

Typology, Two-Level Fulfillment, and Kline's Critique of Dispensationalism

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The kingdom in Eden was Immanuel's land, the holy place of the Glory-Spirit presence, a theocratic paradise-protectorate where a holy nation of priests lived in covenanted communion with the Lord their Creator. In the Glory-Presence on the mountain of God the Edenic kingdom had a focus, a vertical axis uniting earth with heaven and so with the celestial center, the throne-site of God in the midst of the divine council-court. And mandated in the stipulated program of the kingdom was a fullness to be achieved through a correlated process of multiplying the kingdom people and appropriating the kingdom land. The earth was to be filled and in the appointed hour the eternal Sabbath would dawn and the hitherto earth-bound sanctuary city would be transfigured into Metapolis. There the heavens are opened and the Glory-focus coalesces with the kingdom's cosmic fullness. There God dwells with his people and they see his face and reign forever and ever. Continuation of this original kingdom goal as the ultimate hope of the Covenant of Grace is manifested in the reappearance of various features of the sanctuary kingdom of Eden in redemptive prophecy, notably so in the book of Revelation.

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As the revelation of the promised kingdom continues on from Genesis 12 to Genesis 13,15,17,22,26 and 28 and as the promise comes to fulfillment at its two historico-eschatological levels, the distinctive features of the creation kingdom mentioned above (in the résumé of the roots of the Abrahamic promises) emerge more and more into view. It becomes clear that the kingdom promised to Abraham, like that in Eden's garden of God, is a paradise domain flowing with milk and honey, a new heaven and earth with river and trees of life (cf. Isa 51:3), having as its glory the Shekinah Presence of the Lord enthroned among his angels at the focal cosmic axis of Zion (old and new) – all in all, the fitting embodiment of the special covenantal relationship between God and the sanctified human community. And like the

kingdom fullness mandated in the creational covenant, the fullness of this kingdom comes through the multiplying of Abraham's seed and their filling-subduing the allotted land (cf. Gen 35:11). The promised great nation blessing (Gen 12:2a) was nothing more nor less than the creation kingdom redemptively restored and consummated.

C. Promised Kingdom on Two Levels

References to the two-level nature of the promises have been unavoidable in various connections in our analysis of the Abrahamic Covenant up to this point but now it is time to focus on this more particularly. In doing so we will sum up the promises under the concept of kingdom, tracing the two-level structure with respect to the kingdom components of king, people, and land.

As the kingdom promises come to fulfillment in two successive stages, each is identified as a divine remembrance of Abraham or of the covenant made with him. In our treatment of God's ark-covenant with Noah we noted that the verb to remember takes on a specialized sense in such contexts, signifying not just recollection but a faithfulness to prior commitment evidenced in performance of what was promised. God's remembering of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is mentioned at the beginning of the first stage of kingdom fulfillment immediately before the account of the call of Moses to be the agent of that fulfillment (Exod 2:24) and again as the prelude to God's oath to proceed forthwith to deliver the Israelites from bondage and bring them to their promised land (Exod 6:5; cf. also Exod 32:13; Lev 26:42,45). Then at the dawning of the second stage of the kingdom, which was to be brought in through Jesus, mediator of the new covenant, this new development is identified by Zacharias, father of John the Forerunner, as the Lord's remembrance of his holy covenant, the oath sworn to Abraham (Luke 1:72,73; cf. also Luke 1:54,55).

1. The Promised King

At first the promise of kingship came in a general form, as an enhancement of the promise of numerous descendants. If Abraham was to be a father of a great nation and even a multitude of nations, then naturally he would number kings among his descendants (Gen 17:6). So also, if Sarah was to be a mother of nations, "kings of peoples" would come of her (Gen 17:16). When establishing vassal rulers in their kingship, ancient suzerains might assign them dynastic names (cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17). Likewise, the Lord gave to Abram and Sarai the new names of Abraham and Sarah when

presenting to them a promissory grant of royalty (Gen 17:5,15). Similarly, when renewing to Jacob this promise of royal descendants, God confirmed the change of his name to Israel (Gen 35:10,11; cf. 32:28).

Later, the kingship promise became more specific in Jacob's testamentary blessings on his twelve sons, a forecast of their tribal histories down into the eschatological era (Gen 49:1-28). Judah's blessing was to attain leonine royalty, to become the ruling tribe in the midst of the tribes of Israel (vv.8,9). Once established in Judah the sceptre would continue forever, the royal dynasty culminating in the latter days in the coming One, Shiloh, Lord of all peoples (v.10). As was true in the original messianic prophecy of Genesis 3:15 and as is characteristic of all messianic prophecy in the law, the prophets and the Psalms, so in Judah's blessing redemptive suffering conjoins royal glory in the reign of Shiloh, the prince of peace. His reign is one of paradisaic abundance of milk and wine (v.12). He will engage in a triumphant, vesture-incarnadining trampling of the winepress of God's wrath (v.11b; cf. Isa 63:3; Rev 19:13,15). Yet, it is in trampling the head of the serpent-foe that the champion seed of the woman suffers the heel-wound. And so, it is suggested, the "blood of grapes" with which Shiloh's garment is "washed" is also his own, the blood of the Lamb in which the multitude out of all the nations, saved from the great tribulation, wash their robes and make them white (Rev 7:14). Symbolic too of the sacrificial role he must perform is the animal he comes riding on. For the foal, the donkey's colt (v.11a), is mentioned in an ancient treaty account as the animal that was slain in order to ratify the covenant (cf. Zech 9:9,11).

Two levels of kingship were present in this prophetic blessing. Judah assumed the royal supremacy in Israel in the appointment of David as king. He, with his successors under the old covenant, were level one. Then David's dynasty reached a distinctive second level of kingship in the coming of Jesus Christ, Shiloh, the universal Lord, and his inauguration of the new covenant in his blood. In the kingship of Christ, Judah's sceptre became eternal as well as universal.

When the king promise attained its first level fulfillment, it was embodied in a separate covenant of its own. God gave to his faithful servant David a covenantal guarantee that his dynasty would endure forever and that his descendants would build God's house (2 Sam 7:5ff.). In accounting for all the elements in this covenant it is necessary again to distinguish two levels of fulfillment. Only in the

reign of Christ did David's dynasty attain everlasting permanence, but only in terms of dynastic representatives at a pre-messianic level was the threat of chastisement for the committing of iniquity applicable (v.14). Hence too the promise that a Davidic king would build God's house is rightly seen to have twofold fulfillment, first in Solomon's construction of the Jerusalem temple and later in Christ's building of the church-temple of these last days.

At his advent the messianic king was heralded as the fulfillment of the royal promise sworn to Abraham and covenanted anew to David. Matthew's Gospel opens by introducing Jesus as the long-awaited king: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1). Resuming the basic structural formula of the Book of Genesis, Matthew connects Jesus with Abraham through the one link of royal David, so identifying him as the promised king, the ultimate hope of the Abrahamic Covenant. Matthew continues this theme of Jesus' royal identity in the expanded dynastic genealogy that follows (1:2-16) and in the birth narratives. The latter speak of the one who is "born king of the Jews" (2:2), who arises out of Judah as a "governor" and "shepherd" of Israel (2:6). Luke's birth narratives also identify Jesus as the one who is given "the throne of his father David," a kingdom without end (1:32,33), in fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham (1:69-73).

Here was the greater son whom David saw from afar and called "my Lord" (Ps 110:1; Matt 22:43-45). Ancient dynasts had presumptuously named themselves "sons of the gods," divine kings (Gen 6:1-4), but the great name of God-king belonged in truth to the One who, at the second level of promise fulfillment, was the royal seed of Abraham and son of David. He receives the name which belongs to none but him, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev 19:12,16).

2. The Promised Kingdom-People

We have found that in the course of biblical revelation two distinct levels of fulfillment, one provisional and prototypal, the other messianic and eternal, are clearly distinguishable in the king promise given to Abraham. What is true of the promise of the king must inevitably also be true of the promise of the kingdom, both kingdom-people and kingdom-land.

As carried forward in the revelation of the Abrahamic Covenant the concept of the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15), now in the form of the seed of Abraham, continues to have both individual and corporate

significance. There is the individual messianic seed of Abraham, the one through whom the blessings of the covenant were to be mediated to the nations (Acts 3:25,26), the one who was the final fulfillment of the kingship promised to Abraham's descendants. There is also the corporate seed, and the promised seed in this corporate sense is interpreted by the Scriptures as being realized on two levels.

God's blessing on Abraham was such that he would multiply to become a great nation (Gen 12:2). The promise of a kingdom people implicit in that original statement of the promises subsequently became explicit. This people would be as numerous as the dust of the earth, the stars of the sky, the sand by the sea (Gen 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3). Abraham and Sarah would become father and mother of a multitude of nations (Gen 17:4,16).

Development of the twelve sons of Jacob into the twelve-tribe nation of Israel of course constituted a fulfillment of the promise of the kingdom people at one level. Alluding to the promise imagery of Genesis 22:17 (cf. 32:12), 1 Kings 4:20 says that in the days of Solomon's reign "Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude" (cf. 2 Sam 17:11; 1 Chr 27:23f.; 2 Chr 1:9).

Equally obvious is the Bible's identification of a realization of the promise of the Abrahamic seed at another level. As we have seen, when Paul, in Romans 9-11, defends God's covenantal faithfulness in the face of Israel's fall, he bases his case on the identification of the promised seed as the individual election, a remnant-fullness of Jews and Gentiles, spiritual children of Abraham, all like him justified by faith (Rom 9:7,8; cf. Rom 4:16; Gal 3:7). The apostle finds within the Lord's revelation of the promises to Abraham explicit warrant for distinguishing this spiritual seed of Abraham from the physical offspring (Rom 9:7-13; cf. Gen 17:18-21; 21:12,13). What is remarkable is how he bypasses the more literal first level significance of Abraham's seed and takes for granted the second, spiritual level of meaning as *the* meaning of the promise.

Confirming the distinction made in the promise of the seed between literal and spiritual Israelites and pointing particularly to the second, spiritual level of meaning was the inclusion of the nations of the Gentiles among Abraham's promised seed (Gen 17:4,6,16; Rom 4:11,12,16,17). Manifestly the Gentile seed were not Abraham's physical posterity. Moreover, the promise of the many nations as seed is equivalent to the gospel-promise that Abraham through his messianic

seed would mediate blessing to all nations. That is, the promise of the seed is thereby lifted into the messianic, or new covenant, level where Gentile and Jewish believers are gathered together in the united assembly of the heavenly altar. Possibly it is in prospect of this reality that the terminology employed in the promise concerning the many nations is at times that of an assembly (*qahal*) of nations (Gen 28:3; 35:11; 48:4), *qahal* being a standard term for the tribes of Israel as the gathered covenant congregation. Further, in this gospel mystery of the union of the promised kingdom people in the Spirit, the corporate seed (Jewish and Gentile believers) and the individual messianic seed become one, Christ the head and all in him the body (Gal 3:16,29).

The promise of the kingdom people is unlike the promise of the king and the kingdom land in that its two levels of meaning cannot be simply equated with two successive eschatological stages (i.e., old and new covenants). For the second, spiritual level of the promised seed is already in process of realization under the old covenant, being the spiritual election within the national election of Israel.

3. The Promised Kingdom-Land

Step by step what was included in the promised kingdom land at the first level of meaning was more precisely defined. It was a land to be designated later as Abraham followed the Lord (Gen 12:1); the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7); Canaan extending in all four directions (Gen 13:14-17); the area bounded on the northeast by the river Euphrates and on the southwest by the river of Egypt (Gen 15:18) and comprising the territories of a series of specified peoples (Gen 15:19-21). Subsequent reaffirmations of the promise to the patriarchs after Genesis 15 do not further define these boundaries (cf. Gen 17:8; 22:17; 24:7; 26:3,4; 28:13,14; 35:12; 48:4; 49:1ff.; 50:24). That the territory eventually occupied by Israel fully corresponded with the geographical bounds defined in the promise is explicitly recorded in Joshua 21:43-45 and 1 Kings 4:20,21 (cf. Num 34:2ff.; 1 Chr 18:3; Ezek 47:13-20).

From the earliest intimations given at the call of Abraham it began to be apparent that this promised land was laid hold of by the Lord as peculiarly his own, as a holy land removed from the general common grace apportionment of the earth to mankind and set apart for a special covenantal grant to a people of redemptive election. It was a land claimed by the Lord and at his disposal to bestow on Abraham in a manner overriding his ordinary common grace disposition of earthly affairs.

As revelation of the promise progressed it became increasingly evident that appropriation of this royal land grant would be by force. Abraham's arrival in the land was confrontational. The land was not unclaimed terrain but occupied by the Canaanites, in whose midst Abraham erected the altar-claim of his God (Gen 12:6,7). Description of the land in terms of its occupants emphasized the necessity of acquiring it by a process of dispossessing these present owners (Gen 15:19-21; cf. 26:3,4). Most explicit was the prophetic announcement that Abraham's descendants would return from a foreign sojourn to take actual possession of the divine grant at the time when the iniquity of the Amorites would be full (Gen 15:16). Clearly, God's delivering the land to the Abrahamites would be an act of judgment on the Canaanites. It would be through holy war, contravening common grace political processes, that the land promise would be fulfilled.

To possess Canaan, Israel must conquer Canaan in fulfillment of Noah's curse on Ham-Canaan. In this warfare they had God's promise that they would possess the gate of their enemies (Gen 22:17). Established by act of divine judgment as a great nation in God's special domain, the Abrahamites would be the Lord's own protectorate. Also distinguishing this Abrahamic promise of the land from ordinary common grace allotments of territory to other peoples (cf. Deut 32:8; Amos 9:7) is its "everlasting" character (Gen 13:15; 17:8; 48:4). In this feature of permanence the second level of the promise of a kingdom land comes into view. To this we shall return.

There was continuity between the kingdom-land promised to Abraham and the covenant kingdom as it was originally envisaged in the creational covenant and subsequently carried forward in the blessing sanctions of the redemptive covenants. This continuity is already evidenced in the formulation of the promises to the patriarchs and becomes still more pronounced in the record of the fulfillment at the first level under the old covenant. When the time of the promised occupation was at hand the land was described as a new garden of Eden, "flowing with milk and honey" (Exod 3:8,17; 13:5; Deut 6:3; Josh 5:6; etc.). Most illuminating for the connection of this promised land with the garden of God in Eden was the establishing of God's theophanic Presence and dwelling in the midst of it. Particularly the enthronement of the Glory on the temple mount of Zion declared the essential identity of this old covenant kingdom arrangement with the creational order. Here was the cosmic axis of heaven and earth restored as the focus of a renewed holy, theocratic paradise-protectorate. In the patriarchal era the episode of Jacob's dream at

Bethel (Gen 28) was a notable anticipation of the promised land as site of the reestablished kingdom-focus. That episode is presented as a redemptive counterpart to the pseudo-focus enterprise at Babel. And in the teaching of Jesus it is interpreted in terms of the Lord's own identity as the new and true link between heaven and earth (John 1:51)

Fulfillment of the land promise at the old covenant level (cf. 1 Kgs 8:65; 1 Chr 13:5; 18:1-12; 2 Chr 9:26) represented a redemptive renewal of the creation kingdom not merely at its original created stage but at the final eschatological stage contemplated in the God's original covenant with Adam. For, as observed above, Israel's procuring of Canaan is portrayed as arrival at a sabbath-rest (Deut 3:20; 12:9; 1 Kgs 8:56) and Sabbath was the Consummation-goal of the creational covenant. The sabbatical experience of Israel in Canaan was, for one thing, a resting from their enemies. It was a sequel to the "final" judgment of the evil Amorites, just as the gaining of the eternal sabbath-realm will follow upon Christ's final defeat and dispossession of all the enemies of his people.

Israel's attainment of creation's sabbatical goal at a first level of fulfillment coincided with their filling the conquered land of Canaan to its full extent according to the allotments to the twelve tribes. And filling the earth was of course another ultimate objective of the kingdom program of the original covenant in Eden, the reaching of which would coincide with the dawning of the Sabbath upon eternal Metapolis.

By virtue then of both the filling of the land of Canaan and its characterization as a sabbath-land, this first level, Canaanite fulfillment of the land promise is seen to be an anticipatory portrayal of the consummated kingdom-land, the Metapolis kingdom-city of the new heavens and earth which the Creator covenanted to man from the beginning. Canaan represented this in a figure; it was only a limited land, not the cosmic goal of the creation kingdom. Also, as Hebrews 4 teaches, Canaan was not the true Sabbath experience. Even believers under the new covenant still await that. The Canaanite, first level fulfillment of the land promise served the pedagogical purpose of pointing beyond itself to the second level fulfillment, intimated by the "everlasting" nature of the promised possession.

Biblical teaching concerning a cataclysmic overhauling to be undergone by the earth and the emergence of a new heaven and earth at the Consummation presents a problem to any interpretation of the promise of an everlasting land inheritance understood in its specifically

Palestinian delineation. The particular configuration of Canaanite territory specified to Abraham will not exist forever. Even apart from the assumption of radical cosmic restructuring at the final judgment, one would have to recognize that the current continental configurations of the earth reflected in the Abrahamic land promise would be altered beyond recognition in future ages by the natural geologic dynamics of the planet.

Moreover, and more decisively, in the New Testament there are clear indications of a positive kind of the shift to the second level of meaning of the land promise. Indeed, with surprising abruptness the New Testament disregards the first level meaning and simply takes for granted that the second level, cosmic fulfillment is the true intention of the promise. In keeping with Old Testament prophecies that Messiah, the royal seed of Abraham, would receive and reign over a universal kingdom (e.g., Pss 2:8; 72:8; Zech 9:10), Paul identifies Abraham's promised inheritance as the world (*kosmos*, Rom 4:13). What is more, the New Testament attributes to Abraham himself as a subjective expectation an eschatological hope based on a second level understanding of the land promise. According to Hebrews 11:10,16 the object of Abraham's faith-longing was not any earthly turf of this evil world-age but a better, heavenly country, the city of the new age, the creation of God.

The promised land at the second level of fulfillment is no less a solidly physical reality than it was at the first level. There is no question here of a docetic kind of spiritualizing away of the geophysical dimension of the kingdom. As we have observed, New Jerusalem, the second level fulfillment of the land promise, is the redemptive version of Metapolis and is, therefore, as much a physico-spatial reality as that consummation world proffered in the original covenant with Adam. Guaranteeing the continuing geophysical nature of the promised inheritance at the second level is the biblical teaching of the resurrection of the body. For those bodies of the risen saints there must be an appropriate cosmic environment. During the present phase of the new covenant the seed of promise on earth are, like Abraham in his day, still awaiting their inheritance of the heavenly city. They are still a pilgrim people, a church in the wilderness (cf. Rev 12:6), not yet arrived at their Sabbath-land (Heb 4:1,11). But at the advent of the consummated Sabbath-order, the resurrection of their bodies and the expanded, exalted second level realization of their geophysical inheritance will occur together.

Additional New Testament corroboration of the second level meaning of the land promise will come before us as we consider the question of the relationship of the first and second levels of the promise to each other.

D. Typal and Antitypal Kingdom

1. Covenantal and Dispensational Hermeneutics

Dispensationalism is evolving and notice will be taken below of current developments, but it is the earlier, widely popularized form of the Dispensational system that is in view here in the first part of our hermeneutical analysis.

The issue between covenantal and dispensational hermeneutics is not one of spiritualizing versus nonspiritualizing interpretations of the second level kingdom. For, contrary to a common allegation, the covenantal system as well as the dispensational allows for the geophysical dimension of that kingdom. The basic question at issue is rather how to construe the relation of the two levels of the promised kingdom of the Abrahamic Covenant to one another. This amounts to the question of the relationship of the old covenant with Israel to the new covenant with the church, particularly as that comes into focus in the typological connection which the Scripture posits between them.

The fundamental fallacy of the dispensational scheme is its failure to do justice to the Bible's identification of the new covenant (or second level) realization of the kingdom promise as standing in continuity with the old covenant (or first level) realization as antitypal fulfillment to typal promise. While the first level kingdom under the old covenant was itself a fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises, it had the character of prophetic promise when viewed in relation to the second level fulfillment under the new covenant. The latter is *the* fulfillment and the former was prototypal. The Abrahamic promises were in effect restated and elaborated as they were embodied in their symbolic old covenant fulfillment. This typological expression of the promises in the kingdom of Israel developed the picture presented in the verbal promises made to the patriarchs into a dramatically concrete visual model by which the ultimate reality of the promised kingdom could be conceptualized and apprehended until the time of true fulfillment came in the messianic age.

Covenantal hermeneutics properly perceives the prototypal, provisional, passing nature of the first level kingdom and the antitypal, perfective, permanent nature of the second level kingdom. Dispensationalists,

failing to see that the first level kingdom becomes obsolete and gets replaced by the antitype in the messianic age, continue the obsolete order on indefinitely into the new age. They assign it a place parallel to the second level kingdom, perhaps even permanently so, while relegating the second level fulfillment to a parenthetical rather than perfective status. In so doing, Dispensationalism radically misconstrues the typological structure of the old and new covenants, reducing typology to mere analogy and obscuring the historical promise-fulfillment relationship of these two covenants.

Dispensationalism's virtual rejection of the typological identity of the first level kingdom finds expression in their literalistic misinterpretation of prophecies that depict the second level kingdom in the typological idiom of the first level model. Hence the difference between the dispensational and covenantal hermeneutics is sometimes described as one of literal versus figurative exegesis. But the terms literal and figurative obscure the precise nature of the difference between these two approaches. The terms literal and figurative suggest the issue is of a more general literary sort, whereas it is primarily of an historical nature. Specifically, it concerns contrary analyses of the relationship of two successive covenantal orders in redemptive history, one approach being nontypological and the other typological.

2. Typological Unity and Succession

Under this heading we shall present some of the more salient biblical support for the covenantal view of the typological continuity between the old and new covenant kingdoms, the continuity characterized by a unified movement from promise-symbol to fulfillment-reality.

In the case of the promise of the king it will be readily seen that the relationship between the two levels of fulfillment was not that of two analogous tracks, coexisting and running parallel to each other in the course of the messianic age. For the relation between the Davidic dynasty under the old covenant and Jesus Christ in the new covenant is clearly one of succession, of movement from the earlier to the later. It is indeed a genealogical succession, Jesus being the scion of David's line, the successor who replaced his ancestral predecessors on the throne. There are not two parallel lines of development of the theocratic kingship but one linear, dynastic succession.

Moreover, as this single dynastic line moves from the first to the second level of realization the succession is not a simple matter of continuity but of climactic fulfillment. There is continuity but with an epochal

development marked by the difference between David and Jesus, the successor of David who is David's Lord. The difference is that between a promissory typological symbol and the antitypical reality. In Christ the dynasty finds its permanent representative and embodiment. In him the promised everlasting duration of this kingship (cf. 2 Sam 7:13,16) is attained. What had gone before was, by the same token, obviously something temporary and provisional, which performed its historical purpose and made way for the divine King. There is only the one throne of David and since Jesus has now assumed his place as dynastic heir of David on that throne and occupies it forever (Luke 1:32) there is simply no place for the idea of a restoration of the literal David to that throne over God's people. If Dispensationalists do not wish to suggest the replacement of Jesus by David on that throne (in effect, an antichrist usurpation), they have no alternative in interpreting prophecies of the eschatological reign of "David" (Jer 30:9; Ezek 34:23,24; 37:24,25; Hos 3:5) but to abandon their literalistic (non-typological) hermeneutics and acknowledge the genuinely typological nature of the old covenant order as reflected in the typological idiom of such messianic prophecies.

As it is with the king promise, so it inevitably will be with the kingdom promise. Once again the relationship obtaining between the old and new covenant fulfillments is something quite different from and much more than the mere parallelistic analogy allowed by Dispensationalism. What we find in the Scriptures is that there is a unity of the kingdom-people of the old and new covenants and an identity with respect to their promised kingdom inheritance portion. This is consistent with and corroborates the typological, promise-fulfillment continuity proposed in covenant theology, but it is contrary to the discontinuity introduced by the dispensationalist reconstruction with its two parallel programs of two distinct groups of people coexisting apart from each other in two different messianic orders.

Under the figure of the olive tree in Romans 11 Paul depicts the redemptive covenant institution in its ongoing administration from Abraham through the old covenant and into the new. According to the apostle's representation here, it is in the same tree whose lower portion includes the old covenant community (as well as the patriarchal) that the people of the new covenant participate. The picture is one of organic unity between old covenant Israel and new covenant church. Similarly, Paul elsewhere assures the Gentile Christians that, though formerly excluded as foreigners from citizenship in Israel, they are now

fellow-citizens. For Christ has destroyed the dividing barrier and out of the two is creating one new man (Eph 2:11-19).

Besides the institutional continuity of the old and new covenant communities, the olive tree imagery of Romans 11 evidences the unity of the promised seed of Abraham at the second level of election in Christ (discussed above under the heading of Sovereign Election). For though not all the individuals who are in this covenant tree are that promised seed (as we see from the fact that branches of the tree can be broken off), the elect remnant are the constant core of the covenant tree. Such is the burden of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11. Thus, unity of the elect people, extending through old covenant times and on into the Christian church, is also of the organic character illustrated by that one living tree in which all the elect are found. The fullness of elect Israel and the fullness of the elect Gentiles together constitute one spiritual family of father Abraham, the true Israel of God.

Inseparable from the unity of old and new covenant believers as fellow citizens (Eph 2:19) is their identity as fellow heirs (Eph 3:6). As one kingdom-people they participate together in one kingdom-inheritance, in one promised land. Christ's redemptive accomplishment brings to the Gentiles the promised blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14). With reference to God's oath to Abraham guaranteeing reception of the promised land (Gen 15, esp. vv.8 and 18ff.), Hebrews 6:18 says God gave that oath so that we new covenant believers might be reassured of our eschatological hope.

In Hebrews 11 and 12 the common kingdom inheritance of Jewish and Gentile believers is identified as Zion, city of God. Abraham looked for this city of promise (11:10) but did not receive it (11:13). Neither did any of the other just people of God, prediluvian (11:4ff.) or postdiluvian (11:8ff.), all the way down to the coming of Christ: "These all...received not the promise" (11:39; cf. v.13). For God had ordained that they should attain the perfection of the true eschatological inheritance of the heavenly city only in association with his new covenant people (11:40). Even those who under the old covenant experienced the first level fulfillment are here flatly declared not to have received the promise – so far is it from being the case that the first level realization of the land promise continues alongside the second level as a permanent parallel to it. The statement made in Hebrews 11:39 regards the second level realization as the single real fulfillment, so relegating the first level kingdom land to the status of nothing more than shadowy prototype.

According to Hebrews 12:22,23 the believers of pre-messianic times have, in the new covenant age, at last been made perfect (cf. 11:40) in that they are now, in Christ, in the true heavenly city. This passage also indicates that the Christian believers are united with them in common eschatological community and kingdom inheritance as fellow-citizens of the city of the living God. That kingdom-inheritance of the church of Christ is identified as "mount Zion." What is thus designated is clearly not the first level mountain and city but "the heavenly Jerusalem." This use of first level imagery for the second level reality demonstrates again that the relationship between the two levels of kingdom realization is one of typological unity, with a continuity of old succeeded by new. Of like import is the utilization of the imagery of the first level kingdom-city in the picturing of the glorified church, the bride of the Lamb, in its eternal inheritance as the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21:2 and 10. Of special interest for the typological unity of the old and new covenant kingdoms is the fact that combined in the architecture of the eternal city are the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve foundations having on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev 21:12-14).

Not analogy then but typology describes the relationship between the two levels of fulfillment of the kingdom-inheritance. They do not stand in parallel to one another but in a linear succession proceeding from the provisional and transient to the perfective and permanent stage of the kingdom. Kingdom level one is identified with the old covenant and level two with the new covenant, and the new covenant is continuous with the old in a successive manner that involves its replacing of the old. Such, according to the author of Hebrews, is the significance of the designation "new" applied to the covenant mediated by Jesus. Commenting on Jeremiah 31:31-34, he says that in referring to the future covenant as new the prophet identified the Mosaic covenant as old in the sense of that which becomes obsolete and vanishes away (Heb 8:13). In the context he has been arguing the superiority of the priesthood of Christ over the Levitical priesthood, observing that the priestly order of the old covenant was but a shadow of the heavenly reality and had been abrogated and superseded by Christ's historical exercising of his heavenly priesthood (Heb 7:18). And in Hebrews 8:6ff. this relationship of the abrogated Levitical priesthood to the current priesthood of Christ is integrated with the relationship of the old to the new and better covenant. Continuity there is between the two levels of fulfillment, the continuity of the substance and its shadow. It is a continuity in which the old gets annulled and removed, its place

being taken by the new, the real and permanent fulfillment of the prophetic promise contained in the old.

The new covenant is not a renewal of an older covenant in the sense of confirming the continuing validity of the old. If we speak of the new covenant as a renewal of the old it must be to express their continuity as two administrations of the Covenant of Grace or, more specifically, the continuity of the new covenant with the underlying, foundational stratum of the old covenant, the substratum of gospel-grace as the way to the ultimate heavenly hope in Christ. But with respect to the old covenant as a typological realization of the promised kingdom realm, the new covenant does not confirm the continuing validity of the old but rather announces its obsolescence and end.

Necessarily so. For, as the Jeremiah 31:31-34 prophecy indicated, the old covenant in its typological kingdom aspect was not a permanent order of the grace-guarantee kind but a probationary arrangement informed by the works principle, hence breakable. And having been broken, it was perforce terminated. Thereby, as Paul observes, all, Jew as well as Gentile, were shut up together under the sentence of having failed to attain the kingdom on the ground of obedience to the law and thus all alike were put in the position of being wholly dependent on the mercy of God's grace revealed in the gospel (Rom 11:32).

3. Dispensationalism at Odds with the Gospel

In the past, Dispensationalism has recognized the presence of the works principle in the old covenant, even making that the identifying hallmark of its dispensation of law. In doing so, it did not comprehend the full complexity of the situation. For it did not perceive that the works principle was confined to the typological kingdom stratum of the Mosaic economy and that there was simultaneously in that economy an underlying stratum that was concerned with the eternal salvation of individuals and their inheritance of the everlasting second level kingdom, a stratum governed by the principle of grace. Law (works) was also seen by Dispensationalism as the operative principle in the millennial kingdom dispensation. That was the logical consequence of Dispensationalism's bracketing out the gospel of grace by its concept of the church dispensation of grace as a parenthesis between the two kingdom dispensations of the law and the millennium. As a result, Dispensationalism ended up teaching that there were two different and contrary ways by which fallen men secured God's eschatological blessings. In particular, according to the logic of the dispensational scheme, Israel's possession of the promised kingdom throughout the

millennium dispensation would be on the ground of their meritorious compliance with the demands of the law, apart from the suretyship of Christ, that is, apart from the gospel of grace. For all their being fallen sons of Adam, the millennial Jews, it would seem, would be able to satisfy fully and constantly God's probationary demands in that dispensation of law.

Thereby this earlier form of Dispensationalism contradicts the claim of Jesus Christ to be the one way, the only name given under heaven whereby man must be saved. In effect, it takes its stand with Judaism over against Christianity's witness to Jesus as the Christ. Within nominal Christianity it finds itself in the strange theological company of the extreme ecumenists who, advocating a plurality of valid covenantal traditions, accept Judaism, in spite of its failure to confess Christ, as nevertheless, along with the church, a legitimate development of God's covenant with Abraham.

Dispensationalism's beclouding of the exclusive claim and demand of the gospel is also exposed in its failure to challenge the non-Christian Zionist cause when the latter appeals to the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant to validate its claimed right to the (first level) kingdom territory, apart from faith in Christ. In this Zionist claim we see again the defiance of fallen Adam, caught in his covenant-breaking and banished from the "homeland" with its tree of life, but still perversely bent on seizing the forfeited fruit (Gen 3:22). It is the spectacle again of the unbelieving nation to whom the spies brought back the discouraging report about the situation in Canaan, condemned to wander in the wilderness outside the promised homeland because of their rebellious unbelief but willfully striving to occupy the kingdom in defiance of God's judgment decree (Num 14:4ff.). What Zionist ideology projects is a grotesque parody of the kingdom of God – a land without the temple, an earthly fullness without a heavenly focus. From the beginning it was not so. And if it be that a temple building is included in the plans of these modern architects of the kingdom, while they yet spurn the claims of Jesus, the promised seed of Abraham, the Christ of God, what is this but another Babel-tower, another titanic attempt to erect the cosmic focus by autonomous human effort, another repudiation of the grace of God and his redemptive provision of the true holy temple-city from heaven? Such a pseudo-temple the man of sin might occupy but the Son of Man, himself the true temple, would ultimately destroy it. Any response from the Christian community, dispensational or other, that does not challenge the Zionists' appeal to God's covenant with Abraham to justify the present Israeli occupation of

Palestine represents a tragic failure to confront them with fallen man's absolute lack, in himself, of claim on God's covenanted kingdom and with the sinner's desperate need to find restoration to God's favor through Jesus Christ. To show sympathy to the Zionist in his defiant claim is to hide from him the gospel of God's love and to encourage him on his unbelieving way to perdition apart from Christ, the sinner's only hope.

4. Evolving Dispensationalism

As Dispensationalism undergoes revision some of its major former tenets are being shucked off. For one thing, the revisionists would now acknowledge that the eschatological blessings of the salvation-kingdom are secured not by works but by God's grace in Christ. However, in avoiding the error of propounding two ways of salvation they find themselves confronted with a dilemma. For while they want to affirm that it is only in Christ that the Jew can receive the kingdom blessings, they still cling to the notion that there is a separate millennial kingdom for Jewish believers. But the Scriptures disallow this by insisting that if a Jew is in Christ he is no more a Jew, just as a Gentile is no more a Gentile in Christ. For in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gal 3:28,29; Col 3:11; cf. Eph 2:12-14). In the only place where salvation's blessings exist – in Christ, the distinction between Jew and Gentile does not exist.

Identification with Christ by faith automatically and absolutely erases the distinction between Jew and Gentile with respect to the securing of peace with God and the joyous glory of the eschatological inheritance. To suggest that certain Jews who are in Christ will have their own peculiar Jewish experience of the kingdom assumes a continuance of the distinction that Christ abolished. It is to build up again the barrier wall that Christ has broken down. It is to cleave the one new man in Christ apart. All who are in Christ share the same eschatological kingdom destiny. Indeed, as we have seen, it is the teaching of Scripture (for example, Hebrews 11 and 12) that not only do all believers since Christ's coming participate in the one heavenly Zion, but so do all previous believers back to Abraham and even back to the beginnings of redemptive history. Scripture simply will not tolerate this dispensationalist notion of a separate salvation-kingdom for Jewish Christians in a future millennium. There is no place for such a salvation-kingdom outside of Christ and there is no place for it in Christ.

Another difficulty for this dispensationalist tenet of a millennial salvation-kingdom designed for Jewish believers is the biblical teaching

that all who are in Christ receive all the fullness of the eternal inheritance. All who have the Spirit of Christ are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17). Having delivered up his Son for us God will "with him freely give us all things" (Rom 8:32). Paul assures believers: "All things are yours...the world...things present...things to come; all are yours" (1 Cor 3:21,22). This means, on the one hand, that the inheritance of the Jewish believers is the whole world, not just Palestine, and, on the other, that there is no special reserve, Palestinian or any other, set aside for Jewish believers in preference to Gentile believers since all the world belongs to the Gentile believer too. All believers receive all the kingdom alike. All in Christ without ethnic or any other distinction attain to that kingdom fullness that was mandated to the first Adam and is accomplished by the second Adam. God has put all things under Christ's feet, and the church, his body, is "the fullness of him that fills all in all" (Eph 1:22,23; cf. Ps 8:6; Heb 2:8,9). It is the hope and privilege of every believer to be "filled unto all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19; cf. 4:13; Col 2:10).

Also, the revised Dispensationalism that purges itself of the teaching of two ways of salvation does so at the cost of abandoning the correct perception of earlier Dispensationalism that a works principle was operating in the Mosaic kingdom. Since these revisionists, no more than the older Dispensationalists, discern the two distinct strata (viz. the typological kingdom overlay and the underlying stratum of eternal salvation) coexisting in the old covenant, they do not perceive the true solution of identifying the works principle with the former while maintaining the continuity of the one way of salvation at the other, foundational level. All they can do is join certain of their covenantal critics in denying that there was a works principle in the old covenant.

Moreover, this form of Dispensationalism, like every other, so misconstrues as virtually to deny the type-antitype relationship of the old and new covenants.

Another change being made in Dispensationalism by its progressive wing involves toning down the sharp discontinuity between the old and new covenants which came to expression in the parenthesis concept of earlier Dispensationalism. The progressives do not accept the relegation of the church to a parenthesis between supposedly earlier and later phases of the first level, Jewish kingdom. They recognize in a general way that the typological, first level realization of the promises was provisional and has been replaced by the antitypical realities of the messianic order. Inconsistently, however, they adopt the

dispensationalist hermeneutic in their interpretation of the land promise. While regarding participation in the other promises as the common experience of all, Jew or Gentile, in the church of the new covenant, they detach the land promise from the others, attributing to it a continuing first level, Palestinian application on into the second level stage of kingdom eschatology in the messianic age. And they reserve participation in this specialized form of territorial blessing for Jewish Christians in particular.

This progressive Dispensationalism is condemned by the inconsistency of its hermeneutics. The people and the land aspects of the kingdom are in fact correlative and not to be wrenched apart. Together they represent the twin cultural task of filling the earth with people and subduing the kingdom realm as that creational program gets taken up into redemptive history. Land and people promises must therefore be kept together within each level, whether in the typological embodiment of the cultural program in the old covenant kingdom or in its new covenant version. A hybrid combination of old covenant land and new covenant people violates the conceptual unity of these two cultural components of the kingdom, while at the same time ignoring the discreteness of the typical and antitypical kingdoms. In addition to the hermeneutical inconsistency of this form of Dispensationalism there is also the problem that it too contradicts the Bible's insistence that in Christ the distinction between Jew and Gentile ceases with respect to kingdom inheritance.

Incidentally, not all are liable to this criticism who interpret Romans 9-11 as anticipating a distinctive, future, covenantal development involving the physical seed of Abraham. In particular, there are those who, though they (mistakenly) understand the grafting back of Jews into the covenant tree as pointing to the conversion of a future generation of Jews comprehensively, nevertheless perceive that nothing in Romans 9-11 would justify the notion that these reingrafted Jewish believers would be assigned a distinctive territorial inheritance, temporarily or permanently. Indeed, they recognize that the imagery of Gentiles and Jews being ingrafted, or reingrafted, together into the one and same tree plainly suggests that all who find their place there at the new covenant stage of the tree share one and the same kingdom experience.

5. Antitype Kingdom and the Millennium

Inevitably discussion of the kingdom promises of the Abrahamic Covenant leads to a consideration of the millennium. We may get at

this connection by returning to our critical examination of the evolution of Dispensationalism. One feature of Dispensationalism that persists amid the changes taking place is the expectation of a fulfillment of the kingdom promise in a millennial kingdom, a premillennial kingdom ethnically and geographically delimited, a premillennial kingdom of Jews in Palestine.

Also inseparable from Dispensationalism has been the distinctive view it has spawned of a *parousia*-climaxed prelude to the millennium, a seven-year transition from the church age to the supposed millennial resumption of the old covenant kingdom order. The outline of this eschatological scheme is based on a highly idiosyncratic misinterpretation of the seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. This very successfully marketed end-time fiction is integral to dispensational premillennialism. To espouse this peculiar eschatology is to be a Dispensationalist. To drop this eschatological hallmark would be not simply a revision of Dispensationalism but a mutating of it into another species. It would mark the evolution of dispensational premillennialism into classic (non-dispensational) premillennialism.

Classic premillennialism is a big improvement over Dispensationalism but its view of the fulfillment of the kingdom promise of the Abrahamic Covenant is still defective. This same verdict applies, indeed, to every form of millennial eschatology that finds in the millennium a fulfillment of the kingdom promise. Postmillennialism (properly so-called) also commits this error. More precisely the mistake made by both premillennialism and postmillennialism is to posit a coming of the promised kingdom of power and glory foretold by the prophets before the Consummation. Both these millennial views recognize that the ultimate coming of the kingdom in heavenly glory transpires at the Consummation but they also suppose there is a preliminary realization of the antitypal theocratic kingdom in the millennium and thus before the Consummation (which of course comes after the millennium on any view of the sequence of the millennium and the *parousia*).

One problem with such millennial views is that biblical prophecy clearly indicates that until the Final Judgment/Consummation event the evil powers will be present, opposing and persecuting the community of faith on earth. Not until the Final Judgment, not until after the total elimination of the satanic forces forever, will the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom of glory and its cosmic, everlasting dominion (cf., e.g., Dan 2 and 7). Only amillennialism is true to this vision of the postconsummation inauguration of the glory-kingdom. Only

amillennialism recognizes that the millennium is for the church militant a martyr age – an age of martyr-witness in fulfillment of the great commission, an age of martyr-suffering with Christ and not yet the hour of glorification with Christ.

Another problem with the preconsummation views, both premillennial and postmillennial, is that they muddle the type-antitype structure of redemptive history. According to the Scriptures there is a clear-cut distinction between the typical and antitypical levels of fulfillment of the kingdom domain promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. The typical kingdom is a bounded terrestrial territory set within a temporary world order regulated by the terms of the Covenant of Common Grace. The antitypical fulfillment is a supernal and eternal realm, a heavenly New Jerusalem, a Sabbath-Consummation reality whose presence terminates the common grace order, brings to an end the world that now is and introduces the world to come. The classic premillennialists and the postmillennialists do well in recognizing, over against Dispensationalists, that the kingdom promises must be translated from the old covenant typical idiom into the antitypical reality when moving into the age of new covenant fulfillment. But they garble the translation. Their millennial kingdom blurs the sharp distinction between type and antitype. It cannot be identified with either. Unlike the type it extends beyond Palestine to the whole world. Unlike the antitype it is earthly not heavenly and it is of limited duration not everlasting, its dominion being interrupted by a concluding Gog/antichrist/Har Magedon crisis in which the kingdom people are beset on a global scale and their world witness suppressed. Such a mongrel millennial kingdom finds no place in amillennialism. Amillennialism's postconsummational eschatology alone presents a truly biblical account of the antitypical, messianic fulfillment of God's kingdom promise in the Abrahamic Covenant.

6. Design of the Typical Kingdom

A variety of purposes can be discovered to explain the insertion of the old covenant order and its typical kingdom into the course of redemptive history. Of central importance was the creation of the proper historical setting for the advent of the Son of God and his earthly mission (cf. Rom 9:5). In accordance with the terms of his covenant of works with the Father he was to come as the second Adam in order to undergo a representative probation and by his obedient and triumphant accomplishment thereof to establish the legal ground for God's covenanted bestowal of the eternal kingdom of salvation on his people. It was therefore expedient, if not necessary, that Christ appear within a covenant order which, like the covenant with the first Adam, was

governed by the works principle (cf. Gal 4:4). The typical kingdom of the old covenant was precisely that. Within the limitations of the fallen world and with modifications peculiar to the redemptive process, the old theocratic kingdom was a reproduction of the original covenantal order. Israel as the theocratic nation was mankind stationed once again in a paradise-sanctuary, under probation in a covenant of works. In the context of that situation, the Incarnation event was legible; apart from it the meaning of the appearing and ministry of the Son of Man would hardly have been perspicuous. Because of the congruence between Jesus' particular historical identity as the true Israel, born under the law, and his universally relevant role as the second Adam, the significance of his mission as the accomplishing of a probationary assignment in a works covenant in behalf of the elect of all ages was lucidly expressed and readily readable.

Much more than the works-probation aspect of Jesus' task was included in the revelatory design of the typical kingdom. It prepared a public context in world history in which the meaning of Jesus' mission as a whole might be communicated effectively. For example, an exposition of the priest-king role of Jesus was afforded by the institutional integration of the Israelite temple cultus and the Davidic monarchy within the theocratic kingdom.

Besides preparing an appropriate context for the messianic mission, a broadly pedagogical purpose was served by the typical kingdom in that it furnished spiritual instruction for the faithful in ages both before and after the advent of Christ (1 Cor 10:11). Thus, in addition to calling attention to the probationary aspect of Jesus' mission, the works principle that governed the Israelite kingdom acted as the schoolmaster for Israel, convicting of sin and total inability to satisfy the Lord's righteous demands and thereby driving the sinner to the grace of God offered in the underlying gospel promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. (Recognition of this preparatory contribution of the law does not depend on acceptance of the suggested understanding of the *paidagogos* of Gal 3:24,25.)

At this point we may parenthetically note another need met by the kingdomizing of the covenant order. The condemnatory effect of the law just mentioned was intensified by the extensive and detailed elaboration of God's requirements for the community. And the kingdom organization provided by the typical stage in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic kingdom promises was a prerequisite for the formulation of such a comprehensive corpus of legislation. Appropriately, these laws

assumed the specific form of covenant stipulations such as were found in the kind of treaty document that was imposed as a kingdom-constitution on a vassal people (cf. my *Structure of Biblical Authority*, pp.76ff.).

Other lessons about the nature of God's eternal kingdom were taught through the history of the tupal kingdom. Those who gave thought to it might learn that the heavenly kingdom is to be established by a final holy-war judgment of the world; that the eternal kingdom is a temple domain cleansed of all evil, a realm where piety and prosperity are perfectly wedded, where God's personal Presence is the crowning glory and the beholding of God's Face the ultimate beatitude – and many such things. In short, this tupal model of heaven was a master historical parable of the kingdom, dramatically presented by the Lord of history.

Hand-in-hand with the pedagogical function of the tupal kingdom went its purpose of contributing to the preservation of the covenant community on earth. Postdiluvian history down to the patriarchal age exhibited the same trend towards the diminution of the ranks of the people of God as had the prediluvian era. A measure of insulation from the corrosive impact of the corruptions of the Gentile world was secured for Israel by its establishment as a separate nation. This end was furthered by constant reminders, as in the system of things clean and unclean, of their holy distinctiveness as God's people.

A more positive countermeasure taken by the Lord against the erosion of the covenant community was his augmenting of the means of grace through which the Spirit worked to propagate the seed of the woman in a world infested by the seed of the devil. And it was in part with a view to this expansion and concentration of revelation as re-creative instrument of the Spirit that the Lord arranged in the Abrahamic Covenant for the tupal kingdom stage and the ethnocentralizing of the covenant community that accompanied its kingdomization. The rich parabolic teaching of the symbolic tupal kingdom itself would serve to support and strengthen the faith of the remnant. But also in view was the appearance of the Scriptures as the preeminent means of grace unto the preservation of a people for God's name (cf. Rom 3:2). And the linguistically unified and historically continuous community provided by the tupal kingdom facilitated and was even necessary for the production of the Scriptures, Scriptures of the organically coherent kind that God gave his covenant people (cf. my *Structure of Biblical Authority*, pp.77f.).

Thus perceived, the ethnic particularism that characterized the typical kingdom was not so much a constriction of the covenant community as it was a strategy to prevent its further perilous decrease. The grand design of this divine arrangement was the preservation of the covenant community to bridge the centuries yet remaining to the fullness of time and, as we have observed above, the preparation of this community as the suitable historical setting for the earthy mission of the Messiah. As a preparation for the mission of the Savior of the world, the ethnocentric typical kingdom of the old order was, in the wisdom of the divine design, a provisional particularistic means to an ultimate universalistic end.

A fundamental perspective that has emerged in our study of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant is that the fulfillment of these promises in Christ represents the attainment of the eschatological goal set before mankind at the creation. In this messianic accomplishment, overcoming the effects of the Fall, the kingdom focus is restored and its fullness is achieved.

And since the Abrahamic Covenant, as can be seen from its ultimate outcome, was a redemptive resumption of the original universal kingdom program, its inclusion of a particularistic Jewish kingdom in its package of promises ought not to be treated as the launching on a second parallel track of a novel kingdom program. That particularistic kingdom is clearly to be understood as a provisional stage on a single kingdom track, a subordinate stage leading to the new covenant stage and the ultimate universal goal of God's kingdom. Second level fulfillment of the promised kingdom, fulfillment perfect and cosmic, involving "all the fullness of God," leaves no room for the perpetuation of a partial and imperfect first level fulfillment alongside it. Necessarily it replaces the first level fulfillment, which is then seen to have been a typological interim provision, a prophetic sign serving before the fullness of time to point to the kingdom fullness that was to come in Christ under the new covenant.