one Person could undo what the Watchers had done: the Messiah. Consequently, for New Testament writers, the coming of Jesus as Yahweh incarnate meant not only reversing the curse of death

brought upon humanity by the sin of Adam, but also the undoing of depravity. (Heiser, *Reversing Hermon: Enoch. The Watchers & The Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ* 2017, 53)

The blame for the evil within the cosmos is understood to land squarely on these intermediary beings and on the humans who align themselves with them. (Boyd 1997, 178)

He had to become a man to ensure that humanity, God's imager, is not erased from the Edenic vision due to his mortal weakness and invariable propensity to use his free will to attempt to gain autonomy from God. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 267)

The nation, chaffing under the rule of various gentile leaders and having suffered much under most of them, including the Romans, were ready for a Kingdom.

Their viewpoint was messianic, they were looking for a King to take over, they had focused on specific prophecies such as Daniel 2:44 when Daniel was used of YAHWEH to reveal the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 2:44–45

“And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Just as you saw that a stone was broken off from the mountain without hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is certain and its interpretation is trustworthy.” (NASB 2020)

The coming Kingdom will be established by God Himself, not by man. It will be an Eternal Kingdom that will never be destroyed again. (Woods 2016, Kindle Location 859)

And that view was held by many Jews, the problem though, is that they would actually reject the Kingdom when it was offered. They missed something else in Daniel.

Daniel 9:24–27

“Seven times seventy years is the length of time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil. Sin will be forgiven and eternal justice established, so that the vision and the prophecy will come true, and the holy Temple will be rededicated. Note this and understand it: from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem, until God's chosen leader comes, seven times seven years will pass. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defences, and will stand for seven times sixty-two years, but this will be a time of troubles. And at the end of that time God's chosen leader will be killed unjustly. The city and the Temple will be destroyed by the invading army of a powerful ruler. The end will come like a flood, bringing the war and destruction which God has prepared. That ruler will have a firm agreement with many people for seven years, and when half this time is past, he will put an end to sacrifices and offerings. The Awful Horror will be placed on the highest point of the Temple and will remain there until the one who put it there meets the end which God has prepared for him.” (GNB)

That there will be a future, messianic kingdom on earth has been revealed thus far through the divine intention to restore the office of Theocratic Administrator (Gen. 1:26–28) that was lost in Eden (Gen. 3). Likewise, the promise of a future, earthly, messianic reign was prophesied in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15) and related sub-covenants. While these covenants guarantee that the kingdom will one day come to the earth through Israel, according to the Mosaic Covenant, the kingdom's ultimate manifestation is conditioned upon the nation's acceptance of Christ as her long-awaited king of God's own choosing. (Woods 2016, Kindle Locations 1076 - 1080)

We will see, as we follow the spiritual warfare Jesus is engaged in during His earthly ministry, that there is a rejection by the nation that takes place which will result in an anticipated change of mission for Jesus.

Jesus' teaching, his exorcisms, his healings and other miracles, as well as his work on the cross, all remain somewhat incoherent and unrelated to one another until we interpret them within this apocalyptic context: in other words, until we interpret them as acts of war. When this hermeneutical step is made, however, Jesus' ministry forms a coherent whole. (Boyd 1997, 180)

John 1:1–5

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.” (NET)

Genesis 15:1

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram! I am your shield and the one who will reward you in great abundance.”” (NET)

Ezekiel 14:2–3

“The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, these men have erected their idols in their hearts and placed the obstacle leading to their iniquity right before their faces. Should I really allow them to seek me?” (NET)

Jesus is the “name of the LORD.” He is the “word of the Lord.”

Joel 2:32

“It will so happen that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be delivered. For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who survive, just as the LORD has promised; the remnant will be those whom the LORD will call.” (NET)

The Name and Yahweh were interchanged in Israelite theology, so that trusting in “the Name of Yahweh” meant trusting in Yahweh. Likewise, trusting in the name of the Lord, who is Yahweh in the Old Testament quotation, is the same as confessing Jesus as Lord. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 270)

Remember, the book of John is focused on seven “I am” statements that Jesus makes saying He is YAHWEH. He is the Angel of YAHWEH.

Jude 5

“Now I want to remind you, though you know everything once and for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.” (NASB 2020)

Exodus 23:20–21

“Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be attentive to him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your rebellion, since My name is in him.” (NASB 2020)

That angel, per Jude 5, is Jesus Christ, and the reference is one of spiritual warfare made very physical with the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

We will see that every day with Jesus, who is the incarnate YAHWEH...

...was a spiritual assault on the forces of darkness to reclaim what rightfully belonged to him, his Father the invisible Yahweh, and those human beings who were part of the divine council family. (Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* 2015, 271)

His whole ministry was about overpowering the “fully armed” strong man who guarded “his property” (Lk 11: 21), namely, God's people and ultimately the entire earth. (Boyd 1997, 182)

...but two basic dimensions of conflict and triumph emerge: the conflict between Jesus and demonic powers, and the future return of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven. (Longman III 2010, Kindle Locations 1018-1020)

So, to a believing literate Jew living in 3 BC, there is an expectation that they are close to the promises of Daniel and the coming King prophecy being fulfilled. They know His coming must be soon. The manner in which this child is treated once brought to the Temple reveals much of the thought of the time.

Luke 2:25–38

“Now a man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. This man was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the one who would comfort Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are allowing your servant to leave in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared for all people to see—a light that will reveal salvation to the Gentiles and bring glory to your people Israel.” Jesus’ father and mother kept wondering at the things being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall or rise. He will be a sign that will be disputed, so that the inner thoughts of many people might be revealed. Indeed, a sword will pierce your own soul, too.” Now Anna, a prophetess, was also there. She was a descendant of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher. She was very old, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow for eighty-four years. She never left the temple, but continued to worship there night and day with times of fasting and prayer. Just then she came forward and began to thank God and to speak about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.” (ISV)

A couple of observations:

- Neither one was part of the religious establishment.
- One was a woman, who in that culture, had no standing as a witness, but Jesus went out of His way to stand the culture on its head.
- The only member of the religious establishment “in” on this was Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:67–79

“Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel! He has taken care of his people and has set them free. He has raised up a mighty Savior for us from the family of his servant David, just as he promised long ago through the mouth of his holy prophets that he would save us from our enemies and from the grip of all who hate us. He has shown mercy to our ancestors and remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham. He granted us deliverance from our enemies’ grip so that we could serve him without fear and be holy and righteous before him all of our days. And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High. For you will go ahead of the Lord to prepare his ways and to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Because of the tender mercy of our God, a new day has dawned on us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in death’s shadow, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”” (ISV)

How clear was the message of Jesus’ coming?

A hint shows up with a group coming from Parthia, a people never conquered by Rome, we would call it Iran today. The Magi followed a star, they used the message being proclaimed in the heavens

Matthew 2:1–3

“In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;” (NRSV)

Why troubled? Why frightened?

One of a few nations to be seen by the Romans as a persistent threat to their military dominance, the Parthians inflicted upon the Romans one of their most crushing and humiliating defeats at Carrhae (OT Haran) in 53 B.C.E. One reason for this defeat was the effective use of the Parthian or “parting shot,” which combined an archery volley while charging with another over their horses’ tails as they retreated. It is perhaps the Parthian threat in general, and this tactic in particular, that is alluded to in Rev. 9:13–19; 16:12. (Pope 2000, 1010)

Psalm 19:1–2

“The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.” (NLT)

The Magi knew this.

We are told that in the days of Herod the King, Magi came from the east asking, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:1, 2). The name “Magi” is a shortened form of the word “magician.” These were among the descendants of the magicians and astrologers of Daniel’s day. Daniel was the chief of the magicians. “Belteshazzar [Daniel], chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you” (Daniel 4:9). Though this pagan king did not fully understand, he was right in saying that Daniel had the Spirit of God in him. I am sure that Daniel, his writings, and the writings of the Old Testament that he honored were held in high esteem for generations by the Magi. The Magi studied the prophecies of Daniel about the coming of a Ruler, the Anointed One (Daniel 9:25). They knew the prophecies of the Old Testament like Numbers 24:17: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” When they saw the star in Babylon, they put the prophecies together and went in faith to see the King who was born in fulfillment of these prophecies. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they went to the palace of King Herod because they figured that is where a future king would be born. They asked Herod where the baby was, not if such a baby existed. That is how confident they were of their interpretation of this revelation of God that Daniel had taught them. Herod “called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law” and “asked them where the Christ was to be born” (Matthew 2:3). What is fascinating about that is the use of the word Christ or Messiah, the Anointed One. In the Hebrew, that word is found only twice in the Old Testament—in Daniel 9 and Psalm 2. The Magi were looking for Daniel’s Messiah. The teachers of the law knew the answer to the Magi’s question. He was to be born in Bethlehem in Judea, and they quoted Micah 5:2. The teachers of the law knew what the Bible said, but they did not take it seriously, for when the Magi went to Bethlehem, the teachers of the law did not follow. They ignored what the Bible said. (Stortz and Hughes 2004, 34-35)

Magi, originally trained by Daniel, part of the Parthian empire, never defeated by Rome, having just defeated Rome 50 years prior; yes, Herod was nervous, because they followed astral theology taught to them by Daniel and ignored by the Jewish religious establishment

Is there evidence for this in the New Testament? Paul reflected in Romans 10 that he believed the message was clear and he quoted from Psalm 19.

Romans 10:16–18

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.” (ESV)

Romans 1:20

“For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” (ESV)

...this passage is one of several in the New Testament that take us into the ancient concept of astral theology, a subset of which is astral prophecy. In briefest terms, and with respect to a biblical perspective (as opposed to pagan polythe-ism's conception), astral theology was the idea that the One who made the celestial objects in the heavens (sun, moon, stars) to be for "signs and seasons" and to mark time (Genesis 1:14) could use those objects to communicate. (Heiser, *Reversing Hermon: Enoch. The Watchers & The Forgotten Mission of Jesus Christ* 2017, 58)

Paul connects the dots for us. He says we can look to the stars and see when Messiah is to come. The wise men, coming from a group personally trained by Daniel knew that.

We have a description in the Bible of the star alignment that was in place at the birth of Jesus. The birth of Jesus was an open, yet secret arrival of the King. A signal of the reversal, the kingdom is close to be inaugurated, the nations are to be reclaimed.

The star alignment, which all should have known, is in Revelation 12. Just prior to Revelation 12, we have the trumpet judgements. The seventh trumpet has just sounded, the temple in heaven has opened and the Ark has appeared.

Talmudic tradition also held that a trumpet was to be blown on Tishri 1, which in the rabbinic period came to be viewed as the beginning of the New Year. God's eschatological judgment of all people was expected to fall on this day (cf. b. Rosh Hashanah 16). The New Year was regarded "not merely as an anniversary of creation, but also—and more importantly—as a renewal of it. [This is when] the world is reborn from year to year." The New Year trumpet also proclaimed hope in the ongoing and ultimate kingship of God, in God's judgment and reward according to people's deeds, and in Israel's final restoration. This obviously is very much like the Apocalypse's declaration with the seventh trumpet of God's final establishment of his kingdom and accomplishment of judgment and may also stand behind what John has written. (Beale 1999, 620)

Revelation 12:1–5

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne," (ESV)

So Jesus was born on the first day of the Jewish religious calendar, the Feast of Trumpets
The same day Noah was born, the world was created, and the ark came to rest, the evil of the Nephilim had been swept away. The same day some say, we will hear a trump sound and we get called up.

Theological Messaging

- Jesus' birth signaled the same thing
- Reversal of evil of sons of God and nephilim
- Jesus = king = kingdom
- Kingdom inaugurated during his ministry
- Death and resurrection = seated at right hand of God "at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him" (1 Pet 3:22)
- His return = time of end / release of Watchers (Rev 9) (Heiser, *Supernatural Wordview of the NT* n.d.)

Looking at the early years geographical movements of Jesus we see a similarity with the experience of the nation of Israel. It looks like something we saw in the Old Testament about the nation, going into and out of Egypt?

Mark picks up on this and takes the beginning of the ministry of Jesus as a type of new Exodus. This is a theme repeated by many scholars.

Next week we will look at the Baptism of Jesus in context, here is the set up...

John 1:19–23

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." (ESV)

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