

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

Isaiah – Malachi

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ



Part 7 of 14

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

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The American Church:

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## The American Church:

- Churches tend to be deeply segregated along generational, racial, socioeconomic, educational and other lines.
- For example, at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century **only 5.5%** of Christian congregations were racially mixed.<sup>1</sup>
- This is not the model the Bible presents to us.

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

About This Series:

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

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- Finding our **identity in Christ** is to see ourselves as<sup>2</sup>:
  1. Created in Christ (**Ephesians 2:10**)
  2. Crucified with Christ (**Galatians 2:20**)
  3. Buried with Christ (**Colossians 2:12**)
  4. Baptized into Christ and his death (**Romans 6:3**)

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## About This Series:

- Finding our **identity in Christ** is to see ourselves as<sup>2</sup>:
  5. United with Christ in his resurrection (**Romans 6:5**)
  6. Justified in Christ (**Romans 3:24**)
  7. Sanctified in Christ (**1 Corinthians 1:2**)
  8. Glorified in Christ (**Romans 8:30**)

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## About This Series:

- This **identity in Christ** provides the inner motivation that compels us to unite with one another.
- Who we are in him becomes the most important part of the story we tell about ourselves.
- Jesus does not negate differences, but rather unites us around something bigger which all of us share.

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

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3. To accept that our identity in Christ is something shared, and is a basis for unity with diverse others in the church.

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2. To see how **our individual identities** become more meaningful as we find our primary identity in Christ.
3. To accept that **our identity in Christ** is something shared, and is a basis for unity with diverse others in the church.
4. To appreciate biblical diversity as a **spiritual strength** that expresses itself in the people and ministries of our church.

Previously in this series

Previously in this series

# A Shared Origin: The Story of Creation

Genesis 1 – 2

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Part 1 of 14



Previously in this series

# A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

Genesis 3 – 11

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 2 of 14



Previously in this series

# A Shared Promise: The Covenant with Abraham

**Genesis 12:1-3**

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Previously in this series

# A Shared Standard: The Law of Love

Leviticus 19, Deuteronomy 6:4-9

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Part 4 of 14

Previously in this series

# A Shared King: The Covenant with David

2 Samuel 7

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Previously in this series

# A Shared Songbook: Christ in the Psalms

**Psalms 2, 16, 22, 110 & 118**

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# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- The prophets of Israel and Judah prophesied mainly to and about Israel and Judah.
- Not surprising, but what may be surprising is that they also prophesied to and about us – **the nations**.

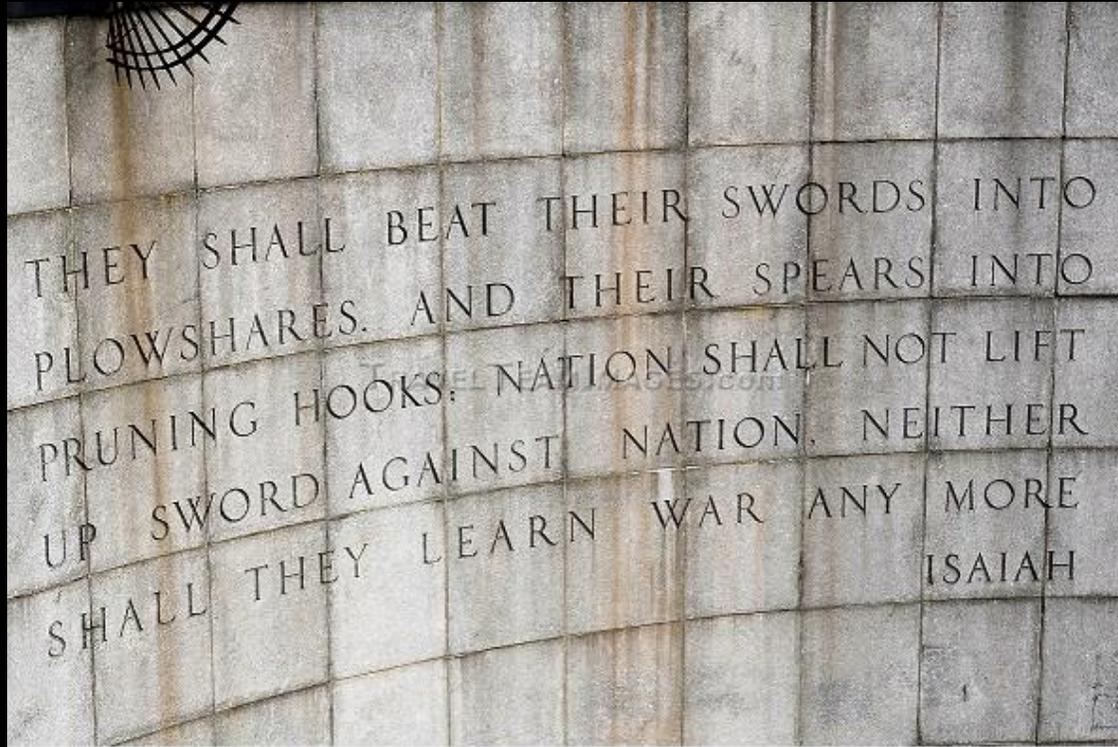
# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- God created the human race and all the nations which comprise it for his own glory.
- While he mainly speaks to and through his chosen nation in Scripture, he speaks to the rest of us as well.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Sometimes he speaks regarding Israel and the nations together in the same passage.
- This shows us with absolute clarity that the God of Israel is truly God over the whole earth.
- See **Isaiah 2:1-4**.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy



- This is a picture of the Isaiah Wall in Ralph Bunche Park.
- It is across the street from the UN in New York.
- The inscription contains the words of **Isaiah 2:4b**.
- So far, it hasn't come true.
- It won't without **2:1-4a**.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Later in **Isaiah** we see this messianic prophecy.
- **Isaiah 49:5-6.**

<sup>5</sup> And now the LORD says,  
he who formed me from the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him;  
and that Israel might be gathered to him—  
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength—

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Later in **Isaiah** we see this messianic prophecy.
- **Isaiah 49:5-6.**

<sup>6</sup> he says:

“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;  
I will make you as a light for the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- When Jeremiah received his calling from God as a young man, God said he would be a “prophet to the nations.”
- **Jeremiah 1:4-5** (ESV)  
4 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,  
5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,  
and before you were born I consecrated you;  
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- And now a few verses from **Ezekiel**,
- **Ezekiel 36:36** (ESV)

Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD; I have rebuilt the ruined places and replanted that which was desolate. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- And now a few verses from **Ezekiel**,
- **Ezekiel 37:28** (ESV)

Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- And now a few verses from **Ezekiel**,
- **Ezekiel 38:23** (ESV)

So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- The most common way that **Jesus** referred to himself in the Gospels is by the designation “**Son of Man.**”
- This was a clever term to use, for it did not have to mean anything more than “**a human being.**”
- God used it when speaking to Ezekiel some **93 times.**
- Yet much more can be implied as we see in **Daniel 7.**

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Let's read **Daniel 7:13-14** to see a greater "Son of Man."

<sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions,  
and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
there came one like a son of man,  
and he came to the Ancient of Days  
and was presented before him.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Let's read **Daniel 7:13-14** to see a greater "Son of Man."

<sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- Christ's use of the term only became controversial at his trial before the high priest in Matthew **26:63-65**.

<sup>63</sup> ... And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." <sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy."

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- As long as Christ's use of the term **Son of Man** about himself was unclear, there was no issue.
- Yes, he was obviously a man – a human being.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- It was an odd nickname, but not shocking or scandalous.
- But connecting himself with the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy – that sounded like robe-tearing blasphemy.
- And it might have been – **except it was true.**

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- When we get to **Micah** in the **Minor Prophets** we hear echoes of Isaiah.
- The peoples who currently walk each in the name of its god will not do so forever.
- Let's look at **Micah 4:1-5**.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- In the same way, **Zechariah 2:10-12** (ESV) connects Jerusalem's joy with the nations in worship.

<sup>10</sup> Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for behold, I come and I will dwell in your midst, declares the LORD. <sup>11</sup> And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. <sup>12</sup> And the LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and will again choose Jerusalem.

# A Shared Expectation: The Nations in Prophecy

- As a proper finale to this collection of passages, in the final prophet of the Old Testament we read,
- **Malachi 1:11** (ESV)

For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.

A Shared Expectation

Conclusions

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- The nations have been arguing with one another since they came into existence in the era of Babel.
- Try as we might, we cannot seem to bring this fighting to an end – but Jesus will.

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- When he returns as the King of kings, the nations will submit to his rule and absolute authority.
- No wiser, more loving, more just ruler could ever be found.

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- The God of Israel will one day be the God of all nations.
- The Messiah of Israel will one day be worshiped over the entire face of the earth.

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- Let's read **Daniel 7:13-14** one more time.

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and behold, with the clouds of heaven  
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# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- Let's read **Daniel 7:13-14** one more time.

<sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- Our identity among the nations is wrapped up in our belonging to him.
- **Who we are** is very important, but **whose we are – who we belong to** – is more important still.<sup>3</sup>

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- Let's pray for God to grant us the supernatural ability to:
  1. See God in his rightful place as the **God of all nations**.
  2. See Jesus as the **Son of Man** who will receive an everlasting dominion and a kingdom that shall not be destroyed.
  3. See ourselves as **Christ's representatives**, awaiting that day when he is revealed.
  4. Bring **Christ to the nations**, starting in Indianapolis and continuing to the ends of the earth.

# A Shared Expectation      Conclusions

- Finally, may the Lord make a church that is
  1. Even more unified
  2. Even more diverse
  3. So fully identified with Christ that God's nature, love and wisdom will be evident to us and to the outside world.

Next Week

# A Shared Savior: The Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 1 – 2

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Part 8 of 14



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