

# Who do you say that I am?

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A Lecture Study of N.T Wright's Book, Jesus and the Victory  
of God

# Introduction

- 'It's going to rain'
- "The meaning of a word is the job it performs in a sentence; the meaning of a sentence is the job it performs in a *story*." –JVG p. 198

# Introduction

**con·text** *noun* \ 'kän-, tekst \

- 1: the parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning
- 2: the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs

# Context

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The Jewish Hope



## Mark 1:14, 15

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. ***“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”***

# Isaiah 52:4-10

4 For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“At first my people went down to Egypt to live;  
lately, Assyria has oppressed them.

5 “And now what do I have here?” declares the LORD.

“For my people have been taken away for nothing,  
and those who rule them mock,”  
declares the LORD.

“And all day long  
my name is constantly blasphemed.

6 Therefore my people will know my name;  
therefore in that day they will know  
that it is I who foretold it.  
Yes, it is I.”

7 How beautiful on the mountains  
are the feet of those who bring good news,  
who proclaim peace,  
who bring good tidings,  
who proclaim salvation,  
who say to Zion,  
**“Your God reigns!”**

8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;  
together they shout for joy.  
When the LORD returns to Zion,  
they will see it with their own eyes.

9 Burst into songs of joy together,  
you ruins of Jerusalem,  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The LORD will lay bare his holy arm  
in the sight of all the nations,  
and all the ends of the earth will see  
the salvation of our God.

# Zechariah 14:9

<sup>9</sup> The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name....

# The Jewish Story

- Eschatology
  - The Hopes and Expectations of Israel
    - YHWH dwelling in his Temple
    - Temple and Royalty: The true King is the builder of the Temple
    - Temple is where heaven and earth meet
    - Destruction of the Temple has both political and theological implications
    - Longing for the true temple, return from exile, and the reign of YHWH as king
    - Primary symbols: Temple, Land, Torah, Jewish Identity, Jerusalem

# Eschatology and Apocalyptic Language

- ‘eschaton’ – the end; ‘-ology’ – the study of
- Apocalypse – As either The End of Space-Time Universe or a dramatic and climactic transitional epoch moment within Space-Time history.
- N.T Wright is arguing for seeing “...Eschatology as a climax of Israel’s history, involving events for which end of the world language is the only set of metaphors adequate to express the significance of what will happen, but resulting in a quite different phase within space-time history...” JVG, p. 208



## Temple: Throne Room

Throne of  
Tutankhamen in his  
tomb (1361 – 1352 BC)



## Temple: Throne Room

Canaanite Prince seated on a Cherubim throne (winged sphinx) from an ivory found at Megiddo (ca. 1200 BC)

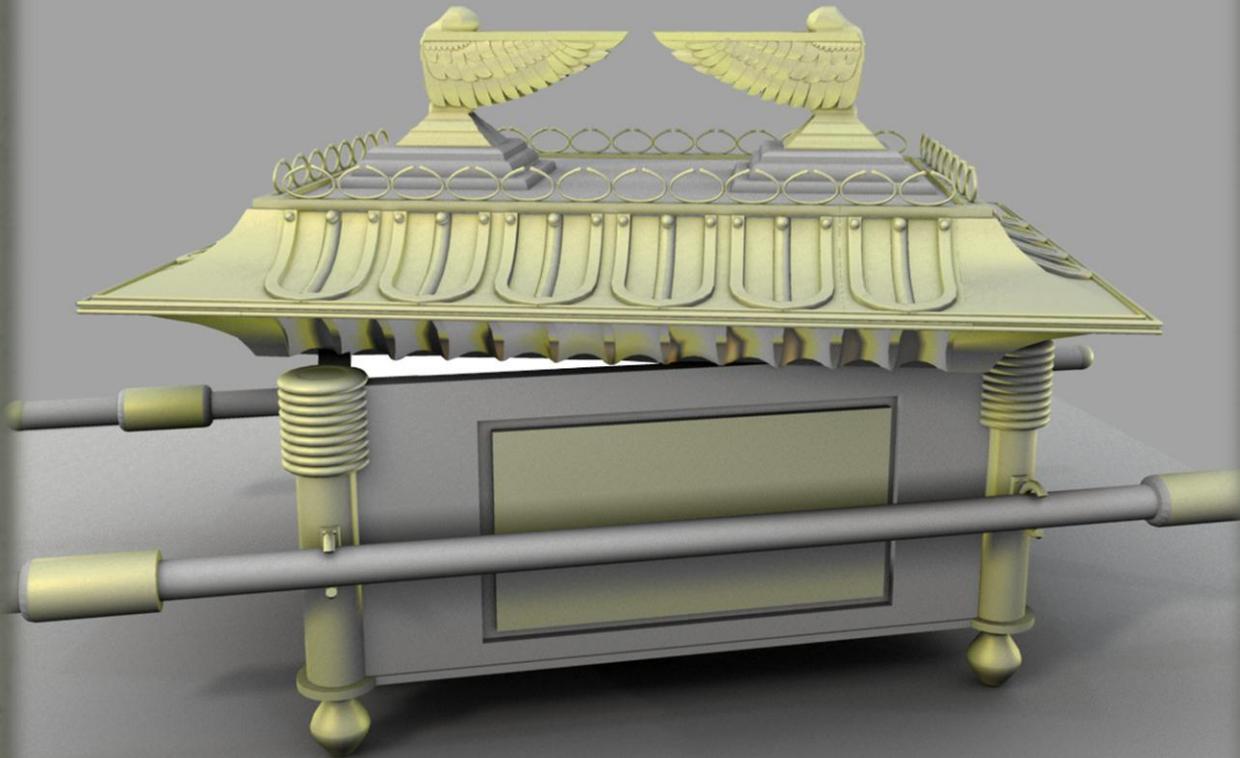


Ahiim, king of Byblos, seated on cherub throne

(13th-12th century BC)

## Temple: Throne Room

The Arc of the Covenant – The Footstool of the Throne of YHWH.



# Context

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The Christian Reappropriation

# The Christian Reappropriation

- Kingdom language is shorthand for “the Church”
- God in “Kingdom of God” is still the God of the OT with all of the story now appropriated, elect, call to holiness, inheritance, hope for ultimate realization of the Kingdom, etc.
- A substantial redefinition has occurred within the basic Jewish framework with four key points:

# The Christian Reappropriation

- The Kingdom belongs both to God *and the Messiah, namely Jesus as Messiah. Sometimes in Paul simply to Jesus!*
- *The chronology of the Jewish hope is accomplished through the Messiah, Jesus and “now but not yet”. (See 1 Cor. 15:20-28)*

# 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

- <sup>20</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. <sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death. <sup>27</sup> For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. <sup>28</sup> When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

# The Christian Reappropriation

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- *The chronology of the Jewish hope is accomplished through the Messiah, Jesus and “now but not yet”. (See 1 Cor. 15:20-28)*
- *Redefinition of apocalyptic hope in terms the exodus of all creation from sin and death. (Romans 8:18-27)*

## Romans 8:18-21

<sup>18</sup> I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

# The Christian Reappropriation

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- *The chronology of the Jewish hope is accomplished through the Messiah, Jesus and “now but not yet”.* (See 1 Cor. 15:20-28)
- *Redefinition of apocalyptic hope in terms the exodus of all creation from sin and death.* (Romans 8:18-27)
- *Redefinition of the symbols, story, praxis and questions*

# The Story

- Act One: Creation
  - Act Two: Fall
  - Act Three: Israel
  - Act Four: Jesus Messiah
  - Act Five: Church
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- Christians were not abandoning the classic Jewish Story, but believed *that they were living in its long awaited new phase.*

# Kingdom Redefined: The Announcement

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Introduction: Summary Announcements

- Review: Jesus actions and teachings place him in the category of ‘a prophet’.
- A crucial element of his prophetic activity is *the story*.
- Israel’s Story is reaching its climax: the long awaited moment has arrived! The Kingdom has come!
- The announcement are like:
  - “Frodo and Sam have entered into Mount Doom!”
  - “They are coming into the home stretch...”
  - “Jane has had her baby!”



## Mark 1:14, 15

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. ***“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”***



## Luke 11:20

But if I drive out  
demons by the  
finger of God,  
*then the  
kingdom of God  
has come upon  
you.*

# Kingdome Redefined: The Announcement

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Stories of Israel's Paradoxical History

# Introduction

- Collections of Parables in Mark 4 and Matthew 13 are designed to characterize Jesus teaching as a whole.
- “The Kingdom of God is like...”
  - A Mustard seed
  - Leaven
  - Wheat and weeds
  - Treasure hidden in a field
  - Fish gathered in a net
- Evocative Challenge: “He who has ears, then hear!”



## The Parable of the Sower

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. <sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed....

Matthew 13:1-23/ Mark 4:1-20/ Luke 8:4-15



# The Parable of the Sower

N.T. Wright:

*“The Parable tells the story of Israel, particularly the return from exile, with a paradoxical conclusion, and it tells the story of Jesus’ ministry, as a fulfillment of that larger story, with a paradoxical outcome.” (JVG p. 230)*

# Prophecy of Restoration: Isaiah 55:8-13

<sup>8</sup> “For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,”  
declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> “As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower  
and bread for the eater,

<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup> You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

<sup>13</sup> Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.

This will be for the LORD’s renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
that will endure forever.”

# A Parable about Parables

- **Matthew 13:13-17**

<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;  
though hearing, they do not hear or  
understand.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“*You will be ever hearing but never  
understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.*

<sup>15</sup> *For this people’s heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.*

*Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts  
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and  
your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I tell  
you, many prophets and righteous people  
longed to see what you see but did not see it,  
and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

- **Isaiah 6:9-13**

<sup>9</sup> He said, “Go and tell this people:

“Be ever hearing, but never understanding;  
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’

<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people calloused;  
make their ears dull  
and close their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts,  
and turn and be healed.”

<sup>11</sup> Then I said, “For how long, Lord?”

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie ruined  
and without inhabitant,  
until the houses are left deserted  
and the fields ruined and ravaged,

<sup>12</sup> until the LORD has sent everyone far away  
and the land is utterly forsaken.

<sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remains in the land,  
it will again be laid waste.

But as the terebinth and oak  
leave stumps when they are cut down,  
***so the holy seed will be the stump in the  
land.***”

# Stories of Israel's Paradoxical History

- Other Parables of Israel's Story
  - The Wicked Tenants (Luke 20:9)
  - The Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31)
  - The Leaven (Matt 13:33)
  - The Treasure and the Pearl (Matt. 13:44)
  - The Householder (Matt. 13:51)
  - The Lost Sheep, Coin, Son (Luke 15)

# Kingdom Redefined: The Announcement

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Conclusion: Announcing the Kingdom