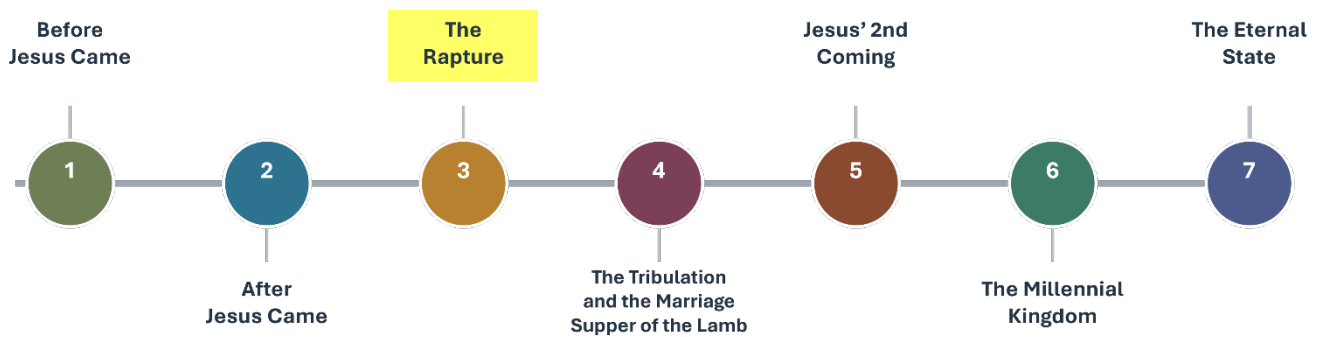




We are now in the time of the rapture (where all who have put their faith in Jesus are now in heaven) and still addressing these same three questions regarding the **location** of heaven at that time, the state of the **souls** of those who have placed their faith in Jesus, and the condition or state of the **body**. And **if you were here last time, you know 1)** heaven (the third heaven—where God resides) is up from the earth, **2)** the soul is fully intact and forever free from sin and corruption, and **3)** it's exactly at the rapture that those who died before the rapture will have their bodies resurrected and glorified, while those who were still alive at the time of the rapture will have their bodies transformed as Jesus takes them up from the earth ([1 Thes. 4:15–17](#), [1 Cor 15:51–52](#)). But admittedly this section (the Rapture) is more about **what we will be experiencing**, because after all this is a series on heaven.

- And last week we started in on [Ch. 4–5](#) as we unpack what the book of [Revelation](#) says about this event in our coming future. There we were introduced to what it will be like when we see **1)** God the Father and **2)** God the Holy Spirit on that day. Which included **3)** a glimpse at the throne of God in heaven.
- But do also remember **this is the great reunion so many have waited for**. For not only is this the day you will be in the literal presence of God, but also when you will be reunited with everyone you love, who were also raptured or died beforehand **with their faith for eternal life in the finished work of Jesus**. And the greatest of all worship concerts is about to erupt. And as you will see, it's not just the praise that will blow us all away, **it's the symbology and meaning which will be revealed and fully understood**.
- Now we stopped at a very interesting place last time, which was an introduction to the **four living creatures** around the throne of God the Father. That's where we are going to pick back up today.

^{6b}And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

So now we add this to what we heard last time about the appearance of God the Father and the Holy Spirit. And it should go without saying that **here we see something else we have never seen upon this earth**. I have a feeling even when John was trying to describe these four living creatures, he must have felt he did a subpar job, simply because these four are indescribable.

- Our God is so creative, and **everything He created has a design and a purpose**, and He created them all.
- Now **Ezekiel** also describes some angels identified as **Cherubim**, that have some **very similar features, but not exactly** ([Ezek. Ch. 1](#)). And he too had real trouble describing them to us, saying they had something like a wheel inside a wheel filled with fire that is attached to (or beside) them ([1:15–21](#)).

- But I personally believe these are the **Seraphim** mentioned only in [Isaiah 6:2–3](#), which translates “*burning ones*.” Which **I believe has to do with their constant proximity to God’s throne**. This piece is certainly open to debate (just an interesting piece, but not as interesting as they are).

Others have thought the four faces have to do with **the four gospels which highlight different attributes of Jesus**. This is some of the symbology I mentioned earlier. Add that to the sounds (thunder and praise) and lights (the appearance of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, along with the flashes of lightning), and the way this impacts us emotionally will only be going up from here.

- [Matthew](#) depicts Jesus as the king/Messiah, which correlates to the face of the lion.
- [Mark](#) depicts Jesus as the servant (not of man but of God) and therefore correlates to the ox ([Ezek. 1:10](#)) which is a working animal (for you students of the Bible, “calf” in [Rev. 4:7](#) can reasonably be translated “ox”).
- [Luke](#) depicts Jesus as the Perfect Man and therefore is fitting to be represented by the face of a man.
- [John](#) depicts Jesus as God and is represented by the eagle, which has long since been given the attributes of deity.

I can see the validity in this, for we find in both these types of angels and in the gospels, there is **a harmony** that binds all of this together **to tell the story of God’s great plan of salvation for His creation through Jesus**.

- But whatever these angels are, they are literal beings with something “*like*” these features. **And their entire desire is to bring praise to God! I can’t wait to worship God with them in heaven.**

We also find here **the 1st of 14 doxologies** in this book. Doxology comes from two words which literally mean “*glory speaking*,” or from the dictionary, “*an expression of praise to God*.”

- And you likely recognize this one in verse 8 from Phillips, Craig and Dean’s “Revelation Song.”
- Yet this part here is not ours. It **belongs to the four living creatures** alone.
- But **1)** we, as well as **2)** all the angels, **3)** the tribulation saints, **4)** mass multitudes, and **5)** every living creature, all **have our own doxologies** to present before God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus (the Lamb), in this most incredible coming day.

This is just one more reason it’s so rewarding to be a people of the Book (the Bible—the whole Bible). There are going to be people in heaven who refused to read the Old Testament, the book of Revelation, or to study heaven as we are doing. And I imagine they will not know what is fully going on. They will look like *I* do when someone tries to explain computer coding to me—completely lost 😊.

- They will stand with their mouth open, asking for someone to please explain what or Who that glorious light is, or what these four living creatures are.
- And we will have the privilege of just entering into the worship **or** choosing to be their tour guides.

Because when these four living creatures begin to proclaim, “*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!*” I have a feeling we are going to just be undone in the presence of God, as our eyes and what we are seeing are witnessing to what they are proclaiming!

(cont. next page)

And here is evidence of this being the case.

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

This is our doxology, so we want to learn this one! And there are more to come after this ([5:9–10](#), [5:13](#), [7:12](#), [11:16–18](#), [19:1–3](#), [19:4](#), & [19:6–8](#) [I put these on my calendar to work on memorizing each day]).

- When the *living creatures* give their praise, **we could not hold ours back if we tried**. **We will fuel one another with our praises to the Lord our God in this common bond between mankind and angels.**
- So, you might ask, how do we prepare ourselves for these things to come in the presence of God in heaven? Folks, we’ve been doing it since we started this series (and at many other times), as we have been looking into what the word of God has to say about what to expect. And we are doing the best we can to imagine something nearly unimaginable. But we are surely gaining ground.

And we prepare ourselves **by praising God** right now, even though we can’t see Him right now. For on that day, we will see all that John (and others) have attempted to describe to us, and more. In that day our hearts and minds will be enlightened in such a way as to fully take it all in.

- We also see the doxologies of this book are **both songs and spoken declarations of praise filled with truth**. So, **1)** wake up singing to Him and speaking out loud your declarations of praise. And **2)** continue to do so until you fall asleep.
- **3)** As you go to devotional time, **4)** as you are making the food He has provided you, **5)** as you are driving to your destination, **6)** as we are here in worship, **both sing and declare 1)** all of His attributes, **2)** all of His mighty works, **3)** all of His great mercy that bought our salvation and keeps it. Give Him thanks and praise without end.

And don’t be afraid to **take up a posture of worship** that expresses what you are saying or singing.

- Here we see that we will *fall down* before Him. And being He’s the same God now as then, **it’s reasonable to fall down before Him now, from time to time in worship and prayer**.
- [Psalm 134:2](#) tells us, “*Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.*” But it’s [Psalm 103:1](#) that says to us exactly how much we should put into praising God, saying, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name.*” We will certainly be taking this posture on that day!
- But there’s one more piece here we should note in terms of worship. When we join in to respond to the glory and honor being given to God on that day in heaven, those *crowns* we might have earned while upon this earth will finally find their full purpose. They will be the very gifts we will be able to cast before the feet of our God.

Folks, to the extent that you worship and serve Him today will be reflected on that day. If He will be worthy then *to receive glory and honor and power*, then He is worthy now! Don’t let someone tell you to stop thinking so much about heaven so you can just focus on being a social justice warrior now.

- If you know what is coming for those who love and worship God on that day, then you will live to love and worship Him every day.
- What gift will you present before Him? He wants your heart. And if He has it, then when you see Him on that day, you will not have to worry about having nothing to bring and offer to Him (see [1 Cor. 3:15](#)).

Now, [Ch. 5](#) picks up with the word “*and*,” signifying it is a continuation of what we will be experiencing when all the saints and angels come together in heaven to see and worship our God.

^{5:1} And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (God the Father) a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

There are several opinions about what might be contained in this scroll.

- Many believe it is the **title deed** (deed of purchase [see [Jer. 32:9–15](#)]) to the earth due to its similarities to the Roman title deeds that were *sealed with seven seals* because they required seven witnesses. And they were written on the inside and out, just as this scroll is. **No one could open that title deed but the one who purchased the item.** And as of this time that deed is being held by the Father, unopened, even though the purchase has been made!
- In [Zech. 5:1–5](#), when the Lord is addressing **the judgment He is going to send** upon the land and people at that time, He uses the image of a scroll, meaning this scroll contained a written proclamation of what God was going to bring upon the land and those who would not turn and repent of their sin. And since the opening of each seal of this scroll pictured here brings another of God’s judgments upon the earth, this too makes a good case for this being what this scroll is.
- But it also appears it could include or be **the new covenant with Israel**, spoken of in [Heb. 8:10–12](#), where in [verse 10](#) the Lord says, “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord* (see also [Rom. 11:25–27](#) & [Psa. 98:3](#)).”

I believe this scroll is God’s righteous decree of judgment that He must fulfill before bringing full restoration of all things the curse has brought. And when that cleanup is completed, He will then inhabit the earth with His people (all of His people, OT saints, NT Gentile saints, and Jewish believers), also restoring to Israel the place He guaranteed to be theirs forever ([Rom. 11:25–27](#), [Acts 1:6–7](#), [Ezek. 37:21–28](#), [Amos 9:11–15](#)). Meaning all three of these positions are correct. For the opening of this scroll will change everything as we have known it to be!

² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

Now this strong angel is not strong enough to open this scroll. In truth there is no created being that could ever open this scroll, for **the ability to open it exceeded the need for enormous strength.**

- The requirement for being able to take and open it is being found *worthy*.

³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I (John) wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

John had walked the earth with **Jesus** for over three years and listened to Jesus as He told them what was coming at the end ([Matt. 24](#)). And by this time John would have had an amazing understanding of the OT prophets such as **Daniel** (who were given so many insights into what was and is coming).

- So, when John was taken up and began to see this vision unfold, I believe he would have had (at the very least) a basic understanding of where this vision was going.
- And he knew that unless that scroll could be opened, the end of all sin, the era of millennial kingdom, and the reinstatement of Israel, as promised by God the Father, would not become a reality.
- So when this angel in this heavenly scene before the throne and presence of God the Father was unable to produce anyone anywhere, in either the spiritual or physical realm, to open this scroll, **John lost it.**

Folks, the world has struggled with sin nearly from the beginning. And John had known of and even watched countless numbers of people be persecuted, murdered (seeing even the murder of Jesus), others starved, assaulted, tortured, robbed, swindled, and falsely imprisoned (the very thing which had happened to him as he was writing this letter while imprisoned on the Island of Patmos).

- These same hostilities and crimes existed before John was ever born, continuing to this day.
- John wept much because although he knew what was coming for those who rejected Jesus was horrific, he also knew that unless that scroll was opened, the curse of sin in the world would never come to an end. **And there was no one there in his vision who was worthy to do so.**

⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

John would have immediately known this was **Jesus**, for in saying *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* was worthy, he would have known this spoke of Jesus, from when **Jacob** (Israel) was dying and prophesied over his sons (the tribes of Israel). And of **Judah** he said, “*The scepter shall not depart from Judah. Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh* (meaning “to whom it belongs”) *comes...*” (Gen. 49:10), bringing us back to the One worthy to open this title deed.

- And when this elder (not an angel, but one who knew personally what this meant) noted this individual was *the Root of David*, it brought forth another OT prophecy which foretold **Jesus’ lineage** (found in Isa. 11:1 & 10).
- But it’s in the genealogy of Matt. 1 where both of these attributes come together to show **1)** that Jesus was a Jew from the tribe of *Judah* (verse 2) **2)** and was the final branch in the lineage of King David (verse 6), **that we now hear of the 3rd person of the Trinity in heaven!**

This is *the glorious appearing of God the Son* onto the scene. Here He is *the One who is worthy to open the scroll*, because He *has prevailed!!!* But what does it mean that He *has prevailed*? John is about to be reminded, just as you and I are, next time 😊.

- Let me leave you with something to think about until then. I was watching a video of people from around the world viewing what a Virginia Tech home football game was like. That stadium seats 65,632 people and every seat appeared to be filled, the vast majority with people in school colors. And they have a tradition of entering the field to the Metallica song “Enter Sandman” (kind of strange to bring that up in a church service, but there is a point here—trust me). So the entire band is on the field, the fans and everyone in the stadium are jumping up and down cheering, and the team has not even entered the field yet. They run on as this song is blasting and seemingly everyone there is singing to this anthem of theirs, fireworks are going off in the background, and these foreigners watching this are simply blown away to the point of having goosebumps, each saying one day they want to experience this in person. And folks, the game hasn’t even been played yet. Their team could lose or win. And yet these commentators are saying this would be one of the best days of their lives.
- Folks, I want you to picture in your mind what it will be like when the rapture of the church occurs and you experience the presence and worship of God who has created everything and has assured us a never-ending victory through the blood of Jesus Christ. And we haven’t even gotten past the first day in heaven after the rapture! *Do you think a Virginia Tech football game, or any other party or celebration, can compare to what is coming on this day?* Get real!
- If you came into this study believing heaven was going to be boring, it’s time to wake up to a reality you are not going to want to miss. And the only way to experience all that God has prepared is to receive what Jesus did to make it possible for you. So **1)** receive Him, **2)** worship God, and **3)** let the anticipation build in you, **4)** serving the Lord with all your heart, **5)** until that day finally arrives and changes everything.

CROSS REFERENCES

1Th 4:15–17 NKJV – (15) For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. (16) For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

1Co 15:51–52 NKJV – (51) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- (52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Eze 1:15–21 NKJV – (15) Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. (16) The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. (17) When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. (18) As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them. (19) When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. (20) Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. (21) When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

Isa 6:2–3 NKJV – (2) Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

Eze 1:10 NKJV – As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

Rev 4:7 NKJV – The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

Rev 5:9–10 NKJV – (9) And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, (10) And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

Rev 5:13 NKJV – And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Rev 7:12 NKJV – saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Rev 11:16–18 NKJV – (16) And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, (17) saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. (18) The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You

should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

Rev 19:1–3 NKJV – (1) After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! (2) "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." (3) Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

Rev 19:4 NKJV – And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

Rev 19:6–8 NKJV – (6) And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! (7) "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (8) And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

1Co 3:15 NKJV – If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Jer 32:9–15 NKJV – (9) "So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money--seventeen shekels of silver. (10) "And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. (11) "So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; (12) "and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison. (13) "Then I charged Baruch before them, saying, (14) 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." (15) 'For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." ' "

Zec 5:1–5 NKJV – (1) Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. (2) And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." (3) Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it." (4) "I will send out the curse," says the LORD of hosts; "It shall enter the house of the thief And the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house And consume it, with its timber and stones." (5) Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth."

Heb 8:10–12 NKJV – (10) "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (11) "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. (12) "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Rom 11:25–27 NKJV – (25) For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (26) And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come

out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; (27) For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."

Psa 98:3 NKJV – He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Act 1:6–7 NKJV – (6) Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

Eze 37:21–28 NKJV – (21) "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; (22) "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. (23) "They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. (24) "David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. (25) "Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. (26) "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. (27) "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (28) "The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." ' ' "

Amo 9:11–15 NKJV – (11) "On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; (12) That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing. (13) "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it. (14) I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. (15) I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God.

Isa 11:1 NKJV – There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isa 11:10 NKJV – "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Mat 1:2 NKJV – Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

Mat 1:6 NKJV – and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.