

From the Inkhorn

In this edition of Latter Rain we look at some further aspects of why God chose Israel, the way of life God set out for Israel, and promises for the future of Israel. We find that as well as 'physical' Israel, the Bible speaks of a 'spiritual' Israel - which is all Christian believers who have faith in Jesus Christ. But to the physical descendants of Israel there are promises which have been passed through the Birthright (through Ephraim and Manasseh) and promises which have been passed through the blessings given to Jacob's twelve sons. God gave Israel the Law and the article "For Your Good Always" looks at some reasons as to why God gave these laws. The article "Why Are We Here?" explains how the spirits of those who will seek to enter into the Covenant of the Birthright were those spirits which had been faithful to God in the spirit world which preceded this physical world.

Many believe that because God made a New Covenant which applies to all believers that the original covenant with Israel has been done away with, but the Scriptures show that as well as this new covenant with the Christian Church, God still has in His plan a unique place for His servant nation - Israel. Through obedience to His will they will become an elect group showing the benefits

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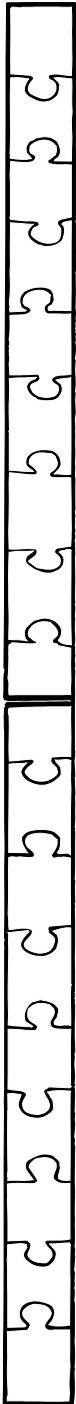
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of man living in harmony with God's instructions.

We hope that this series of articles will explain more fully the understanding of the Bible as taught by the Christian Israelite Church particularly with regards to the role of Israel in God's plan for this world.

Why Are We Here?

by Stanley GOULD



Have you ever wondered why you are here, I mean having been born, and allowed to live on this planet?

The Christian Israelite Church, along with many other groups, understands that this planet and all its inhabitants are part of a great plan of which God is in control. We did not come about by a 'big bang', or evolution, but were designed and created by God for His purpose and enjoyment.

We have the Bible which God has preserved down through the ages, telling of His creation, His plan for mankind and what He wants mankind to do. It contains revelations and instructions from God to mankind since mankind was created on this earth. So that we could understand better what that plan was, and how we can live the way God wants us to live, we believe that He has also given later revelations and explanations through the founder of the Christian Israelite Church, John Wroe.

These explanations are contained in volumes know as the 'Word, which we believe fulfils that spoken of in Daniel 12:4 "...shut up the words even to the time of the end", and Acts 1:7, "It is not for you (the disciples at that time) to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." They explain further issues mentioned in the Bible and reveal much about the last days and the return of Jesus Christ. They also give very descriptive details of the creation of man and

the planet we live on. We believe that this Church has been given the responsibility of preserving and distributing these latter-day revelations to the world, so that God can use them to educate and gather out His elect people in readiness for the return of Jesus Christ and the setting up of His kingdom here on this planet.

The Bible gives a lot of detail about the 'last days', and a great deal of this is in parable and in metaphors and needs to be interpreted and understood to find out what it means. In this article I would like to share with you some excerpts from the 'Word' which explain in more detail why mankind was created and what his future holds.

When God created this planet and mankind upon it, He could have also created hundreds of other planets with people, but if so, we have not found them yet. When we start to consider God's plan for this world, we need to realise that His scope is limitless. There are certain aspects of His work which have been revealed to mankind and these we need to seek to understand so that we can be prepared to serve Him better.

Since creation the world has been following a plan designed by the Creator . When God had finished the six days' work of creation, He said "It was very good" Genesis 1:31. He did not say that it was perfect, or that it was without fault, but that it was "very good", indicating that it was ready for a set of conditions to begin and develop.

Spirit Creation

Before God created this planet and mankind, we understand He had created an innumerable number of spirits (2nd Esdras 6:3) and they lived in a spirit world called the kingdom of Heaven, which is paradise (Divine Communications, Vol. 2, p. 1402). Just what the spirits did there we don't know, but we are told they lived in happiness

continually, for all was righteousness and peace. Not knowing evil by which to make a comparison, they tended towards discontent. So God allowed the evil (Isaiah 45:7) to work, to try them, and to show them the intrinsic value of goodness and the error of evil (Isaiah 45:6). Many spirits had high positions which we read about, such as Gabriel, Michael, Lucifer, etc.

Unrest with Lucifer Leading a Rebellion

Satan, called Lucifer the anointed cherub, dwelt in Heaven with God and all the spirits, and was perfect in all his ways till iniquity was found in him (see the allegory in Ezekiel chapter 28, in particular verses 14 and 15). He was God's chief officer over all the spirits, but he allowed the evil to take possession of him, and he was lifted up because of his riches (his beauty and his position), and he set himself as god (Ezekiel 28:5,6).

The spirits began to murmur and wondered if they came of themselves or did God create them - Lucifer jumped at the opportunity to show his power and lead a rebellion against God. This was a totally different situation. Satan had chosen evil as his portion and in opposition to God and goodness, and this caused a war in heaven which caused a division amongst the spirits, for some gave their allegiance to God, whilst the majority yielded to Satan's temptations - some willingly, some unwillingly, but were finally persuaded. This is further explained in the 'Word' as follows: "I anointed Satan the head cherub in heaven, till iniquity was found in him (Ezekiel 28:14-15), till the angels cried that he was an unjust steward" (15th September, 1838, Divine Communication Vol. 2, p.199). "I made the angels and set them over the works of mine hands, and a division took place amongst them, whether I had made them or they came of themselves; and the angels who rebelled against my commands I drove out by those who rebelled not. And I said unto the angels that rebelled not against me, ;let us make man in our image; I created man lower than that which I had made, and he was alone, which was evil in my sight; and I set that which I had

made (angels) over that which I had created (mankind). And I said unto the angels which had rebelled against me, Be thou over that which is alone, which is evil" (For the Public 1853-1854, 27th July, 1853).

Creation of this World and Mankind

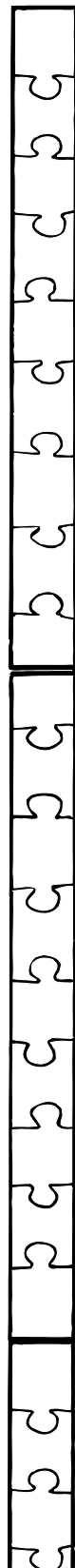
To prove these spirits, God set His plan in action. He would give them a second chance, to test who their allegiance is really with, Him or Satan, and to also improve them, and give them more meaning.

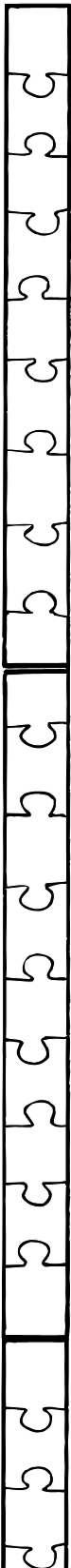
He designed and created this planet we live on which we read of in Genesis chapter 1. Along with all the plants and creatures He also created man in His own image.

This man who was physically created was a temple to send one of those spirits to, to cause it to have life.

We believe each of the spirits when first created in the spirit world was a duo spirit, that is male and female as one, and the spirit called Adam was sent to the first man God created, male and female created he them. This spirit was the life of that body.

God then separated the male and female by creating an earthly body for the woman and she was to live by blood, which also gave her a soul. It is the soul that allows people to reason and judge things and to think about things. Adam and Eve were given a command, but they did not know the consequences if they disobeyed it. Because of that disobedience they fell - from a state of innocence to a state of guilt - in the Garden of Eden. Having connection (eating of the fruit) in the wrong time (Leviticus





15:25) then resulted in Adam also receiving a life of blood with a soul.

Now as each baby is conceived, a spirit from the spirit world is sent to give it life in a physical body here on this planet.

We are told Adam was created from the earth, which made his body physical or tangible, hence each spirit from the spirit world is better off now by receiving a physical body with a soul.

Each of us had no say whether we wanted to be born or not. It is a privilege God has given our spirit and it is up to each of us then to accept Him or not accept Him in this life.

This is one of the reasons we are here, to allow those spirits from the spirit world, to receive a body that will give them substance.

Further readings from the 'Word': "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now' Romans 8:20-22.

Question - Then whether is it those who were with the fallen angels, or those who were with them that fell not that will put on immortality?

Answer - Those who were with them that fell not.

John said, Let this go into all nations. The number who are with them that fell are to put on incorruption; and the number who are with them that fell not are to put on immortality, with the number that shall be

conceived and born of them, and be bride to the bridegroom by seeking for the sin to be taken away." (13th March, 1836, Divine Communications, Volume 2).

Man now has Three Parts

Because of the fall, man could no longer live by the power of the spirit, so God provided him with a soul, the life of which is in the blood, and man then had an evil heart because of the influence of Satan on the soul through the life of blood. So that he would not live to eternity in this mixed evil and good condition, God drove man's spirit outside his body and placed a "flaming sword" to cause the death of his body, thereby preventing him taking the Tree of Life and living eternally in an evil condition (Genesis 3:14).

In other words, man fell from the immortal life of his physical body generated by the Spirit of God, to a life generated by blood and subjected to death, but with the hope that the now acquired soul would be a spiritual body at the first resurrection.

Mankind now having a spirit, a soul, and a body is a great way better off than they were in the spirit kingdom at first, as a spirit only. Even if we die and lose the body our spirit still has gained a soul and will be as an angel in the kingdom of heaven.

At death the only part of us to be lost is the body, the soul and spirit cannot be destroyed. For each spirit to gain a soul is another reason we are here.

Created in the Image of God

The design of man is a unique work of art in its conception, life, and death. The human is the only living creature which shows the image of God. Although we are very clever we are not perfect because of the evil content in our bodies.

Man was created in the image of God but His creation was marred by the intervention of Satan, resulting in all people born having evil in their bodies. It is God's plan to allow a number of people to work their way to immortality by having this evil removed and then they will be the real likeness of God. They will then be brothers and sisters to Jesus, the Son of God.

The Christian Israelite has been shown that we need to have this evil removed. The people that do have the evil removed are on their way to being God-like, and will not see physical death. The book of Revelation tells us there will be 144,000 such people who will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at Jesus' return. They collectively will be the Bride of Jesus Christ. This is another reason we are here - to show the real image of God and to allow for a number of people to become as Jesus Christ.

Following are further extracts from the 'Word' explaining the creation of man. Note that these are samples only. (The three volumes of Divine Communications covering John Wroe's Life and Travels are available on the Internet [www.cichurch.asn.au] or may be purchased by contacting the address on the inside cover.)

"The tree of knowledge of good and evil, if they touched it, was to be death unto them - if not life: and because they did, God said, Seeing they have become as one of us, to know good and evil, He drove them out of the garden (Genesis 3:22-24); but they knew not that there was evil in it till they had done it. And though they had the knowledge of good, they had not that of evil, for the creature was made subject to vanity (Romans 8:20), or else, how would the fallen spirits have got bodies?

"If man had not touched the evil, he would have generated and brought forth the perfect image of God, but seeing they had fallen in heaven, it was necessary to prove the spirits.

"In the Scriptures those that have repented are put on the right hand, but those that have not upon the left: and the Lord says unto those on the left hand, Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:31-46). Recollect that that is the second death - the soul separated from the spirit for one thousand years.

"Question: For if those spirits that fell in heaven had not come first, how could they have received bodies, Joseph Shaw?

"Answer: They could not.

"God created them in His image, and

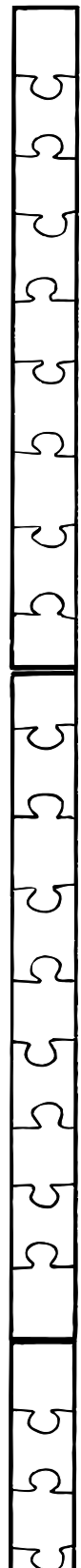
called their name Adam (Genesis 5:2). Recollect God did not call the woman a woman. Man is called the house of Zion; and there is the cleansing of the house of Zion.

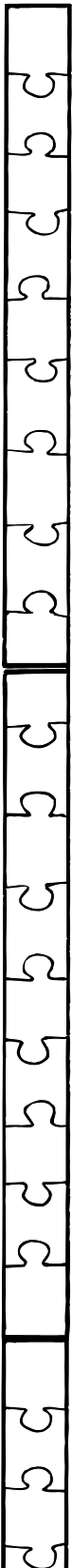
"There has been one vessel prepared (Jesus), that the spirits of the just may be cleansed, for if there had not, there would have been no Saviour, and all are washed by that one vessel, and that is the birth. It is that which is the partial redemption to the mortal spirit, and bears it to the immortal Spirit - the mortal life to the immortal, and will it not do the work?

"Adam was made liable to fall, and took a soul with an evil heart. Then something had to be done that a vessel might be prepared for the spirits of the just, that they might keep the commands, that their bodies might be secured.

"Jesus said unto Pilate: *'Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin'* John 19:11. And has not God visited the sins of Adam unto the third generation? and will He not unto the fourth when the aliens are submitted to trial again, and Satan is let loose? For they will not have gained the victory.

"This has been the wisdom of the Almighty, that the spirits of the just should come last, and the wicked who had transgressed first, that they might be made higher than before they fell - for they would not have had souls. Now, if they repent do they not receive punishment during their mortal life? For if a child die after it is born, there is some punishment even to the child in the womb, for there are various gifts of spirits.





“Jesus says: Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; when they cried for fire to come down from heaven and destroy their enemies (Luke 9:54, 55). He showed them that no living man should claim revenge, for that is the old root, and he showed them the new: for the man that dies with revenge in his heart, it is the death of his soul. Vengeance is not given to man, and that man is happy who can bear it and not take it. This did Job, when his friends and relations rose up against him, and his wife wished him to curse (Job 2:9).

“But this is the man that claims not revenge - who knows that all he has is of God -that he brought nothing into the world. Jesus says, these are my brethren and sisters, who do the will of my Father (Matthew 12:50), and they seek no revenge, for though men rob one another will they rob God?

“When the tree of good and evil was placed, it was only death when it was in its separation - out of it, it was life and good; but it was not life and good till it was separated - which man is not till he be separated from the evil; and when their eyes were opened, they were to be as gods, knowing good and evil (Genesis 3:5).

“And because Jesus made himself God they put him to death, though he said unto them, Is it not written in your law, Ye are gods (John 10:29-36)? But he spoke that which was for a time to come, but then it was a mystery, for they could not come into that state till their bodies were cleansed; then, when their bodies are cleansed, is that fulfilled, “*Those that thou gavest me have I kept, and none of them is lost*” John 17:12. The spirits

of the just in the third generation, and the aliens in the fourth.

“The body of man is sown in weakness in the womb, it is brought to life by the attraction of the spirit, and **becometh a mortal body**, and when it is raised from mortal to immortality, it is raised in power, the Spirit being put within it, and it is made equal in power with me, and possesses my kingdom. But if the body becomes dead before it is changed, and the spirit returns to me who gave it, it is sown in **dishonour till it put on incorruption**. Then the souls that repented while their bodies lived, will be raised in glory at the first resurrection, and be spiritual bodies for their spirits to dwell in, higher than they were before they fell, not subject to the angels, but equal to them, and possess the kingdom of heaven; and if they died in faith they will come with the bridegroom, and minister to the kingdom, which is the natural bodies.


“So the natural body, which is decayed, is the first, and after that the spirit and soul become as the angels. So though there is a temple, which is a natural body, prepared for the spirit of man, disobedience permits not that spirit to dwell in it, but only to attract the blood to give life to it, which temple liveth not a day, which according to the key that I delivered unto Peter is with me as a thousand years. So it dieth within the day, and is sown again in the earth in **dishonour, corrupt, till the spirit raise the soul from that corruptible body, then it is no more a natural body, but a spiritual body.**

“The spirits of men exist before they have bodies with souls to attract; and when the spirit leaves the body, the soul is sown in the earth with the body, and remains till it is raised a spiritual body.

“So in the works of the creation of man, he is first spirit, and then that spirit gives life to the body, so that it becomes mortal with the soul through attracting it, but the spirit returns to me who gave it, and the natural body dies and goes to corruption; the soul dies not, neither does it decay, or vanish away into air, but is either in happiness till the first resurrection, or in misery till the final resurrection, until the spirit returns to raise it

from that corruptible body; then it becomes a spiritual body for that spirit to dwell in: this is the creation of the heavens" (note: this is not the complete Communication) (16th of 11th month, 1849, Divine Communication, Vol. 3, p. 332).

"But hear, O Israel! I will now do greater than I did then; my Spirit shall always abide on thee, both by day and by night; it shall be a girdle to thee - it shall be as a sword in thy right hand, and a staff of defence in thy left. And he that is possessed with the evil power shall shake before thee; for my Spirit was before he was, and he must serve it, it is a restorer of life - first to Israel, that they may be made like unto me, their Redeemer; then to those who have sought for the remission of their sins, that their corruptible bodies may put on incorruption, and receive bodies as the angels.

"This is within the six thousand years, and on the seventh the aliens shall know of my blessings by Satan being bound, and on the eighth, the souls of the wicked shall be raised out of the corruptible bodies into incorruptible bodies, houses for their spirits to dwell in, they shall return to their former estate: as it is written in Ezekiel 16:55, *'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 thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.'* For the whole race of Adam's seed is for ever and ever, being two thousand years in each, to fulfil my words by Jesus: *'Every branch that abideth in me I will purge'* John 15:2; and his purging shall be as gold, which is in the midst of the fire; and every time that it returns out of the vessel he shall bring forth more fruit. And I will prove them by things which men say are unfair. For was it by fair things that Jesus, the woman's seed, was proved to be the Son of God? It was putting him to death, which was contrary to the law, he having fulfilled it, proved him by raising him from that death. (Note: This is not the complete Communication) (21st December, 1834, Divine Communication, Vol. 2, p. 57). 

Hymn No. 120

(2nd Esdras 13:5,8,10-12,27,35,39-40; 2:42-43)

When Isr'el's tribes with Baal did stray,
And from God's law depart;
For them, Elijah, he did pray
That God might turn their heart.

But Malachi, of later date,
The Messenger proclaim'd,
With the new Cov'nant for to go,
As by that prophet named.

To this standard they here did flow,
As mov'd by holy fire;
In all their zeal and love to show,
They did that truth desire.

From the fiery test of this law,
The truth it was despis'd:
That great multitude here below
Against that truth did rise.

In their anger they did desire
That Man of God to slay;
Until by streams of purging fire,
They all did melt away.

Upon that mountain, great and high,
That Messenger appear'd;
To Him the tribes did all draw nigh,
The words of peace they heard.

Then all that multitude of strife
Did vanish from the earth;
Not worthy to obtain that life
Which brings immortal birth.

At last was found a peaceful throng,
Seal'd in the law of love;
And all their themes of holy song
Ascend to God above.

They, by that great, Anointed Son,
Are crown'd with life and light;
And then with Him they are made one,
In all His glory bright.

From that throne on high, the Spirit
Of all truth is come down;
For all Is'el to inherit
That bright, immortal crown.

Israel - Elect or Servant Nation

by Paul GRAY

When God created mankind he said, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him..."* Genesis 1:26-27. Adam was a Son of God, and later some of his descendants were called 'sons of God', but others were called 'daughters of men'. We read in Genesis 6:2 that *"...the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose"* Genesis 6:2. They were called sons of God, under the promise that they would become the sons of God if they followed and lived God's ways. God *"calleth those things which be not as though they were"* Romans 4:17.

The influence of the daughters of men (ie. the ways of the world) was to take the sons of God (ie. those seeking spiritual ideals) from their dedication to God, and hence evil increased in the world and God sent the flood to destroy all the wrong doers, leaving only eight survivors.

The earlier article in this issue titled *"Why Are We Here"* revealed to us that this is all part of the Plan of God (2nd Esdras 6:1-6, Apocrypha) setting before mankind alternate paths of good and evil. Mankind chose the pathway of following Satan and evil, so God's plan for this world, which was still for the benefit of mankind, was put into execution.

"The putting of man into the garden was putting his spirit within his temple. The taking of the evil of the tree which was in the garden, which was contrary to my command, drove him out of the garden, so that he only attracted it: and the wages of that disobedience was the first death, which reigned over his body while he lived. And I showed unto man that if he walked not in my commandments, the second death should reign over his soul after the death of his body. So I made

another covenant with him, that if he repented, and asked for the forgiveness of sins while his body lived, death should not reign over his soul after the death of his body ..." (23rd November, 1835, Divine Communications, Volume 2)

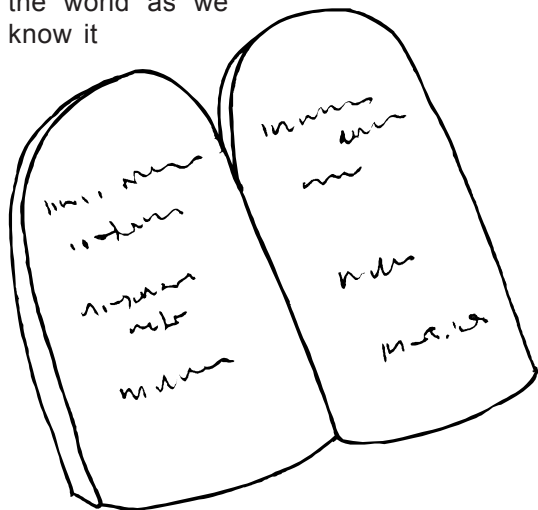
It is not always understood by people that man's spirit pre-existed his soul and body, and that as a spirit it had been involved in a war in heaven, making the choice: to wholly follow God, to go willingly with Satan, or being undecided, to be persuaded by Satan to follow him. "The spirits of men exist before they have bodies, with souls to attract; and when the spirit leaves the body, the soul is sown in the earth with the body, and remains till it is raised a spiritual body. So in the works of creation of man, he is first spirit, and then that spirit gives life to the body, so that it becomes mortal with the soul through attracting it, but the spirit returns to me who gave it, and the natural body dies and goes to corruption: the soul dies not, neither does it decay, or vanish away into air, but is either in happiness till the first resurrection, or in misery till the final resurrection, until the spirit returns to raise it from that corruptible body; then it becomes a spiritual body for that spirit to dwell in; this is the creation of the heavens. But the obedient are the children of those who have sought for the tares (evil) to be taken away, in whom the good seed was sown, which are for the kingdom, whose life is immortal" (23rd November, 1835, Divine Communications, Volume 2).

This is an outline of the Plan of God: that all spirits will eventually gain a soul, but that some would also gain a physical body as well as a soul; in the mean time we have no knowledge of having been a spirit in heaven, only what we learn as we study God's Word in this world.

One Man's Trials

God called Abraham, and initially tried him by not giving him a descendant through his beloved wife Sarah, but Abraham still believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6; James 2:23). In Genesis 17:1-29 we read how God made a **covenant** with Abraham, "... an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee"(v7). This covenant was sealed by the circumcision of "...every man child in your generations," (v12). God did give Abraham a son by his wife Sarah, and said, "my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year" (v21). Abraham showed his desire to come back to being a son of God by maintaining his faith and believing in the covenant, fulfilling what God had spoken.

We find the blessing of Abraham was carried through Isaac, Jacob and the tribes of Israel. As a nation Israel strayed from God's instructions and were dispersed all over the world (see Latter Rain No. 43, *A History of Israel*). The Nation failed to keep up the commitment of their covenant, as God had said, "To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee...thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations" Genesis 17:7 & 10. We do find individuals, and groups of individuals, that tried hard to keep God's instructions; however, generally speaking, in the world as we know it



Ten Commandments

1. *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
2. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*
3. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*
4. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
5. *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*
6. *Thou shalt not kill.*
7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
8. *Thou shalt not steal.*
9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
10. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

nations are not following fully God's guidelines given even in the Ten Commandments.

We, in today's worldly environment, have to make our own commitment of acceptance of God, and the way He has made for us to be restored to Him, that is that He will be our God, if we believe His word and promises, and that we want our actions to follow the way of God that will prepare us for Jesus Christ's return.

The Fall in Eden, Jesus' conclusion "you are of your father, the devil ..."

In John 8:31-59 Jesus was speaking to the Jews, and pointed out that Abraham had both seed (anyone who has descended from him) and children (those descendants who look to and follow the covenant that Abraham made with God Almighty). Jesus said, "*Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin...I know ye are Abraham's seed...if ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham.*" He classified them as being sons of Satan, "*...ye are of your father, the devil...*", because they did not try to understand Him, or His teachings, or God's purpose in sending Him. In the routine of daily living we meet temptation both outwardly and inwardly because the enemy of God is trying all the time to devour and destroy those who would follow good and God. We should not 'blame' Satan, because this is his job by his own choice, to test the creatures of God's creation, by using evil or deceptions that are against God, causing them to sin (Job 1:6-12). When they have sinned, then he can accuse them back to God, and bring them into bondage so that their physical body, and their soul are cast into the grave by death. Death is the "*last enemy that shall to be destroyed*" 1st Corinthians 15:26, and it will be destroyed when all souls are raised back to life, and a group of Abraham's children, through the help of spiritual power from God, achieve the ability to subdue sin and have the evil cast out of their physical body so that it is

changed from mortal to immortal.

The First Step - Salvation

Accepting God's Son, Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins, gives us peace of mind that even though we have done wrong, we can, and are, forgiven. We must sincerely ask for forgiveness in the name of Jesus. We are assured of the salvation of our soul, even though we lose our physical body through death. Our believing reassures us that we will rise again by our spirit returning to our soul and forming a spiritual body. In accepting this path and believing that death is inevitable, we are precluding God from showing His power through us to conquer the evil as well as the sin that is within us. By accepting Jesus as our Saviour we are overcoming the effect of sin but not overcoming the cause of sin.

The Second Step - Redemption

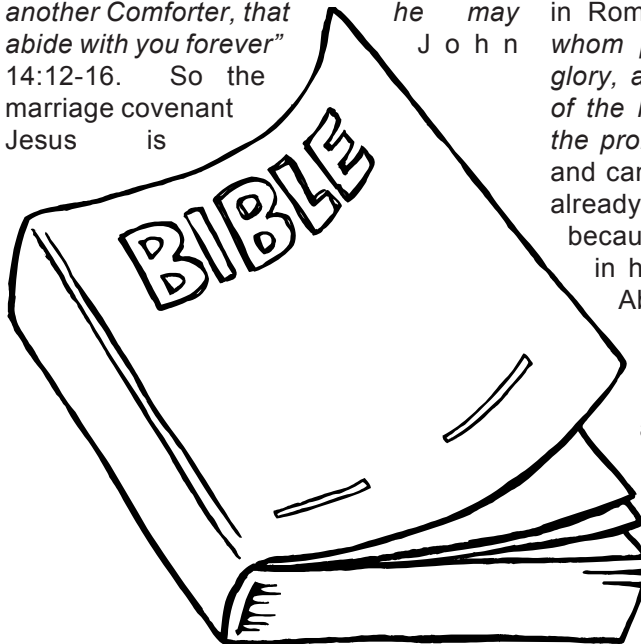
Throughout the Scriptures is the thread that God created man to be in his own image, and God has preserved of Israel (ie. a seed that will accept and follow Him as their God) and then dedicate their life and ambitions to do His will in all that they do. This seed, after accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour, (for forgiveness of sins), will through the help of the two Immortal Spirits (Christ and the Holy Ghost) from God, seek to live in harmony with God's complete instructions, subduing the evil, ready to have it cast out of their physical body. They strive to show that God's ways are best. James said, "*Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone*" James 2:17-18, so they seek the spiritual strength to work through their own spirit in their thoughts and actions.

In Revelation 22:12, 14, 17 are recorded the words, "*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be...blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city...and the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is*

a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” When Jesus comes again to this earth He will reward every man as he has lived; but God wants a special group who will live so closely with the Spiritual Power from God, that their will, will be the will of God, which will be, not to sin by following temptation, but to subdue the evil ready for it to be removed from their physical body (John 17:15). God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe, but His greatest victory is for individuals to overcome physical death by proving implicitly that they choose right over wrong - good over evil - at all times.

Hosea profoundly declares, “And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi (that is my husband); and shalt call me no more Baali (that is My Lord)” Hosea 2:16. This indicates a marriage, a binding covenant, between two people to be faithful to each other. In what way are they joined together? In righteousness, love, and understanding, as stated in Revelation 14:1-5.

Jesus said, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do: because I go unto my Father...ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” John 14:12-16. So the marriage covenant Jesus is



speaking of works two ways, just like a temporal marriage covenant, each working to please and help the other, each there for the other. Jesus said further, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine...Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are...I have given them thy word...I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil” John 17:12-15.

God’s All Embracing Plan

When we consider passages like, “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect” Isaiah 45:4, “And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there” Isaiah 65:9. “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord” Jeremiah 31:37. “For, lo, I will command and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth” Amos 9:9. Then Paul makes a statement recorded in Romans 9:4, “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises.” How is Israel foreknown, and can be spoken about as if they have already achieved their ambition? It is because of the stand their spirit made in heaven. In God’s planning Israel, Abraham’s children who are living in obedience to God’s Laws, are known and will achieve, through God’s help, ‘perfect obedience’ as Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” Matthew 5:48.

God’s will is expressed in both the Old and New Testaments – God’s thread

of instruction from Abraham, through the giving of the Law, the dedication of the Nation of Israel, the prophets in the Old Testament, then specifically through Jesus' instructions, in the New. Because of the calling of the Gentiles (those who were not of Jewish/Israelite descent) to the Christian faith, some of the Apostles in their letters referred to the two separate teachings: that for Israel, to present their spirit and soul and body alive until the coming of Jesus (1st Thessalonians 5:23), and for them *"that believe to the saving of the soul"* to look for the hope of the resurrection (Hebrews 10:39). Some theologians take the promises made to Israel and apply them to the Christian Church generally, but we believe that these passages show a continuing distinct message for an Israelite people.

Israel's Specific Challenge

Revelation 14:12 reads, *"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."* And how do they do it? Not through their own strength but through power from God keeping the commandments in them. They have the desire and seek through God's grace and prayer to God for Him to do His work in them. Jesus said, *"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"* John 16:24. Is it possible that Jesus is exhorting his followers to ask specifically for the Comforter to do the will of God in them and remove the evil from within them? In these latter times drawing near to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel are to be prepared, by seeking to live in accordance with God's laws and commands, dedicating themselves as Paul exhorted, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (your complete physical self) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove*

what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God" Romans 12:1-2. At this time Israel still live amongst the world, but are to seek, through their own desire to be in the world but not of the world, and through their answered prayer the Power of God will help them achieve this hope.

The Fountain will be opened.

Zechariah, in the Old Testament, looked forward to redemption in Israel. *"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin (wrong actions we do), and for uncleanness (the inherit evil each has received from the fall)"* Zechariah 13:1. This fountain offers both salvation and redemption. This is the source that Israel need to drink of for them to fulfill the promises made to them.

Are you prepared to accept the challenge that Israel through being obedient servants will become a wife to the Lord? We need to seek through fervent prayer for spiritual help from God and see how we can covenant our life to Him who is the Giver of our strength and life. Jeremiah said, *"Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah"* Jeremiah 31:31-33. This covenant will be to remove the evil from within their bodies so that Satan will have no power to tempt them to sin.

Israel is foreknown of God to receive this wonderful glory. However they must first show themselves to be obedient and faithful servants before they can qualify to receive of the elect calling of God in Christ Jesus. *"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him"* Daniel 7:27. *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death... but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* 1st Corinthians 15:26, 57. 📖

Statement of Belief

The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures.

Here is an outline:

We believe...

- In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6).
- That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were "for their good always" (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- That all have sinned and come "short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; 2nd Corinthians 5:19).
- That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1st Timothy 4:10; 1st Corinthians 15:44).
- That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1st Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20).
- That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21).
- That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1st Peter 2:9).
- That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation 19).

We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.

Love Through Obedience or Obedience Through Love

by Kerion FELLOWES

Do we develop or learn to love through being obedient, or do we strive to be obedient because we love. I believe it is the latter, we strive to be obedient because we love – so in the case of God we strive to follow the Laws because we love God. The other way round you would be keeping the Laws to develop a love for God which is the wrong way around. So loving God leads us to want to be obedient to His commands and to mirror, to a small degree, the love He manifests on and in His creation, particularly the gift of His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for ALL mankind. Jesus gave us the example of obedience to the Father that we can seek to emulate. To be obedient is to understand what will make somebody else happy and to do it, not for self gain, but as a display of love to the other by wanting to see them pleased, with no reward for the self. Obedience is to show concern for the other, in this case God, and to live with His approval as the guideline.

But Samuel replied: *“Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as on obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”* ^{1st} Samuel 15:22,23. This quote is telling us quite clearly that obedience is preferable to sacrifice, obedience shows loyalty and develops trust. The outward show of sacrifice in no way compensates for the inner sacrifice of the heart to God. To feign loyalty by sacrificing in public is not what God wants – this does not have to be from the heart – but obedience comes through the heart, through love. There is faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love, and it is through love that comes the desire to be obedient.

The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart and strength. Implicit

in that love is obedience. Genuine love for God works out in obedience to God. To show God how much you love Him, follow His commandments and through your obedience to His will your relationship with Him will develop immensely.

To obey the commandments of the Lord should be the fulfilment of religious life. The Lord is more delighted with someone who obeys Him than with hundreds of people who are pursuing their religious activities to be seen of mankind to be righteous (Isaiah 58:1-9).

As Christians there are commandments in the New Testament that are incumbent on ALL believers. In the Old Testament there are instructions (the Law) for those believers thereby acknowledging God’s special relationship with Israel, and feel in their hearts a genuine desire to keep God’s laws and walk in His ways. As we mature in the Lord we become conscious of His will for our life. As we present our body a living sacrifice, for God to do with as He wills, we are able to show the will of God through our change in lifestyle, behaviour and attitude. Eventually we find ourselves looking to the Lord for every decision we make.

Obedience is an active by-product of love. How could we truly love God and then disobey Him? This seems impossible but comes about as a result of the evil inherent within each of us. The greatest of all commandments is to love God with all our heart and strength. So if you love God with all your heart and strength, why don’t believers keep His commandments that He said He gave for our good always. To love and worship God is to cleave to Him with a loving, obedient heart.

To disobey God, our Father, in any matter, is absolutely unthinkable. This would be a certain indication that we do not love nor trust God and are

not pleased with Him or the ways in which He wants us to live. But God does have the power to force every creature to obey and love Him. God, though, having given mankind freedom of choice, wants mankind to obey Him because we love Him, to choose Him because we want a relationship with Him. Jesus told the Apostles to go and make disciples and teach those new disciples to obey everything they were commanded. *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen,”* Matthew 28:19, 20.

God knows we are constantly tempted to do the wrong thing, after all isn't the earth Satan's playground, to play with individuals as he wills to draw them away from God. But just like a loving father in an earthly family, God doesn't abandon his children when they are naughty. God has given mankind guidelines to live by, but He knows there will be times when mankind will 'fall' and transgress or sin against the law. God, though, does not cut individuals off, but leaves them with access to return to Him – God is always forgiving of those who return their hearts to Him. The Law allows us to live in right relationship with God, but also shows what sin is so we know when we do transgress and can do something to remedy that transgression.

As stated earlier, through God's great love for mankind, He gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for ALL. Through this gift we were given physical, tangible evidence of God's love for us, so don't we now owe it to God to mirror that love and give it back to Him? Through Jesus Christ we have been shown aspects of the character of God, and through Jesus Christ we were also shown how to keep the Law through love of God, not fear of reprisal.

The New Testament is full of promises made to those who obey the

commandments: *“If ye love me, keep my commandments”* John 14:15 and *“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me”* John 14:23, 24. So it may be said that to obey God's commandments is to show God that you love Him and that you do not find His commandments burdensome (1st John 5:3).

Love and obedience go together. Obedience is the test of our love for God. In the same way the test of the love of Jesus for God the Father was his complete and total obedience, obedience to the point of death on the cross. Jesus said to the Apostles who were struggling through faith to overcome their fear of Jesus' coming crucifixion, *“And li will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* John 14:16. 📖

Dedication

Thou, whose unmeasured temple stands,
Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls that human hands
Have raised, O God, to Thee!

Lord, from Thine inmost glory send,
Within these courts to bide,
The peace that dwelleth without end
Serenely by Thy side!

May erring minds that worship here
Be taught the better way;
And they who mourn, and they who fear,
Be strengthened as they pray.

May faith grow firm, and love grow warm,
And pure devotion rise,
While round these hallowed walls the storm
Of earthborn passion dies.

William Cullen Bryant

Who Are Israelites?

by Rodney GRAY

Asher

JOSEPH
Benjamin
Dan
REUBEN
Zebulun
Simeon
Issachar
Levi
Judah

In Romans 9:4,5 Paul, when talking of his “brethren according to the flesh”, makes the statement:

“Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth

- *the adoption,*
- *and the glory,*
- *and the covenants,*
- *and the giving of the law,*
- *and the service of God,*
- *and the promises;*

whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

In this statement Paul summarises the main aspects of the relationship established in the Old Testament between God and Israel, and notes also that Christ (Jesus) is a descendant of Israel. Looking at this list also causes us to ask the question, ‘Who are Israelites – to whom all these things pertain (or belong)?’ There are many different ways to answer this question. A number of aspects are discussed in this article to provide further background before trying to answer the question.

Physical Israel

As we read in Latter Rain 43, the nation of Israel was formed after God called Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to follow His covenant. From Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel, came the twelve tribes of Israel who were recognised as a people when God delivered them out of Egypt. They continued as a nation of twelve tribes until the death of King Solomon. At this stage the kingdom was divided into two separate nations - Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, reigning over only two tribes (the Jews), and Jeroboam reigning over ten tribes.

The ten tribe nation was overtaken by Sennacherib in around 722 BC, and the nation was dispersed. This was the custom of the Babylonians, to disperse the captives

so that they would not be in a position to regroup and cause an ethnic-based uprising in the future. There are many theories about what happened with the descendants of the ten tribes, but the Bible tells us that they were dispersed among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people. Again Moses talks of them being scattered throughout all nations of the Earth. So the conclusion is that there are potentially descendants of the ten tribes mixed among all nations, all over the earth.

The two tribe Kingdom was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and after seventy years a number of them returned to Jerusalem, but nevertheless those in captivity were still loosely associated and were recognised as an ethnic group in a foreign land. No doubt many descendants from these people also spread across the Earth, but there was a dominant group which stayed in Jerusalem, and became known as the Jews. It was into this group that Jesus was born, and who were responsible, in their zealotry of what they believed to be right, for his crucifixion. After 70AD these people also ceased being a recognised group, and were scattered across all nations of the earth. As Jews, however, a number of the descendants have been able to continue and keep their identity and in recent history have re-established their national identity in Israel. No doubt, however, there would be a much greater number who have lost their identity compared to those who have retained it.

Spiritual Blessings

God said to Abraham, *"In thy seed shall all the nations of the Earth be blessed"* Genesis 22:18. Some historians will suggest different ways in which this promise has been fulfilled, but as Christians we see the ultimate fulfilment through Jesus. It is through Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, and the sacrifice he made of his life, that the world will be reconciled to God (2nd Corinthians 5:18-19) and all nations will be blessed. Paul talks about this as being a spiritual blessing, and concludes that all who believe have received of Abraham's blessing, and in a spiritual sense, have become

members of the Commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:12). However many believe that in addition to this spiritual blessing, there is still a physical blessing promised in the Scriptures to the descendants of Israel which has not yet been fulfilled (see for example Deuteronomy chapter 30 for which history cannot yet show a fulfilment).

Seed and children

The Jews who came to John the Baptist claimed to have a special relationship with God because of their physical lineage from Abraham. John the Baptist pointed out that this in itself was of little value, and that almost anyone (*"of these stones"*) could be brought into this family (Luke 3:8).

The Jews came to Jesus with a similar argument, but he turned it around another way and said *"I know ye are Abraham's seed, but if ye were the children of Abraham ye would do the works of Abraham"* John 8:33, 39). He made a distinction between the seed and the children, pointing out that the mere lineage from Abraham was of little consequence in obtaining God's promises if they did not follow the way of life Abraham had demonstrated in his relationship with God.

Blessing to a Remnant

In a similar way the blessings promised to the children of Israel are offered to those who accept the terms of the covenant God made with His people. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" Exodus 19:5. The blessings and promises held out to a remnant of the descendants in these latter days is conditional on obedience. In Deuteronomy chapter 30 Moses sets out the process of dispersion, repentance, return and regathering in store for Israel – or for those Israelites who accept the challenge of wanting to obey God's voice. It is true that this process is enacted within the life of believers as they come to God, and as God enlightens individuals to give their lives to Him, but there is still an overriding indication that this will also be

fulfilled in a very physical way in bringing together a remnant of the descendants of God's Israel people in the last days. See also references such as Jeremiah 31:10, 35-37, Ezekiel 34:11-13, Acts 1:6.

Birthright through Ephraim and Manasseh

God had made a covenant with Abraham, and this had been passed down through Isaac and Jacob. When Jacob was dying, he left a blessing for each of his sons. In Genesis chapter 49 we read of the physical blessings, and in Deuteronomy chapter 33 we read the blessings that Moses gave each of the tribes, which was more a spiritual blessing. However, because Reuben, the firstborn, had despised his birthright, the birthright was passed through Joseph, the eldest son of Jacob's second, or beloved, wife

(1st Chronicles 5:1-2). In Genesis chapter 48 we see that this blessing is passed by Jacob (Israel) through Joseph to Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. *"And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance."* And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" Genesis 48:1-16.

So whilst there remain significant physical blessings to the descendants of all the sons of Jacob (Israel), the covenant blessing was passed through the birthright to Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. It is interesting to note that Ephraim had ten sons, and Manasseh had two sons (1st Chronicles 7:14, 23-27).

A will to want to obey - Righteousness to the Plummet

What criteria then, will apply to determine who of the countless millions of descendants of Israel, will form the remnant that will sit on the Throne with Jesus Christ (the Lamb)? The calling out of a remnant

Birthright

Accidents of birth and social custom do not control what God wants to happen. The term 'birthright' denotes the advantages and privileges that were customarily enjoyed by the eldest son. Some of these advantages and privileges were: natural vigour of body and character (Genesis 49:3; Deuteronomy 21:17); a position of honour because he was head of the family (Genesis 27:29), and a double share of the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:15-17. Jacob, although, blind, was guided by God to choose the younger over the elder, the chief blessing going to Ephraim and the lesser blessing to Manasseh. This isn't the first time, or the last, that the younger receives the greater blessing over the elder. Cain was the elder between him and Abel, but Abel's sacrifice was preferred; Ishmael was Abraham's firstborn son, but God told Abraham that *"in Isaac shall thy seed be called"* and Esau was the elder between himself and Jacob (there are other examples throughout the Bible). The destiny of Israel was not to be shaped by human intention, but by God's intention.

will be based on obedience. God will place a desire in the hearts of these people to want to obey His commandments. Isaiah used the illustration of a builder, “*Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*” Isaiah 28:17. The calling to a hope of spiritual salvation culminating in life after death, is common to all people (1st Peter 1:9-10), but the hope of physical redemption through the evil being overcome and removed from within the physical body is, we believe, the promise which pertains to the remnant of Israel. The land which Israel was called to inherit is a type of the physical bodies of believers which will be changed from mortal to immortal at Jesus’ return.

However we must always acknowledge that it is God who convicts each individual of what they believe, it is He who would call people to want to live a life of obedience to His laws and commands, and it is He who will give individuals the power to do so and who will do the work in them. It is all through God’s grace – and not of any ‘works’ which we ourselves may do, but results from a work which God may do in us.

Who will sit on the Throne with Jesus Christ?

Revelations chapter 14 tells of 144,000 who will sit on the Throne with Jesus Christ (the Lamb). These would appear to be the same as those detailed in Revelations chapter 7:3-8, “*Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.*”

Manasseh

Ephraim

Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.”

From what we have outlined above, it would seem that the people included in this number may be descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, being “*called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.*” We believe that God will gather this group in the last days, and will pour out His Spirit upon them to prepare the way of the Lord, for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Exactly how it will happen and when it will happen, and who will be called of God to be of the number we do not know. As a church we have particular beliefs about many of these issues, but it is really up to each individual to trust in God that He will fulfill His will in them. Habakkuk said “*For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry*” Habakkuk 2:3.

Clearly there are broad promises made to ‘Israel’ which will be fulfilled through the Church – the body of Christian believers from all nations, and kindred and tongues. There are also blessings given to Israel’s children (descendants) which have been and are being fulfilled in the world around us. But there also appears to be specific promises with a physical outcome which have been made to a remnant of the descendants of Israel who will seek spiritually to obey God’s Laws and Commands. 📖

Debug Your Bible: For Your Good Always

by Lynne GRAY

This article is going to look at the Law as given in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy – not the actual content of the Law (although small bits will be dealt with) but the intent of the Law with regards Israel. The Law encourages relationship between God and His creation, especially Israel, and some aspects of this relationship will be examined to show the benefit to mankind of the Law and that the Law was a gift to mankind from a loving Creator.

Why was the law given? The word for law in Hebrew is *Torah*, meaning 'to teach, to instruct' and this is literally what the Law does, especially for Israel. The Old Testament gives us a very clear and distinct reason for the giving of the Law to Israel. Deuteronomy 5:29 tells us, "*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!*" This quote shows us the earnest wish of God "*O that there were such an heart in them.*" You can hear and feel the heart-felt plea behind the wish – the love behind the request – similar to a father bemoaning his son or daughters misbehaviour. The emotion of the statement is also stressed by ending in an exclamation mark to give added stress – this is a genuine plea, based on love, from the heart. This quote in the Old Testament is closely followed by Deuteronomy 6:24 which tell us, "*And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.*"

Here is God's hope for Israel that Israel will 'fear' Him and keep His commandments always for their own good and well being - that through keeping these commandments, through love, they will be preserved alive.

So what is meant by 'fear' Him? We tend to think of the word 'fear' in a negative

way denoting something to be scared of, or threatened by. In Biblical Hebrew, which the Old Testament was written in, there are many words for 'fear'. For example, *magor* meaning 'fear' as in Psalm 31:13 means 'terror', *emah* used in Exodus 15:16 also means 'terror', *deagah* as used in Joshua 22:24 means 'fear, sorrow' and *charadah* from Proverbs 29:25 means 'trembling' - there are another 11 Hebrew words in the concordance that all mean similar to the above examples. The exception is *yirah* and its close relative *yare* meaning 'to fear, to reverence.' As you can see these words hold a different meaning to our English understanding of 'fear'. The word *yirah/yare* is used to convey a massive breadth of emotion and awe, such as wonder, amazement, appreciation, surprise, gratitude, humility and also awe at the mystery of it all – in other words *yirah* suggests a general attitude. Mankind should live in awe and reverence at the creation he is part of and the same awe and reverence towards the Creator that created it all. One of the reasons that it is interpreted as 'fear' is the incomprehensibility, for we humans, of the God we relate to and the world we live in. Our understanding of the world we live in is minimal, and in many cases as incomprehensible as God Himself. This inability to understand and comprehend can sometimes be scary and this is another reason why the word 'fear' is used.

God is a God in relationship with His creation. God did not need to create the world, but He chose to and as part of that choice God also chooses to exist in relationship with what He has created – He is not a God aloof from His creation but He is lovingly involved with His creation through all times and at all times. From Genesis chapter 2 onwards we read of God's active involvement with mankind and

mankinds' active involvement either with God or against God. Do you think God did not know where Adam was when Adam was hiding in the garden? Of course God knew where he was, but with relationships comes accountability. God wanted Adam to be accountable for what he had done, just as we have to be accountable to God for anything that we have done wrong. The entire Bible is a collection of narratives about the relationship God has with His creation.

The most important aspect of God's relationship with mankind is love. When we say that 'God is love' what do we mean? It may help first to look at what love is in the Greek language - the language of the New Testament. In the Greek language there are 4 different words for love, but only 2 are used in the New Testament:

- *agape* – this type of love describes God (God is love) and the love He has for mankind and the love he wants mankind to have for each other. This word was rarely used in Greek literature as unlike the others listed below it is not based on emotional affection but is the most popular word for love used in the New Testament. It is sacrificial, giving love – not selfish or based upon the desires of oneself but purely focused on others. The greatest example of agape is in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Unlike the other forms of love listed below, agape is a universal love ("For God so loved the world...") and an eternal love (nothing can "separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" Romans 8:37-39). Those who believe in God must exercise agape love to, not only each other, but to the world also, friends and strangers, family and enemies.
- *phileo* – is the love descriptive of friendship and endearment – Jonathan and David had phileo

love for each other. Phileo is used in the New Testament in relation to brotherly love and community love.

- *eros* – is physical love, sexual love, so it is very different to agape. The use of the word eros is only found in Greek literature and was not used in the New Testament.
- *storge* – also not used in the New Testament, but it means the love that exists between a parent and child and child and parent. In other words, family affection.

So looking more closely at *agape*, which is the form of love we are to exhibit to each other and the world, what are the main attributes of *agape* love so we may emulate these qualities? 1st Corinthians 13:4 would seem a very good place to start, but please note that the *agape* has been translated as 'charity' because the self-sacrificing aspect of the word 'charity' conveyed better the meaning of *agape*. "...and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing. Charity (love) **suffereth long**, and is **kind**; charity (love) envieth not; charity (love) vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity (love) never faileth...and now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three, but the greatest of these is charity (love)." So now we gain some insight into the nature of God and how God wants us to inter-relate with Him and His creation.

The fruits of the Spirit (Christ) are detailed in Galatians 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (see further discussion on the Law below). Therefore if we profess to be Christian and seek to have Christ ruling our hearts and minds, then these are the attributes and

behaviours we should manifest, not the negative list given just prior to the above quote in Galatians 5:19-21. A demonstration of the active part, or inactive, God plays in believer's lives is shown by our attitudes to each other for *"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us"* 1st John 4:12. And it is through agape love that Israel When Whadevelops the obedience to follow God's law – because the law becomes engraved upon the heart of the believer (*"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it"* Deuteronomy 30:14). It is an instinctive part of Israel's nature and to not keep the Law would be going against the very essence of who and what Israel is.

The best metaphor to demonstrate this aspect of love is the often used metaphor of God as Father. Fathers in this world use this model as an example on how they should treat their families. A father does not abandon his children when they are naughty or disobedient. Many times in the Old Testament you read of God's outstretched arm and mighty hand saving Israel (Deuteronomy 26:8; Jeremiah 21:5; 27:5; to name a few), just like a father stopping his child from tripping over a rock - extending his hand to steady his son to save him from falling. This is what God does for us.

What does the law do for Israel? The law was given, as Paul tells us in Romans 3:20, "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The Law established what sin was and is a permanent guide for mankind, especially Israel, on how to live a godly life. Why did the Law need to be written down and what happened before this? Before the flood there was an oral law passed down from generation to generation. We know this because Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to the Lord and Noah divided the animals into clean and unclean for collection into the Ark, just to name two examples. The lifespan prior to the flood, though, was such that the maker of the history was present to either tell the story himself or listen to it being told by another family member, but be there to correct the

teller if they omitted or changed any of it. With the decreasing of the years in the life of man (at the time of Abraham mankind's age dropped to a maximum expectancy of 120 years), there came a need for that law to be written down. This would keep continuity, save changes developing orally in different camps, add and keep uniformity to the law, etc., so that no matter how large or how dispersed Israel ended up, the Law would be the same throughout.

What does the law do for Israel's relationship with God? The law established God as the focus of the lives of Israel as a community and every Israelite individually. Every aspect of the Israelite life was legislated to be directed to Godly ways and a Godly life, rather than to worldly ways and a worldly life. Dietary laws, hygiene laws, sacrificial laws, laws for worship, laws for farming, laws for the interaction with your neighbours – at every juncture of their lives the Law was present as a reminder of God and who God is to Israel. When Israel lived in right relationship they were blessed, when Israel lived in wrong relationship with God they suffered. The lesson is there for everyone today that if you live in right relationship with God, God will direct your life and guide you into deeper relationship with Him, but live in wrong relationship with God and the world takes you further and further away from God, just as depicted in the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:4 where the one that strayed was in danger of falling over a cliff, starvation, etc., all symbolic of a falling away in relationship with God and the loss of His guidance and direction in your life. This is not to say that Christians are constantly blessed by 'good' things happening, because Satan causes 'bad' things happen to everybody, but the Christian knows that when something bad does happen in their lives it is God's will and they are not alone during this tragedy.

What does the law do for Israel's relationship with each other? First and foremost is the instruction to love and treat each other (both family, friend, stranger and foe) as God treats us. The Law gives a moral and ethical foundation for inter-

relationships that are necessary to live in this world so that we may co-exist in cooperation and amicability, rather than in hostility. Israel is to be in the world but not of the world, the keeping of the Law being an evidence of this state. The Law enables Israel to show the world how to live in 'right' relationship with God.

One of the amazing things about the Law is the amount of scientific study being undertaken that shows the Law is 'good' for mankind in many, many ways. To name just a few:

1. Circumcision (Genesis 17:12) – a much debated issue in western society today but it is amazing when you look at the health benefits in relation to this practice.

- a. Newborn males were more prone to severe urinary tract infections than girls and these infections are 10-20 times more common in uncircumcised boys.
- b. 12% of uncircumcised boys develop a problem with their foreskin that requires either medical or surgical treatment, conditions such as Phimosis, Paraphimosis and infections under the foreskin.
- c. The moist enclosed under-surface of the foreskin is a perfect breeding ground for STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) such as HIV – uncircumcised men with a sexual partner who is HIV positive have a 3 to 8 times greater chance of becoming HIV positive than circumcised men.
- d. There are health benefits for women with their partner being circumcised: a fivefold reduction in the risk of cervical cancer (caused by the human papilloma virus); a fivefold reduction in risk of a woman being infected by Chlamydia; a

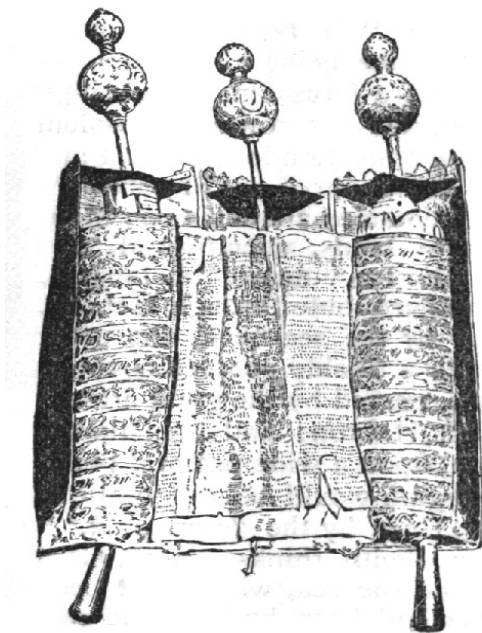
twofold reduction in the risk of Herpes simplex type 2; better hygiene.

And these are only some of the health advantages of circumcision.

2. Diet and Food – known medical fact that too much pork and offal causes uric acid build up which is gout, a painful inflammation. The Law has a general prohibition against eating any blood (Genesis 9:4) or fat (Leviticus 7:22) - these days we know that too much animal fat is bad for cholesterol levels and hearts and are instructed to abstain, or cut our consumption of animal fats down. The Law broke down meat into two categories: clean and unclean the clean being those that divide the hoof and chew their cud. The pig is guilty of being one of the animals most involved in the transmission of infectious diseases to mankind. Recent research has brought up some amazing details, such as the causal relationship between pig meat and cirrhosis of the liver. There are many, many more reasons and examples showing the wisdom behind the Dietary Laws that could be cited here but a later issue will deal with this in more detail.

3. Sanitation – burying their effluent saved it from ending up in waterways through rainfall and flood which often caused cholera and typhoid outbreaks amongst the armies. This saved Israel from losing valuable fighting men to internal disease from lack of care with bodily effluent, which was a major cause of death in other armies (Deuteronomy 23:12). Even at the time of the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) an analysis of military casualties shows that five times as many soldiers died from infections caused by exposure to germs generated from waste than from the war itself. 213 out of 613 biblical commandments in the Law were medical laws to safeguard the health of the Children of Israel.

4. Very early awareness of germs with the instruction to wash hands in running water (Leviticus 15:13). Not till the late 1800's would mankind learn of the existence of germs and the prime instruction after this discovery was to try to enforce in the



medical community the washing of hands (Dr. Ignaz Philipp Semmelweis [1818-1865] recognised the necessity for washing hands but his theory was not widely accepted even though, when implemented mortality was reduced from 10-35% to below 1% for deaths from puerperal fever [childbed fever]. The recognition of the importance of hand washing was not universally accepted until Louis Pasteur confirmed the germ theory). The instruction for the discarding of broken pottery shows understanding of the harmful germs that the cracks in pottery can

harbour (Leviticus 6:28). The instruction for the treatment of dead humans and animals is also another advanced understanding of cross-contamination (Leviticus 7:24; 11:35), and there are many, many more examples of this advanced awareness of germs and instructions to prevent disease.

There are many more instances of the 'good' of the Law but space limitations prohibit expanding these any further. The tenor of many of the laws are incorporated in our daily habits, and we may not even realise that the things we do out of common sense, or as accepted practice do have a basis in the way of life set out by God in the Old Testament. But it is clear that God is right and the Law is for man's 'good' always. It is not until you start looking at the reason for the giving of the Law and what the Law gave to Israel that you can gain a greater understanding of the relationship between Creator and Creation, with greater appreciation gained for the love that God has for us. There is no better summary to this article on the relationship between God, Israel and the Law than Deuteronomy 10:12-13, *"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?"* 📖

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Psalm 67

"God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy:

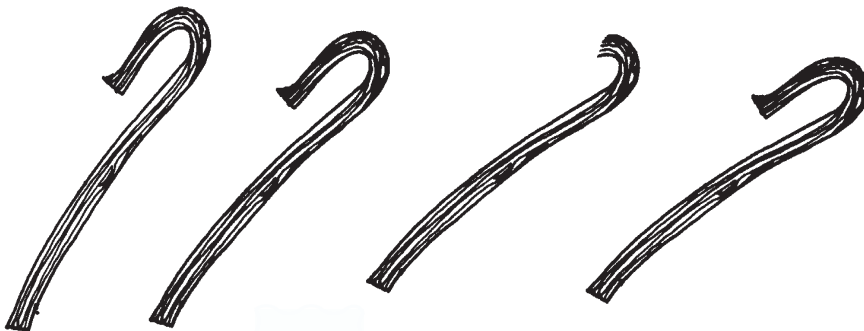
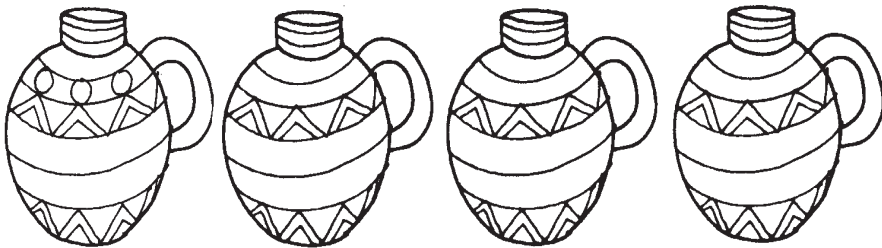
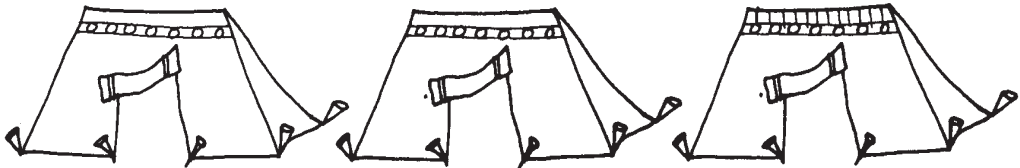
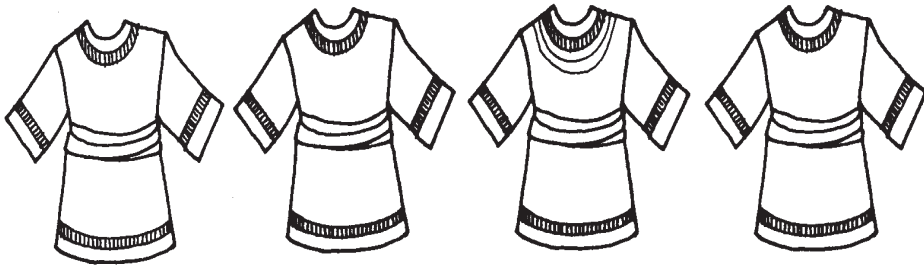
for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the people praise thee O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

Puzzle Page

Abraham

Abraham was a rich man. He lived in a tent and owned many animals.

Circle the picture that is different in each row.



Expand Your Bible: Willing? Yes or No

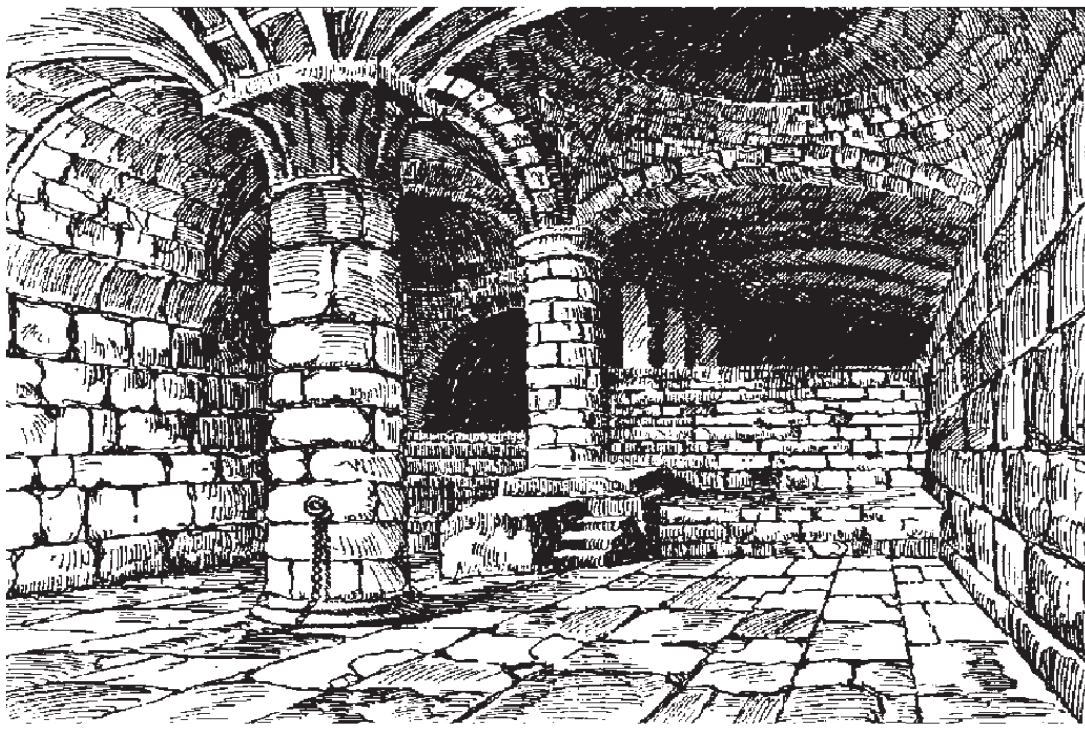
by Audrey HARRISON

Recently we celebrated Whitsuntide (Pentecost) as a Church celebration and as a part of this celebration produced a short musical play about Jonah the prophet, often known as the 'unwilling' prophet.

Jonah was dubbed 'the unwilling prophet' because he tried to run from obeying God's instructions to go to the people of Ninevah to tell them to repent from their sins and be saved from destruction. These people had been enemies of the Israelites and perhaps Jonah bore them no goodwill and didn't want to help but the result was that he was reluctant to do God's bidding and tried to run and hide from Him. This made me think about the prophets of Israel, or the ones with whom we are more familiar anyway. Were they willing, or unwilling? Were they given tasks they did not want to perform? What was their reaction to

being 'chosen' to follow the path of being a prophet? Did they enjoy the calling?

A prophet who came very readily to mind was Elijah. There is no real calling recorded concerning him - he just suddenly appears, but there is no doubt he was a very powerful prophet for many years and a man of great faith. But even Elijah had his moments when he was wishing himself anything else but God's prophet. There is one particular instance that comes to mind, and that is his confrontation with Queen Jezebel when so many of her prophets to Baal had been slain after the test between God and Baal at the well known event of the burning of the sacrifice with fire from heaven. She was determined to slay Elijah because of his allegiance to God. Elijah was frightened and, forgetting God's support he ran and hid where he thought



he would not be found. But of course God knew where he was and renewed his strength to keep on with God's work (read the full account in 1st Kings chapters 18 and 19).

Elisha, Elijah's successor didn't seem to complain about being chosen in this role. This anointing as a prophet is recorded in 1st Kings 19 and 20. Elisha was ploughing with a yoke of oxen when Elijah called him, *"And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, Let me I pray kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back for what have I done to them."* This implied that Elijah knew that Elisha's life was altered forever and he would have times of trial in his ministering as a prophet.

Isaiah was worshipping in the Temple when he had a sudden extraordinary vision of God on His throne. So immense and awesome was this experience that Isaiah felt he was witnessing something he had no right to be seeing and he screamed out *"Woe is me for I am undone...for my eyes have seen the King. The Lord of hosts"* Isaiah 6:5. Immediately a six winged seraph flew to his rescue, placing a burning coal from the altar upon his lips, absolving him of all mortal guilt and allowing him to remain where he was. When the Lord asked who would be His messenger, without hesitation Isaiah volunteered, *"Here am I ! Send me"* Isaiah 6:8. God warned Isaiah that the message he had to deliver would fall on deaf ears and when he asked for how long this would be the case he was told, *"...until cities lie waste without inhabitant...and the land is utterly destroyed"* Isaiah 6:11, which was, we know in hindsight from history, when the kingdom of Judah would fall to Babylon.


Jeremiah is often referred to as the lamenting prophet or the prophet of doom as most of his messages and instruction related to the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the inmates and of their miseries. At the time of his calling to be a prophet Jeremiah was at first unwilling protesting *"Lord God! Behold , I cannot*

speak ; for I am a child" Jeremiah 1:6.

But God told him *"Before I formed thee in the belly , I knew thee...and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."* God encouraged him *"Be not afraid of their faces for I am with thee to deliver thee"* knowing that there would be some trying times for him and forewarning him.

Ezekiel, another of the well known prophets, was among 8,000 exiles taken to Babylon. In the fifth year of exile he was called to be a prophet. Ezekiel's calling and perhaps initiation is described in Ezekiel chapter 1:4 onwards with his vision of the strange beasts and wheels with eyes all round looking every way at once and of seeing *"the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord"* Ezekiel 1:28. As with Jeremiah, God told Ezekiel that he was being sent *"to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me"* Ezekiel 2:3. God assures the prophet in verse 6 to *"be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words"* and tells him in verse 7 that *"thou shall speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear"* and also warns him verse 8 *"Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house."* The message Ezekiel had for the people was words of lamentations, mourning and woe. One reason Ezekiel was to go was to let the people know that there was a prophet amongst them whether they were in Israel or Babylon.

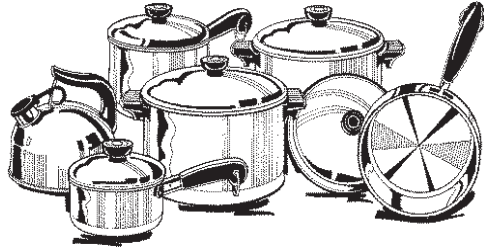
It would appear that it would not have been the prophets who were unwilling to go, but the people who were unwilling to hear. It would also appear that the path of the prophet was not always a smooth one. Did the children of Israel to whom the prophets spoke really want to be the 'chosen people' or did they think it was too hard to follow God's instructions?

And that of course brings us to the present day. Are the people today - and that includes you and me - any more ready to listen to God than they were thousands of years ago? Are we still a stubborn and rebellious people unwilling to accept the way God wants us to live? 

Vegetarian Recipes

Asparagus Frittata

2 medium potatoes
2 large shallots, sliced
1 bunch fresh asparagus
6 eggs
6 mushrooms, sliced
300 ml cream
salt and black pepper, to taste
100g cheese, preferably tasty



Preheat oven to 180degC and then lightly butter a 26-28cm shallow dish.

Peel the potatoes and then slice them and par-boil for 4 minutes. Drain and lay as a layer on the base of the prepared dish. Blanch the asparagus and then slice it into 5cm lengths and spread evenly over the potato. Then scatter the shallots on top and add a layer of sliced mushrooms.

Beat together the cream and eggs and season to taste and pour carefully over the vegetables.

Sprinkle the top with the grated cheese and bake in a preheated oven for 30-40 minutes until golden and puffed up. Test the centre with a clean knife. Remove and serve immediately.

Serves 4.

Microwave Risotto

2 tspns butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
2 cups arborio rice
1 cup dry white wine
3½ cups vegetable stock

150g mushrooms, thinly sliced
150g snow peas
4 shallots, chopped
250g asparagus, chopped
¼ cup parmesan cheese (grated or flaked)

Place onion, butter and garlic in a large microwave dish; cook on HIGH for about 2 minutes until the onions are soft. Add the rice and cook on HIGH for 1 minute.

Add the wine, cook on HIGH for 1 minute. Then stir in the stock and cook covered on HIGH for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the mushrooms, peas, shallots and asparagus. Cook, covered, on HIGH for 5 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and the liquid is absorbed. If the dish is too thick add a little boiling water to it.

Serve the risotto sprinkled with cheese.

Serves 4.