

The Bible Standard

“Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;...”

Psalm 43:3

“LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE”

Isaiah 62: 10

INSIDE

THE OLD TESTAMENT

- CAN CHRISTIANS USE IT TODAY?..... 66
- WATER BAPTISM 69
- ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT 72
- JOSIAH—A GODLY YOUNG KING 75
- TIES THAT BIND 77
- CONSIDER THE WONDROUS
WORKS OF GOD 78
- KING ZEDEKIAH BLINDED 79

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BACK PAGE



THE OLD TESTAMENT Can Christians Use It Today?

“Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister” (1 Peter 1: 10-12)

WE find that “Thus saith the LORD” is an expression used very often in the Old Testament Scriptures; yet some professed Christian people are inclined to esteem lightly what Jehovah wrote for “us” there, under the impression that since we have the New Testament, with its clearer and brighter light, we have no further need for the Old Testament Scriptures. We believe that some Christians, however, recognize that, while the Old Testament was a great blessing to those who lived in the days of the Law and the prophets, nevertheless most of it was written more especially for the benefit of the LORD’s consecrated people living during the Christian dispensation.

The prophets foretold things which they did not themselves understand; for instance, Daniel, having seen a vision reaching far into the future, upon making inquiry as to the time, was told: “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end”; then “many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”; and “none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12: 9, 4, 10). The increase of travel and knowledge in our day indicates we are in the “time of the end”; and “blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he comes shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them” (Luke 12: 37; comp. Matt. 24: 42-44; 25: 13; Rev. 16: 15).

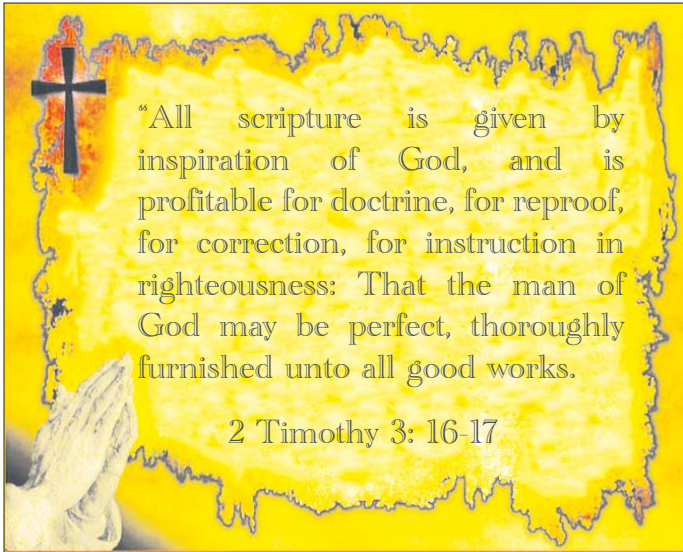
As indicated in our text, the Apostle Peter speaks of the Old Testament prophets, who wrote as they were moved by God’s Spirit or power, not understanding the full significance of what they wrote. They inquired and searched diligently as to *what time*, or *what manner of time* the Spirit in them did signify [*i.e.*, whether the time given them was *literal* or *symbolic time*], unto whom it was revealed, that *not unto themselves*, but *unto us* [the Gospel Age consecrated] they did minister and still do. They were used as God’s mouthpieces merely, and laid up treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are developed and made manifest during the Gospel Age, a little at a time, as “meat

in due season,” [progressing to this very day] which by God’s Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, is illuminated as due, to guide the faithful into all Truth (Prov. 4: 18; Psa. 119: 105).



That the prophetic writings of the Old Testament are reliable is certified by the Apostle in 2 Pet. 1: 21: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man [Old Testament prophecies were not the imaginings of longing human hearts]; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved [to speak] by the Holy Spirit.” God’s Spirit or power operated on their minds to write what He wanted them to write, though they did not understand the deep things hidden in their writings, as they themselves sometimes indicated, *e.g.*, Ezek. 20: 49 “Then said I, Oh LORD God! They say of me, does he not speak in parables.” Also in Daniel (Dan. 8: 26, 27) we read of the vision of the evening and morning were true and that it would last for many days. The Apostle Paul explains of some of these Old Testament writings that “they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world [Greek plural: *ages*] are come” (1 Cor. 10: 11)—at the end or Harvest of the Jewish Age and the end or Harvest of the Gospel Age (Matt. 13: 39); the work continues to this day. Also, he states “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15: 4). The Old Testament is a great treasure-

house in which God has locked up and sealed items of great interest and value to His Gospel Age consecrated children; especially here in the end of the Age, and the New Testament is the key by which we gain access to them, as the due time comes for them to be understood. Jeremiah 15: 16 says “Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me a joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of host.”

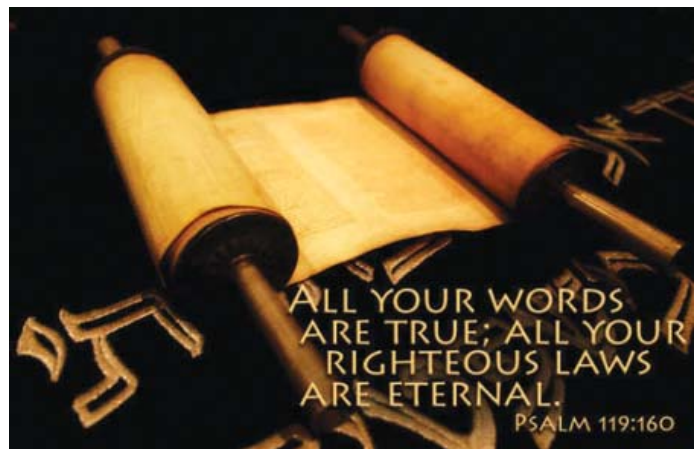


What part of the Scriptures did Jesus refer when He said, “Search the scriptures . . . they which testify of me” (John 5: 39)? We answer: the Old Testament, since not one word of the New Testament was then written. When the Apostle Paul commended the Bereans, who “searched the scriptures daily” (Acts 17: 11), for their diligent study, what Scriptures was he referring to? The Old Testament! From what Scriptures did Jesus and the early Apostles quote and to what Scriptures did Jesus refer when He said, “The scripture cannot be broken” (John 10: 35)? The Old Testament! And when the risen Lord as “a stranger” walked and talked with the two men on the way to Emmaus, and “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24: 27), what Scriptures were they? The Old Testament! Apollon was “mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18: 24) of which Testament? When the Apostle Paul visited the Jews in their synagogues and “reasoned with them out of the scriptures” (Acts 17: 2), what Scriptures did he use? Surely the Old Testament, to which he referred also when he asked King Agrippa, “Do you believe the prophets?” (Acts 26: 27) and when he wrote to Timothy, “From a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3: 15). Paul was surely referring to the Old Testament Scriptures here, in verse 16 “All scripture given by inspiration of God, is *profitable*.” V. 17 “that the man of God may be perfect,

thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

We might ask, why are some professed men of God so imperfectly furnished. Well, reason says that they lay aside more than two-thirds of God’s Word, the Old Testament, which as we just read in 2 Tim 3: 16—St. Paul says is *profitable* to the man of God. So highly did the Apostle Peter esteem the prophecy of the Old Testament, that he considered it better evidence than his own sight; and after telling of Christ’s transfiguration “in the holy mount,” and that it was given as an evidence of the coming Kingdom of Christ, he says (2 Pet. 1: 19), “We have also a *more sure word of prophecy*; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn.” He corroborates St. Paul’s statement that it is *profitable*, and informs us that it will continue to be useful “*until* the day dawn.”

The Old Testament is filled with many prophecies that are fulfilling in our very midst to this very day, here in the end of the Gospel Age and many that will be fulfilled in the near future; and it behooves the wide-awake Christians, the consecrated watchers, who do “not sleep, as do others” (1 Thes. 5: 6), to arise and trim their lamps (search the Scriptures) and have them burning. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119: 105).



In spite of all this New Testament testimony some professed Christians are inclined to neglect the Old Testament writings, they are largely or wholly ignorant of prophecy and its past, present and future fulfillments, “when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”—“the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3: 21), when through Abraham’s Seed all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12: 3; 22: 18; Gal. 3: 8, 16, 29). Oh, just as the moon reflects the great light of the sun and gives us light by night, so the Old Testament sheds much light on the Christian’s pathway by its doctrines, precepts, promises, exhortations, histories, prophecies and types.

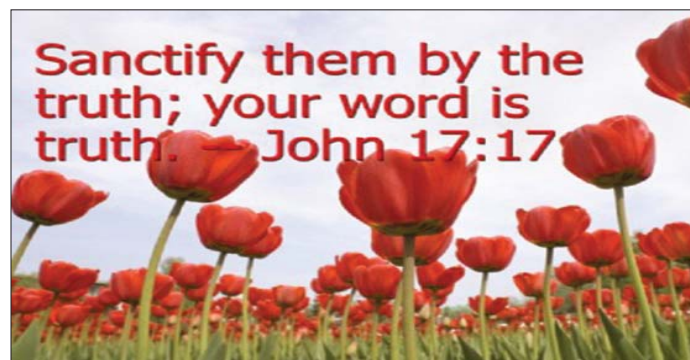


Many Christians neglect the study of the Old Testament because they fail to recognize its types, such as Israel's Tabernacle in the Wilderness (see *Tabernacle Shadows*) and its related sacrifices and ceremonies, which, the Apostle Paul assures us, were shadows of good things to come (Col. 2: 17; Heb. 8: 5; 10: 1). This failure to recognize the Old Testament types is occasioned, in part at least, by the fact that now, as in the time of the first advent of Christ, the cross of Christ has become a stumbling block and foolishness to many. "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto they were appointed" (1 Pet. 2: 8). Many professed ministers of the cross do not recognize its value or preach it. On the contrary, much of their teaching now aims to disclaim and disprove that we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and spot" (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19), and substitutes for this the theory of evolution, which denies the Bible doctrine of man's fall and the necessity of a ransom from it, claiming that Christ's value to the sinner consists in His words and example *merely*.

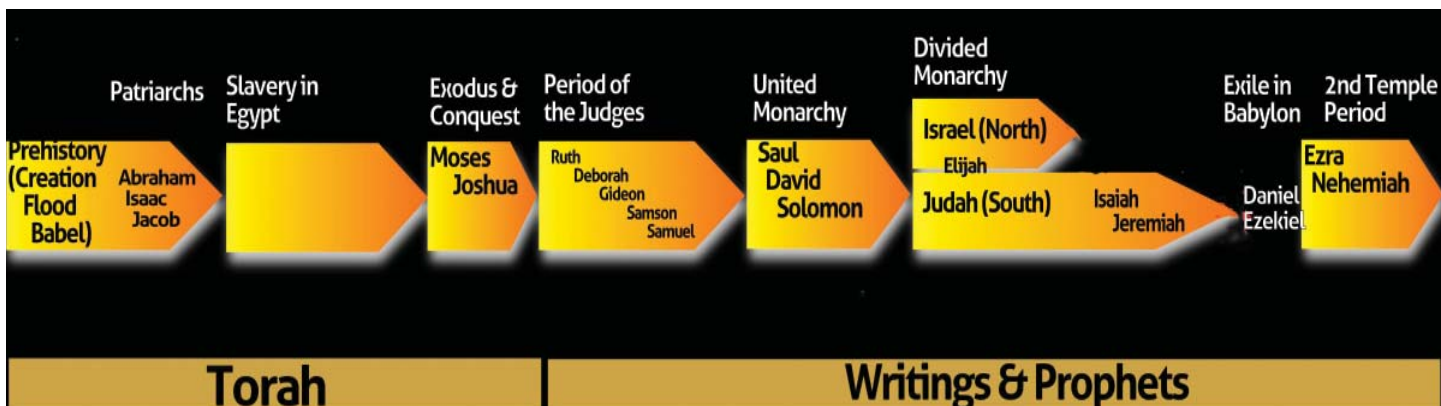
As the light on Jesus' ransom-sacrifice becomes dim in the minds of those in pulpit and pew, the Old Testament, with its Mosaic Law and sacrifices which typed that ransom-sacrifice, must be relegated to a place of minor importance. Once, when they saw by the light of God's Word, they appreciated the Apostle Paul's statement that Israel's sacrifices were foreshadowings of the "better sacrifices" for sin (Heb. 9: 23). We ask, how can

a professing Christian refuse the antitype, the ransom sacrifice of Christ, the antitypical sin-offering? These typical sacrifices of the Old Testament are repudiated and esteemed as meaningless!

THE BIBLE STANDARD stands for the *whole* Word of God—both the Old and New Testaments. Our policy is to neglect none of it—that the man of God may be *thoroughly* furnished, not partly furnished. We are not "ashamed of the testimony of our Lord" (2 Tim. 1: 8). We realize that it is written "precept upon precept" and "line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28: 10) and that to get the proper perspective and the whole picture we must fit all the parts together and see their perfect harmony. Dear Brethren, if we use only parts of God's Word and neglect other parts, we, too, are apt to get a wrong concept of God's great Plan of Salvation for the Church and for the world (1 John 2: 2).



False doctrines are built upon private interpretations, preconceived notions and partial understandings. We should "take heed" unto "the doctrine" (1 Tim. 4: 16), "knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. 1: 20). Our policy, therefore, is to take heed to the *whole* Word of God, not adding anything to, nor taking anything away from it, but diligently studying it, "to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15). We invite our readers to join with us and to co-operate with us to this end; and may God bless us all as we seek to learn and perform His holy will in all things!



WATER BAPTISM SYMBOLIZES — GIVING UP YOUR WILL TO DO GOD'S WILL

ETERNAL TORMENT

Church history shows that the damnation theories grew gradually. First came the theory that every child of Adam was born damned to eternal torture at the hands of fireproof devils, and that the only escape was through baptism. But it was claimed that baptism cancelled only previous sins and not subsequent ones; it was the custom in Constantine's time to put off baptism until as near the hour of death as possible. Tertullian is credited with supporting this view. Later came St. Augustine, advancing the theory that only the Church would be saved and that baptism was for the purpose of induction into the Church.

INFANT BAPTISM

Naturally, it followed that if infants died without being admitted into the Church they would go to eternal torture. As a result of this teaching infant baptism sprang into great popularity, which is still maintained. At first the infants were immersed in water, but later, under the belief that all bishops were successors of the Apostles and equal in authority, church councils took the place of the Word of God. They not only sanctioned infant baptism, which is not even mentioned in the Bible, but additionally claimed that immersion was unnecessary, and that a few drops of water would induct the aged or the babe into the Church and constitute an insurance against a hell of eternal torture. This theory still persists to perhaps a greater degree than many would imagine. Someone suggests, "Ah! We practice infant sprinkling, but it is merely a 'christening.' We have no thought whatever that the gracious Heavenly Father or His adorable Son, our Redeemer, would consign an infant to torture, even if it died without being christened." Do not be too sure—superstitions die hard. We know of a white-haired bishop in the Episcopal Church who was appalled at the very suggestion that his infant grandchild might be safe in the



"Let the little children come to me . . ." —Matt. 19: 14

arms of Jesus without being "christened." Not only so, but these superstitions of a darker day are forcefully impressed upon the people by some of the clergy.

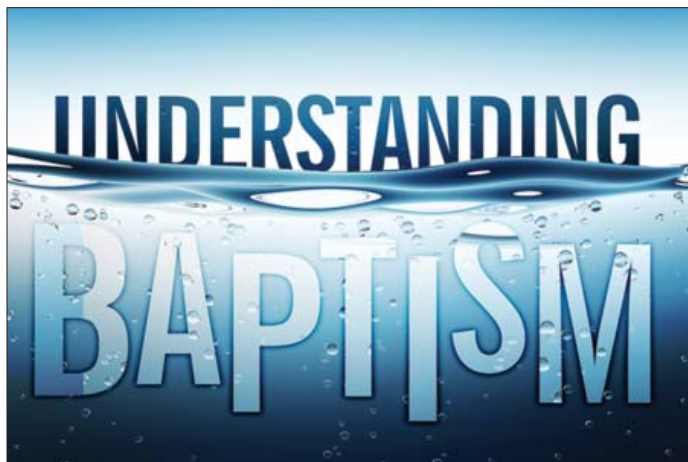
No one is unimportant to God

Jesus delighted in the children and demonstrated that God's love has ample room for everyone! He comes to each person individually and uniquely that he might touch them with His healing love and power.

In examining the doctrine of immersion as set forth by the Christian-Disciple denomination, we would not say an unkind word respecting any of the people of this denomination. Their doctrines are, however, quite inconsistent. In their immersion theory they use many texts as proofs that *baptism is for the remission of sins*, which texts, as given in the Bible, were never intended to apply to any except Jews, for none but Jews ever validly baptized for forgiveness of sins. The Jews were in Covenant relationship with God through the Mosaic Law. If they got into sin it was proper for them to repent, return to God and use water symbolically, indicating return from sin. All Jews in full harmony with the Law Covenant in Jesus' day were transferred from Moses to Christ. Only those who had committed special sins were called upon to wash away those sins symbolically in water. Others living consistent lives as

"Israelites indeed" were never instructed to be baptized or to wash away their sins. Amongst the Apostles there is no record of any of them having been immersed in water for the remission of sins, except St. Paul, and he only because he had persecuted the Church of Christ. The baptism into Christ announced for Gentile converts is wholly different from the Jewish baptism for the remission of sins. An illustration of this is found in Acts 18: 24, 25, where Apollos had baptized certain Gentiles of Ephesus with John's baptism for the remission of sins. St. Paul

afterward declared this incorrect and directed them to be immersed again—not for the remission of sins, but for symbolic induction into the Body of Christ, the Church (Acts 19: 1-6). Moreover, Cornelius, and others with him, received the Holy Spirit before they were immersed, which proves that their sins had been previously forgiven, since one’s sins must be forgiven before he can receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 44-48; 2: 38). But the chief point we would make against the Christian-Disciple theory that Baptism is for the remission of sins, is that it naturally disfellowships all Christians who have not been immersed. The logic of this theory would find few supporters in the Christian-Disciple denomination. The logic of it is this: If immersion is necessary for an adult in order that his sins may be remitted or washed away, it would logically follow that all adults not immersed are yet in their sins—unforgiven. And this signifies, according to this theory, that if they die they must suffer the penalty of their sins, which penalty, they say, is eternal torture.



WATER BAPTISM

We compliment the Baptist theory as being more nearly in line with the Scriptures than any theory of Baptism held in mainline churches. And yet remarkably few Baptists today could or do stand by their theory, if put to the test. Nevertheless, in theory and practice, the great mass of Baptists declares that immersion is a necessary incidental to admission to the “Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven.” In full keeping with this, in nine out of every ten Baptist Churches the world over, only immersed Christians are ever invited to the communion table to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Why? Because they claim that only immersed persons belong to the true Church and that the communion service is exclusively for the Church. If we ask them what are the advantages claimed for membership in the Church, they reply—Salvation! What is the antithesis

or opposite of salvation? We ask. They answer—Lost! What do you mean by lost? We inquire. The reply is, to be banished from God and suffer everlasting torture. So then, theoretically, our Baptist friends deliver to the non-immersed the same bloodcurdling theory handed out by Christian-Disciples—that Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, etc., are en route for eternal torture.

BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST’S DEATH

St. Paul tells us of certain times of ignorance which “God winked at” or disregarded. We believe that the Almighty graciously overlooked such inconsistencies in the theories of some of His children and charged them not with the responsibility of so terribly maligning the Divine character and misrepresenting the Divine Word. But now our God is opening the eyes of our understanding and there is no longer excuse for any to believe such monstrous theories, nor excuse still to profess to believe them after they have been repudiated by the heart. The true view of Baptism is one which cannot be controverted. It is consistent with itself and with every Bible statement. It recognizes every consecrated child of God of every denomination, or outside of all denominations. It inducts the saintly Baptist, saintly Disciple, saintly Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Congregationalist, Methodist, etc., into membership in the one Church of the Living God, whose names are written in heaven.” What Baptism can this be? We reply that it is the one mentioned by St. Paul in a text which we have all read and quoted time and again: “So many of you as were baptized *into Jesus Christ* were baptized *into His death*” (Rom. 6: 3). The mistake we have all made in the past is in applying these words of the Apostle to *water baptism*. The Apostle said not a word about water baptism, but mentioned specifically the Baptism into Christ, into “the Body of Christ, which is the Church.” The thought is that God has ordained the gathering of the elect Church during the Gospel Age. The Head of this Church was received up into glory eighteen centuries ago, and since Pentecost one and another of the true footsteps followers of Jesus have been accepted of God through His merit and counted as “members of the Body of Christ,” which is the Church. But there is not a word of Scripture to say that the world, which misses this glorious exaltation, will on this account suffer eternal torture. They will lose the *great* prize, however. Water baptism is not the door into the true Church. Our Baptist friends will agree to the above statement. They will say, Yes, that is what we mean, only, in order to be in Christ, we Baptists claim *water* immersion is necessary. We are

glad to have their plain, candid statement and to meet the issue squarely. That is the Baptist mistake—supposing that water baptism inducts anybody into membership in the true Church. But the question arises, Just what is meant by these words, “Baptized *into His death?*” Was *His* death in any way different from the death of *others?* Most decidedly it was! Our race dies as sinners, children of wrath, under Divine sentence of death. But Jesus was not a sinner and was not under Divine sentence of death. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners” and free from Adamic death. His death was a sacrificial one—a surrender of an unimpaired life. Those, therefore, who would become His footstep followers and be baptized into His death, must participate with Him in a *sacrificial* death. The Scriptures explain that this would be impossible except as those footstep followers should be cleansed and made acceptable sacrifices through the merit of Jesus, because “by nature we were all children of wrath, even as others.” *Death* was the real meaning of our Lord’s baptism. John the Immerser knew that Jesus was not a sinner, knew that He had no sins to wash away, and at first he declined to immerse Him. And he did so only after Jesus had assured him that it was right and that the matter had a deeper significance. “Suffer it to be so—to fulfill all righteousness.” All righteousness is all that the Law demands, which are the obedience of all under it and death to all who disobey it. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by obeying the Law’s every injunction and by dying to satisfy its demand for the death of the disobedient. These two things He symbolized: (1) His death by His burial into the water; and (2) His obedience in rising into the new life by His rising out of the water, symbolizing by immersion that He fulfilled all righteousness.

Our Lord, for three and a half years was carrying out the consecration vow which in Jordan He symbolized—baptism unto death. Day by day He became more deeply immersed into death. That real immersion into death was finished on Calvary. In harmony with this, shortly before His death Jesus said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.” A little later it was accomplished, when He cried, “It is finished!” His baptism into death was finished. The same thought the Master gave to His followers, saying to two who desired places on His right and His left in the Kingdom: “You know not what you ask!” You do not know what it requires to secure exaltation into the Kingdom. Are you able; are you willing to drink of My cup of sorrow, self-denial, etc.? Are you willing “to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with”—the baptism into

death? When the disciples replied that they were willing, the Master assured them that He would attend to the rest. The terms of discipleship have not changed.

Baptism for the remissions of sins, as given in the Bible, only Jews ever validly baptized for forgiveness of sins. The Jews were in Covenant-relationship with God through the Mosaic Law.

WHAT WATER BAPTISM IS NOT

Just a word further respecting water baptism. It has its place, not in keeping any out of eternal torment, not in getting them into eternal glory, but it is a *symbol*, a beautiful *picture* in one act. It is a testimony to all believers that the consecrated one has vowed loyalty to the Redeemer—even unto death. As such a confession of such a consecration, we commend water baptism to all the consecrated as being the Lord’s own provision of a *pictorial* confession for those who have accepted His terms, surrendered their all, and are seeking to walk in newness of life and to attain the eternal life in the Kingdom (Rom. 6: 3-5; Gal. 3: 28; Phil. 3: 10). As for the unconsecrated world, it is fitting that they should not be baptized. Baptism was never intended except for the fully consecrated, the sanctified in Christ Jesus. When God’s due time shall come the world of mankind will receive the blessings provided for them through the Redeemer’s merit, under the gracious arrangement of that Redeemer’s heavenly Kingdom, which will be established under the whole heavens for the purpose of uplifting mankind from sin and death—whoever wills.

Since Nature’s works be good, and death doth serve

As Nature’s work, why should we fear to die?

Since fear is vain but when it may preserve,

Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?

Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,

Disarming human minds of native might;

While each conceit an ugly figure bears

Which were not evil, well viewed in reason’s light.

Our only eyes, which dimmed with passions be,

Let them be cleared, and now begin to see

Our life is but a step in a dusty way,

Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind;

Since this we feel, great loss we cannot find.

It's A NEW DAY

ISRAEL'S NEW COVENANT

*“Behold the days are coming says the LORD when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Jer. 31: 31-34).
“Behold the Lord, whom you seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in. Behold He shall come, says Jehovah of Hosts; but who may abide the day of His coming” (Mal. 3: 1-5)?*

Six thousand years ago, God, in justly sentencing His disobedient children to death, intimated that ultimately the Seed of the woman would bruise the Serpent's head. This hidden prophecy was the first intimation of the Divine mercy which our gracious Creator had purposed in Himself from before the foundation of the world. Ever noble, kind and gracious our Creator restrained His mercy for the good of His creatures—that they might learn to appreciate the exceeding sinfulness of sin. For the good of the angels also—that they might fully know of His Justice, as well as of His Wisdom and Power—God insisted upon dealing with His creatures from the standpoint of exact justice. They had sinned, and thereby had forfeited all claim upon the eternal life which He had given them conditionally. Eternal torment, as we have already seen, did not in any sense or degree enter into the Divine purpose. His sentence upon man, plainly stated, was, “Dying you shall die,” not, Living you shall live in torment. “The soul that sins it shall die” (Gen. 2: 17; Ezek. 18: 4). God purposed to exemplify in His dealings with our race a principle of Divine government to

be made operative everywhere ultimately—among all His creatures on the spirit, as well as upon the earthly, plane. Long centuries after, in the seventh generation of Adam's children, God spoke prophetically through one of these, Enoch, saying, “The Lord comes with ten thousands of His holy ones to execute justice in the earth,” to establish righteousness among men. Time passed on, but sin prevailed, and the coming of the Great Deliverer was still future (Jude 14).

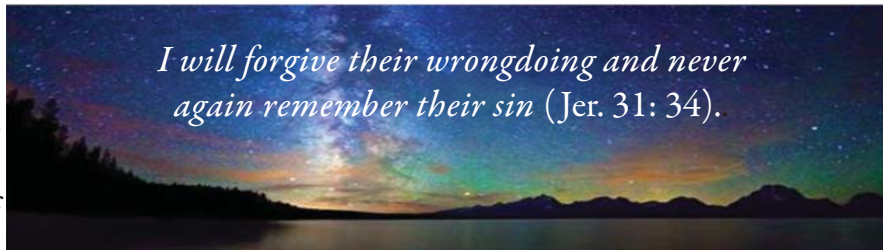
Next God spoke to Abraham, after first having tested his faith and loyalty. To him He mentioned the same great Deliverer who would bruise the Serpent's head and who would come in great glory with ten thousands of His holy ones. To Abraham He gave assurance that this One would, in some way, be identified with his posterity, so that He

might properly be called the Seed of Abraham. God said, “In Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12: 3). The Divine Program was not changed, but more explicit statements were given respecting it. Thereafter all taught of God would know to look for the Messianic blessing through Abraham's Seed. Besides, the Covenant was afterward confirmed with an Oath to Abraham, later to Isaac, later to Jacob. That Covenant Promise became the basis of God's adoption of the entire nation of Israel—all of Jacob's children. They were heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant—the Oath-Bound Covenant. If so great an honor from the Almighty God has made some of the Jewish people at times to appear arrogant and proud, let us not forget that to err is human—to forgive, Divine. Perhaps if we were in their stead our imperfections would similarly display themselves. Israel's experiences of tribulation and bondage in Egypt were probably necessary to prepare them for God's great proposition—that they

should keep the Law and as a reward have life everlasting. As it is written, “He that does these things shall live by them” (Lev. 18: 5). Israel greatly rejoiced

in this manifestation of Divine preference for them more than for all others of humanity. The Law Covenant was mediated. The sacrifice of bulls and of goats made a typical atonement for them for a year, so that they might enter into this Covenant relationship with God. But when they attempted to keep the Law they were disappointed. They failed. The Law of God is the full measure of a perfect man's ability; and the Jews, being imperfect like other men, found that they had undertaken an impossibility.

Not a Jew kept the Law perfectly. Not a Jew, therefore, gained eternal life during the first year. But foreknowing this, God had made preparation for a repetition of the Atonement Day every year, so that the people might continue striving to attain eternal life. Year after year, century after century, they failed, and discouragement



I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin (Jer. 31: 34).

took the place of hope. God was teaching them a great lesson respecting the need of “*better sacrifices*” than those of bulls and of goats, and also teaching them that there is no other means of justification in His sight. They had blessings under this Covenant—educational blessings, but not the blessing hoped for, not *life eternal*. They were not in a position to become, as they had hoped, a national Messiah, a national Seed of Abraham, for the blessing of all the nations. For a time God gave them kings, but these were unable to accomplish the great things hoped for. But the promise of a personal Messiah was made, who should be of the lineage of David, a great King, far superior to the great, wise and rich Solomon—Messiah would be David’s Son and yet David’s Lord (Psa. 110: 1; Matt. 22: 42-44). Here as God designed, Israel began to get the thought of a personal Messiah, a King of Glory, who would use their nation as His instrumentality for the conquering of the world, when every knee should bow and every tongue confess, to the glory of God. The next lesson for Israel to learn was that a change of dispensation must come—that, as Moses had mediated the Law Covenant, so an antitypical Moses, a greater than Moses, would induct them into the blessings and privileges of a still better covenant, a covenant more favorable to them, one under which they could gain eternal life. This New Covenant was particularly set before them through Jeremiah’s prophecy (Jer. 31: 31-34). And this, combined with the statement of Moses respecting a greater Mediator, helped their faith to take a fresh hold upon the Oath-Bound Abrahamic Promise—“In Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

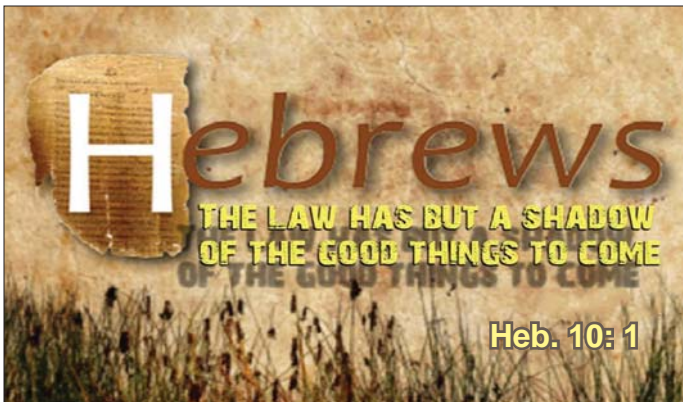
If a great enough Mediator should come as the promised Messenger of God, and should establish a better covenant, under which Israel could have eternal life, and if He, as the offspring of David, should become their King, then indeed Abraham’s Seed, the nation of Israel under that great Mediator King, would be fully qualified to bless all the families of the earth. The thought of this glory to their nation became a fresh inspiration, and around it gathered the fifty odd thousands of Jews, out of all the tribes of Israel, who returned from Babylonian captivity under the edict of Cyrus. Through the Prophet Ezekiel the LORD again made mention of the fact that their Law Covenant made at Sinai must, before their great blessing of *restitution*, give place to a New Covenant, a better covenant. Speaking of the time when He would regather them out of all lands and would fulfill to them the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and make them a great nation, and use them for the blessing of other nations, the LORD declares, “Not for your sakes do I this, O House

of Israel, but for My name’s sake.” He then proceeds to tell them that at the time He would receive them back into His love and favor He would also humble their pride by restoring the Samaritans and the Sodomites—peoples whom Israel detested as inferiors and sinners (Ezek. 36: 22). God declares that neither of these peoples had ever committed as serious sins against Divine goodness as had Israel, and that when He would again bless Israel He would bless also these other peoples in their midst. Let us quote His words: “When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their *former estate*, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their *former estate*, then you and your daughters shall return to your *former estate*. . . Nevertheless I will remember My *Covenant* with thee in the days of your youth, and I will establish to you an everlasting *Covenant*, . . . and I will give them [Sodomites and Samaritans] to you for daughters, but not by your *Covenant* [not under the Old Law Covenant; but under the New Law Covenant of the future], and I will establish My *Covenant* with you;. . . [in order that] you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth anymore, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the LORD God” (Ezek. 16: 55-63).



ABIDING THE DAY OF HIS COMING

This new and better Covenant is to be mediated through a personal Messiah—a still more glorious Mediator than Moses, a still more glorious King than David—this One whom Israel began to look for and to long for. Can we wonder that they failed to identify Him in the lowly Nazarene who died at Calvary? We cannot! Nothing but a special assistance of the Holy Spirit would enable any one to trace the connection between the glorious pictures of the prophecies and the humble appearance of Him who came to fulfill those prophecies. We do see, however, that the great Messiah of Glory, Jesus, in His Second Advent as King of kings and Lord of lords, fills absolutely every demand of Jewish expectation and of prophetic outline. Some can see, but others cannot as yet, that He who was pierced is the same One who, as the Son of God, in great glory is shortly to bless Israel—and all the families of the earth through Israel. Our text is from another prophecy speaking of this same great Messiah, the Mediator of the



New Covenant, King of kings and Lord of lords, who, as the Representative of the great Jehovah, His Father, is to reign until all enemies shall be put down—until Satan shall be bound and, ultimately, shall be crushed; until Adam and his race, released from Divine sentence, under the New Covenant provisions shall be uplifted from sin, degradation and death to perfection and everlasting life the unwilling and disobedient being destroyed in the Second Death. The prophet Malachi points out that the Messiah of the New Covenant, whom he announces, is the glorious Mediator and antitypical King for whom they had waited long, and of whom they delighted to think. He would come to the Temple—implying that He would be not only an antitypical Prophet, an antitypical King, but also an antitypical Priest—“after the order of Melchizedek.”



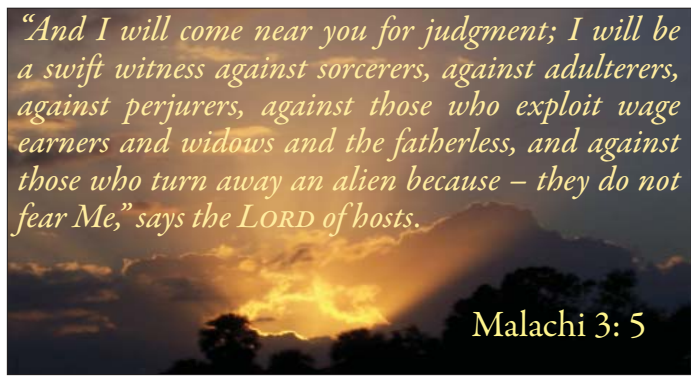
But after this joyful proclamation that their long-expected and gloried-in Mediator of the New Covenant should be looked for, they were warned that His Day would be one of trial, one of special testing and proving, that the Lord might find the antitypical Priests and antitypical Levites to serve in the antitypical Temple. He would be like a refiner of fire to take away the dross and to leave only the pure metal—fiery trials and testings being implied. He would “be like fuller’s soap,” in the sense that a great cleansing would take place to make for the Kingdom the called, chosen and faithful (Mal. 3: 2). At that time the consecration of Judah and Jerusalem unto the LORD will be accepted as in olden times. We understand that this spirit of devotion was revived among the Jews, particularly among those who were identified with Jerusalem and

the Zionist movement. Before this it was a political movement in the interest of Jewish nationalization and a home for exiles. The due time has come for those who have the faith to draw near to God and to show that faith by looking forward in the restoration of earthly Jerusalem and her interests.

The First-begotten of the Father, as His glorious Agent in the great work of creation, had the honor granted Him of becoming the great Messenger of the Covenant, the great Prophet, Priest and King of Israel, the great Michael of Daniel 12: 1. But there were tests connected with His attainment of this high position: (1) By faith He must lay aside His Heavenly glory, in obedience to the Father’s will, to become a man—not a sinful man, but a perfect man—holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. (2) In this way prepared to become the Redeemer it was His privilege to make a full consecration of His earthly interest, and the Father’s pleasure to beget Him of the Holy Spirit at Jordan to a spirit nature on the highest plane. For three and a half years His sacrifice burned upon the altar. It was indeed better than the sacrifice of bulls and goats; for it was a corresponding price for Adam—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a man’s life for a man’s life. (3) When Jesus had sacrificially parted with His earthly life He experienced a resurrection change from human nature to spiritual, like what He was originally, only higher and more glorious. He was at once both a sacrifice and the Spirit-begotten priest who offered that sacrifice. When He arose from the dead His personal sacrifice had ended, and His personal perfection as a spirit being was completed (Heb. 10: 1-14; 13: 11-13). Then why did He not at once begin His great work as Prophet, Priest, King and New Covenant Mediator for Israel and through Israel for the world? It was because there was to be more than one sacrifice in the Divine Plan on the antitypical Day of Atonement. Throughout this Gospel Age this risen, glorified High Priest, Mediator, Prophet and King has been waiting to inaugurate His glorious Kingdom of blessing—waiting while a little handful of saints should be selected from the world, tested and found worthy and glorified with Himself—a “Little Flock” from mankind, Jews and Gentiles.

The Bride class has completed her sacrifice in and under the merit of the great Priest. Now every arrangement for the blessing of Israel as Abraham’s Seed, and of all nations through Israel, can take place. In this way, the revelation of Israel’s great Messenger of the New Covenant is very important not only to the Jew, but also to the world of mankind, who must receive their blessings under Israel

by a compliance with the same New Law Covenant. Moreover, the Elect handful of saints drawn, called and gathered during the parenthesis period (Gospel Age) were also deeply interested in God's glorious Kingdom; for the Divine promise was that they would be changed to be like their Master and share His glory. Notice the

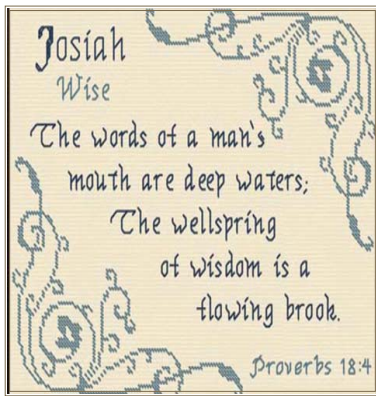


further message of the LORD through the Prophet, "I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right" (Mal. 3: 5). Yes, do we not see here plainly stated that the Messianic Kingdom means not only glory and honor to those whom He will accept as servants, but also requirements of faithfulness to the principles of truth, of purity, of harmony with God? And this lesson for the Jew, under his New Covenant arrangement, will ultimately apply to all nations. Under that new arrangement, under Israel's New Covenant, all the families of the earth will be privileged to become "Israelites indeed" through faithfulness to the great Mediator of Israel and of all earth's families.

JOSIAH — A GODLY YOUNG KING

2 CHRONICLES 34: 1-13

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12: 1).



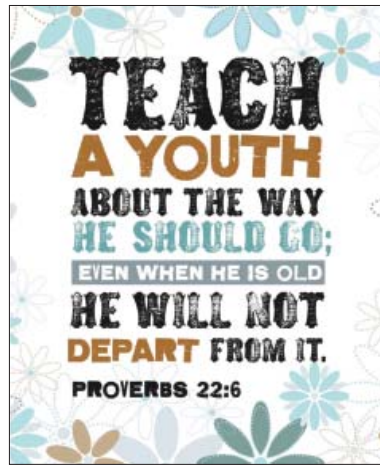
We begin our study with some history about Josiah's grandfather, King Manasseh, son and successor of King Hezekiah of Judah. This Manasseh became king at the age of twelve after his father's death. And yes, there were anti-reform groups in

that time (716 BC) and they used the boy king to stop the reforms in worship and morals begun by Hezekiah. Manasseh outdid himself to accommodate the cults and please their adherents; including human sacrifice using his own son (2 Kings 21: 6). The prophets attributed the fall of Jerusalem to the cruelty and superstition that was allowed to flourish during most of Manasseh's reign (55 years). In his later years he realized his disobedience and was allowed by God to mend his ways and return to Jerusalem.

King Manasseh had an evil son, Amon, who reigned but two years in a dreary repeat of his father Manasseh's immorality, luxury and corruption. King Amon was murdered by his courtiers in his own palace (2 Chron. 33: 20-24). Amon's son, Josiah, the central figure of this study, became the sixteenth king of the kingdom of Judah in his eighth year. By the time he was sixteen his heart had begun to seek after and to desire to serve the Almighty God. By

the time he was twenty his religious convictions were so deep and fixed, and his authority as a king so in his own hand, that he dared to begin the work of reformation. The idols and their temple and groves for idolatrous worship were destroyed and the Valley of Hinnom was desecrated and made a dumping place for the offal of Jerusalem.

The temple of the LORD was repaired and cleansed of all its idolatrous defilements of worship and praise and was restored to the Almighty. More than this, the king extended his influence for the destruction of idolatry into what was once the territory of Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes of his kingdom.



What an example there is in our text, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth!" What a great mistake some parents make in assuming that their children must have an experience in "sowing wild oats" before they would be prepared to appreciate righteousness and become its servants!

This thought is reflected upon the minds of the young, both male and female; rarely do they seek to live by a higher standard than that expected of them by their

parents or guardians. This book of Solomon seems to have been written in later life when Solomon's heart had grown sick with excess of sensuous pleasures and the lack of true happiness. It was at this time when he turned from all his riches and spoke the sad refrain "vanity of vanities all is vanity" (Eccl. 1: 2). From his own experience he proves the truth of our text and counsels others to take a different course than his! "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12: 13).

We have known saintly mothers to unintentionally lay snares for the feet of their children by introducing them to ways of the world in which they themselves would not walk. They sometimes look past wrong behavior saying he is only sowing his wild oats! They have failed to realize that, at the present time, there is no real happiness in the world except in the "narrow way" (Matt. 7: 13, 14). The "broad road" of self-gratification, pride, lust, sin, selfishness, is made to appear as a beautiful picture at a distance; but the picture is a mirage—it can never be reached—it is a delusion. The millions, who throned the broad road

of selfishness, pride, etc., are all bent on pleasure, seeking it with all their might; but how many of all the millions on that road have actually found lasting pleasure? We hold that they are merely pleasure-hunters and not pleasure-finders; we hold that the only real pleasure and substantial joy in the world is to be found in the narrow way of self-sacrifice—in the footsteps of the great Teacher—in taking up the cross to follow Him—in laying down life as He laid down His.

Of those who enter the broad road, few ever turn back to the narrow way. Parents, friends, Christians have given them the misunderstanding that the broad road is the one of pleasure and happiness. When they find it fails time and again to be so, they naturally think that the narrow way must be much less desirable. Of the few who do find the narrow way again after having walked in the broad road, their comment is, "Oh, why, as a youth, did I not find the way of the LORD which leads to His truth, joy, peace and happiness!"

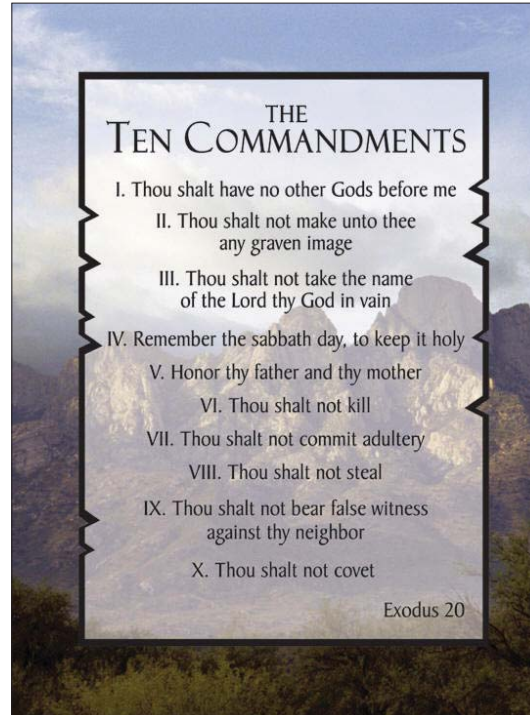
Notwithstanding the depravity with which all are born, there appears to be a certain simplicity and honesty in the mind of every child. It is that principle which must be used by teachers and helpers in general, if the child is led

in the right way by which he would most quickly attain a relationship and harmony with his Creator, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22: 6). In fact, at times, under God's providence, the message from on high reaches the heart, and draws it with seemingly little resistance. The hollowness of life is perceived, the need of wisdom from on high is recognized, and perhaps through parental instruction, perhaps through the counsels of a friend, perhaps by a tract or a book, the young heart is shown the way of wisdom and is pointed to the LORD and to the narrow way.

We are to remember that the will is the real director of our destiny (under Divine providence), and that it is all-important to have the will rightly directed and established. Many a one is in the broad road of sin and selfishness—away from God today—that has in his makeup many good qualities entirely out of sympathy with his position and course in life. But without the will to guide, to lead, he goes downward. Similarly there are some who have been on the narrow way who have had many physical, mental and moral blemishes of heredity

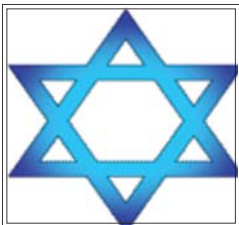
continually drawing them toward the broad road, but who have been kept in the narrow way of the LORD—not by the self-will of the flesh, but by the power of a renewed will. How important then, the proper directing and fixing of our wills in youth! How much greater blessing we may enjoy in the present life, and how much more adequate preparation we may thereby have for the future life!

King Josiah of our study is an example of the proper course for every young person to take. First of all, the heart should be given to the LORD in the days of youth, before the evil days and evil experiences have come; before one shall have learned so much of evil that the remainder of life would not suffice to eradicate it. Then, like Josiah, when time shall bring us opportunities for the service of righteousness, let us be whole-hearted in our advocacy of the right and in our opposition to the wrong, and in everything show forth the praises of our God, with the motto, God first.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

If you were arrested for being a Christian—would they have enough evidence to convict you?



TIES THAT BIND

Jews Connecting Through The Centuries

Jews are one of the few ancient peoples who have survived into modern times. Judaism is among the world's oldest living religions.

Jewish civilization was already over 1,000 years old when the Romans conquered Judea, but the Jews safeguarded their unique heritage for the next two millennia. No matter how far they wandered, how much they adapted to their host societies, or how much they were persecuted, Jews maintained their identity.

Judaism and its sacred books bind the Jewish people together. Whether they are religious or secular, Jews are connected by the ethics and values that Judaism teaches. Parents have passed the tradition to their children, who passed it on to their own children, and so it has continued for thousands of years.

Jews everywhere observe the holy days in almost identical ways and repeat the rituals and prayers that Jewish families have used since the days of ancient Israel.



Jewish Tradition

Coming of age for a Jew

(Boy age 13 - Girl age 12)

Bar and bat mitzvah mean, literally, "son and daughter of the commandment." Bat mitzvah is Hebrew, while bar mitzvah, historically a much earlier ceremony, is Aramaic. The word bar is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew ben (son of). While bar and bat mitzvah are often used to refer to the ceremony, the terms also refer to the child. Thus, a boy is referred to as a "bar mitzvah" and a girl as a "bat mitzvah."

"Jews prefer being prisoners in Jerusalem to enjoying the freedom they could acquire elsewhere. . . The love of the Jews for the Holy Land which they lost. . . is unbelievable."

—Jesuit Father Michael Naud on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 1674²

Jews share the same life-cycle rituals. When an eight-day-old infant is circumcised or adolescents celebrate their bar and bat mitzvahs and the whole community celebrates, they are reenacting age-old Jewish traditions. When a loved one dies, Jewish customs and prayers comfort the grieving and spell out how the community should support and console the mourners.

Jewish life centers around home and family. Jewish tradition sanctifies family relationships. Parents' devotion and sense of responsibility for passing on Jewish identity have bound generations to the past while linking them to the future.

Jews have always identified with Zion, the Jewish homeland. It is at the core of Jewish history, religious texts, and identity. Many consider title to the land to be at the heart of the promise between God and the Jewish people in the Torah, which dates back thousands of years. The Hebrew language, the Torah, the laws in the Talmud, the Jewish calendar and Jewish holidays and festivals all originated in ancient Israel and revolve around its seasons, way of life, and history. Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned 809 times in the Hebrew Bible. When Israel was reestablished in 1948, Jews everywhere came to embrace Israel and once again recognize it as the center of Jewish life and continuity.¹

"The Greeks and the Romans...are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time but it burned out... the Jews saw them all, survived them all... all things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces passed, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?" — Mark Twain, 1898³

¹Text on this page used with permission by StandWithUs.com ²R.P. Michael Naud, Voyage Nouveau de la Terre-Sainte, Paris, 1702, pp. 58, 563. ³Mark Twain, "Concerning the Jews," Harper's Magazine, March 1898.

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Job 37: 14

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- ✿ Destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, but perserving Lot and his family
- ✿ Inflicting the ten plagues on Egypt, including the destruction of the firstborn of man and beast
- ✿ Overthrowing of Egypt’s armies, but sparing Israel, at the Red Sea
- ✿ Preserving Israel with manna and water in their wilderness wanderings
- ✿ Drying up of the Jordan so Israel could cross into Canaan
- ✿ Overthrowing, on Israel’s behalf, the hosts of Midian and Assyria
- ✿ The miraculous virgin birth, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ
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- ✿ Utter destruction of Satan’s empire including every oppressive government, false religious system, predatory aristocratic and capitalistic organization, and every other evil and selfish institution
- ✿ Complete binding of Satan and his fallen angels, removal from earth’s atmosphere, and imprisonment during the Millennial Age
- ✿ Resurrection of all the just (elect) and the unjust (non-elect)
- ✿ Establishment of His kingdom throughout this planet
- ✿ Turning the earth into paradise
- ✿ Lifting up Adam’s lost race to the original perfection
- ✿ Loosing Satan and the fallen angels for a final test
- ✿ Preservation of the faithful in everlasting life upon this planet
- ✿ Final destruction of Satan and the wicked angels and human beings at the end of the Little Season
- ✿ Filling this whole earth with the glory of God
- ✿ Future creations of sentient beings which will inhabit countless other worlds in the universe

Epiphany Volume 1 “God”, pages 49-53

**“...for I am God, and there is none else;
I am God, and there is none like me...”**

Isaiah 46: 9



King Zedekiah Blinded (Zedekiah Dethroned)

God promised King David that the Messianic Kingdom should come through his line, and for several centuries no king reigned in Jerusalem except David's posterity.

The last was King Zedekiah. Of him God declared through the Prophet (**Ezekiel 21:25-27**), "O thou profane and wicked prince, whose time is come that iniquity should have an end! Take off the diadem, remove the crown; this shall not be the same. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it to Him." This was another way of saying that there would be no more kings of David's line until Messiah. This has been fulfilled during the long period of 2519 years from then until now. All later kings were tributary, and none of David's line.

When God took His Kingdom from Zedekiah, He told him through one of the prophets that he would be carried prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; and by another Prophet that he would never see Babylon. Both prophecies came true, for Nebuchadnezzar caused his eyes to be put out when a prisoner, and in that condition he went to Babylon.

But God's promise to David, "Of the fruit of thy loins shall a king sit upon thy throne forever," was not broken. The message to Zedekiah merely indicates that the throne ceased to be recognized of the Lord, and would thus remain until Messiah's Kingdom.

But the First Advent of Jesus did not fulfil this prophecy; for, although Jesus is the Messiah, He has not yet entered upon His Kingly office. Jesus began His service as a Priest—"He offered up Himself." His offering continues these nineteen hundred years. Since Pentecost He has been accepting and offering as His members such as present their bodies living sacrifices (**Romans 12:1**). These joint-sacrificers are promised, as "members of the Body of Christ," a share in the Messianic reign of a thousand years, for the blessing of Israel and the whole world.—**Revelation 20:6**.

Questions for Lesson 47

- 1* What did God promise David?
- 2* Who was the last of David's line to reign as king in Jerusalem?
- 3 What prophecy was made in regard to Zedekiah?
- 4 What did this prophecy signify?
- 5* Who is the one mentioned as one "whose right it is"? Par. 1
- 6 When was Zedekiah overturned? Studies, Vol. 2, pages 79, 80.
- 7 When did Messiah begin His reign? Studies, Vol. 2, page 40.
- 8 How many years were thus required to fulfill the prophecy of Ezek. 21: 24-27? Studies, Vol. 2, page 79.
- 9 What seemingly contradictory prophecies were made concerning Zedekiah and how were they fulfilled? Par. 2
- 10* Was God's promise to David broken? Par. 3
- 11 Did Jesus enter upon His kingly office at this first advent?
- 12* What did Jesus begin to do at this first advent?
- 13 How long has His offering continued?
- 14* What sacrifices have been offered since Pentecost?
- 15 What are the joint-sacrificers promised? Par. 4
- 16* What will be their work?
- 17* Does this mean that those who reign with Christ will sit upon visible earthly thrones?
- 18* Who is the only King who will establish lasting peace on the earth?

* The questions marked with an asterisk are especially for children.



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