

THE HINGE OF REFORMATION: THE CONTROVERSY OF THE GOSPEL

– Elijah Choi // KINGS HOUSE DALLS // [WHOLEHEART MINISTRY](#)

INTRO: LET NOT ZEAL OUTPACE UNDERSTANDING

1. In 1974, when Ralph Winter rightly recovered the biblical meaning of the term *ethne*—referring to people groups rather than nationalities—it revolutionized the global missions movement. That single revelation transformed how the Church understood what it means to “finish the mission” and re-shaped how every local congregation participates in the Great Commission. I believe we now stand on the hinge of history. Another reformation—one perhaps even greater in magnitude than the Reformation under Martin Luther. Yet this time, it will not concern half the book of Romans—the gospel of grace alone (Romans 1-8)—but the whole book of Romans (Romans 1-16), especially the mystery of Israel (Romans 9-11).
2. I am reminded of Paul’s lament in Romans 10: “...**they have a zeal** for God, but **not according to knowledge**.” (Romans 10:2). There is a kind of zeal that, though well-intended, is seriously misguided—an eagerness that outruns understanding. This is why Jesus “**strictly**” commanded His disciples to remain silent about His identity until the appointed time (cf. Matt. 16:20; Mk. 8:30).

“30 And he **strictly charged** them to **tell no one** about him.” (Mark 8:30, ESV)

3. Why did Jesus strictly charge them not to evangelize? The issue wasn’t urgency—it was accuracy. He refused to let zeal outpace understanding, lest premature proclamation lead to confusion and even deception. As Spurgeon warned, “**unripe** testimony might **stumble** more than **strengthen**.”¹ Or as A. W. Tozer puts it, “**A gospel** that does not include **the whole counsel of God** is **no gospel at all**.”² For this reason Paul solemnly charged the Ephesians elders to “**not shrink back from the whole counsel of God**”:

“26 Therefore I testify to you this day that **I am innocent of the blood of all**, 27 **for(because)** I did not **shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God**.” (Acts 20:26-27, ESV)

4. Therefore, we must break free from assumptions and ask the most fundamental question: What is **the gospel of the kingdom**? What did Jesus **mean** by it? And why did He **connect this Great Commission with the Great Tribulation**? Why did He use the word “**Therefore**” in verse 15?

“14 And **this gospel of the kingdom** will be preached in all the world **as a witness to all the nations**, and then **the end** will come. 15 “**Therefore** when you see the ‘**abomination of desolation**,’ spoken of **by Daniel the prophet**, standing **in the holy place**” (whoever **reads**, let him **understand**), 16 “then let those who are **in Judea** flee... 21 **For (Because)** then there will be **great tribulation**,...” (Matthew 24:14-21, NKJV)

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, “The Lord’s Transfiguration” (Sermon #1908, March 25, 1883), Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. 29, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs1908.pdf>.

² Tozer, A.W. The Root of the Righteous. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015.

THE KINGDOM ACCORDING TO MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

1. The gospel did not begin in the New Testament. Jesus did not invent the term. Neither did Paul. The Bible used by Jesus and the apostles was the Tanakh—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. In fact, it was Isaiah who first coined the term **“gospel”** and proclaimed the good news of the coming Messianic King to Jerusalem in the sight of all nations (cf. Isa. 40:1-10; 52:1-54:5; 61:1-63:7).
2. Thus, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus revealed Himself through **“Moses and the Prophets”** (Lk. 24:27). Likewise, when Paul testified about **“the Kingdom of God,”** he did so from **“the Law of Moses and the Prophets.”**

“23 ...From morning till evening he expounded to them, **testifying to the kingdom of God** and trying to convince them about Jesus both **from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.**” (Acts 28:23, ESV)

3. Even more significant is that, for Jesus and the apostles, the term **“Kingdom”** was never merely spiritual. Just as Jesus is fully God and fully man, so the Kingdom carries both spiritual and physical dimensions. It speaks of God’s tangible dominion exercised over real geography on the earth. Jesus Himself promised His disciples tangible authority to rule: “I assign to you **a kingdom...** and you will sit on thrones **judging the twelve tribes of Israel**” (Luke 22:30). And after describing the signs of His return, He declared:

“31 So also, **when you see** these things taking place, you **know** that **the kingdom of God is near.**” (Luke 21:31, ESV)

4. This is why, during the forty days following His resurrection, the risen Christ spoke about one central theme: **“the Kingdom of God”** (Acts 1:3), and the disciples summed it up in one pressing question: “Lord, is it at this time you are **restoring the kingdom to Israel?**” (Acts 1:6, ESV)
5. There are many passages that expound the gospel of the Kingdom, yet Psalm 2 offers one of the clearest summaries. I will break this Psalm into four sections and highlight few key points.
 - 5.1. vv. 1-3 Gog and Magog against Jerusalem
 - 5.2. vv. 4-5 The Throne Room Perspective
 - 5.3. vv. 6-9 The Gospel of God’s Reign from Zion
 - 5.4. vv. 10-12 The Call to Wisdom and Warning

1: GOG AND MAGOG AGAINST JERUSALEM

“1 Why do **the nations rage** and **the peoples plot** in vain? 2 **The kings of the earth** set themselves, and **the rulers** take counsel together, **against the LORD and against his Anointed,** saying, 3 “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”” (Psalm 2:1-3, ESV)

1. **"The nations rage... The kings of the earth set themselves":**

I like to call Psalm 2 David's Maranatha song.³ It is a prophecy of Gog and Magog, seen from the throne room's perspective.⁴ The Karaite Jewish commentators—especially Salmon ben Yeruham and Yefet ben Eli—interpret this psalm eschatologically.⁵ Strikingly, they viewed the global rebellion as a deliberate attempt to **"destroy Israel completely before the Messiah appears"**⁶. Salmon ben Yeruham further clarifies that the armies of Gog (Antichrist) have come **"to fight against Israel."**

2. **"against the LORD and against his Anointed":**

Zechariah, Joel, and Jesus all testify that this final battle will center on the city of **"Jerusalem"** (Zech. 12:1-3; 14:1-9; Jl. 3:1-14; Lk. 21:20). Zechariah specifically highlights that these nations are the **"surrounding nations"** of Israel (Zech. 12:2). Both Daniel and John build on this, identifying the formation of a final coalition: **"ten kings"** who will unite and give their allegiance to the Beast (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:7, 8, 10, 20, 24-25; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 12, 16). They will make a covenant with the Beast and **"make war on the Lamb"** (Rev. 17:12-17; cf. Rev. 11:7; 12:17; 13:7; 17:14; 19:19). But who are these ten? The most explicit list comes from Psalm 83—alongside Ezekiel 38—where the veil is pulled back to expose the identity of this satanic alliance. As David C. Mitchell notes, few psalms contain direct and detailed prophecy about the end times. Yet, **"the most striking example is Psalm 83.... History records no such alliance.... The ten nations of Psalm 83 therefore suggest an eschatological conflict."**⁷

Now look at verses 2 and 5: **"your enemies"** and **"they conspire with one accord; against you they make a covenant"**. This alliance is not merely political. It is a global rebellion—parallel to the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11). They are His enemies. And they make a covenant to overthrow Yahweh. But since they cannot reach Him, they unleash their fury upon the apple of His eye—Israel: **"they lay crafty plans against your people."** This is the connection we cannot not miss: the global rage against God will manifest through the controversy against Zion.

³ While this psalm is partially applied to the crucifixion of Jesus (cf. Acts 4:25-26), and verse 7—**"Today I have begotten You"**—is directly fulfilled in Christ's resurrection (cf. Ac. 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5), the prophecy as a whole ultimately points to the end of the age.

⁴ James Hamilton insightfully summarizes: **"The eschatological king who will inherit the nations and possess the ends of the earth (Ps 2:8) will crush the head of the seed of the serpent (2:9; 110:5; 137:9) who plot a vain rebellion against Yahweh and the seed of the woman (2:1-3)."**—James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms*, Vol. 1, eds. T. D. Alexander, T. R. Schreiner, & A. J. Köstenberger (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 105.

⁵ The Karaites were a Jewish sect that relied solely on the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) for religious law and guidance, distinguishing themselves from Rabbanite Jews, who also followed the Oral Torah—such as the Mishnah and Talmud. They emphasized *peshat*, the interpretive method that seeks the plain, literal meaning of the text. This approach gave careful attention to grammar, syntax, and historical context, while avoiding allegorical and mystical interpretations.

⁶ See Mariano Gomez Aranda, "Medieval Jewish Exegesis of Psalm 2," p. 5.

⁷ Mitchell, David. "The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms," p. 101-103.

"1 O God, **do not keep silence**; do **not hold your peace** or be still, O God! 2 For behold, **your enemies** make an uproar; those who hate you have raised their heads. 3 They lay **crafty plans against your people**; they **consult together** against your treasured ones. 4 They say, "Come, let us **wipe them out** as a nation; let **the name of Israel be remembered no more!**" 5 For they conspire with one accord; **against you** they **make a covenant**— 6 the tents of **Edom** and the **Ishmærites, Moab** and the **Hagrites**, 7 **Gebal** and **Ammon** and **Amalek, Philistia** with the inhabitants of **Tyre**; 8 **Asshur** also has joined them;..." (Psalm 83:1-8, ESV)

2: THE THRONE ROOM PERSPECTIVE

"4 **He who sits in the heavens laughs**; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 **Then he will speak to them** in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, **saying**," (Psalm 2:4-5, ESV)

1. "He who sits in the heavens laughs":

We must understand that God is unthreatened by the global rebellion (Dan. 7:9-14; Rev. 4-5). For He alone **"declares the end from the beginning"** (Isa. 46:10). It is He who not only forms light but also **"creates calamity"**—that is, He is absolutely sovereign over global rage (Isa. 45:7). Therefore, His purposes **"cannot be annulled"** (Isa. 14:27). Even Herod and Pontius Pilate were instruments of His sovereign will: **"to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place"** (Acts 4:28). So it will be with Gog and Magog. It is Yahweh who brings the Antichrist against Jerusalem (Ezek. 38:16). He gathers the nations Himself (Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:1-3; 14:2; Jl. 3:2; Matt. 25:32). This is the mystery of divine providence: God uses the global rage to fulfill the global mission.

"12 But they **do not know the thoughts of the LORD**; they **do not understand his plan**, that **he has gathered them** as sheaves to the threshing floor." (Micah 4:12, ESV)

2. "Then he will speak to them... saying":

What, then, is God's message amid this global rebellion? What does He commission His messengers to proclaim? Notice the connection between the global missions and its message in the next verses.

3: THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S REIGN FROM ZION

"6 "As for me, **I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.**" 7 I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. 8 **Ask** of me, and I will **make the nations your heritage**, and **the ends of the earth your possession**. 9 You shall **break them with a rod of iron** and **dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.**" (Psalm 2:6-9, ESV)

1. "I have set my King on Zion":

The gospel message at the end of the age is not merely that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world or the King of kings—it is that Jesus Christ is the King enthroned over Zion. Why Jerusalem? Why is this significant? Because, as we have seen, the Antichrist and his armies will attack Jerusalem as the final solution. Yet in His sovereign wisdom, God has chosen Zion as His eternal dwelling place. This is not poetic language—it is geographical reality. Jesus will rule and dwell forever from Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 48:35).

"13 For the LORD has **chosen Zion**; he has **desired it** for his dwelling place: 14 "This is my resting place **forever**; here I will dwell, **for I have desired it.**" (Psalm 132:13-14, ESV)

"3 Thus says the LORD: **I have returned to Zion** and **will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem**,..." (Zechariah 8:3, ESV)

2. **"Make the nations your heritage":**

Therefore, He commissions His Church to proclaim this gospel—the gospel of His reign from Zion—to every tribe and tongue (Dt. 32:43; Isa. 40:1-10; Isa. 62:6-7, 10-11; Jer. 31:7). For every nation must choose where it stands in the controversy of Zion (Jl. 3:14). This is the aim of the Great Commission: to prepare the nations for the Great Tribulation that centers around Jerusalem (cf. Matt. 24:14-15). This is the essence of the gospel of the kingdom—to announce the coming reign of Jesus from Jerusalem. Isaiah encapsulates this entire reality in a single phrase: the good news. Notice four things in Isaiah 52:7-10—the content of the good news ("Your God reigns"), the audience to whom it is proclaimed ("Zion"), the reason the watchmen sing ("for eye to eye they see the return of Yahweh to Zion"), and the outcome ("all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"). Finally, compare Isaiah 52 gospel with the context of Zechariah 14:

"7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news**, who publishes **peace**, who brings **good news of happiness**, who publishes salvation, **who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."** 8 The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they **sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.** 9 Break forth together into singing, you waste places **of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people**; he has redeemed **Jerusalem.** 10 The LORD has bared his holy arm **before the eyes of all the nations**, and **all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**" (Isaiah 52:7-10, ESV)

"1 Behold, a day is coming for the LORD... 2 For I will **gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle**,... 3 Then **the LORD will go out and fight against those nations**... 4 On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives.... 9 And the LORD will be **king over all the earth**...." (Zechariah 14:1-9, ESV)

3. **"You shall break them with a rod of iron":**

Do you see the context? This is precisely where David declares the message of verse 9—within the frame of global missions. Every missionary is not merely commissioned to proclaim the gospel of grace, but also to announce **"the day of vengeance"** (cf. Deut. 32:41; Isa. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; 63:4; Ezek. 33:6; John 3:18, 36; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thess. 1:8-9).⁸ The phrase **"a rod of iron"** unmistakably points to the final judgment. In Psalm 110, David prophesied that **"the mighty scepter will rule in the midst of His enemies and crush the kings and heads of many nations in the day of His wrath"** (Ps. 110:5-6). Revelation 19 pulls back the veil and gives us the full picture: Jesus comes as the Man of War to **"strikes down and rules with a rod of iron"** (Rev. 19:15-18).

⁸ "8 For it is **the day of the LORD's vengeance**, And the year of recompences **for the controversy of Zion.**" (Isaiah 34:8, KJV 1900)

4: THE CALL TO WISDOM AND WARNING

"10 Now therefore, O kings, **be wise; be warned**, O rulers of the earth. 11 **Serve** the LORD **with fear**, and **rejoice with trembling**. 12 **Kiss the Son**, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him." (Psalm 2:10-12, ESV)

1. **"Be wise; be warned":**

Finally, David gives us a clear applications: **"be wise and be warned."** What does it mean to be wise? I believe Paul unfolds this very exhortation in Romans 11. He urges us not to be **"wise in your own sight"** so be **"unaware of this mystery."** What mystery? The mystery of Israel. Paul warns that if we become **"arrogant"** (Rom 11:18) concerning this issue, we will be **"cut off"** (Rom. 11:22). That is what David means by **"you perish in the way."** To **"kiss the Son"** is to submit to God's sovereign election and embrace His redemptive purposes.

"25 **Lest you be wise in your own sight**, I do not want you to be unaware of **this mystery**, brothers: **a partial hardening** has come upon **Israel**, **until the fullness of the Gentiles** has come in. 26 And in this way **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob'; 27 'and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'" (Romans 11:25-27, ESV)

So how do we gain wisdom into this mystery? Revelation does not come spontaneously; it is not received on the run. Like the wise virgins, the oil takes time to cultivate (Matt. 25:4). This is why Paul exhorts us to be wise by **"making the best use of time"**—literally, **"redeeming kairos"** (Eph. 5:15-17). In Paul's view, every breath in our lungs is a kairos moment. It is our responsibility to redeem it. Therefore, Proverbs reminds us of both the cost of understanding and the perseverance it demands:

"Buy the truth and **sell it not**; also **wisdom**, and **instruction**, and **understanding**."—PROV. 23:23.

2. To buy means to **"choose"** (Lk. 10:42) it above all competing desires by saying **"no"** to lesser things (Phil. 3:8). Jesus called this holy violence (Matt. 11:12). It is not a one-time decision but a lifelong pursuit: **"One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple."** (Psalm 27:4, NKJV)
3. We must also not **"sell it."** Purchasing wisdom does not make it permanently ours. Truth once embraced can still be abandoned. We must choose it daily—until our final breath. This is what Paul meant when he said, **"forgetting what lies behind, I press on"** (Phil. 3:13-14). Wisdom demands perseverance.

"13 But he who **endures to the end** shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13, NKJV; cf. Lk. 21:19; Heb. 10:36)