

Titles of Christ:

## ***THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS***

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**“And I will shake all nations,  
and the desire of all nations shall come”  
(Haggai 2:7 KJV)**

The entire verse as it appears in the prophet Haggai is as follows:

6 For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it [is] a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and

the earth, and the sea, and the dry [land];

7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house

with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

8 The silver [is] mine, and the gold [is] mine, saith the Lord of hosts.

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in

this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts. (Haggai 2:6-9 KJV)

The Greek translation known as the Septuagint does not use the expression “the desire of all nations” as a title for Christ. Rather it opts for a more ambiguous expression. However, if we refer to the Latin Vulgate, which is closer to the Hebrew, we find that “the desire of all nations” is the expression of choice.

***“I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;  
And... all nations”:***

This earthquake which occurs in the heavens and earth and all the nations they contain is a prophetic allusion to a radical change in the way God deals with man. Nature will participate in this change as it is liberated from its state of slavery to corruption as a result of Adam’s sin. As it is written: “Cursed is the ground because of you...” (Genesis 3:17). This change will come about when mankind’s salvation is completed and he enters into his heavenly dwelling.

This took place for the first time in history when God descended to speak with Moses from the peak of Mt. Sinai. “And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. . . . Now when all the people perceived the thunderings and the lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled; and they stood afar off...” (Exodus 19:18, 20:18). In this way the Old Testament inaugurates nature’s celebration of God’s descent to speak to his people. This is the beginning of God’s old covenant with his people. In the same fashion, we see nature celebrating the advent of

the “desire of all nations.” The heavens are also involved in the celebration because He comes from above—from the heavens. Also, “all the nations” participate in the festivity by virtue of the earthquake that shakes the nations. However, this event is not viewed in human, visible terms, but in spiritual terms. The “desire of all nations” is none other than the Son of God who came in secrecy and peace without public recognition: “Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior” (Is 45:15). Indeed, we observe that the signs of the end time are displayed in much the same fashion (Mk 13:8, 24-26). These signs accompany the Son of Man’s completion of the work of salvation. At his final appearing, he will be revealed as God, coming in glory with the saints. All creation will be shaken including the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars. This is the final celebration of man. Nature will participate in this emancipation as the curse is lifted from it.

### ***“The Desire of All Nations”:***

This particular title of Christ is unique in that it describes Christ’s role in regard to the nations in our day. The word “desire” suggests an intense love—an intimate relationship of heart, soul and spirit with this one who is Savior and Redeemer. The prophet Isaiah foretells something of the ardor and passion which possesses those who love Christ. Listen to his words: “Thy memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee” (Is 26:8-9). Isaiah is not speaking of himself but prophetically. He is speaking of a future reality when Christ will be the desire of the nations. If this prophecy was for Haggai and Isaiah, it is also for us. Indeed, it speaks for us if we are only willing to speak the mystery of Christ in truth.

### ***Christ’s Position as the Desire of All Nations:***

Christ himself sanctifies this title and encourages its use. Listen as he says, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man...” (Lk 17:22). While the verse refers specifically to the desire for his “days”, the clear meaning of the passage is a desire for him. He is directing our hearts and minds to consider the depth of relationship which is to bind us to him. It is difficult to find him if we wade in waters outside the sea of desire for his love. In order to find him, we must be motivated by a passionate desire to see him. He will not be found apart from the deep recesses of a desiring heart. He who grasps this mystery has learned the best of man’s secrets and more. Listen as he speaks about his gospel and his words: “Truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear” (Mt 13:17; 16).

What the prophets and righteous men longed for—to see Christ and hear his words—they did not receive. We who believe in Christ have received the Word made both visible and audible. This vision and hearing is the meaning of the word “desire.” Seeing and hearing this “Christ who is desired” have become our right. It is also clear that the vision of Christ has become a vision of faith which is a higher level than the physical sense of sight. Concerning his words, his gospel

has been granted to us. Therefore, Christ has fulfilled the title assigned to him by Haggai centuries ago (520 BC). Indeed, he is the desire of all nations by faith and the gospel. Faith makes his person present. The gospel reveals to us his word.

Concerning the prophets who desired but neither saw nor heard, perhaps the clearest example is Daniel. We read in his prophecy that when he desired to know the mystery of Christ and the end, he was told:

“Go your way Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand. And from the time that the continual burnt offering is taken away, and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he who waits and comes to the thousand three hundred and thirty-five days” [in other words “until the coming of Christ”] (Daniel 12:9-12).

After Christ declares: “many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it,” he applies this word to us when he says: “But blessed are your eyes because they see.” This is the same blessing pronounced in the book of Daniel on those who are to be present at the coming of Christ.

After this the book of Daniel describes Christ in the following terms: “to bring in everlasting righteousness...to anoint the most holy,...an anointed one, a prince” (Dan 9:24-25). This is one of the most beautiful and most powerful revelatory titles of Christ. He alone is righteous. He is the seal of all visions and the end of all prophecies. He alone is holy, Christ the prince of peace.

Not only did Daniel prophesy about the coming of Christ. Other prophets and righteous ones spoke these inspired words:

We hear Jacob the Righteous, the father of Patriarchs declare: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah (the tribe of Judah), nor a lawgiver from between his feet (a king who orders and establishes), until Shiloh comes; and unto him [shall] the gathering of the people [be]” (Gen 49:10 KJV).

Notice that a prophecy given as early as the book of Genesis clearly relates Christ’s rule to the nations. Jacob’s soul also desired to see this “Shiloh” of whom Scripture spoke. But he did not see or hear.

Consider also the prophet Balaam “who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down, but having his eyes uncovered” (Numbers 24:16). He says: “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh; a star shall come forth out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel” (Num 24:17). Balaam also had an intense desire to see this one whom he beheld as a star that lit up the sky. Still, he neither saw nor heard.

Isaiah also says: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)” (Is 7:14 KJV). Through this astounding mystery, Isaiah reveals certain facets of Christ’s advent. How could his soul not long to see and hear Immanuel? He cries out,

“Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour” (Is 45:15). His eyes grew dull before the vision was fulfilled. His ears were not allowed to hear it.

Isaiah himself speaks of this one who is coming: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’” (Is 9:6). Isaiah, as well, longed to see and hear that divine Son. However, he neither heard nor saw him.

The Inspired word also speaks of Christ as a vineyard through Isaiah: “A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day” (Is 27:2,3). Imagine how great was Isaiah’s desire to see that vineyard and know who it was. Still, he did not see or hear.

Isaiah speaks again. “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert” (Is 35:5-6). Isaiah longed to see that one who would cause rivers to spring forth in the desert, but he did not see or hear.

Isaiah calls out yet again, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law” (Is 42:1-4).

Isaiah’s words are for the comfort of coming generations, yet he himself does not grasp the depth of the words he speaks.

Daniel the prophet also says, “Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand; but those who are wise shall understand... Blessed is he who waits...” (Dan 12:10,12). Shiloh is hated at his coming, thus fulfilling the prophetic word that the wicked shall not understand. The star of Jacob appeared but they despised him and even produced a counterfeit of him (i.e., Bar-Cochba, d. AD 135). The son of the virgin came. They merely said “we know his father and mother” and they began to look for an occasion to stone him. A son was born to Judah who did the works of God. They said, “he does these things by the prince of the demons.” He came who causes waters to break forth in the desert. He opened blind eyes and deaf ears. The lame and paralyzed carried their beds and walked. They asked, “are you he who is to come, or do we wait for another?” He came who did works of truth. They wore him down, judged him and killed him. However the wise ones were purified. Their clothes were made white in the blood of the lamb. They were cleansed by the Spirit. These received the blessing from the mouth of Christ because they saw and heard in truth. Their desire was fulfilled. These are the ones of whom the prophets and seers spoke: “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things...things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet. 1:12).

It is truly amazing that the “desire of all nations” is also the one desired by the angels. Is it not because he is Lord of heaven and earth whose “speech is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable” (Song of Solomon 5:16), indeed, the desire of the saints and angels!

“Blessed are your ears because they hear...”, hear what they desire—the word of Christ.

### ***The Desire of the Gospel:***

The gospel is the incarnate voice of God. It is hearing and seeing, by faith, at the same time. The desired one is found in the gospel by faith (seeing) and by the Spirit (hearing). One might well ask: “How can I long for the gospel?” The apostle Peter responds: “Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation? (1 Pet. 2:2).

This longing for the gospel is portrayed by a most creative means. The apostle Peter represents this desire through a suckling, laid upon his mother’s breast, urged by an instinctive longing to obtain his mother’s pure milk. It is as though he is calling us to be animated by a similar instinctive, unquenchable desire to obtain the gospel. The suckling is moved to satisfy his natural hunger. He must have this milk for the sake of his growth and health. If the infant is deprived of his longing for food, he will refuse to nurse. He will even vomit his food if forced to nurse without this desire. The gospel is viewed in the same light by the apostle Peter. If one reads without a believing spirit, the desired result will not be forthcoming. If the gospel is read by force, the words will simply exit as easily as they enter accruing no benefit for life and spiritual development. So, the desire for the gospel is an essential element of the gospel. Indeed, he who gave the gospel, the “desire of the nations,” also insisted on a desire for it. The purpose and origin of this analogy is Christ himself as he declares: “Many prophets and righteous ones desired to see and hear what you see and hear.” What we see and hear through our earnest desire is Christ himself.

Dear reader, please pay attention. This is no exaggeration. It is established truth. In this truth lies the mystery of life, the gospel and growth in Christ: “Long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2).

The question is, “how can I long for the gospel?” The answer is at the heart of the meaning of “gospel.” The gospel is the voice and image of Christ. If your love relationship with Christ has come to the point of longing, then your desire for the gospel will take on the same quality. Listen as Saint Peter speaks of vision, love and longing for Christ: “Without having seen him you love him; though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy” (1 Peter 1:8). In the gospel you meet with Christ by the vision of faith. This vision creates an inexpressible joy in your heart in anticipation of the future glory. In this way, the saying is fulfilled in us: “Blessed are you for you see and hear ‘the desired one’.”

This fact is not some hidden mystery. It is open to all as we have often proclaimed that the reading of the gospel is an encounter with Christ. This is why it produces inexpressible joy which gives witness to the fact that a true encounter has taken place, leading to growth and life. This title of Christ, “the desire of all nations,” is a mystery of mysteries.

### ***The Utmost Examples of Mutual Desire:***

Christ said: “I am the true vine...and you are the branches” (John 15:1,5). What is this union of the branches and the vine, this passionate, longing love? Is not this union the utmost example of mutual desire? “Abide in me and I in you” (Jn 15:4). This is a love which never ceases day or night until the branch brings forth fruit. Is not this a case of passionate mutual love which refuses any separation?

Furthermore, what is the origin of these unique qualities? Do they not spring from the identity of the vine as it is he who is “the desire of all nations?” Here is he who revealed the secret: “A pleasant vineyard, sing of it! I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. Lest any one harm it, I guard it night and day” (Is 27:2-3).

“And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (Lk 22:15).

He grasped the cup of his slain love on behalf of his beloved ones in this world. He breathed his love into it. He poured out the passion of his soul and said to them: “Drink of it, all of you” (Mt 26:27). It was said about Christ that “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). It was also said about the cup that he took: “I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (Lk 22:15). Can we not discern here, dear reader, that a story is unfolding? It is a story taken from the mystery of the Eucharist. The sayings of Christ are part of this mystery. They live in the heart of him who eats of Christ. When we partake of the bread corporately, we partake of his love to the uttermost and the passion of his soul in its completion.

The gospel and the Eucharist are one mystery, revealing Christ as “the desire of the nations.” “[They] have tasted the goodness of the word of God” (Heb 6:5). “...for you have tasted of the kindness of the Lord...” (1 Pet. 2:3). This is the taste of love and passion, Christ says: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (John 6:56). Is this not the result of mutual love which has reached its highest degree? He also says: “You in me and I in you...” (Jn 14:20). Is not this liaison of communion the completion of all that the soul desires in Christ? Is it not the completion of all that Christ desires from those who love him and believe in him? It is also an enlarged picture of the word of the gospel when it takes up residence in the desiring heart.

Paul elucidates the highest degree of practical application of this name “the desire of the nations.” He describes Christ’s union with those who believe in him— his beloved church—as a model relationship of love between a bride and groom. “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). Let the reader observe that Paul depicts believers in the feminine form. Christ’s love is like the love of a man for his bride—the very essence of passion in its holiest sense. He further elevates his description of this holy state of love: “...that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle” (Eph 5:26-27). Saint Paul carefully places believers on the level of a bride who deserves the love of

her husband—the level of a holy passion. By means of sanctification by baptism and the blood, believers attain to the state of holiness and thus become the bride of “the desire of all nations.”

It may seem to the reader that this description of a passionate mutual love between Christ and redeemed mankind is a temporal expression. The truth is that God designed this plan, preparing it for implementation before the foundation of the world. It was a matter of his choice concerning those who were to be united to Christ. “...who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” (Eph 1:3-4). Then he further clarified the ultimate objective of this unique condition of communion with Christ: “He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (Eph 1:5-6). We are to become a new creation capable of standing before him in heaven to proclaim praise and glory to Jesus Christ the beloved.

This is the “desire of all nations.” This is how the nations receive this “desired one.” This is how they become one with him and he with them in the ultimate attainment of glory. Now that we know the position of “the desired one” in regard to ourselves and our place in regard to him, the path we must follow to arrive at this passionate love for him has become well-marked. We join Isaiah, making his words our life’s song:

“Thy memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee” (Isa 26:8-9).