

CHAPTER VI: MANIFESTATIONS OF JUDGMENT

The Chosen People were enroute to the Promised Land. The Lord was in their tabernacle. He guided them daily with the pillar of cloud/fire. He provided for their needs each day even in the austere environment of the desert. He protected them from enemies. In a whole series of events the goodness of the Lord had been demonstrated to the Children of Israel.

Yet sin reared its ugly head! Jealousy, human fears which smothered the promises of the Lord, open rebellion against the God-appointed leaders, and even the carelessness of Moses and Aaron pass before our eyes in the events that will be considered in this chapter.

St. Paul's words in Rm 11;22 come to mind in this connection: "Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off." Though the passage deals specifically with God's severity upon the apostasy of the Jewish nation of a later time and God's kindness in bringing in the Gentiles into the New Testament church, the principles are the same in the events that are now before us.

In severity God inflicted leprosy on a jealous Miriam, but in kindness He allowed her back among God's people (Nu 12). God's severity condemns an entire generation to death in the wilderness when they refused to go forward into Canaan under His blessing (Nu 14). But His kindness provided manna for each day of the 38 years and prevented their clothes from wearing out (Dt 8;4). The severity of the Lord destroyed Korah and

his cohorts, when they challenged the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron (Nu 16). Yet God's kindness kept Him from destroying the whole nation, when they mistakenly accused Moses and Aaron of killing God's people. The severity of the Lord chastises Moses for failing to glorify the Lord in connection with a miracle (Nu 20). Yet God's kindness permits Moses to view the earthly Promised Land before this heroic leader is taken into the heavenly Canaan.

This brief preview again demonstrates God's zeal on behalf of His Word. Law and Gospel are clearly, appropriately and even dramatically presented each time that the K'BHOD YHWH manifested itself during the sojourn in the wilderness.

"Behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow."
Nu 12

The burden of leading a stiff-necked people had led Moses to complain in the previous chapter (Nu 11). The burden was increased as the first seeds of outright sedition arose within his own family. His own sister, Miriam, and his brother, Aaron, made a claim against Moses' right to be the sole leader of the people.

Miriam seems to have been the instigator. Two points in the text support this statement. In Hebrew a man would usually be named before a woman. Yet here Miriam is named first and then the verb "spoke" is also feminine. Aaron seems to be characterized as a rather spineless person, just as he had shown himself to be at the time of the golden calf.

The substance of their attack on Moses was two-pronged. One attack challenged Moses' worthiness by suggesting that he had married inappropriately. In attacking Moses through his wife they called her a Cushite woman. This term is probably best interpreted as an ethnic slur, compar-

able to many in our contemporary vernacular. In the emotional heat of the situation, Miriam and Aaron may not have been too careful about the factuality of their attack. Zipporah, whose marriage to Moses is reported in Exodus 2, would more appropriately be called a Midianitess. If a person feels compelled to reconcile this difference, it can also be done through the geneological table of Genesis 10 & 11, where part of the family of Cush is said to have settled in Sinai.²⁶

The second attack was on the office of Moses. The emphasis was on the word "only" (Nu 12;2). Miriam's claim to leadership was based on the fact that she was designated as a prophetess in Exodus 15,20 and had led the women in a song of exultation after Israel had been delivered at the Red Sea. Aaron's claim was based on the fact that he was the High Priest and the Lord had revealed Himself and spoken to him also. On the basis of such situations Miriam and Aaron claimed that the Lord had "spoken through us also" (Nu 16;2). They wanted equality with Moses, the younger brother.

In this way the jealousy surfaced.

That Moses should describe himself as the humblest of men (Nu 12;3), as some translators suggest, does present a problem. Though the intrinsic contradiction that this is humility that boasts about itself can be explained through the fact that the Holy Ghost inspired Moses to write these words, a far better solution is to take the word לַיָּסוּרִים to mean: "afflicted, plagued, troubled, poor." Such a translation is well attested by a word study in Isaiah II, An exposition of Isaiah 40-66 (p. 602, by August Pieper, trans: Erwin E. Kowalke, Milwaukee. Northwestern Publishing House. 1979). Then, as Moses acknowledged his difficult position, we note how he awaited the Lord's solution. That solution was not long in coming.

The Lord had heard the complaints and intervened. He summoned the three principals to the tabernacle. The importance of the situation is

indicated by the fact that the Lord issued the invitation.

At the tabernacle the Lord used the familiar manifestation of His K'BHOD in a pillar of cloud. Yet, because it was only in a cloud, there was already a hint of judgment. Further, the K'BHOD YHWH presented itself to them at the doorway. Since Miriam could not enter the Holy Place, the Lord met them between the altar and the Tent of Meeting.

No witnesses were necessary. The Lord knew the issues and spoke to Aaron and Miriam immediately and directly. As He spoke, the Lord vindicated Moses completely. Three points were made. First, it is the Lord, not creatures, who pick prophets by giving them visions and dreams. Secondly, the Lord asserted that Moses had been given a position that was superior to all the prophets. The Lord spoke to him mouth to mouth. In other words the Lord communed with him in a conversational way, openly, and not in dark sayings. Further, Moses had the privilege of beholding the form of the Lord. Moses was regularly before the Lord, when the Lord presented Himself in the K'BHOD YHWH and there was also the special situation on Mt. Sinai.

After this vindication of Moses, the Lord made the third point, speaking directly to Miriam and Aaron. They were getting more than they bargained for. Though they thought they were attacking Moses, they were really attacking the Lord Himself. He is "My servant" (Nu 12;8). They were challenging God by discrediting His servant. How clearly the Lord showed that He stood behind the statement, "He that despises you, despises Me." (Lk 10;16)

At that point the case was closed. Miriam and Aaron had no opportunity for explanation, excuses or objections. The Lord had had His say and departed (Nu 12;9).

Then the Lord's severity against this sedition was immediately evident. A sentence was immediately carried out. Miriam was leprous, She alone was afflicted. This fact provides further support for the conclusion that she was the prime instigator of the sedition.

When Aaron noticed the illness of his sister, he directed a plea to Moses (Nu 12;11ff). Through this plea Aaron had to acknowledge that Moses was God's chosen mediator and that therefore his own position was subordinate. As he addressed Moses, we can also note a clear improvement over his actions at the time of the golden calf. Aaron does not pass the buck. Instead the words "sinned... acted foolishly... sinned" have the ring of true repentance. His only plea was for mercy -- that this terrible punishment should be removed, so that Miriam would not be like a half-decayed still-born child. The argumentativeness was gone from Aaron.

In response to this plea Moses did act as mediator and addressed a simple prayer to the Lord. The Lord answered and thus vindicated Moses' mediatorship. The Lord indicated that there really was no reason for leniency. Among the Children of Israel even a human father, who had spit on a rebellious daughter, would have her excluded from the camp for seven days. Should the Lord do less to this rebellious daughter? Nevertheless the Lord allowed the chastisement to be shortened to a seven day exclusion from the camp. Miriam, who had really had leprosy, but was now as suddenly healed, would only be required to follow the normal procedure for cleansed lepers. She would be excluded from the camp for seven days, after which the priest could declare her clean. Then she would be allowed to return to normal life in the camp.

Yet the goodness of the Lord is evident also in the fact that He did not lift up the cloud from the tabernacle and add to Miriam's woes

by leading the people further (Nu 12;15).

What a vivid lesson in humility! While it was true that the Lord had called Miriam as a prophetess and Aaron as High Priest, they should have recognized that receiving such functions was already an act of grace on God's part. He showed how easily He could put them to shame, not only by removing them from office, but even by removing them from the Chosen People through leprosy. As severe and sudden as the chastisement was, there is also the goodness of the Lord, as He showed mercy and again allowed Miriam to continue in fellowship with the people. How wonderful His mercy!

"Your corpses will fall in the wilderness."

Nu 13 & 14 (See also Moses' review in Dt 1; 19-46)

The events that occurred at Kadesh-barnea re-echo through all the later history of Israel. The immediate aftermath was the wandering in the wilderness, but references to the sojourn in the wilderness reverberate through the entire Old Testament and even into the New Testament.

The issue was simple: Would the people proceed into the Promised Land by faith? or would their 'sight' mislead them? Stated another way, the question was: How would they react to Satan's siren song, "Yea, hath God said?"

The reasons in favor of proceeding on faith were many. They had been delivered from the Egyptians by God's mighty hand. They had arrived at Kadesh-barnea, even though at first they had been led south to the Red Sea and Mount Sinai. The Lord had sustained them by manna and on occasion had provided meat. A miraculous victory had been given them over the Amalekites. The Lord had favored them with the revelation of His Law and Covenant. The Tabernacle had been consecrated and the priesthood had been established in their midst. They had an eminently qualified

mediator in the person of Moses, who was already God's chosen instrument. But the moment of truth had arrived: "Would they now proceed in confidence in the Lord, or would they trust their own human judgments more?"

As the situation developed, the Israelites were certainly encouraged often enough to go forward under the Lord's blessing and promise. Moses tells us, when he reviewed the events of that day in Dt 1;19-21, that he had urged the people: "See the LORD your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Dt 1;21) Yet the people hesitated. Suggestions were made. Send out spies! Search the land! Figure out a strategy to approach the land! Examine the cities of the land!

Moses presented the suggestions to the Lord. Then he reported the Lord's answer to the people (Nu 13;2): "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel. You shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them." Even as the sending of spies was authorized, the Lord reminded the people that the spies were going to "the land, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel." The Lord's pledge had been given! He was going to bring success! Sending spies was only for their sakes! God didn't need them!

So the spies were selected and given their instructions by Moses (Nu 13;17ff). They were to examine the entire country from the Negev to the hill country. They were to see whether the land was good or bad, whether the people were strong or weak, many or few. They were also to examine the cities to determine whether the people lived in camps or fortified emplacements. They were also to make an effort to get some fruit of the land. None of these directions was inappropriate, even if

the people went forward in confidence in the Lord. For if they went forward in faith, the information, which the spies had gathered, would show how great God's gift was in bringing them into the land and how powerful God was in overcoming even the most powerful inhabitants.

The spies followed the order carefully. Their course spanned the whole land from the wilderness of Zin to the far north (Rehab and Lebohamath). They also examined special areas, like Hebron, the home of the Anakim, and the valley of Eshcol from which they brought back the large clusters of grapes.

When the spies returned after 40 days, they made a report to Moses and to the people. The majority report was that the land was indeed good. "Nevertheless" (Nu 13;28) 1. the people are strong; 2. the cities are fortified; 3. the people are fierce (descendants of Anak, Amalekites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Canaanites).

The minority report (Nu 13;30), which was presented by Caleb, looked beyond the factual data and urged: "Go up," "Take possession," "We shall surely overcome." Boldly Caleb encouraged the people to go forward with full confidence in the Lord's promise and power.

But the majority rebutted (Nu 13;41): "We are not able." "They are too strong." "The land devours its inhabitants." (Apparently referring to wars that seesawed back and forth across the land). "There are the Nephilim, and we were as grasshoppers in our own sight and theirs." The majority report was correct in saying, "WE are not able." But they erred by ignoring the Lord's promise to Israel. They also forgot that it was God's judgment that the peoples of Canaan had filled up their cup of wrath, and in His sight the Anakim were as grasshoppers.

The majority report prevailed. The people wept that night (Nu 14;1).

In the morning they grumbled against Moses and Aaron. More signifi-

cantly they were rebelling against God. Their oft-repeated lament echoes in the camp again. They would rather have died in Egypt than in the wilderness. Further, if they went up against the land, everything would go wrong. The Lord has brought us here so that we may fall by the sword and our wives and children will become plunder.

It is interesting to note the exaggeration that their sinful fears produce. Defeat is a foregone conclusion. "All" the people are bigger and stronger. The cities are all fortified to heaven (Dt 1;28).

In answer to these fears Moses had patiently pointed to the true Leader of Israel: "The Lord will fight on your behalf." (Dt 1;30) Look at your experiences. He delivered you in Egypt. He provided His support in the wilderness. In words that cannot be misunderstood, Moses also pointed to the nub of the problem: "You did not trust the Lord." (Dt 1;32).

In the scene the next morning (Nu 14;6ff) Joshua joined Caleb in urging the minority report. Their grief and dismay is evident as they tear their clothes. "If the Lord be pleased with us, He will bring us into the land and give it to us." "Only do not rebel against the Lord." The people will be "our prey." "The shadow of God's protection is removed from them." "The Lord is with us!"

Thereupon the people became surly. They prepared to stone these faithful leaders.

At that moment the K'BHOD YHWH appeared (Nu 14;10ff). The Lord brings His chief accusation about the people: "How long will they not believe in Me? despite the marvellous signs?" "I will dispossess them, and make you (Moses) a nation greater and mightier than they."

At this juncture, though the temptation to personal advantage was again presented, Moses remained true to his call as mediator and inter-

cessor for the people. His prayer on behalf of the people could only repeat the same things that he had used when the people had sinned in worshipping the golden calf (Nu 14;13ff).

Moses pointed out that the Lord's glory was at stake. The nations had heard that He was in the midst of this people, that He appeared eye to eye in their midst and that the cloud of His presence travelled with the Israelites. If the Lord destroyed this nation now, other nations would say, "He could not bring this people to the land He had promised by an oath." (Nu 14;16). Such a conclusion would surely discredit the Lord.

The second plea was directed to the lovingkindness (CHESED) of the Lord. This plea for God's grace is ultimately the basis of every prayer that comes before Him. God's steadfast love was the only hope of the people, especially in their sinfulness. Drawing on God's own sermon about His name in Ex 34, Moses pleaded, "Pardon the iniquity...from Egypt till now." (Nu 14;19).

The Lord addressed the last plea first: "I have pardoned." (Nu 14; 20). I will not destroy them. Indeed all the earth will be filled with my glory, even as I now chastise this people and ultimately carry out my purposes. But there will be chastisement. The men who have seen My glory and My signs, and who yet have tested me these 'ten times'²⁷ shall by no means see the land. The only exceptions to this chastisement will be Caleb and Joshua (Nu 14;24&30). Before giving additional details of the chastisement, the Lord takes a solemn oath (an oath that is repeated many times in Ezekiel, when another judgment of the Lord is impending) that He will carry out the judgment (Nu 14;28). The wish of those who stated they would die in the wilderness rather than go up to Canaan will be accommodated. "Your corpses shall fall in the wilderness."

(Nu 14;32). But the fears of the people, that their children would be a prey, would not come true. In those children the glory and power of the Lord would be magnified, as He preserved the nation. He would bring those very children, which seemed so vulnerable, victoriously into the Promised Land. Of course, the children would also be wanderers (shepherds) in the wilderness for forty years, suffering for the unfaithfulness (fornications) of their fathers. As a final explanation, the Lord indicated that each year of the 40 years was to match one of the forty days that the spies had been investigating the land.

But the judgment of the Lord was not yet finished. The ten spies who had submitted the majority report against going up to Canaan "died of a plague before the Lord." (Nu 14;36). On them the judgment was immediate. The hand of the Lord was evident because not only were those who advised against going to Canaan struck down, but also Caleb and Joshua, who had urged them to go forward, were spared. In this way the Lord clubbed the people over the head with the seriousness of their offense and showed the certainty of His carrying out the chastisement He had described.

Thereupon the people made a complete reversal. The next morning they were suddenly eager and enthusiastic about going. "We will go up to the place the Lord has promised." (Nu 14;40). Now those who would not go in the strength of the Lord, are ready to go up in their own strength without the Lord. They persist in their plan even though Moses warned them, "You will fall by the sword." (Nu 14;43). When the people persisted, Moses did not accompany them, nor did the ark of the covenant go before them. What a commentary this is on the power of sin! The Scriptures tell us that they went out "heedlessly" (Nu 14;44) and "presumptuously" (Dt 1;43).

To chastise Israel in these circumstances, the Lord did not need to use the power of His K'BHOD. When the people went out without His hand and protection, the Amalekites and Canaanites were able to do exactly those things which the people had feared. A resounding defeat followed. The rout extended from Seir to Hormah. "They chased you as bees do" (Dt 1;44) is the graphic description that Moses gave of this defeat.

How well this illustrates the statement, "Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found." (Is 55;6) 'Too late' is a sad and almost inadequate word to describe the misguided eagerness of the remorseful Israelites.

So the severity of the Lord is plain. He acted with sternness because the Israelites refused His leadership. But His mercy was also evident, for in condemning them to wander in the wilderness till the forty years were finished, He also committed Himself to provide for them. He gave them manna through all those years (Ex 16;35). He kept their clothes from wearing out (Nu 8;4). He continued to forgive them. He also ultimately carried out His promise to bring the children into the Promised Land.

"Are you seeking the priesthood also, Korah?"
Nu 16

The stirring of rebellion against Moses and God had already been evident in the sedition of Miriam and Aaron. It is very natural that such stirrings should become more pronounced after the Children of Israel were turned back from entering the Promised Land. Such an incident is the rebellion of Korah. In its overt aspects this revolution was directed against the authority and faithfulness of both Moses and Aaron.

This rebellion is one of only two incidents that give us a glimpse into the years of exile (the other is the Sabbath-breaker, who was

stoned to death - Nu 15;32ff). Though arguments are almost equally as valid for placing the incident late in the 38 years that remained of the sojourn in the wilderness, I am inclined to place it early. It would seem that thoughts of rebellion would very naturally follow from the events at Kadesh-barnea. First the people would not go forward under the Lord's blessing. Then they wanted to go forward under their own power without the Lord's blessing. When they were defeated and Moses had not gone with them what is more natural than to seek a scapegoat? What is more natural for sinful human beings than to project all the blame from themselves to their leaders? In paraphrase of Gen 3: "The leaders whom thou gavest us, Lord, have misguided us, and we have therefore failed to enter the Promised Land."

In such a milieu the two-headed rebellion against the priesthood and the general leadership of Moses was spawned. At the head, as the chief spokesman, was Korah, who aspired to be promoted from Levite to priest. Lending ready support were three leaders from the tribe of Reuben, who were apparently disgruntled because their tribe was not pre-eminent, even though Reuben was Jacob's oldest son. An even broader base for the rebellion was provided by other leaders of the congregation.

The first statement of the insurgents revealed the false premises on which they were acting (Nu 16;3). The error does not come through clearly in translation, since the Hebrew words קָהָל and עֵדוּת are not always clearly distinguished. ²⁸ "The distinction between קָהָל and עֵדוּת is the following: קָהָל signifies 'conventus,' the congregation according to its natural organization; עֵדוּת signifies 'convocatio,' the congregation according to its divine calling and theocratic purpose."²⁹ In contemporary terms קָהָל refers to the nation, whereas עֵדוּת designates the faithful believers (or the invisible church) within the nation.

In the rebels' statement the term קֹדֶשׁ was used first and is identified with the קֹדֶשׁ . Therefore their statement asserted that the entire nation was holy and for emphasis they added "everyone of them." The absurdity of their statement is self-evident when a person looks back to the ways in which the people had erred since leaving Egypt.

The next assertion of the rebels, "And the Lord is in their midst," is in itself a correct statement. It is the truthful part of their allegation that gives a sheen of propriety to the entire allegation. But the carnal self-righteousness that characterized later Judaism is already revealed, for the tone indicates that the followers of Korah looked at the presence of God as an inherent right that belonged to them, rather than as an evidence of God's grace predicated on the covenant. How quickly they had forgotten the condition attached to their calling, i.e., "If ye will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant" (Ex 19:5).

On these false premises the final allegation of Numbers 16:3 is directed at the offices of Moses and Aaron. The rebels

altogether overlooked the fact that God Himself had chosen Moses and Aaron and appointed them as mediators between Himself and the congregation, to educate the sinful nation into a holy nation, and train it to the fulfilment of its proper vocation. ³⁰

Thus the challenge had been laid down. The accusation was even made that Moses and Aaron had arrogantly usurped the offices of spiritual and national leadership in Israel.

Moses' first reaction was to fall on his face (Nu 16:5), apparently in wonder that the Lord did not strike down Korah and his followers on the spot, because of their false assertions about the holiness of Israel. But the decision was to wait for the next day, when the Lord would show whether Moses and Aaron had been called by the Lord to their positions

of leadership. The proposed procedure was simple and direct. Korah and his followers were to bring their censers for burning incense to the tabernacle. The crucial discriminating point of this procedure was that burning incense in the tabernacle was reserved for the priests only. Therefore this procedure would give God the opportunity to show whether He accepted the incense offerings of Korah and his followers in place of the incense offering of Aaron, the High Priest.

But even as Moses outlined the procedure, he immediately admonished Korah and his followers to consider carefully what was before them. "You have gone far enough" (Nu 16;70). Certainly it ought to have been privilege enough for them that they had been separated for the service of the tabernacle as Levites. "Are you seeking for the priesthood also?" (Nu 16;10) Then Moses also pointed out the ultimate seriousness of their challenge by saying, "You and all your company are gathered together against the Lord; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?" (Nu 16;11) In this statement Moses designated the real issue that was before them -- their rebellion was against the Lord, because they were rebelling against the High Priest whom the Lord had designated and called.

The second challenge was directed against Moses' leadership. In order to bring the matter into the open Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram the primary co-conspirators who were from the tribe of Reuben. (Nu 16;12ff) Insolently those leaders refused to obey the summons. The complaint against Moses was that he had led the people into the wilderness to die. In bold perversion of the truth they accused Moses of leading them out of a land of milk and honey, i.e., out of Egypt. Further, his method of administration was described as "lording it over us" (Nu 16;13) Still further, he had failed to bring them to a land flowing with milk

and honey. Moses was to blame because the people had been deprived of their inheritance. The rebels asserted that they had had enough of Moses' deception. Moses would not be allowed to throw dust in their eyes. "We will not come up!" (Nu 16;14)

When this report was brought to Moses, his patience ran short. In no way had he been a heartless taskmaster to the people. He had not even taken a donkey from them. "I have done no harm to anyone." (Nu 16; 15) Yet Moses set the problem before the Lord, even while he asserted that the whole accusation was a 'bum rap.'

But this problem also had to wait for the morrow for final settlement. So Moses repeated the directions for Korah and his followers reminding them to appear on the next day with their censers, and assuring them that he would do likewise.

The next morning Korah and his company brazenly dared to show up at the tabernacle. With no qualms they came right to the doorway of the tent of meeting, the place where the priests were to function. In moral support of Korah's claims, the people had assembled outside.

But now the time of judgment had come. The K'BHOD YHWH appeared (Nu 16;19). As Moses had indicated, the Lord's arrangements were being challenged by the rebels. Therefore He would decide the issue. In fact, in His anger the Lord was again ready to consume the entire nation "instantly" (Nu 16;21).

In this crisis Moses and Aaron still pleaded with the Lord on behalf of the people (Nu 16;22). Moses, as the spokesman, appealed to God as the author of life, and presented the argument that, even though one sins, God should not be angry with the entire congregation. ³¹

Once again the Lord relented regarding the destruction of the entire nation. Yet the rebels were to be punished. God instructed Moses to

urge the people to get back from the dwelling of Korah and the other leaders. But even this warning did not reach the hearts of the ring-leaders. In an attitude of challenge, Dathan and Abiram stood at the doors of their tents with their families and watched Moses approach.

As Moses moved from the tabernacle toward the tents of Dathan and Abiram he declared that if the rebels would die a natural death, it would be proper to conclude that the Lord had not sent him (Moses - Nu 16;29). For this blatant rebellion the Lord would use a new thing: The ground would open up and swallow them. Still the rebels spurned the warning.

Moses had hardly finished speaking when the terrifying punishment occurred (Nu 16;31ff). The ground opened and swallowed Dathan and Abiram, their households, their followers and all their possessions. They were literally wiped off the face of the earth without a trace. Confronted with such a sudden and overwhelming catastrophe, the people drew back, lest the catastrophe should envelop them also.

Meanwhile back at the tabernacle, fire shot out from the K'BHOD YHWH. In a manner similar to the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, who had also come into the tabernacle with strange fire, the fire consumed the 250 who were offering incense at the tabernacle. The devastation seems to have been more complete in this situation, however, since there is no mention of burying these people (Nu 16;35). Apparently the fire consumed them completely. The only things that remained were the censers that they had used. Since the censers had been presented in the tabernacle, and had been 'consecrated' through the death of these men, Aaron was instructed to gather the censers up and prepare a plating for the altar. That plating on the great altar was to be a constant reminder to the people about the terrible punishment that consumed these rebels and "as a reminder that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron

should come near to burn incense before the Lord." (Nu 16;40)

But the sinful need to find a scapegoat had not yet abated! On the very next day all the people gathered in rebellion against Moses and Aaron. "You are the ones who caused the death of the Lord's people," they said (Nu 16;41). What an exalted view they had of Korah and his followers!! What a superstitious view they had of the powers of Moses and Aaron!! These servants of God, whose offices had been vindicated by the Lord's judgment on the previous day, are accused of selfishly and magically retaining their offices by wiping out the true people of God.

Whether in hope of relief or in anticipation of further punishment, Moses and Aaron instinctively turned toward the Tent of Meeting. (Nu 16;42). They were not disappointed. The K'BHOD YHWH appeared again. Again the Lord was ready to consume the entire people in an instant. What should Moses now say? He had pleaded eloquently at Mt. Sinai. He also pleaded importunately at Kadesh-barnea. The previous day he was almost desperate to find a reason to keep the Lord from wiping out the nation. Now no words seemed possible in behalf of so rebellious a people. Yet Moses used God's own appointment -- the incense offering -- offered by the appointed High Priest, Aaron. Aaron was instructed to make an incense offering immediately, for Moses noted that a plague had already started among the people.

Aaron obeyed. With a boldness proper for God's appointed servant he then moved out among the people to stand between the living and the dead. The courage to go out among a people who had moments before been so surly is certainly to be noted and commended. The faithfulness in carrying out his office, since he was their High Priest also in their sinfulness, is worthy of imitation by those who are called as public ministers of the Gospel.

So the plague was checked. But the severity of the Lord was still evident, as 14,700 died of the plague, besides those that died with Korah and his followers (Nu 16;49). Yet the goodness of the Lord moved Him to preserve this people and keep His promises through them. He sustained them during the remaining time in the wilderness. In concern for their spiritual life, He even reaffirmed the priesthood of Aaron through the miracle of the "budding rod." (Nu 17).

"You (Moses) shall not bring this assembly into the land."
Nu 20

This section is dated very precisely in the first month of the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt. The exile had drawn to an end. The people were again assembled at Kadesh. The natural assumption would be that everybody was happy that the exile was over and was eagerly anticipating a triumphal entry into the Promise Land. But another event occurred which is remarkably similiar to an event 38 years earlier.

The circumstance that tested the people was the lack of water. The mood of the people became ominous. Bitterly they "contended with Moses" (Nu 20: 3). "We would be better off dead," was their first contention. Then they attacked Moses personally: "Why have you brought the Lord's assembly into the wilderness to die here." Even this second generation looked back longingly to Egypt. Everything seemed bad. There was no place for farming. There wasn't even enough water!!

In the face of this hostility Moses and Aaron immediately turned to the Lord at the doorway of the Tent of Meeting.

In answer to their unspoken prayer the K'BHOD YHWH appeared there.

The Lord acted directly to solve the water supply problem. He commanded Moses to "take the rod" (i.e., his own staff, that had been used in connection with miracles on previous occasions). In front of

the assembled people Moses was to speak to the rock that was before them. The promise of the Lord was clear: "You shall there bring forth water" (Nu 20;8).

Moses the obedient servant of the Lord, did as he was commanded. But at the point where he began to speak to the people a discordant note crept in. "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of the rock" (Nu 20;10). This question and its implications seem to be the focal point of the Lord's criticism later. The people were indeed rebels, but Moses seemed to have taken the rebellion as a personal affront rather than in terms of its relationship to the Lord. The tone of Moses' address obscured the fact that the real rebellion and complaint was against the Lord. The next step followed easily enough. The word 'we' must be contrasted with the fact that it was the Lord who provided the water. Moses had failed both to point out that the rebellion was directed against the Lord and to direct the credit for the miracle to God.

But more followed. Even though he had been told to take the rod, the Lord had only instructed him to speak to the rock. But Moses struck the rock -- twice. This seems to agree with the focus expressed in the question: "Shall we bring forth water out of the rock?" Apparently Moses felt that he had to do something more tangible than mere words to show where the water was coming from.

In spite of this sin, the Lord did provide the water for the sake of the people. He was still glorified, though Moses must now be disciplined.

The Lord then said to Moses and Aaron: "Because you have not believed me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Nu 20;12) The whole reason for the chastisement was that Moses and Aaron had failed to glorify God.

In this way Moses and Aaron were forewarned that they would not enter the Promised Land. In effect they were told that they would die within a year. On one occasion Moses did appeal for a reprieve (Dt 3;23ff) But the Lord refused to reconsider and so Moses, as a faithful believer, acquiesced in the Lord's will. Indeed Moses is exemplary in showing that if believers expect the crown of glory beyond the grave, there is no reason that they should grieve as they approach the grave.

So the severity and the goodness of the Lord is evident also in His dealings with Moses. Because of Moses' sin, the great leader of Israel was denied the privilege of entering the Promised Land. As severe as the judgment was, the goodness of the Lord is also evident. First, the Lord granted Moses the privilege of seeing Canaan and then the Lord promised him the greater privilege of going to the heavenly Canaan.

*"Behold, the time for you (Moses) to die is near."
Dt 31;14ff (See also Nu 27;12ff)*

A whole series of events are chronicled for the final months before the entry into the Promised Land: the waters of Meribah; the death of Miriam; the transfer of the High Priesthood to Aaron's son; Aaron's death on Mt. Hor; the refusal of passage through Edom; the trip around Edom and Moab; further complaints of the people and the brazen serpent; victories over the kings Sihon and Og; arrangements for the settlement of the 2½ tribes beyond the Jordan; Balak, Balaam and the curse turned to blessing.

As this series of events unfolded, the Children of Israel were constantly getting closer to the Promised Land. But coupled directly with that fact was the fact that with each passing day the time for Moses' death was approaching. So as the Children of Israel were encamped east of the Jordan river at the northern end of the Dead Sea, a time of final

preparation for entering the Promised Land occurred.

Moses knew that the time of his death was drawing near and indicated that he no longer was "able to come and go." This term indicated that he would no longer be the leader of the people, rather than that he was physically debilitated.³² At this juncture there were several things that he had to do before his death. As a valedictory, he made three distinct discourses to the people. In these discourses, which are recorded in Deuteronomy, he pointed emphatically to the Lord as the Leader of all Israel, and encouraged the people to faithfulness in all phases of their life. The second act was to induct Joshua into office before the people. In an official way the torch of leadership was passed (Dt 31;7). The final act in anticipation of his death was to entrust the priests and leaders of the people with the formal written document that he had prepared. The priests were instructed to read this document before the people every seventh year, so that the Children of Israel might in each generation know the will of the Lord.

Then the Lord summoned Moses to present Himself at the Tent of Meeting. The purpose of the meeting revolved around the fact that "the time for you to die is near." (Dt 31;14). But directly related with the departure of Moses was the fact that the Lord also wished to commission Joshua in a formal way. So the instructions included directions that Joshua should also come to the Tent of Meeting. When these two heroes of the faith presented themselves before the Lord, the pillar of cloud descended onto the Tent of Meeting. That the cloud was used for this manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH seems to be a reminder to Moses of his sin. At the same time the cloud showed that Joshua was not to have the privilege that Moses had had. Joshua would not be permitted to speak to God face to face.

In summary, the Lord tells Moses: You are going to die; when you die, the people will arise and play the harlot with strange gods; especially when they prosper in the land, they will become unfaithful; the Lord will then surely send his judgment. To keep these thoughts constantly before the people, God instructed Moses to prepare a song and teach it to the people, as a "witness for Me." (Dt 31;19) The song, which is recorded in chapter 32 of Deuteronomy has three main parts: 1) God's faithful dealing with Israel; 2) The Israelites will grow fat and forsake God; 3) The Lord will again restore a repentant Israel. Both in the words that Lord spoke directly to Moses as well as in the song, the whole history of Israel is presented in prophetic summary. Truly the Lord knows the end from the beginning.

Thereupon the Lord commissioned Joshua. "Be strong and courageous for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land, which I swore to them, and I will be with you." (Dt 31;23) With such a commission Joshua was able to go forth confidently in the challenging work that was assigned to him by the Lord.

The obedience of Moses and Joshua was clearly evident because the book of the Law was placed beside the Ark of the Covenant and the people were taught the song that God had inspired Moses to write.

On the same day (Dt 32;48) Moses was commanded to go to the top of Mt. Nebo. He would be permitted to view Canaan, but then he would die without entering it. Once more the Lord reminded Moses that his death was caused when he broke faith at Meribah-Kadesh (Dt 32;51).

The time for final farewell had come. Moses' final recorded words were words of benediction over the Children of Israel (Dt 33). As the type of Christ, he blessed his followers, as He was taken away from them, just as Jesus did at His ascension. The blessing of Moses reviews the

Lord's special care for the Chosen People. Moses blessed each of the twelve tribes, and then urged them all to go forward, confident of victory under the Lord's blessing.

Then Moses proceeded to the top of Pisgah, surveyed the entire land and died, as the Lord had said. His burial was performed by the Lord at an unknown spot, though in Jude there is an obscure statement about a dispute between Satan and Michael for the body of Moses (Jude 9). Deuteronomy then closes with some final notations about Moses. He was 120 years old at the time of his death, yet his vision was not dimmed and his vigor was unabated. The people, in laudable respect for this servant of God, mourned for him thirty days. Truly no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the "Lord knew face to face" and through whom so many signs and wonders were performed (Dt 34;5-12). So Moses went from the privilege of seeing the manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH here on earth to beholding the Lord in glory in heaven.

Thus the severity of the Lord resulted in Moses' death prior to the entry into Canaan. Yet Moses surely was aware of the goodness of the Lord. Moses did not lament or complain. How well his final acts show that if believers hope to go to heaven rejoicing, there is no reason they should go to the grave mourning.

This incident is the final appearance of the K'BHOD YHWH in the cluster of manifestations that occurred at the time of Moses. In these manifestations the Lord has showed His wisdom in calling Moses, His power in delivering the Israelites from Egypt, His providence in supplying food and water and in leading the nation, His holy and gracious will in the covenant, His grace and mercy in the sermon on His name, and both His severity and His goodness in a whole series of incidents in the

wilderness.

This cluster of manifestations revolves around the establishment (and re-establishment) of the Sinaitic Covenant. Around that covenant the Lord gathered the Old Testament believers, who worshipped Him as a merciful and gracious Lord.

A similar cluster of manifestations occurs at the time of fulfillment. At that time the Lord used the K'BHOD YHWH a number of times, when He established the New Testament in Christ's blood.

These observations serve to emphasize once again the fact that the manifestations of the K'BHOD YHWH were used by the Lord because of His zeal for His Word.

CHAPTER VII: ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF CONSECRATION

A period of four centuries separates Moses from Solomon. During those four centuries there is no recorded manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH. To be sure, the Lord manifested His presence and power in other ways. The walls of Jericho crumbled. He performed His miracles with Gideon's fleece. He thundered to cause confusion for the Philistines. The Philistine idol Dagon fell over, when the Ark of the Covenant was placed in its temple.

One incident in this period approaches a full manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH. It occurred when King David consecrated his altar at Ornan's threshing floor (1Chr 21;28ff). At that time fire from heaven came on the altar of burnt offering. This is surely a method by which the Lord consecrated David's altar. Yet the full manifestation did not present itself and the Lord did not choose to reveal more about Himself at that time.

Therefore we can move on to the consecration of Solomon's temple. We have designated this as "Another Manifestation of Consecration", because it is so directly related to the consecration of the tabernacle at Sinai. As the central place of worship was changed from the tabernacle at Gibeon to the temple at Jerusalem, the Lord chose to manifest His K'BHOD to show His pleasure in and approval of the new arrangement.

*" I have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice."
(2Chr 5;11-14 & 7; 1-3; 1 Kgs 8;1-11)*

With God's approval another sanctuary was to be dedicated. King David had wanted to build the temple, but the Lord reserved that privilege

for Solomon. The seven-year building program had really produced a magnificent building -- rooms overlaid with gold, intricate decorations, utensils of pure gold and equipment of polished brass that was too vast to measure (1 Kgs 7;17). One of the wonders of the ancient world had been erected in honor of the God of Israel.

Yet it would have been only a marvellous building if the Lord had not come to dwell there. Even idol temples had very rich accoutrements. Therefore the appearance of the K'BHOD YHWH at the dedication of Solomon's temple is very significant. It is the presence of the Lord that consecrated the building and made it His dwelling place on earth.

The dedication ceremonies, which took place in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, resulted in a celebration that was fifteen days long. The rituals were very impressive. A solemn procession brought the Ark of the Covenant from Ornan's threshing floor, and the tabernacle was brought from Gibeon. Sacrifices too numerous to mention were presented to the Lord along the route of the procession (2 Chr 5;6). As the procession entered the temple, the priests deposited the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. It was placed under the cherubim, which were overlaid with gold, and which were ten feet high and had a wingspan of ten feet. The poles of the Ark were pulled out so that they projected against the curtain of the Holy of Holies. Within the Ark were the two tablets of stone, which Moses had brought down from Mt. Sinai. Meanwhile outside, trumpet music rose in bold crescendoes and the singers' voices swelled to the doxology: "He indeed is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." (2 Chr 5;13). Then as the priests came out of the Holy of Holies, the temple was filled with the bright cloud of the Lord. Because of the cloud the priests were unable to minister in the temple. "The Glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (2 Chr 5;14).

Solomon acted as officiant on this solemn occasion (2 Chr 6;1-3). He first noted that the Lord had promised to "dwell in the thick cloud," such as the one that was before their eyes. Thereupon he spoke the actual words of dedication and turned to face the people in order to extol the faithfulness of God. He pointed to the immediate past, reminding the people that David's son was to erect the temple, and that the Lord's will was now carried out in the building that was before them.

Then Solomon entered the bronze pulpit, which had been erected especially for this occasion, and spoke the dedicatory prayer (2 Chr 6;14ff). The salutation of the prayer pointed out that there is no God in heaven and earth like the God of Israel. He alone keeps covenant and shows lovingkindness. Even this magnificent temple was unworthy of the Lord's presence, since the heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain God. Yet when people come to this temple, Solomon prayed that the Lord would hear from heaven. Seven situations are presented. If any man sins against his neighbor and repents, Lord, hear from heaven. If Israel is defeated, but then returns to Thee, Lord, hear from heaven. When rain is lacking and the people look to Thee, Lord, hear from heaven. When famine, pestilence, blight, mildew or plague oppress the people, Lord, Hear from heaven. When foreigners come to worship at this place, Lord, hear from heaven. When Israel goes to battle, Lord, hear from heaven. When Israel sins against Thee and is carried into captivity, but then acknowledges its sins, Lord, hear from heaven. After these petitions Solomon closes the prayer with a doxology.

Thereupon the second manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH occurred. In a way similar to the consecration of the altar in the wilderness, "fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings and sacrifices" (2 Chr 7;1). "The Glory of the Lord" filled the entire house again and

the priests could not enter to minister. Through this manifestation the great altar of Solomon's temple was consecrated by a direct act of the Lord. This act showed that He would accept the offerings that would be presented to Him there.

At the sight of the K'BHOD YHWH the people were overawed. The prostrated themselves and worshipped this glorious God in the exultant doxology: "Truly He is good, truly His lovingkindness is everlasting."

During the seven days of the dedicatory feast that followed, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep were offered by Solomon. The people freely brought many additional offerings. Since many of these sacrifices were peace offerings, only limited parts of the sacrificial animal were consumed on the altar. The rest was eaten by the priests and the people to celebrate their fellowship under the covenant with a gracious God. The sacrifices were so numerous that auxiliary altars had to be set up within the temple in order that the offerings could be completed (2 Chr 7;7).

After the celebration the Lord appeared to Solomon at night in a dream, as He had once done at Gibeon. In this vision the Lord reconfirmed with words what had been demonstrated by the manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH at the temple. Alluding to many points in Solomon's prayer, the Lord made the following promises (2 Chr 7;12ff & 1 Kgs 9;1ff): "I will hear from heaven and will forgive." "I have chosen and consecrated this house" "forever" "perpetually." "Walk before me and I will establish your royal throne." "If you turn away and serve other gods, you will be cast out and I will cast this house out of my sight." Should such judgment become necessary, people will say, "Because they forsook the Lord... therefore He has brought all this adversity upon them."

In considering the dedication of the temple, our attention is drawn to the fact that the king, rather than the High Priest, was the officiant.

Edersheim gives a very lucid explanation, which I quote in part:

According to the terms of the covenant, all Israel was God's servants (Lv 25,42 & 55).. But what the nation was as a whole that Israel's theocratic king was preeminently: The servant of the LORD (1 Kg 8,25. 28.29.52.59). It was in this capacity that Solomon acted at the dedication of the Temple, as his own words frequently indicate (see passages just cited).... Thus we perceive that the common underlying idea of the three great institutions in Israel, which connected them all, was that of "Servant of Jehovah." The prophet who uttered the voice of heaven upon earth was the servant of Jehovah. So was the priest, who spoke the voice of earth to heaven; and the king, who made heaven's voice to be heard on earth. That which gave its real meaning equally to this threefold function -- downwards, upwards, outwards -- was the grand fact that in each of them it was the Servant of Jehovah, who was acting, or in other words that 'God was all in all. ³³

During the centuries that followed, Solomon's temple was the focal point of Israel's worship-life. Devout Israelites were keenly aware that the K'BHOD YHWH was in the Holy of Holies. Into that sanctuary the High Priest entered only on the Great Day of Atonement. On the great altar the morning and evening sacrifices were made. The priests presented the incense offerings. In connection with that temple the people addressed their prayers to God and received answers from Him. (See Appendix 3: The K'BHOD YHWH in the worship-life of the Old Testament Church)

What privileges the Israelites had! Such a feeling of thankful awe seems to have struck the Apostle Paul in Rm 9;iff. Even as Paul expressed his willingness to be cursed for the sake of his kinsmen according to the flesh, he listed their privileges because they were "Israelites, to whom belong(s) the adoption of sons, and the glory (DOXA = K'BHOD) and the covenant, and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises....."

CHAPTER VIII:

MANIFESTATIONS THAT POINT BEYOND THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL

Although the manifestations that will be considered in this chapter are separated by several centuries, they are here linked together because in each case the Lord through three of the major prophets clearly points to the fact that carrying out His plan of salvation is not dependent on the continued history of the Children of Israel as a nation. Isaiah, Ezekiel and Daniel saw the national fortunes of Israel at very low ebb. Isaiah was a witness to the deportation of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians. Ezekiel was carried into captivity by the Babylonians when he was 25 years old. While he was in captivity, the remnant of Judah was defeated and carried off and then both Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed. Daniel's life spanned the entire Babylonian captivity, and his prophecies indicated that Israel would be subject to the ebb and flow of great national powers until the Messiah would come.

As these three prophets witnessed such calamitous events in the political history of Israel, the Lord manifested His K'BHOD to each of them. Through each of them the Lord proclaimed to the world that the plan of salvation was not dependent on the existence of the Jewish state. Though each of them was commissioned to call the recalcitrant Israelites to repentance, they also knew that the plea would go unheeded by a vast majority of the people. Yet in ever clearer fashion the Lord indicated that the plan of salvation would be carried out. Isaiah proclaimed that Immanuel,

the Servant of the Lord, would come, would provide redemption and would shine as a light to the Gentiles. Ezekiel, in parallel fashion, revealed that the K'BHOD YHWH would leave Solomon's temple, and would remain with the remnant in exile. He also tells of God's power to give life to dry bones, of the work of the Holy Spirit and of the Messiah, who, as the Great King, will rule over a restored people in a heavenly Canaan. Daniel tells of "One like a son of man" who will ascend to heaven and judge the world, who will be given all power and might and dominion, and who will finally bring about the resurrection and life everlasting.

Because of these aspects of similarity the manifestations of the K'BHOD YHWH that were revealed to them are considered together here.

But before examining these manifestations, reference must be made to two events in the life of Elijah that approach the full revelation of the K'BHOD YHWH. On Mt. Carmel the Lord sent fire to consume Elijah's offering, as well as the altar and the water. Although this miracle did vindicate the Lord's right to be worshipped, there was no explicit self-manifestation on that occasion.

The same could be said of Elijah's departure from the earth in a fiery chariot. Though the fiery chariot does indicate that it is a glorious God who is translating Elijah into heaven, the Lord did not choose to use the situation for fuller self-manifestation.

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts."
Is 6; 1-13*

During Isaiah's life-time the Northern Kingdom had filled the cup of God's wrath to the brim. That nation lost its separate identity. Judah, the southern kingdom, was also under severe threat from Assyria. How helpless the people of God seemed to be!! Had God finally abandoned His people and forgotten His promises of the Messiah?

In this frightening milieu midway between Moses and Christ, God appeared to Isaiah. Using the K'BHOD YHWH the Lord called Isaiah to be the great evangelist of the Old Testament.

Though the term K'BHOD YHWH does not occur in Isaiah 6, the apostle John (12;41) states the Isaiah "saw His (Christ's) glory." (DOXA is the NT equivalent of K'BHOD). That the pronoun "His" refers to Christ adds a dimension to this manifestation that is not immediately evident in the text itself. The YHWH of Is 6 is the same as the incarnate Kurios of the New Testament.

Since the "ifs" of Moses and Solomon regarding the unfaithfulness of Israel had become reality, Isaiah was commissioned to expend much effort in proclaiming God's uncompromising anger against sin and unbelief. Yet the unfaithfulness and obduracy of the Children of Israel does not negate the faithfulness of God (Rm 3;3-4). His promises are sure. The Messiah will come. Under the inspiration of God Isaiah proclaims the unfathomable sweetness of the Gospel as he penned the great Immanuel passages (7;14; 9;1-7; 11;1-10) and the comforting passages about the Suffering Servant (42;1-9; 49;1ff; 50;4ff; 52;13 - 53;12). But the prophecies range even further into the future. The coming of the Gentiles, the world-wide preaching of the Gospel and the final glorification of God's kingdom are also laid out for us.

In the vision of the K'BHOD YHWH Isaiah was granted the privilege of looking into the throne-room of God. The vision is adapted to the capabilities of the finite creature. God presented the details of the vision to Isaiah, so that there was objective fact and so that it did not depend on some subjective working of the prophet's mind.³⁴

The background features within the vision emphasized the unchangeableness of God and His exaltation above all creatures. He is the "Adonai"

(Is 6;1), i.e., the God who is able to carry out His purpose. Trusting in this God, believers could be sustained even when the whole world about them seemed to be coming apart at the seams.

A distinctly new aspect about the K'BHOD YHWH was added by the fact that the Lord was presented in human form. The Lord was sitting on a throne. He was clothed in a voluminous robe, which filled the whole temple (i.e., the temple of the vision, not Solomon's temple). Whereas previously the light and cloud (smoke) was the center of a manifestation, the Lord here chose to draw the veil aside a bit so that Isaiah was able to see Him in the form of a person, rather than merely to hear His voice. In this way the Lord was preparing believers for the time when "the glory of the Lord will be revealed" (Is 42;5) in the incarnate Son of God, when He would take the form of a servant.

The actions of the seraphim show how all creatures must stand in awe before the glorious Lord. In humble respect before the Creator, the seraphs covered their faces with two wings. In humility they also covered their feet, and with one pair of wings they flew, always hovering round the throne, ready to carry out the Lord's commands. Their constant antiphonal song extolled the YHWH of hosts: "Holy, holy, holy, LORD God almighty, the whole earth is full of Thy glory." This trisagion exalts God in His essential perfection and righteousness. Yet they also name Him LORD, YHWH the God of grace. Many centuries later the angel choirs at Bethlehem extolled the God of grace by singing; "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." In a parallel way the trisagion links the LORD God almighty to the world, as the seraphim proclaim: "The whole earth is full of His glory."

Additional physical phenomena caught Isaiah's attention. The foundation of the door quaked, when the Lord spoke. The temple was filled

with smoke, apparently from the altar that is mentioned in v. 6, an altar that was prefigured by the altar of incense in the tabernacle and Solomon's temple.

As he viewed this vision, Isaiah was all too aware of his creatureliness and his own sinfulness. "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" (Is 6;5). He could not stand before the thrice holy God. Both the uncleanness of his lips and the uncleanness of those with whom he is identified made it impossible for him to join the seraph choirs. Not only was it inappropriate for him to be present, but, as a sinful man, his very existence was endangered because his "eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts" (Is 6;5). Surely he remembered God's words to Moses, that no man can see God and live (Ex 33;20).

But to this repentant sinner absolution was immediately granted. A seraph took a red-hot coal (stone) from the altar and touched his mouth. This symbolic act is then explained: "Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven." (6;7). The term for 'forgiven' is 'KAPHAR' which states not only the fact of forgiveness but also implicitly includes the atonement upon which the forgiveness is based. In Isaiah's mind the direct association was with the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant, and yet the concept receives its full and true meaning in the great atoning sacrifice of Immanuel.

Having had this vivid illustration and verbal assurance of God's grace, Isaiah was ready to serve. Consequently the words, "Here am I. Send me!" (Is 6;8) sprang from his lips, when the Lord asked for a volunteer.

Yet the first message that Isaiah was to preach would be one of judgment. From His throne the God of heaven and earth declared that the Israelites, even though they had God's Word in their midst, would block

it from their hearts. Consequently the divine judicial act of hardening of hearts had followed. Because they would not believe, God now made it so that they could not believe (cp Rm 1;24.28 - "God gave them up"). In consequence of that judicial act the preaching of Isaiah would have a reverse effect. ³⁵ It would actually make the people "fat" (Hebrew so) or 'insensitive' (NASB). Their habitual rejection would become so engrained that they could not now be changed by the preaching of God's Word. Instead they would become more self-satisfied. Yet God would be vindicated by reaching out to them once more. Through Isaiah He was reaching toward them even though that situation had become hopeless for many people. -- Note the chiasmic arrangement in v. 10: heart, ears, eyes, eyes, ears, heart. The sinful heart dulls the ears and blinds the eyes. When the Gospel is to penetrate to the heart, it must in the power of the Holy Ghost open those eyes and ears so that it can reach the heart. On the other hand, when God acts in the judgment of hardening, the eyes are also made so that they cannot see and the ears so that they cannot hear, and therefore the heart does not have any channel for receiving the Gospel.

In dismay Isaiah asked, "How long?" (Is 6;11) How long could this sorry state of affairs continue? How long must the preaching go on? How long till the Lord would act in further judgment?

In answer to that query, the Lord pointed to the exile. The cities, the houses, even the land would be devastated and desolated. The people would be removed into captivity and so there would be many "forsaken places" (Is 6;12 -- cp 'ghost towns and abandoned houses'). Through such a judgment all the false hopes based on national pride and prosperity would be removed.

Yet the Lord promised that a remnant (a tenth portion - Is 6;13)

would survive, even though the remnant would undergo still further judgments. In the simile of the stump of a tree that continues to have life and send forth shoots, the Lord points to the continuation of the remnant. It wouldn't die out, because the Lord would not let it die out! In that stump was the holy seed!

Regarding the term "holy seed," commentators take it in the collective sense of descendants or offspring and then speak of the holy seed and a sanctified nation. I prefer to put it in the line of prophecies that begins with the Woman's seed (Gn 3;15) and that is refined in the Messianic prophecy to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"(Gn 12;3; Gn 22;18; cp Ga 3;16). In view of St. Paul's explanation of the singular form of the word "seed," God's promise in Is 6;13 is then a clear reference to the Messiah. Only the Messiah could without qualification be named "the holy seed." How appropriate then that the next chapter (Is 7;14) points to the miraculous virgin birth, chapter 9 to the Son that is born, and chapter 11 to the Branch that will come forth from the roots of Jesse.

Thus the translation "The Holy Seed is its stump" would mean that the "tenth portion," the remnant, would be there but the real life of that stump is in the Holy Seed that is within it. From the Holy Seed life-giving power would spring forth.

With this interpretation the entire message of Isaiah was clearly set forth in his commissioning. The themes would be: the apostasy and hardening of the people in general; the historical judgment in the exile; the preservation of the remnant; the Holy Seed, Immanuel and Servant of the Lord, who makes possible the Gospel proclamation: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Is 1;18)

Ezekiel --- Historical Background

Four manifestations of the K'BHOD YHWH are presented in Ezekiel. Since the first three are intimately connected with the historical situation of Judah, it seems desirable to set the stage by giving a resume of the political and spiritual situation at the outset.

Ezekiel stands at the end of an era. The nation, which God had led and protected for almost a millennium, was about to be carried into captivity. Babylon had carried off some of the people. The Davidic monarchy was tottering. Israel had filled the cup of God's wrath to the brim. The people had ignored the repeated chastisements and the copious warnings from the prophets. Their hearts were hardened to the calls to repentance. The prophecies of Isaiah that Babylon would subdue the Southern Kingdom were on the verge of fulfilment. The fall of Judah was imminent.

At this crossroad in the history of Judah, the Lord sent three prophets: Jeremiah, who preached to the people who were living in the homeland; Daniel, who was God's witness at the royal court of Babylon; and Ezekiel, who was God's called prophet to the common people who had already been carried into exile.

Ezekiel had been carried into exile in 597 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar had first captured Jerusalem. According to the custom of conquering monarchs, Nebuchadnezzar had carried the cream of Judean society into captivity -- all the princes, all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths (2 Kgs 24;14). Jehoiachin, the king of Judah (also named Coniah or Jeconiah), was also carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Only after a 37 year imprisonment was he made a life pensioner at the king's table.

The fall of Jehoiachin was so significant for Ezekiel that he dated

many of his prophecies from the time when this last Davidic king, who had been selected by the Israelites themselves, was removed from the throne. Nebuchadnezzar had installed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's brother, as the regent of Israel. But the puppet-king was no match for the war-party in Judah. Contrary to the counsel of Jeremiah, an alliance was made with Egypt. Zedekiah then took the plunge of refusing to submit to Babylon. Retaliation was swift. By January 588 B.C. the Babylonian army had laid siege to Jerusalem. A threat from an Egyptian army provided a temporary reprieve. But the Egyptians were soon driven back and the siege of Jerusalem was resumed. In July 587 the walls of Jerusalem were breached. When Zedekiah tried to escape, he was captured and taken as a prisoner to Riblah. His punishment for rebelling was to watch his sons executed. Then his own eyes were gouged out and he was taken in chains to Babylon, where he died. A month after Zedekiah's capture Jerusalem and the temple were burned to the ground.

It is against this background that Ezekiel prophesies. The first twenty-four chapters of his book are written prior to the fall of Jerusalem. The sinfulness of Israel and the vindication of God's judgment upon Israel is the main content of these chapters.

Chapters 25 - 32 express God's judgment on surrounding nations, which had belabored Israel. Chapters 33 - 39 predict a restoration of a remnant and also move toward the great battles at the end of time. The final eight chapters depict the glorious city of God.

The people to whom Ezekiel preached and wrote included two groups: the exiles and the residents in Judah. The exiles were defensive, because it seemed that the Lord had singled them out for punishment. They longed to be back in Judah, and had an almost superstitious attachment to the Temple. Many pinned their hopes for an end to the exile on the fact

that Jehoiachin was still alive. A vital part of Ezekiel's preaching was to comfort the exiles and to inform them that they would be the remnant.

On the other hand, those who had been left behind in Judah were not ignored in Ezekiel's preaching. They were exhibiting a false pride. They thought that, because they had not been carried off into captivity, the Lord had selected them to carry on the line of Judah. Their hopes for the future hinged on the physical existence of the temple. Most accepted the false premise that the presence of the temple in Jerusalem assured them of political safety. Consequently, they felt no need to change and continued in outright idolatry or in a syncretistic combination of worshipping idols and also worshipping in the temple. In general they ignored their responsibilities to the Lord. As stated earlier, Jeremiah was the prophet appointed to witness mightily against the sins of those who remained in Judah. He suffered severely for his witness. Some portions of Ezekiel were designed to support the witness of Jeremiah.

Besides dating his book from the fall of Jehoiachin, Ezekiel also referred to the thirtieth year. It will be assumed here that this dating refers to Ezekiel's own age. This assumption would mean that the Lord called him at the age when a priest was normally inaugurated into office. Further, it would mean that Ezekiel was twenty-five years old when he was carried into exile (cf 1;2-3), and therefore had real memories of Jerusalem and the temple. He was a priest, the son of Buzi, who was also a priest. He was married, though the Lord took his wife from him on the day when Jerusalem fell. He lived with a group of exiles at the Chebar river in Babylon. This biographical data is provided in the book itself; there are no references to Ezekiel in the contemporary Biblical records.

As mentioned earlier, there are four distinct occasions ³⁶ on which "The Glory of the Lord" revealed itself to Ezekiel. Each of these is carefully dated from the exile of Jehoiachin. Only Moses was privileged to see a greater number of manifestations. As the theocracy-monarchy was coming to an end it seems that the Lord wanted to instruct Ezekiel and the Israelites that He is not bound to the earthly temple at Jerusalem. Stated positively, the Lord wanted to show them that He is pleased to manifest His presence wherever there are faithful believers.

"Upon the throne was a figure with the appearance of a man."
Eze 1; 466

The fullest description of the phenomena that accompanied the is given in the first appearance. Ezekiel referred back to the first manifestation each time it appears with the words: "Like the glory I saw by the river Chebar." (Eze 3;23; 8;4; 43;3) Therefore it seems most efficient to gather any additional details from later manifestations and treat them at the outset. (One sidelight: Since Ezekiel is a fully accredited prophet through his ability to foretell future events, e.g., the fall of Jerusalem, the theory that this manifestation was merely a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) hardly deserves serious rebuttal.)

The first manifestation occurred while Ezekiel was beside the Chebar river. It appeared in the distance, coming from the north (Eze 1;4). The appearance was like a storm cloud with thunder and lightning and there was a bright light or fire in the center of it. The menacing appearance was a strong indication that judgment was imminent. A person is certainly reminded of the awe-inspiring manifestation that occurred on the crest of Mount Sinai many years earlier.

As the manifestation drew closer Ezekiel was able to distinguish

four living beings, which had the general shape of human beings. From Eze 10:1ff we learn that the creatures are cherubim. Each time that this order of angels is mentioned in the Scriptures, the cherubim are described as serving and singing doxologies in the immediate proximity of God's throne or carrying out some specific orders from the Lord. (cf Gn 3:24; Re 4:6ff).

In considering the appearance of the cherubim, it is well to remember that angels can assume forms which are appropriate to the functions they are performing. From such a point of view we will consider the outward appearance of the cherubim, the living beings ().

After giving the general description that the cherubim had a human form, Ezekiel noted that each of them had also four faces and four wings (Eze 1:5-6). The detailed description is presented from the bottom to the top. Starting with the legs of the cherubim, he noted that they were straight. Either the legs had no knee joint, or, at very least, the cherubim did not have to flex their legs as they darted about. The feet were in the shape of a calf's hoof, and the legs or lower extremities glowed like polished bronze.

Moving up to the wings and faces, Ezekiel noted that there were human hands under the wings. Each cherub extended two wings until they touched the outspread wings of two other cherubim, apparently forming a square. When the angels moved, their wings made considerable noise (Eze 1:24) and, when they stopped moving, their wings dropped to their sides. Thus it is clear that the "expanse over their heads" (Eze 1:26) was not actually supported by their wings. With the other pair of wings they covered their bodies in humility before the Lord.

In considering the faces, it should be noted that each had four faces (), not four heads (). Each of the cherubim

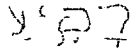
had the faces of a man, a lion, a bull, and an eagle. On each of the cherubim the faces were in the same relative position, so that the viewer would see an example of all of the faces from any direction when the cherubim were arranged in a square. The symbolism of these faces is that these beings combine: the intelligence of the human, the crown of earthly creation; the ruling power of the lion, the king of beasts; the physical strength of the bull, the strongest of domesticated animals, and the ability to soar like an eagle, the king of birds. By this combination of characteristics the cherubim are depicted as beings that are capable of doing far more than mortals and sum up in themselves the fact that all creation had been designed to glorify God. Since the Scripture gives no further explanation, it seems dangerous to go further.³⁷ Yet it must also be noted that Ezekiel, in Eze 10; 14, substituted the face of a cherub for the face of a bull, and in Revelation 4 the four living creatures do not have four faces apiece, but one of each of these faces is on the four living beings, i.e., one had the face of a lion, another of a calf, etc.

One other fact about the living beings is presented in Eze 10; 13, where it is stated that the whole body, including the wings, of each of these creatures was covered with eyes. Perhaps the best explanation of this phenomenon is that, if God's creatures can see so much at one time, just imagine what God can know with His omniscience. The eyes also seem to indicate that the cherubim can see every detail about how to serve God best.

The swift movement of the living creatures is also described. They darted "to and fro like bolts of lightning" (Eze 1;14), as they were swift to be about the Lord's business. It is also noted that they moved "straight forward" (Eze 1;12), "without turning as they went" (Eze 10;11).

In the midst of the square formed by the four living creatures were "burning coals of fire" (Eze 1;13). Additional descriptive terms are "torches darting" "lightning flashing." It should be noted that in Ezekiel's vision of God's judgment on Jerusalem, coals from this fire were taken and used to destroy Jerusalem (Eze 10;2ff).

Another phenomenon of this manifestation was the four wheels. One wheel moved in coordination with each of the living creatures. The wheels are described as made of "sparkling beryl" (Eze 1;16) or of "Tarshish stone" (Eze 10;9). Though they were not in any way 'attached' directly to the living creatures, the wheels still moved in perfect accord with the living beings, because "the spirit of the living beings was in them" (Eze 1;21). Within each wheel there was another wheel. Since the wheels could move in any direction, it is assumed that the wheel and the wheel within were at right angles (Eze 10;11 - cp a gyroscope). In Eze 10;13 they are called the "whirling wheels," which indicates that they continued to spin at all times, even when they were not moving across the terrain. The rims of the wheels also were "full of eyes round about" (Eze 1;18).

Above the cherubim was an "expanse" (Eze 1;22,  cf Gn 1;14) which gleamed like crystal. Above the expanse, Ezekiel saw a throne. The throne is described as lapis lazuli (Eze 1;26) and as a sapphire stone (Eze 10;1). On the throne was the figure with the appearance of a man. From His loins upward his body appeared as glowing metal with fire inside, and from his loins downward his body appeared like fire. This figure with the appearance of a man is specifically called "The Lord of Israel" in Eze 10; 20. Around this figure of a man was a radiance. That radiance had the character of a rainbow (Eze 1;28).

In interpreting the various aspects of this vision, we shall move from the top to the bottom. The radiance like a rainbow symbolizes God's faithfulness, just as God told Noah that a rainbow is to tell the world that He would never send a flood again. The Lord appeared in the form of a man to prepare the hearts of believers for the coming of the Messiah in human form. The glow and fire within the figure of the man indicated His glory, His holiness and His zeal for His Word. Since fire can also destroy, we are reminded of God's righteous judgment against all sin. The crystal firmament tied this vision to God's manifestation on Mount Sinai, when the Old Testament covenant was ratified (Ex-24) and also the manifestation to the Apostle John, which includes the sea of glass like crystal (Re 4;6). Since the word $\gamma\epsilon\tau\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ is used, and God is above it, we are reminded that the heaven of God is far above our earthly visible heavens.

The fire in the midst of the living beings becomes the means for destroying Jerusalem in the vision that begins in Eze 8. Consequently the fire points to God's righteous judgment on sin and apostasy. The darting movements of the cherubim indicate their ready obedience in God's service. The eyes indicate that the knowledge, which these agencies of God have, similar but distinctly subordinate to God's omniscience. The wheels provide the reason that this manifestation is called "God's Chariot-Throne." Since the wheels symbolize mobility, in this vision already there is a hint that the K'BHOD YHWH is not bound to any one place. We are reminded of Dr. Martin Luther's observation that the Gospel is like a rain shower, which waters one place for a while but then at God's good time moves on to another place. To proclaim this message, which includes both judgment and hope, God called Ezekiel.

In the presence of this awesome manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH.

Ezekiel, the created human being, could only fall on his face. This respectful, worshipful attitude is assumed by Ezekiel each time that the Lord granted him a vision of His K'BHOD. How humbly we ought join Ezekiel, even as we see this manifestation of "The Glory of the Lord" through his eyes!

In Ezekiel 1,28 when the prophet used the summary statement: "Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," our attention is caught by the term "likeness." The prophet was so steeped in the priesthood that he had a problem thinking of "The Glory of the Lord" in any other place than the temple. The Lord allows us to see into Ezekiel's mind when He inspires the prophet to describe the Chariot-Throne as the "likeness" (כְּדֹמָם) of the K'BHOD YHWH. It was inconceivable to Ezekiel that the actual K'BHOD YHWH would manifest itself anywhere but in the temple. Significantly in chapter 8ff this word is dropped. At that point, when the glory cloud left the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple to join the Chariot-Throne, it was evident to Ezekiel that the two manifestations were one in essence and that the Lord is not bound by any earthly locality. Consequently it was his privilege, even in exile, to see the manifestation of "The Glory of the Lord."

For Ezekiel a whole new concept was illustrated: The Lord is the Lord of the faithful wherever they might be. The Lord intended to carry out His gracious purposes through the people of the exile, rather than through the people who were at that time living in the land of Israel.

As indicated earlier, Ezekiel was thirty years old, when the first manifestation occurred at the Chebar river (Eze 1;1). Since priests were to be thirty years old when they were inducted into office, and since Ezekiel's work would include the vision in which he entered the temple, the Lord called him at that age. This was also the fifth year of Ezekiel's exile (Eze 1,2).

The purpose of the first manifestation of the Chariot-Throne was to call the prophet. Ezekiel was overwhelmed. The Lord commanded him to rise. But this was accomplished only when "The Spirit entered me and set me on my feet." In addressing Ezekiel the Lord used the term "Son of man." (Eze 2;1) This term became the normal form of address whenever the Lord dealt with Ezekiel. The form of address was apparently intended to remind Ezekiel that he was a man, a mere creature, in the presence of the glorious God, and yet it is with this term that Jesus chose to refer to Himself. "I am sending you" is the statement of Ezekiel's marching orders. The prophet was to be the tool of the Lord. The recipients of the prophet's message were variously described as "the sons of Israel," "a rebellious people," "stubborn," "obstinate," "a rebellious house," i.e., no longer the house of the Lord (Eze 2;3-6). To these people Ezekiel was to speak with the authority inherent in the words: "Thus says the Lord God." The prophet's attitude was to be that he should neither fear the people nor their words and he was to speak "whether they listened or not" (Eze 2;7).

This general charge is followed by a symbolic act. The act involved Ezekiel's mouth, for he was to be a mouthpiece of the Lord (cp Is 6;5-7). The Lord instructed him to accept the charge by eating a scroll and fill his whole body with the scroll (Eze 3;2-3). The message from the scroll was symbolically to be in every part of his body. But before eating Ezekiel noted that the scroll was written on the front and on the back (writing was usually done on one side of a scroll). He also observed that the writing on the scroll was lamentations, mourning and woes. The complaints against Israel were so copious that it was necessary to use both sides of the scroll. Then the Lord fed the scroll to his servant, and the remarkable comment is made that the scroll was sweet to his

taste (Eze 3;3). The symbolism of this sweetness is that the believer rejoices in the Lord both in His grace and in His righteous judgment. As our minds are led to follow the way of the Lord, we acknowledge that if people will not worship God as a God of grace, they will still have to acknowledge Him as a holy God, when He vindicates His righteousness by means of His retributive power.

After Ezekiel had accepted his prophetic commission by eating the scroll, the Lord reviewed again the difficulties that would attend his ministry. There would not be the obvious problems of language barriers, nor would the Lord send Ezekiel to many different peoples. Yet the people "who should listen to you" (Eze 3;6) would not. They were perfectly capable of receiving the message, but "they are not willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me." (Eze 3;7).

The Lord also promised to give Ezekiel the necessary strength to cope with such obvious frustrations. The Lord would make Ezekiel's "face as hard as their faces" (Eze 3;8) and his "forehead harder than flint" (Eze 3;9). In concluding the call the Lord repeated the charge that Ezekiel's words were always to be based on: "Thus saith the Lord God."

As this scene was closed the prophet heard a song of praise: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord in His place." (Eze 3;12)

It is remarkable that the next seven days were days of silence. Ezekiel reported that he was "embittered in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was heavy upon me" (Eze 3;14). With the reluctance of a Moses or a Jonah, Ezekiel was at that point less than enthusiastic about his call. But the Lord could also use this silence. For Ezekiel "sat there seven days, causing consternation" (Eze 3;15). The commentator Feinberg notes that Ezekiel's ministry thus began in silence, but the

curiosity that the silence aroused prepared the people for the time when Ezekiel did begin to speak. That time was not long in coming.

"And you will say to them, 'Thus saith the Lord.'"
Eze 3;22ff

Seven days after the first manifestation the Lord addressed Ezekiel again. In Eze 3 16 the phrase: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying" occurs for the first time. This refrain punctuates page after page of Ezekiel's book. On the basis of this statement Ezekiel proclaimed the theme: "They shall know that I am Jehovah (the Lord)." The people would recognize this fact both in God's judgment on Israel as well as in the message of grace that Ezekiel proclaimed.

In quiet censure of Ezekiel's silence, the Lord described the prophet's work as being a "watchman to the house of Israel" (Eze 3;17ff). Here, and again in Chapter 33, the Lord made the application that Ezekiel was to speak out to the wicked. If they hear, that wicked person is saved and the prophet has saved his own soul. On the other hand, if the prophet fails to speak, the wicked is lost, but the responsibility for his blood lies on the prophet. A parallel listing of responsibility is made concerning the righteous man who has fallen into sin.

Having laid this responsibility on Ezekiel, the Lord indicated that He wanted to talk to Ezekiel in the plain (Eze 3;22). There the Lord appeared to Ezekiel on His Chariot-Throne a second time. ³⁶ After the Spirit had again set the prostrate Ezekiel on his feet, the Lord explained that Ezekiel would not be able to speak at certain times for his tongue would stick to the roof of his mouth, but on the other hand, the Lord added, "When I speak to you, open your mouth." (Eze 3,26-27)

Thereupon the Lord directed Ezekiel to prepare four visual displays as instructional material for the people.

The first symbolic act was designed to show the certainty of Jerusalem's fall (Eze 4:1-3). Ezekiel was to prepare a brick (a building tile) by inscribing a map of the city of Jerusalem upon it. Then he was to lay siege about it on every side with all the paraphernalia of war. But he was to take an iron plate and place it between himself and the city. In this display even without words, Ezekiel was to predict the fall of Jerusalem. Yet the iron plate showed that the exiles would be protected.

The second symbolic act was designed to show the cause of Jerusalem's fall (Eze 4:4-8). For 390 days the prophet was to lie on his left side in front of the tile that represented Jerusalem. In this act Ezekiel was to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel, i.e., the Northern Kingdom. Each day was to represent a year. Similarly he was to lie on his right side for 40 days to represent the 40 years of Judah's iniquity. During this whole time he was to "set his face toward the siege of Jerusalem" and "with arm bared, prophesy against it." For this arduous task the Lord promised to give help: "I will place ropes upon you, so you cannot turn from side to side." In my own mind this last statement establishes the fact that Ezekiel did literally lie on his side for those 430 days. An answer to those who say that Ezekiel's next reference to time occurs before the 430 days had passed, the need for interstitial months in a lunar calendar seems to provide an adequate explanation regarding time factors.

How clearly this symbolic act showed God's patience in His dealing both with Israel and with Judah! If taken literally, 430 years would approximately cover the period of the monarchy. However, no certain date can be fixed as a starting point. Even if there were such a starting point, it would ignore the fact that the faithlessness of

Israel had preceded the monarchy. Therefore, we can only say that the 'long-suffering' of the Lord is adequately indicated by the figure "430 years."

The third symbolic act was designed to show the suffering that would occur in connection with the fall of Jerusalem (Eze 4;9-17). While Ezekiel was lying before the tile, he was to subsist on a starvation diet. The flour for his bread was to be a mixture of the most humble grains, and he was to have only 20 shekels weight of bread a day (equivalent to 8 oz or 220 g). Water was also to be limited to 1/6 hin (equivalent to 2/3 qt or 2/3 liter). To show that the Israelites would have to eat unclean food during the siege of Jerusalem, Ezekiel's bread was to be baked over human dung. This arrangement was so repulsive to Ezekiel that he requested an exception, indicating that he had never eaten anything which had been defiled. Thereupon the Lord accommodated Himself to Ezekiel's revulsion and permitted that the bread be prepared over cow's dung. Though this arrangement is not much less repulsive to contemporary Americans, it is a method of food preparation that is used in other societies.

The Lord Himself explained that his action symbolized the severe famine that would occur when Jerusalem would fall. Not only would the food be in short supply, but it would be ceremonially unclean. To such a sorry state the Lord would reduce Jerusalem when He carried out His judgment.

The fourth symbolic act presented the final outcome of the captivity for the people of Israel (Eze 5;1-17). "When the days of the siege are completed," i.e., when Ezekiel had completed the 430 days, he was to sharpen a sword and use it to shave his head and his beard. The hair was then to be divided into thirds by weight. One third was to be burned

in the center of the city, a second third Ezekiel was to strike with the sword all around the city, and a third third he was to scatter to the wind. Yet he was to save a few hairs in the edge of his robe. But even some of that small remnant of hair was to be burned in the fire.

The Lord explained the symbolism of this charade in the following way: The Lord had placed Israel at the crossroads of the world (Eze 5;5) so that they could be witnesses of His grace to all people, but they had rebelled against Him and walked in their own ways, (Eze 5;6). Indeed, as people to whom much had been given, they had dealt more wickedly with the Lord than any other nation. Therefore, the Lord said, "I am against you" (Eze 5;8). Truly it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Lord. For again the Lord stated that there would be suffering, the like of which He would never inflict on man again (Eze 5;9), e.g., fathers eating sons and vice versa. (Eze 5;10). God would not pity! He would not spare! Even the remnant (and this is the only time the Lord clearly mentions the remnant in this section of the symbolic acts) would be scattered.

From the vantage point of later history we know that the message of these four symbolic acts became stark reality. The Lord did "execute judgments against you (Judah and Jerusalem) in anger, wrath and raging and rebuke" (Eze 5;15), until His anger was spent. This correlation and fulfilment is another vivid reminder that a prophecy is as sure as reality once the Lord has affixed His name to the prophecy, especially with words like: "I, the Lord, have spoken." (Eze 5;15)

There is no indication of the withdrawal of the K'BHOD YHWH at the end of Chapter 5, but Chapter 6 begins with the formula: "And the word of the Lord came to me saying," This formula indicates that the lord used a different method of revelation to give the discourses of Chapters

6 and 7 to Ezekiel. The discourses have the same message as the symbolic acts that have just been considered.

*"The glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple."
Eze 8 ; 2 - 11 ; 25*

The vision of Ezekiel that is reported in chapters 8 - 11 must have shaken the prophet to the very core of his being. As a priest, who even in exile focused his spiritual life and hopes on the temple in Jerusalem, Ezekiel must have felt very dismal when he had to report that the "Glory of the Lord" had departed from the temple. The prophet had seen the temple before he was carried into exile and knew that it had been consecrated by the presence of the K'BHOD YHWH. Now he had the sad duty to report that the Lord had decommissioned Solomon's temple. As Ezekiel reported the departure of God's K'BHOD, he also recorded how the Lord had vindicated His actions at each step by pointing to the extreme provocation that He had suffered at the hands of Israel.

The framework scene of this soul-wrenching event was that Ezekiel was sitting with some of the elders of Judah in his home in Chebar. Suddenly the being that had appeared on the throne in the vision of the Chariot-Throne appeared and grabbed Ezekiel by a lock of his hair. The being in the likeness of the appearance of man can be clearly identified because He had the appearance of fire from the loins downward and the appearance of brightness from the loins upward. Then the Spirit of God transported Ezekiel to Jerusalem, and the events that follow occurred "in the visions of God." (Eze 8;3; cf note # 34).

When Ezekiel arrived at the temple, the manifestation of the Chariot-Throne occurred again. It came toward the temple from the north. While Ezekiel stood at the north gate of the temple the Lord began to list His indictments against Israel.

The first indictment focused on the "idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy" (Eze 8;3), which was just inside the north gate of the temple. The designation for this idol seems to indicate that this form of idolatry especially (even as all idolatry) does provoke the Lord to jealousy. The idol seems to represent the forms of Canaanitish idolatry that the Israelites adopted and adapted. This idol was reason enough in itself that the Lord should be far from His sanctuary (Eze 8;6).

But there is more! When Ezekiel noted a hole in the wall at the entrance of the court, the Lord instructed Him to enlarge the hole and then to proceed through the door that was revealed within. Inside the room that Ezekiel entered were 70 elders of Israel worshipping all manner of creeping things, beasts, detestable things and all manner of idols carved on the wall (Eze 8;10). The indictment was clear. The leaders of Israel were corrupted by the idolatry that had been imported from the Egyptian animal cults. The Lord indicated two additional aspects of this abomination: These people also worshipped their idols in their homes; and laymen were using the censers and burning the incense -- a function that the Lord had reserved for the priests (Cp the rebellion of Korah, Nu 16). The false security which these people felt in their idolatry was added: "The Lord does not see us; The Lord has forsaken the land" (Eze 8;12). With those words they were denying the omniscience of the Lord and His providence for Israel. How corrupt they were!! How valid the Lord's indictment was! As the fortunes of the monarchy were fading, they assumed that it was God's fault and therefore they were turning to other gods, who, they hoped, would treat them better. They acted on the superstitious assumption that by changing their spiritual allegiance, they could profit in their personal and corporate life.

But there is still more! The next indictment was directed against

the idolatry which the women practiced (Eze 8;14-15). Near the north gate of the temple Ezekiel saw the women worshipping the idol Tammuz. This idol has been identified with the Babylonian deity, Damuzi. Damuzi was the ruler of spring vegetation, who supposedly died during the summer heat, but was revived after the scorching of the summer. His worship was accompanied with the basest forms of sexual immorality. The women were participating in such acts and they even had the temerity to conduct such "worship" in the temple.

The fourth indictment is no less damning. In front of the east gate of the temple between the porch and the altar twenty five men were facing the east and apparently were worshipping the sun (Eze 8;16ff). This worship had also been imported from the nations east of Israel. The twenty five men seem to be representatives of the 24 courses of the priests plus the High Priest. Even the religious leaders were guilty of idolatry! While they bowed to the rising sun, their backs were physically turned to the Lord's temple. Spiritually and physically they were turning their backs on the Lord.

What horror must have filled Ezekiel's mind as he witnessed these desecrations within the temple! How bold the contrast, as Ezekiel heard the words of the Lord, -- living, omniscient, and exalted on His Chariot-Throne, expressing Himself concerning these forms of worship, which exalted mere wood or stone, or some other aspect of the Lord's creation! What a sad commentary on the spiritual life of the Israelites! They had completely lost sight of the purpose of the temple and "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures (Rm 1;23). "Abominations!" the Lord declared. They have filled the land with violence and provoked me repeatedly!(Eze 8;17), How bold they are! They put the

"twig to their noses"(Eze 8;17),i.e., as the context clearly indicates, they thumbed their noses at God.

In these four scenes the full indictment of the Lord against the Israelites was made. The Lord had been more than patient!! But the people thought "lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Rm 2;4). They were hardened in their apostasy.

In chapter 9 the focus shifts from the indictments to judgments. Seven men were introduced into the vision. Six of them were carrying "shattering weapons," (Eze 9;2) and the seventh was clothed with linen and had a writing case at his loins. These men stood before the bronze altar in the temple and awaited their orders from the Lord.

Before the orders were issued to the seven men, the Lord took the first step in decommissioning the temple. "The Glory of the Lord" left the area by the cherub, i.e., it left the space above the ark of the covenant between the cherubim and moved to the threshold. The K'BHOD YHWH was leaving Solomon's temple!!

Then orders were issued to the seven men. It is interesting to note that, in spite of all the provocation, the Lord still acted in grace and mercy first. The man in linen was instructed to move throughout Jerusalem and **make** a mark on the foreheads of the people who were sighing and groaning over all the abominations in the city (Eze 9;4). The purpose of the mark became evident when the other six men were instructed to destroy everyone who did not have the mark. They were to strike and slay without pity and without regard to age or sex. Their work was to begin at the sanctuary of the temple and move outwards through the whole city. So the slaughter started with the seventy elders in the temple courtyard. How fitting that the physically dead should defile the place where they had

introduced spiritual death!!

While the orders for destruction were being carried out, Ezekiel expressed His concern that a remnant should be preserved (Eze 9;8). In proper believing humility the prophet was drawing attention to the promises which the Lord Himself had made that a remnant would survive the captivity. The Lord answered, however, that He would utterly destroy. But the grace of the Lord was still evident as the man in linen reported, "I have done just as you commanded me" (Eze 9;11). The faithful would indeed be saved.

At this point the next step of the decommissioning of the temple occurred. The K'BHOD YHWH moved to the outer court of the temple. The cloud of the K'BHOD YHWH had moved outside of the sanctuary.

The cherubim that were with the Chariot-Throne started their wings whirring in agitation. The sound was like the voice of the Almighty. They were ready to move on at the Lord's command. As Ezekiel's attention was drawn to the Chariot-Throne again, he used the occasion to describe more details about the manifestation itself (cf the description given earlier).

Then the man in linen received the coals from the hand of one of the cherubim and went out to destroy the city itself.

Most significant for our study is the fact that the glory-cloud left the threshold and stood over the cherubim (Eze 10;18). As the whole manifestation stood at the entrance of the east gate of the temple, the essential identity between the vision that Ezekiel had witnessed earlier and the K'BHOD YHWH in the temple was shown. Ezekiel realized that there was no distinction between the two types of manifestation and stated: "The Glory of the God of Israel hovered over the cherubim." (Eze 10;18-22).

In chapter 11 one more evidence of God's righteousness in judging

the Israelites remained to be shown.

Twenty five men were assembled at the gate of the temple. Two are named in particular: Jaazaniah, the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah, the son of Benaiah. These two men were political leaders of Judah. They had hypnotized the people with false hopes. They had urged the people to build, because the nation was going to endure. They had used the simile that Jerusalem was the "pot" that would protect the "flesh" from the fire (Eze 11;3). Just as a pot prevents the meat inside from being consumed by the fire, even though the meat may be "stewed" for a time, so Jerusalem would protect the people inside. But the Lord viewed matters quite differently!! Such hopes were folly, if the Lord Himself were not present to support such hopes. Indeed the Lord vowed to "judge you (the people) to the border of Israel" (Eze 11;10). God's purpose was: "So you shall know that I am the Lord." (Eze, 11;10). Then with attention-grabbing suddenness, Pelatiah died.

Again Ezekiel expressed his concern about the remnant of Israel. "Alas, Lord God! Wilt thou bring the remnant of Israel to a complete end?" (Eze 11;13)

The Lord responded with gracious concern. The remnant was not to come from the unfaithful people that were still inhabiting Jerusalem and who were pinning their hopes on the fact that they were still physically in Canaan. Rather "your fellow exiles" (Eze 11;15) will be the remnant. Though they had been far removed from the Promised Land, the Lord was still their sanctuary. He did not need the temple to maintain such a relationship. The Lord would assemble them and give them the land. When they returned to the land, the exiles would remove the abominations. The Lord would give them a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone, and they would walk in the statutes of the Lord and do them. "Then they will

be My people, and I will be their God" (Eze 11;20).

Such was the Lord's definition and description of the remnant. Upon this positive note the K'BHOD YHWH departed from the city. It moved eastward and hovered over the mountain which was east of the city.

The temple was "de-consecrated." The building now had nothing more to adorn it than the skill of the builders and the cunning of the metal workers. It was no different now from any idol-temple. And the city, which had spurned the Lord, had lost its buckler and shield. The people were abandoned to the Babylonian armies which would wreak the havoc that the Lord intended.

With the departure of the K'BHOD YHWH the vision ended (Eze 11;24). Ezekiel was transported by the Spirit back to the exiles in Chaldea. Faithfully the prophet reported all that he had seen. (Eze 11;25).

From chapter 12 - 24 under direct instructions from the Lord, Ezekiel presented the sins of various groups within the people of Israel. The laity, the women, the judges, the royalty, the Levites and priests are each castigated in turn for the part they have played in the corruption of the spiritual life of Israel.

About three years after "The Glory of the Lord" left the temple, Zedekiah, the vassal king of Judah, disavowed his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. In the 9th year after Jehoiachin's capture, on the 10th day of the month, the Lord informed Ezekiel that Babylon had laid siege to Jerusalem. About a year and one half later the city fell. On that day the Lord took Ezekiel's wife from him. But the Lord instructed Ezekiel not to mourn his wife (Eze 24;16ff). This was to be a sign for the people. When the people asked him why he had failed to mourn, he was to explain that this sign meant that they were not to mourn over the fall of Jeru-

salem. Still another year and a half later, the report came that Jerusalem had fallen (the 12th year, the 5th day of the 10th month). The Lord's prophecies through Ezekiel were proved 100% correct.

At the beginning of chapter 25 the mood of Ezekiel's prophecies change! The judgment of the Lord is directed against the surrounding nations (Chapters 25 - 32).

In chapters 33 - 37 the prophecies of restoration are presented. In chapter 33 the Lord again described Ezekiel's responsibilities as a watchman over Israel. In this chapter the words of gracious concern occur: "As I live saith the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked might turn and live." Chapter 34 pictures the Lord as gathering the sheep that have been scattered by unfaithful shepherds and points to the Messiah under the picture of the "one shepherd, My servant David." Chapter 35 depicts the destruction of Edom for its never-ending enmity against the Lord's people. Chapter 36 speaks again of the spiritual restoration of Israel, and its return to the land of Canaan. He promises to give a new heart to the people and promises also to send "My Spirit." "You will be My people and I will be your God." Chapter 37 is the vision of the dry bones that were brought back to life. Vividly this vision presented the fact that it is the Lord who gives all life, and also just as vividly shows that spiritual life originates in God and is produced through the preaching of God's Word. For it was when Ezekiel preached to the bones that they were restored to normal living forms. Through Ezekiel's preaching the Lord instilled life into those bones and they became a large army. At this point Ezekiel seems to be moving into a picture for the spread of the Gospel in the New Testament. The parable of the two sticks, which represented the people of Judah and the people of the Northern Kingdom, suggests the concept of the one church

comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. Over this one church "My servant David, their prince forever" shall rule.

Thereupon Ezekiel's prophecies move even further into the future as chapter 38 - 39 depict the final great conflict between the church and the forces of evil under their leader, Gog.

But the people of God are secure because the Lord will finally act to destroy the forces of evil. (Cp Revelation). Chapters 40 to 48, while depicting the heavenly promised land and the New Jerusalem bring us the fourth manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH in the book of Ezekiel.

"This is the place where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever."
Ez 43;2 - 44;4

Although the manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH is depicted in chapters 43 & 44, it is necessary to know the scope of the last nine chapters of Ezekiel in order to understand the significance of this manifestation. So a brief overview of these chapters is in order. I shall use Keil's summary:

When the Lord shall gather the sons of Israel from their banishment among the heathen, and bring them back to Canaan, so that they shall dwell therein as a united people under the rule of His servant David, then shall they, on the fresh distribution of the land according to the full extent to which God promised it to the patriarchs, and indicated the boundaries thereof through Moses (Eze 48,15-20), set apart the central portion of it as a heave(-offering) for the sanctuary and His servants, the priests and Levites, as well as for the capital and its laborers, and also give to the prince a possession of his own on both sides of this heave(-offering). In the central part of the heave(-offering), which occupies a square space of 25 thousand rods in length and breadth, the temple is to stand upon a high mountain, and cover, with its courts, a space of 500 cubits square; and round about it a space of 500 rods on every side is to form a boundary between the holy and the common. The Glory of Jehovah will enter into the Temple and dwell therein forever; and the temple, in its whole extent, will be most holy (Eze 48,1-12). Round about this the priests receive a tract of land of 25,000 rods in length and 10,000 in breadth to dwell in as a sanctuary for the sanctuary; and by their side, toward the north, the Levites receive an area of similar size for dwelling-places; But toward the south a tract of land of 25,000 rods in length and 5,000 rods in breadth is to be the property of the city; and in the centre of this area, the city, with its open space, is to cover a square of 5,000 rods in length and breadth; And

the rest of the land on both sides is to be given to the laborers of the city out of all Israel for their maintenance. The land lying on the eastern and western sides of the heave(-offering), as far as the Jordan and Mediterranean, is to be the property of the prince, and to remain the hereditary possession of his sons (Eze 45,1-8; 46,16-18; 48,8-22). After the separation of the heave(-offering), which with the prince's possession, cover about the fifth part of the whole extent of Canaan, the rest of the land on the north and south of the heave(-offering), is to be divided into equal parts and distributed among the twelve tribes, so that every tribe-territory shall stretch from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, -- seven tribes receiving their hereditary portions on the north of the heave(-offering) and five on the south, whilst the foreigners having their permanent homes among the different tribes are to receive hereditary possessions like the native Israelites. (Eze 47,21 - 48,7 and 48,23 - 29).

Israel, thus placed once more in possession of the promised land, is to appear with its prince before the Lord in the temple at the yearly feasts, to worship and to offer sacrifices, the provision of which is to devolve upon the prince at all festal seasons, for which purpose the people are to pay to him the sixtieth part of the corn, the hundredth part of the oil, and the two hundredth head from the flock every year as a heave(-offering). The sacrificial service at the altar and in the holy place is to be performed by none but priests of the family of Zadok, who kept the charge of the Lord faithfully when the people wandered into idolatry. All the other descendants of Levi are simply to discharge the inferior duties of the temple service, whilst uncircumcised heathen are not to be admitted into the temple any more, that it may not be defiled by them (Eze 43,13 - 44,31; 45,8-46,15 and 19-24). When Israel shall thus serve the Lord its God and walk in His commandments and statutes, it will enjoy the richest blessing from God. A spring of living water will issue from the threshold of the temple house, and swelling after a short course into a mighty river, will flow down to the Jordan valley, empty itself into the Dead Sea, and make the water of that sea so wholesome that it will swarm with living creatures and fishes of every kind; And on the banks of the river fruit-trees will grow with never-withering leaves, which will bear ripe fruit for food every month, whilst the leaves, will serve as medicine (47,1-12).³⁸

Though this presentation uses a description of the physical Canaan, it soon becomes evident that Ezekiel in chapter 40 - 48 is describing an idealized or heavenly temple, city and land. Millenarians have, of course, challenged such an interpretation and have posited a return of all Jews to Canaan and a restoration of the temple, of its sacrifices and of the theocracy within the geographical territory of the Holy Land. Though an exhaustive rebuttal of the millennial interpretation is beyond the scope of this presentation, let it suffice to point out the following:

1. The temple is already in existence; Ezekiel is merely to report what he has seen. The details of the measurements demonstrate the perfection of this temple and land. The temple, as described and measured, was huge. It would have covered an area much larger than the ancient city of Jerusalem. The mountain on which it stood is never designated as Mt Zion. If the mountain were indeed to be Mt. Zion, an earth-moving project would have to be undertaken that would defy the abilities of modern machinery. And be it further noted, that, in contrast to the detailed instructions Moses received for building the tabernacle, there is no command whatsoever indicating that the Israelites were to build this temple.

2. The land already belongs to the Lord and it is His to divide. There is no need to conquer the land before the division. There are also geographical problems for the literal interpretation. The strip of land from the Jordan to the Mediterranean which was to contain the temple, the city and the homes of the priests and Levites, and the land of the prince would be a sizable portion of the entire land. The amount of land that would remain for the twelve tribes is very small. Each of the twelve tribes would receive a strip of land from the Jordan to the Mediterranean that is only about ten to twelve miles wide. Such an area would hardly be adequate to provide standing space for all the Jews that are supposed to return to Canaan.

3. There is no human High Priest designated. All the priests from the family of Zadok are on a par. This would point to a time beyond the coming of Christ, our Great High Priest.

4. There is no mercy seat or ark of the covenant in the temple. Significantly the Day of Atonement is omitted from the list of feasts. Again this would point to the time when the single perfect sacrifice of

Christ has abolished the need for the Old Testament types and symbols. Stated another way, Christ has entered in once into the Holy Place and presented the perfect sacrifice for us.

5. Perhaps the most telling internal argument against the millennialists is the 'river of the waters of life.' Again I quote Keil:

To this must be added the river issuing from the threshold of the eastern temple gate, with its marvellously increasing flow of water, and the supernatural force of life which it contains; for, as we have already pointed out, this cannot be regarded as an earthly river watering the land, but can only be interpreted figuratively, i.e., in a symbolic-typical sense. But if the stream of water flowing from the temple cannot be regarded as a natural river, the temple also cannot be an earthly temple, and the sacrificial service appointed for this temple cannot be taken as divine service consisting in the slaying and offering of bullocks, goats, and calves; and as the entire description forms a uniform prophetic picture, the distribution of the land among the sons of Israel must also not be interpreted literally. 39

After these remarks we affirm that these chapters of Ezekiel are an Old Testament presentation which telescopes the picture of the New Testament church with the heavenly Jerusalem (Re 21 & 22). Our approach can be stated simply in the words of Kretzmann:

The remaining chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy give an ideal picture of the spiritual temple of the Lord, of His Church of the New Testament, of His glorious kingdom. It was a wonderful vision which was vouchsafed to the prophet, its beauty being enhanced by the descriptive details. As in the case of every parable, however, it would manifestly be a mistake to stress every point of parallelism. The exposition, therefore, deals with the larger outlines of the picture only. The ideal temple, as here pictured, exhibits, under Old Testament forms which are used as being familiar to the men whom Ezekiel was addressing, the essential character of the Church of Christ and of the worship of the Messiah as it would be when He would exercise His rule among His own people, among the believers in every part of the earth. 40

A more technical description is given by Keil:

Thus also in Ezekiel the bringing back of the people of Israel, who have been scattered by the Lord among the heathen on account of their apostasy, to the promised land, the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple, which have been destroyed, and the future blessing of Israel with the most abundant supply of earthly good from the land which has been glorified into paradisaical

beyond the indefinite future to the sense of the English word "forever.") The perfection of this now-consecrated temple was evident, as the Lord exclaimed that it would never again be defiled.

To Ezekiel God then gave the charge to make the whole vision known. (Eze 43;10). He is also commanded to write about this experience.

This idealized temple was consecrated by the presence of the Lord, But we note that the Lord in this temple is to be very accessible. He makes it possible to worship Him directly. He is no longer veiled. We cannot but think of St. Paul's words, "Then shall I know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13;12)

The perfection of the temple itself is presented in its spaciousness, in its magnificence, in the fact that the whole area is declared holy, and in the measurements that show that it is a perfect square. Such is the perfection to which the Lord calls us.

Since this picture of the heavenly city and temple are pictures under the forms of Old Testament worship, we might note a few things about the fact that sacrifices are still stipulated. Though all forms of Old Testament sacrifice are referred to, the shift of emphasis is clearly to the sacrifices of service and consecration to the Lord. Thus sin offerings are mentioned only for the first month of the year, and even those sacrifices are part and parcel of the Passover celebration which points to God's gracious deliverance of His people. The other feasts that are enjoined, as well as the sabbath offerings, the new moon offerings, the morning sacrifice all focus on the sacrifices that depict worship and fellowship with God.

Copious burnt offerings are to be brought, Yet it is remarkable that the victims for the burnt offerings and for the sin offerings are to be provided by the great prince (Eze 45,13ff). It would seem that this pro-

cedure, which applied to all festivals, to the sabbaths, and to the new moons, suggests that the Savior would provide what is necessary for the offerings for man's sins, and that the members of the nation were to enjoy on such a substitutionary basis all the benefits of fellowship with God. In other words, for the people the emphasis in all the offerings was on their new relationship to the Lord on the basis of the gift of the prince. Thus whether it was the burnt offerings, in which the vicarious sacrifice dominated, of the grain offerings, with its significance of consecrating life itself to God, or the peace offerings, which were to express the joy of the communion of the forgiven sinner with his gracious God, the emphasis is clearly worship and service.

It is impossible to leave this section without speaking further of the river of the water of life (Eze 47; lff). The source was at the threshold of the sanctuary. Clearly this is to indicate that the Lord is the source of all life. The stream then flowed past the altar and out the east gate. The remarkable increase in the river, even though it had no tributaries, shows the power of God to create life. As the waters flow into the Dead Sea and revitalize its waters, we note that God can bring forth life, even in those places where there is no life. The trees along the bank, providing both food and medicine, remind us that we are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." (1 Pe 1;5)

What a beautiful picture this swelling river is of the power of God to reach out with the Gospel and create a new life within us and others. As the Gospel spreads in a world that because of sin is a spiritual desert, the Lord provides the power to make all live. As the river of the Gospel spreads and grows it reaches people in many places and gives them the life that will not end (cp Jesus' reference to living waters in Jn 4).

One final note concerns the last verse of Ezekiel (48;35). The name of the city is given as JEHOVAH SHAMMAH ("The Lord is there.") By contrast Jerusalem fell because the people did not any longer want the Lord to be there. The temple was destroyed because the Lord departed and was no longer there. But this heavenly city will have the characteristic that the "Lord is there." What privilege is ours! What joy should fill our hearts, as we see that we are heirs of this city on the basis of Christ's redemption, made known to us through the Gospel!! "The Lord is there" and may each one who reads this ultimately be "there," in the presence of the Lord where there is fulness of joy.

*"The Ancient of Days took his seat... and there before me was One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven."
Dn 7; 9-14*

The two manifestations that we will be considering in Daniel do not directly state that they are manifestations of "The Glory of the Lord". Yet especially after examining the manifestations in Ezekiel and in The Revelation of St. John, one is compelled to include the manifestations which are recorded in Daniel. Features of other manifestations, which are directly designated as manifestations of the K'BHOD YHWH are clearly and unmistakably included in the manifestations in Daniel.

Supportive data is also presented in the Scriptures in the instances in which Christ clearly alludes to these manifestations to Daniel in His descriptions of His Second Coming. Clouds, glory, angels, judgment all come through clearly as Jesus describes His Parousia. Let one specific reference illustrate this: In Mt 26;62-63 the central issue of the trial before the Sanhedrin is presented. The High Priest addressed Jesus directly: "I adjure You by the living God, that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God." To this Jesus answers: "You have said

it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven." This allusion to the seventh chapter of Daniel was not lost on the Sanhedrin. They accused Jesus of blasphemy because they recognized that Jesus by referring to the seventh chapter of Daniel did claim that He was God. Their error was only in the fact that they did not use the evidence that showed that Jesus had the right to make the claim.

With this general background we shall proceed to examine the manifestation itself. The manifestation occurred in a dream, and was only the central part of a dream that included a description of the fate of four great world powers, which are represented in the dream by four beasts. We shall focus first on the manifestation proper.

The central figure of the manifestation is "the Ancient of Days." This designation presents the fact that God is from everlasting to everlasting. The form of the figure indicates God, the Father. Certain features of the manifestation remind us of the Chariot-Throne, which appeared in Ezekiel. For the Jew in exile, this pictorial presentation signified that God was still on His throne, even though He was no longer residing in the temple in Jerusalem.

In comparison to Ezekiel, Daniel focused far more clearly on the person on the throne. The specific features of the manifestation set forth many of the attributes of God. His glory is set forth by His garments, "like white snow," denoting His splendor and purity. "The hair of His head was like pure wool" which to Daniel's generation indicated someone who was wise and deserving of respect and veneration. "His throne was ablaze with flames" is a phrase that showed His zeal to warm the hearts of believers and to destroy and punish the wicked. "Its wheels were a burning fire" depicted the Chariot-Throne which after the destruction of the temple would move from place to place on the earth, just as

the Gospel-shower moves from place to place on the earth to bring people to faith. The "river of fire flowing and coming out from before Him," was a clear warning to unbelievers since it depicts the certainty of God's judgment upon those who despise His Gospel. Around this throne are an innumerable group of angelic attendants.

The solemn purpose of this manifestation is to present the day of judgment. "The court sat, And the books were opened" (Dn 7;10). After all the nations have had their day in world history, the Lord will have the final say. He will carry out a judgment upon all the people of the world.

Thereupon a second figure came upon the scene in Daniel's dream. He is described as "One like a Son of Man" (דָּבָר כְּבָרְאִים), coming in the clouds of heaven. Keil summarizes the significance in this way:

The superhuman or divine nature of the person seen in the form of man lies in the coming with the clouds of heaven, since it is true only of God that He makes the clouds His chariot; Ps 104,3; cf Is 19,1. But on the other hand, also, the words do not exclude the humanity as little as the *אִישׁ כְּבָרְאִים*. Re 1,13; For as C.B. Michaelis has remarked, 'The 'Kaph' non excludit rei veritatem, sed formam ejus quod visum est describit (The Hebrew letter 'Kaph' does not exclude the truth of the matter, but describes the form of that which is seen.); so that with Oehler we may say: The Messiah here appears as a divine being as much as He does a human. ⁴²

The full meaning of Daniel's vision is evident in the fact that Jesus during His ministry frequently referred to Himself by the name "the Son of man," thereby making clear reference to this manifestation. Nor can one help remembering the careful wording of Php 2, where we are told that in His humiliation Jesus was "in the likeness of man, being found in appearance as a man." In the same careful way even within this manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH, the humanness of Christ is presented, so that the Old Testament believers might know that He would come as man for man to die, and also would again rule in glorious triumph.

Though Christ, prior to His incarnation, was "in the form of God and did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Php 2), we note that the vision depicts Him as receiving all "dominion, glory, and a kingdom." This gift is given to Christ according to His human nature. According to His divine nature all glory and dominion had been His from all eternity. Therefore Daniel is here depicting a time beyond the ascension of Jesus, when He was exalted far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and above every name that is named. We also note that Jesus in His ministry stated that the "Father has given me authority to execute all judgment." (Jn 5;27)

Returning to the specifics of Daniel's dream, the kingdom of the One like a Son of man was to be a world-wide kingdom, in which people of every nation and tongue or language would serve him (Dn 7;14). This kingdom would also be an everlasting kingdom. In bold contrast with the passing of the world-powers, the kingdom of Messiah will be an "everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed" (Dn 7;14).

The blessings which the citizens of Messiah's kingdom will receive are presented in Dn 7;18: "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for ages to come." These thoughts are repeated in vv 22 & 27.

How comforting this must have been to the faithful of Daniel's day! They had been carried into captivity. Some had returned to the land of Canaan under Cyrus' decree but even when they tried to rebuild the temple, some wept because it was so humble in comparison with Solomon's Temple. Further, the problems with the Samaritans and with the Medo-Persian rulers were disturbing. Their little nation was engulfed in an ebb and flow of tidal proportions, as world-powers swept across their land with powerful

armies. But they had something more secure and more lasting than the worldly powers had. They were in the kingdom of Christ, which at the last judgment would be shown to be more lasting, more victorious, than all the world-powers put together.

From this thought we turn to the balance of the dream that was given to Daniel. In the part prior to the manifestation of the Ancient of Days, four beasts had been presented. The winged lion had been overwhelmed by the bear; the bear in turn had been overwhelmed by the four-winged leopard. Finally the leopard had been defeated by the beast that could not be compared to earthly beasts, but had teeth of iron and claws of brass. The ten horns of the fourth beast were also described, plus the fact that another horn rose to supplant three of the other horns. This last little horn had eyes, and spoke boastful, proud, and blasphemous things.

The explanation that was given to Daniel (Dn 7;15ff) identified these beasts as the world powers that were to come into existence in the Lord's plan for the history of the world. The lion was the Babylonian empire. The bear and the leopard represented the Medo-Persian and Grecian (Macedonian) powers, respectively. For these two a further explanation was given in the vision of the ram and the goat in chapter eight. The beast which could not be compared to an earthly animal, represented the kingdom that would engulf all the others and, though it is not specifically named, indicated the Roman Empire. The little horn which supplanted three kings symbolized the Antichrist, especially as it tried to caricature the "One like a Son of man." The caricature is in the fact that the little horn though really a beast like the other kingdoms tries to emulate a human with its eyes, its mouth and its ability to speak. Yet from that mouth come forth blasphemies, boastful and proud things against the God of gods.

There is more on the matter of the Antichrist in the next section on chapters 10 - 12.

In considering this dream, a person is immediately struck by the fact that the beasts are used to represent earthly kingdoms. Yet such a comparison is most appropriate, because man, when he loses his spiritual moorings, is little more than a beast. Power, and especially power to hurt and destroy and rule by fear, become the center of his existence. By contrast the Messiah is One like a Son of man, who is able to restore the proper relationship with God and thus bring man to his highest humanity. Really, the contrast is as great as the fact that the beasts rise from the sea, and the Son of man comes on the clouds of heaven.

Still another feature of these manifestations to Daniel reminds us of the outlines of The Revelation of St. John. A first focus is on secular history and the suffering that is brought on the human race within the ebb and flow of world power. Those calamities which are brought about by natural means are a judgment of God. The second focus is on spiritual apostasy which reaches its culmination in antichrists and the great Antichrist, who dares to blaspheme God and to mislead many with his flattery and cunning. But the final scene is always the judgment of God, in which the faithful of all generations are given their inheritance in the everlasting kingdom of God (cf Dn 7;14; also vv 22 & 28). In the great battle between the spiritual powers of God and the satanic powers of hell, the Lord will at His good time show His mighty arm and gain the victory for all believers.

From our vantage point in history, another feature about Daniel's prophecies is that the Lord clearly knows history in advance. The study of Daniel made it possible for believers in Jesus' day to know that the coming of the Messiah was imminent (cf Simeon in the temple).

With such zeal we ought also examine all the revelations that the Lord has made, so that we might know the times and especially the imminence of the end times.

We close this section with a few comments about God's zeal on behalf of His word, as illustrated in this manifestation to Daniel. There is, of course, very clear preaching of the Law, as the prediction of judgment upon the world-powers is clearly presented. But the Gospel is also there in the proclamation of the final and eternal victory of Christ, the Messiah. So though the world powers may seem overwhelmingly powerful, there is one who is still more powerful and will be able to carry out His will in the end. So clinging to the Messiah brings the assurance that we will be on the side of ultimate victory.

"The vision pertains to the days yet future"
Dan 10 - 12

Before considering the manifestation in chapter ten reference must be made to "the voice" from the Ulai Canal (Dan 8;16). Apparently the owner of the voice above the Ulai Canal was the same person as the one who will be described in chapter ten. The previous statement is carefully qualified because there is no description given in chapter eight. On the other hand the "voice" gives orders to Gabriel. Therefore we make only this passing reference, even though the vision of the ram and the shaggy goat is very significant in understanding the rise and fall of the Medo-
 Persian Empire and the Grecian (Macedonian) Empire. In that vision a four-fold division of the Macedonian Empire is prophesied through the four lesser horns that grew on the goat, after the one large horn had been broken. The prophecy was fulfilled when the empire of Alexander, the Great, was divided among his four generals. The four nations that resulted became the dominant factor of mideastern politics until the rise of the

of the Roman Empire. Among the later kings of those four nations there was to be one who would be especially wicked. This later king has been identified with Antiochus Epiphanes, whose wickedness is also presented in the section that we will now consider (chapter 10 - 12).

There is no direct statement that the manifestation in Dn 10 is a manifestation of the K'BHOD YHWH. Yet the conclusion is inescapable as is evident from the argumentation of Keil:

This heavenly form has thus, it is true, the shining white 'talar' (linen) common to the angel of Ez 9,9, but all the other features, as here described -- the shining of his body, the brightness of his countenance, his eyes like a lamp of fire, arms and feet like glistening brass, the sound of his speaking -- all these point to the revelation of the K'BHOD YHWH the glorious appearance of the Lord, Ez 1, and teach us that the "Man" seen by Daniel was no common angel-prince, but a manifestation of Jehovah, i.e., the Logos. This is placed beyond doubt by a comparison with Re 1,13-15, where the form of the Son of man whom John saw walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks is described like the glorious appearance seen by Ezekiel and Daniel." ⁴³

It is significant that the manifestation was in the form called the "One with human appearance"(Dn 10 18). In this form the Lord was preparing the hearts of the faithful in Israel for the time when Christ would come in the flesh to redeem us through His death on the cross. Once again we quote the careful wording of Php 2: "(Christ Jesus took) the form of a servant, and (was) made in the likeness of man, and (was) found in appearance as a man." Side by side with that, the manifestation in Daniel shows just as clearly that this "man dressed in linen" is eternal and glorious.

Daniel, just as others before him, was overwhelmed by the manifestation and fell on his face in a deep sleep. His companions, as the companions of others (e.g. Saul), were able to perceive that some frightening manifestation was occurring, though they could not see the vision proper. They ran away to hide themselves (Dn 10;7). Daniel is then strengthened to stand up again and later to speak. The Lord addressed Daniel with the salutation: "O Daniel, man of high esteem." In this salutation there is a parallel

between Daniel and John, the apostle whom Jesus loved. To each of these men, who were so highly favored, the Lord granted visions of near and distant future, even extending to the final outcome of the history of the world. The parallel is even more specific in the themes of the visions. To Daniel the Lord said, "I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to things yet future." (Dn 10;14; cp Re 1;19).

The prophecies about four more Persian kings, the Grecian (Macedonian) conquest and the later division of the Macedonian kingdom are remarkably clear. The prophecy then focuses on the battles between the King of the North and the King of the South. Throughout these battles the Lord's concern was always for His church, which will indeed suffer many things at the hands of the two kings. Yet the very purpose of the Lord was to lift the eyes of the people so that they might trust that the Lord was in control of history, even when persecutions seemed to present reasons for doubt. The Lord also wished to direct the attention of believers to the final judgment. For then the faithful will be revealed in victory, even through the redemption of their bodies (Dn 12;1-3).

As a person examines the battles between the King of the North and the King of the South, there are many details that could be depicting specific historical events, especially the events of the intertestamental period. Some commentators have gone into great detail to show how every part of chapter 10 fits into that period.⁴⁴ Yet, especially as a person reaches Dn 11;36, a number of very serious difficulties arise (cf Keil ad loc). Especially at the end of the chapter it becomes impossible to refer the events only to the intertestamental period, because the last verses of chap. 11 are directly connected to Dn 12;1-3, which describes the resurrection of the body and the final judgment. Therefore it seems

more prudent to view these prophecies as a telescoped perspective on the great battles between God and Satan as they are enacted in the history of the world. In this telescoping we can note parts that fit for each of the following:

- a) Antiochus vs the Jewish church - ca 175 B.C.
- b) The Roman Empire vs the early New Testament Church
- c) The great Antichrist vs the later New Testament Church.

To illustrate this point of view, we shall use Dn 11;31-32. The King of the North is depicted in the prophecy as showing no regard for the holy covenant, as doing away with regular sacrifice and as setting up the abomination of desolation. If a person views this as a telescoped prophecy, it is not hard to see a first fulfilment in the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes. He did attempt to destroy the Jewish worship and did convert the temple at Jerusalem into a temple of Jupiter. A second fulfilment would be the Roman conquest of Jerusalem, in which the Roman general required worship of the Roman eagle in the temple. A third fulfilment has occurred in the Antichrist, who rejects the Gospel, sets himself up in the house of God, and wants to be worshipped as God (2 Th 2).

Some details of the prophecy do fit very definitely for Antiochus Epiphanes, but some details just don't fit for him and cross over into later times. For example, the spread of the kingdom of the North occurred in directions that do not fit for the events in the life of Antiochus; also, the parts that deal with the end of the world point to events, that occur much later in the history of the world. From this approach we get a perspective that spans the history of the world by considering Antiochus as an antichristian prelude to Christ's first coming, and at the same time views the great Antichrist as a prelude for Christ's second coming. The prophecies of Daniel seem to include both ideas.

It is tempting to focus on the battles and forget that the Lord wants us to look beyond the battles to the final outcome in the victory of Christ. Through Christ the faithful believers also are victorious. Daniel 12;1-3 brings this to our attention. The first verse describes the final great tribulation that will befall the saints. We are reminded of Jesus' own description of that time, promising only that they will be shortened, lest the elect be misled. (Mt 24;24). "Everyone who is found written in the book will be rescued," Daniel writes (Dn 12;1). This hope is then broadened to include the resurrection from the dead. On this matter Daniel's words are the clearest of the Old Testament "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt." (Dn 12;2) There is no mistaking the parallel and the fuller detail of Christ's words in John 5;28: "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." The final statement of Daniel's prophecy depicts the believers like bright stars shining brightly forever and ever.

But Daniel has one more question: "How long?" The answer that is given is the enigmatic time designation that has occurred previously in Daniel: "a time, times, and a half time." Perhaps the best explanation has been given by the commentator who said that this answer expresses "concealed definiteness." The definiteness is there, since God has set the times and seasons, but for human beings the time is concealed. The only thing that we can be sure of is that God knows the day and the hour. But having said that, and without wishing to get deeply involved in numerology, it might be well to note the parallels between: "Time, times, and a half time" "3½ years" "42 months" and "1260 days" (cf Revelation

also) -- all of which designate the same amount of earth time, but are used to summarize the whole of earthly time. Perhaps all that the Lord means to tell us is that we can't know when judgment day is, but we can know that Judgment Day marks only the "half-way point." The end of the world after "3½ years" is half of the ideal number '7'. So Judgment Day is only a "half-way point." Our existence will continue -- either in heaven or hell. Therefore the net result of a person's life can only be measured by what happens on Judgment Day after the completion of the 3½ years. Therefore we should evaluate our lives so that we are ready for a blessed "second half" beyond Judgment Day.

But be that as it may, we note the final question of Daniel, "What will be the outcome of these events?" To this the Lord gave the comforting advice: "As for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again to your allotted portion at the end of the age." (Dn 12;13). Don't be too curious! Don't get too involved in times and seasons! Just be confident that the Lord is able to keep that which we have committed to Him against that day (2 Tm 1;12).

Thus the zeal of the Lord of Hosts on behalf of His Word is evident. He urges Daniel to cling to the Word which promises that he will rise again and enter his portion (Dn 12;13). Let the tidal ebb and flow of history go on; view it as part of the agony of this world, but keep your eyes clearly on your goal in heaven.

As we leave the section that deals with the manifestations to the prophets, a brief glance backward is very instructive. God manifested His K'BHOD sixteen times when the nation was called into being. As the national fortunes of Israel declined, the Lord again chose to reveal Himself in His K'BHOD on a number of occasions.

At the time that the Northern Kingdom was carried into captivity during Isaiah's lifetime, and as Judah also succumbed at the time of Ezekiel, the Lord chose to reveal His K'BHOD. The purpose of these manifestations is to present the fact that the Lord is not bound by earthly arrangements or buildings. He will faithfully carry out His plan of salvation. The same thought strikes us as Daniel depicts the faithfulness of God midst the ebb and flow of national powers. Therefore God is the sanctuary of all who worship Him in spirit and in truth, wherever they may be in the geography of this globe. The manifestations point to a time beyond the history of Israel, for God would still carry out his plan of salvation.

Further, in each of these manifestations to the prophets, the Lord revealed Himself in the form of a man in order to prepare believers for the incarnation. To Isaiah the human-like being is the majestic Adonai in the throne-room of heaven. The throne-room is stable. Therefore the instability of world events need not disturb the believer of Isaiah's time. The Lord will definitely send Immanuel, His suffering Servant. To Ezekiel the being with a glorious human form appeared at the pinnacle of the Chariot-Throne. This being is a person who is acting and judging. Because of the apostasy of the people, He will no longer stay in Solomon's Temple. Consequently His throne is movable -- a Chariot-Throne. Yet it will find its stable abode in the heavenly temple. Daniel saw the Messiah in the most human form of all (Dn 10:4). Thus the Lord prepared the hearts of the Old Testament believers to know more of the humanity of the Messiah. Our Savior's references to Himself as the "Son of man" draw on the visions of Daniel. Yet the exaltation of Christ is also presented so that we can know He is the Lord of all history who will have dominion, glory, and a kingdom and who will bring salvation on Judgment Day.

These brief summary comments demonstrate how in all these manifestations the Lord's zeal on behalf of His word is evident. Kings and kingdoms may come and go but God's plan of salvation will be carried out.