

How Does Christ Fulfill the Law?

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Publisher: Church of God, Bismarck, Darwin & Laura Lee, **Editor:** Laura Lee, **Assistant Editor:** Darwin Lee We do not necessarily agree with all contributors, or their works submitted and printed in this newsletter. It is up to you to get out your Bible and see whether these things are true. Iron sharpens Iron

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1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

How Does Christ Fulfill the Law?

(Copyright 2023) by Charles Whitaker (Charlotte, North Carolina)



"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17)

We begin by observing Matthew 5:17 from a Protestant-oriented paraphrase called *The Message*. Jesus Christ is speaking:

Don't suppose for a minute that I have come to demolish the Scriptures—either God's Law or the Prophets. I'm not here to demolish but to complete.ⁱ

It might be surprising how many correspondents—people who write letters to the church—assert that God's law is "completed." To them, its completion means that they no longer need to obey it.ⁱⁱ Scholars call the theology behind this notion *supersessionism*, the teaching that the New Testament supersedes the Old, grace supersedes law, Christianity supersedes Judaism, the church supersedes physical Israel, and so on.

Jews, of course, consider the term "supersessionism" derogatory, scoffing at the temerity of Christians for insisting that Christianity succeeds and replaces Judaism. Without God's election, Jews will never concede that the gospel Christ brought is superior to their conception of the law of Moses. They and their forbears have stubbornly resisted God on this point since Jesus traveled the lands of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee.

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However, Scripture indeed contains supersessionist statements. For instance, God Himself says the Old Covenant is obsolete, making way for the far better New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:7-13). The sacrifice of our Savior fulfills and replaces all the Old Testament ritual sacrifices and offerings (see Hebrews 10:11-13). Baptism replaces circumcision as the sign of the covenant (see Galatians 3:26-27; 5:6).

Supersessionism takes a few other forms: Replacement Theology, Fulfillment Theology, and even Dispensation Theology. In all its permutations, the concept of supersessionism is a tangled web of truth and error. Here, we will narrowly consider Matthew 5:17 in light of the interminable argument over grace and law.

A Critical Word: *Pleroo*

What is Christ *really* saying in Matthew 5:17? Is He speaking about doing away with the law, or does He intend something else? We can expand our view by including verse 18:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17-18, *English Standard Version*ⁱⁱⁱ)

To unravel this theological knot, we will start in the middle and work outward. To begin, we must consider the verb “fulfill.” The underlying Greek word is *pleroo* (*Strong’s #4137*), which appears 95 times in the New Testament and bears several meanings. (Incidentally, the “ple-” in *pleroo* is the same “ple-” of the English verbs “complete,” “replete,” and “deplete.”) *Pleroo* means “to make full,” “to fill up,” “to render full,” “to complete,” “to bring into effect.” So, when a person pours water into a cup to the brim, he is completely filling it up.

When a prophecy is fulfilled, God brings it into effect, as in the Greek verb’s first use in the New Testament, Matthew 1:22-23:

All this took place to fulfill [*pleroo*, “bring about”] what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us).

Pleroo can also mean “to finish” or “to end” in a temporal sense, that is, of time. Here are three examples of that straightforward meaning:

1. Luke 7:1: “After He *had finished* all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum” (emphasis ours throughout). *The Revised Standard Version* renders this passage: “After He had ended all His sayings . . .” The verbs “finish” and “end” carry the meaning that Christ had completed His discourse for that time.
2. Acts 7:30 (*Lexham English Bible*): “And when forty years *had been completed*, an angel appeared to him in the desert of Mount Sinai in the flame of a burning bush.” Here, the translators use “completed” in a temporal sense, a period of time had ended or finished.
3. Acts 19:21 (*World English Bible*): “Now after these things *had ended*, Paul determined in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem . . .”

So, considering these various meanings, what does *pleroo* mean in the context of Matthew 5:17? Does it mean “end” in the temporal sense, like when Christ ended His speaking, or does it mean “complete,” “render full,” “bring into effect”—or what? And how do we know for sure?

We have two avenues of study to help us:

- First, we have context—what comes before and after *pleroo* in the passage.
- Second, we have other scriptures, other witnesses which serve as guides to understanding.

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The Context of Matthew 5:17

We will begin with context. We started in the middle of the passage, and we will now work outward. So, what comes before and after the appearance of *pleroo* in Matthew 5:17?

Before it, Jesus says: “I did not come to abolish.” The Greek word, *katalyo*, (*Strong’s* #2647), a very strong verb, means “to dissolve,” “to overthrow,” “to bring to naught,” “to disunite,” “to demolish,” “to destroy.” The verbs “abolish” and “end” are semantically similar, for, in some usages at least, to destroy is to bring to an end. For example, to abolish slavery is to end it. To abolish can surely carry the notion of finishing, or more colloquially, “finishing off” or “finishing up.”

So, one must ask, would Christ say that He did not come to abolish the law but that He came to end it? The question answers itself. He would be contradicting Himself within one sentence, in one breath. Further, He would then quickly contradict Himself in verse 19, where the least in God’s Kingdom will be those who disobey—and teach others to disobey—the law. Verse 19 does not support the notion that the law is “done away” by any means.

Christ uses both verbs, “abolish” and “fulfill,” to help us understand exactly what He means by using *pleroo*. He is saying it does *not* mean “end” or “finish” in Matthew 5:17 because the verb *end* implies “abolition” or “elimination.” By His use of *pleroo*, He is signaling that He means something *other* than “abolish” or “do away with.”

While considering the context of Matthew 5:17, it behooves us to mention verse 18 briefly, to see what comes after *pleroo*: “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” Not even the smallest part of the law will fail “until all is accomplished.”

The Greek verb rendered “accomplished” here, *ginomai* (*Strong’s* #1096), means “to happen” or “to come to pass.” Frankly, the word *all* (Greek *pas*; *Strong’s* #3956) simply means “all” or “everything” in Greek. Christ is saying that only something as big as God’s creation of the New Heaven and New Earth, His dissolution of the present order, when *all* prophecies have been fulfilled—only that will be sufficient to end the law. Christ’s coming, His earthly ministry, His death, and His resurrection, as explosively important as they are, are not sufficient in themselves to bring about the abolition of God’s law.

The End of the Law?

Turning away from a contextual view of the passage, we will consider the light another oft-mishandled verse sheds on Matthew 5:17. When wrong-headed theologians seek support for their supersessionist notion that, with Christ’s death and resurrection, the law is “done away,” they invariably turn to Romans 10:4. The *Good News Translation* vastly mishandles God’s Word in this case: “For Christ has brought the Law to an end, so that everyone who believes is put right with God.”

A still more unabashedly fraudulent rendering of Romans 10:4 is that of *The Jerusalem Bible*, a Catholic Bible first published in 1966. It serves as the official Bible for use by English-speaking Catholics outside North America: “But now the Law has come to an end with Christ, and everyone who has faith may be justified.”

The focus, of course, is the English noun “end.” In Greek, it is *telos* (*Strong’s* #5056) and means “result,” “object,” “scope,” “final cause” or “the end proposed and intended.” In essence, *telos* is the target at which one aims.^{iv}

English-speakers use “end” in this way, usually denoting the idea of “result”: “He reasoned with his son to the end that he might convince him not to join the army.” His son’s deciding not to enter the military was the father’s intended *aim*. Another: “The end of the boy’s playing in the snow was a high fever.” Again, the *result* of exposure to cold and wet conditions was illness. One more, a proverbial but false saying: “The ends justify the means.” Here, as in the others, the proverb asserts that the *outcome* of an action excuses the action, no matter how unconscionable it may be.

With that background, we will examine seven of the more honest translations of Romans 10:4:

1. *The Berkeley Version*: “For Christ is to every believer the completion of the Law that brings righteousness.”
2. *Concordant New Testament*: “For Christ is the consummation of law . . .” *Consummation*, meaning “the act of completion,” is quickly becoming an archaic word in our day. An example of its usage: “The signing of the treaty

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marked the consummation of months of negotiation.” In its adjectival form, “consummate,” it means “the best,” “superior”: “He is a consummate statesman.” “With consummate skill, he played the concerto without flaw.”

3. *International Standard Version* and *New International Version*: “For the Messiah is the culmination of the Law . . .” “Culmination” is similar in meaning to “consummation.”
4. *Common English Bible*: “Christ is the goal of the law . . .” Here, the translators took *telos* to signify a target or objective.
5. *Complete Jewish Bible*: “For the goal at which the *Torah* aims is the Messiah . . .” That is, Christ is the ultimate intent of the law. All the law points toward Him or, we could say, describes His character.
6. *New Testament for Everyone*: “The Messiah . . . is the goal of the law . . .”
7. *The Voice*: “God’s purpose for the law reaches its climax when the Anointed One arrives . . .”^v

Christ, the Law’s Object and Exemplar

Considering both the context of this passage and the correct meaning of *telos* in Romans 10:4, Christ is the object of the law, its culmination. When put to the test, neither Matthew 5:17 nor Romans 10:4 states that He “finished it off,” “put an end” to it, or “completed” it to make it of no effect.

We can have no objections with “fulfill” as a proper translation of *pleroo* in Matthew 5:17. When someone fills a cup, he completes the cup’s purpose—a cup is for filling up. Until Christ came to teach the letter *and* spirit of the law, enabling us through the Holy Spirit to obey it, our understanding of the law was incomplete—a cup not full.^{vi} Now, after His finished work, the cup is full.

In closing, a brief mention of Romans 3:31 (*New Century Version*) is warranted. The apostle Paul begins by rhetorically asking: “So do we destroy^{vii} the law by following the way of faith?” His answer is emphatic. “No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.”

Please note that Paul does not accept the supersessionist idea that law and faith are binary opposites—enemies, as it were, with daggers drawn. To him, law and faith do not work at cross purposes, but collaboratively, if not reciprocally. Law, the schoolmaster (a metaphor Paul uses in Galatians 3:23-25), teaches us what sin is and simultaneously displays God’s character to us. Having the faith of Christ operating in us through the work of the Holy Spirit, we can obey that law both in its letter and in its spirit. In this way, we live God’s way, embedding His character in us, being what He wants us to be.

End Notes

i To be fair, the translators of *The Message* redeem themselves a bit when they editorialize, “I am going to put it all together, pull it all together in a vast panorama.”

ii The volume of those letters is a good measure of how many preachers in the world’s churches assert this lie and how many of their parishioners believe it.

iii Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural citations are from the *English Standard Version*.

iv Admittedly, *telos* can—but does not always—mean “end” in a temporal sense or “finish” in a spatial one, as in the end of the day, the end of a string, the end of the war, or the like.

v Another, somewhat adequate translation is that of the *GOD’S WORD Translation*: “Christ is the fulfillment of Moses’ Teachings so that everyone who has faith may receive God’s approval.” Of course, Christ is the object of God’s law, not “Moses’ Teachings.” Paul makes a similar point in the book of Galatians where the apostle connects Christ with the promises God made to Abraham (see Galatians 3:15-29).

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vi Considering the contexts and meanings of *pleroo* and *telos*, the following two versions do an adequate job in translating Matthew 5:17:

- *Berkeley Version*: “I did not come to abolish but to complete the Law”
- *The Holy Bible in Modern English* (F. Fenton): “I have not come to abolish, but to complete [the Law and the Prophets].”

vii The Greek verb here is not *katalyo* but *katargeō* (*Strong’s* #2673). The King James Version translators render *katargeo* as “destroy” (5x), “do away” (3x), “abolish” (3x), and “cumber,” “loose,” “cease,” “fail,” “deliver,” and eleven other miscellaneous translations once each.

See Charles Whitaker’s other articles at:

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Anti-Lockdown Goes Mainstream

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It’s a shift worth marking. *New York Magazine* is featuring an article called “[COVID Lockdowns Were a Giant Experiment. It Was a Failure.](#)” The authors are two excellent journalists, Joe Nocera and Bethany McLean, who have also written a new book called [The Big Fail](#), which I have not read but intend to. The ascent of the book and thesis is hugely important, if only to further blunt the impact of Michael Lewis’s [The Premonition](#), which came out in 2021 with the purpose of valorizing the absolute worst of the lockdowners.

The worry at the time was that Lewis’s book, like [The Big Short](#), would become a major movie that would codify lockdowns as the right way to deal with infectious disease. That does not seem to be happening, and the cleverly titled book by Nocera and McLean seems to assure that this will never happen. Thank goodness. This is progress. Be grateful when we see it. It is also a tremendous credit to all those who have been pushing the Nocera/McLean thesis since the spring of 2020.

Lockdowns were always an impossible means of pandemic management. We knew that from a century ago. It was not even controversial. The orthodoxy in public health survived even up to a few weeks before the lockdowns began.

Out of nowhere, settled wisdom was completely upended. Suddenly, as if straight from Orwell, lockdowns became “common sense mitigation measures.” Meanwhile this country and most other countries around the world were being utterly tortured by a crazed bureaucracy determined to master the microbial kingdom by bullying people and wrecking their businesses, schools, churches, and lives.

If nothing else, this era proves for this generation the astonishing capacity of the human mind to undertake utterly insane policy experiments on a grand scale without the slightest evidence that they could ever succeed, even while they trample on all established norms of rights and liberties.

This is a revelation, at least to me. We’ve never seen anything like it in our lives. Speaking personally, this reality utterly shattered a worldview that I didn’t know I held: namely, I genuinely believed humanity was on a path, even an inevitable one, toward greater knowledge, learning, and the embrace of freedom. After March 2020, I and everyone discovered otherwise. That was both intellectually and psychologically traumatic for me and for millions of others.

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We are still figuring out how and why all this happened. In order to do that, we at least need a consensus that this was a terrible mistake. Even three and a half years later, we haven't even had that. To be sure, it is very difficult to find defenders of lockdowns. They have mostly evaporated into the hedges. Even those who pulled the trigger and defended them at the time are all denying that they had anything to do with them. My favorite: we never had a real lockdown.

Regardless, the mere appearance of the Nocera/McLean article takes us quite a distance to where we need to be at least for now. Yes, it is 42 months late, but we take progress wherever we can find it.

Just some quotes from the article:

“One of the great mysteries of the pandemic is why so many countries followed China’s example. In the U.S. and the U.K. especially, lockdowns went from being regarded as something that only an authoritarian government would attempt to an example of “following the science.” But there was never any science behind lockdowns — not a single study had ever been undertaken to measure their efficacy in stopping a pandemic. When you got right down to it, lockdowns were little more than a giant experiment.”

*“Unfortunately, there is no shortage of policy failures of which to take stock. We do an accounting of many of them in our new book, *The Big Fail*. But one that looms as large as any and remains in need of a full reckoning in the public conversation, is the decision to embrace lockdowns. While it is reasonable to think of that policy (in all its many forms, across different sectors of society and the 50 states) as an on-the-fly experiment, doing so demands that we come to a conclusion about the results. For all kinds of reasons, including the country’s deep political divisions, the complexity of the problem, and COVID’s dire human toll, that has been slow to happen. But it’s time to be clear about the fact that lockdowns for any purpose other than keeping hospitals from being overrun in the short term were a mistake that should not be repeated. While this is not a definitive accounting of how the damage from lockdowns outweighed the benefits, it is at least an attempt to nudge that conversation forward as the U.S. hopefully begins to recenter public-health best practices on something closer to the vision put forward by [Donald] Henderson.”*

You will notice the hedge here: “for any purpose other than keeping hospitals from being overrun.” Another way to put it: lockdowns are fine for rationing healthcare. There is reason to emphatically disagree. Hospitals wildly exaggerated how overrun they were. There were two hospitals in New York boroughs that had high traffic, but this was due to exigencies of ambulance contracts. The rest were largely empty as they were around the country. This was due to lockdowns that restricted medical services to Covid only even in places where there was no community spread, plus public fear of leaving the home.

(I had a conversation last week with the head of a company that sells ventilators and diagnostic equipment to hospitals in New York. He said that in the early months of lockdown, he had never seen hospitals so empty. This was confirmation to me of what we already knew.)

This whole subject needs some serious unpacking. To my knowledge, we still don't know where the edicts came from to lock down hospitals all over the country. That is a research project all its own. In other words, carving out an exception for “overrun” hospitals is deeply dangerous: it only incentivizes the lockdowners next time to game the reporting in a way that is favorable to more lockdowns. This is precisely what happened in the UK, where the main and even only justification for lockdowns was the rationing of healthcare services.

So, this proviso is actually dangerous in every way.

Now we must deal with another piece of this article that is far from correct. I quote:

*“As the United States gains more and more distance from the COVID pandemic, the perspective on what worked, and what did not, becomes not only more clear, but more stark. **Operation Warp Speed stands out as a remarkable policy success.** And once the vaccines became available, most states did a good job of quickly getting them to the most vulnerable, especially elderly nursing-home residents.”*

The perspective is what we might call the exogenous theory of the jab. The idea is that the lockdowns and masking and the whole apparatus of disease control exists in a separate system of ideological confusion, whereas the vaccine came

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from the outside to intervene but otherwise was not part of the planning apparatus.

I certainly once shared this view. About the vaccine in 2020, rumored to come along at any point, I care next to nothing about it. I assumed it would be useless because my reading on the topic showed that a coronavirus is in the class of pathogens against which one cannot vaccinate.

That aside, there is a real danger associated with attempting to vaccinate your way out of pandemic. You can create the conditions that drive mutations even more and introduce the prospect of what’s called original antigenic sin. What I had not anticipated was that the shot would be actually deeply dangerous, much less that it would be mandated.

The more research we do, the less plausible this theory of exogenous intervention is. From the very outset, the vaccine was planned as a huge part of the entire pandemic control agenda. And consider this question. Would it have been possible to drive the emergency use authorization, indemnify the results from any liabilities, retain patents, elicit tax funds for development, plus push innumerable institutions to mandate the shots in absence of the national emergency, the frenzy, the demoralization, and the population-wide panic? I’ve asked many people this question, and the answer is always: no way.

There is no world in which Warp Speed would have taken hold absent the lockdowns. They are all part of the same system and policy. So, yes, it is strange for our authors to isolate the vaccine as good in the context of everything else which they label bad. Emergencies elicit bad actors and bad actions. They are all of a piece.

At this point, most of us have become jaded about media and messaging from mainstream sources. So, an easy tag to put on this important article in *New York Magazine* is: limited hangout. Let’s admit failure where possible, concede mistakes and disasters along the way, even while sneaking in an approving and passing remark about the thing which in the end is the most important part of the whole epoch, namely the vaccine itself. That way, the rubes will be satisfied that there is some accountability going on, even while the biggest and deepest caper of them all gets away without a scratch.

There is no need here to chronicle the innumerable and now widely known failure of the shot. In any case, among those who still want to claim it to be a great success, their messaging is not long for this world. The evidence is too overwhelming and felt in every part of society the world over.

What we have with this book and article is an important step. It is just one step. Lockdowns utterly shattered the protocols of public health, settled law, and freedom itself all over the world. They wrecked myriad institutions, wrought an incredible economic and cultural crisis, demoralized the whole population, and built up a leviathan of command and control that is not only not backing down but growing ever more. Far more will be required to utterly and completely repudiate the methods and madness of our epoch.

See Jeffrey A. Tuckers other articles at:

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Looking Inside Noah’s Ark
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About 4,500 years ago our great¹ grandfather Noah fashioned the wood used in the Ark in order to save the life of himself and his family from a worldwide flood that God told him was going to be released on an evil and wicked world. You can

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see in these short videos, parts of the Ark Noah built with his own hands! What else could such an enormous wooden structure crafted so expertly be; sitting so high up a mountain named Ararat (Genesis 8:4)? Noah *may* have had some help from his 3 sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth (at least it seems likely although the Scriptures do not give that information that I recall).

The videos below certainly appear to not be faked nor even could be in my opinion. I know the explorer and researcher Ron Wyatt believed he had found a ship-like form much farther down from the mountain pointed at the ends, but to many there are a number of problems associated with that. Such as the shape and also iron parts were found in that area whereas the biblical record does not record any mention of iron; just wood and pitch inside and out to keep any water out.

The Noah flood time frame would be around November 2348 BC if my calculations are accurate.

The Bronze age started around 3300 BC and the Iron age supposedly was around 1200 BC – 600 BC. In the area of what Wyatt investigated, there also are large stones with holes in them which are believed to be anchors, which Noah would not have needed. Ron Wyatt did investigate an interesting area, but it would require more proof for me. At this time the much higher up iced-in wooden structure has my vote.

Explanation of reference 1: ‘great grandfather Noah’ (1st paragraph) - going back around a *maximum* of 250 generations if we figure *only* 20 years between generations.

The case for the much higher up wooden structure:

<https://www.arkinsight.nl/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Lpz2mMJz-4> 3.25 min. pt 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQDmBA9TuD0> 9.34 min, pt 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGQ85Glsa4Q> 8.45 min. pt 3

OVERVIEW OF THE STORY OF NOAH AND THE ARK STARTS IN GENESIS CHP. 6

Genesis 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 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. 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. [Note: *Rather than meaning the average lifespan of humans, it appears this 120 years likely is a reference to Jubilee years which is every fiftieth year. See Leviticus 25 info below*].

Gen. 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Gen. 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect [Note: ‘perfect’ in regard to verse 4 above] in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Gen. 6:14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15 And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. [cubit = anywhere from about 15 to 21+ inches] 16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side

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thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17 And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. 18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. 20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. 21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. 22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. [I recommend reading chaps. 8 & 9 also to get the complete report. Gen. 8:4 says the ark came to rest upon the mountains of Ararat. These mountains of Ararat are in the country of Turkey.]

INFO RE 120 YEARS from Genesis 6:3:

Leviticus 25:8–13 states: You shall count off seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; and there shall be to you the days of seven Sabbaths of years, even forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. You shall make the fiftieth year holy and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you; and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you. In it you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself, nor gather from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat of its increase out of the field. In this Year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property. (WEB)

SIGNIFICANCE OF 120 YEARS AND THE JUBILEE

You will note every Jubilee eliminates all debts and starts everything fresh again. That is how God's Government works. God is right now allowing mankind 6000 years (120 years of 50-year Jubilees) to try and rule themselves, and we see that has and is failing miserably. The Son of God, the Anointed One or Messiah, will be sent to earth by the Father to put down all evil and reestablish the true ways, allowing this project to last for 1000 years; represented by the last day of the week, or the 7th day of rest – the weekly Sabbath! That is not Sunday. Even the devil and his group which have been counterfeiting God's Holy Days will be imprisoned for 1000 years. Peace at last! There are many scriptures that talk about this time; especially read through Jeremiah chp. 31 and Zechariah chp. 14.

By the way, the 6000 years (120 years X 50) of mankind's self-rule is almost done; we are probably already into the last biblical week or last seven years. The time of rest is coming fast; right after a time of terrible trouble for mankind known as the Tribulation. Hang in there! Our Savior said, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he who endures to the end, the same will be saved." (Matthew 24:12-13). Let's not let go of our love for our Creator (1 John 5:2-3) or especially our fellow believers (John 15:12, 17)!

See James Steinle's other articles at:

[Steinle, James – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Anakim Are from Adam
(Copyright 2013) by David Sielaff (Portland, Oregon)

Well, at Least One of Them Are Human

It is often frustrating to encounter new things in Scripture, especially when you have read passages over and again without realizing a detail that totally changes your understanding of that text. Yet for me, this is also part of the fascination of Scripture.

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I recently reread Joshua 14:15 and found a very interesting item in the text. (Well, it was interesting to me.) Joshua chapters 14 and 15 describe the distribution of the land. One portion of land was the choice of Caleb, a reward for his faithfulness (Joshua 14:6–15). He was one of the 12 Israelites sent to spy on the land God promised to Israel 40 years before.¹ Caleb desired the portion of Hebron with a particular city:

“And the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba; which Arba [he] was a great man [hadam, in Hebrew] among the Anakims. And the land had rest from war.”

• Joshua

14:15 The King James translates this verse in a manner that could be taken two ways:

- (1) Arba was a human, but great among the giant Anakim people, or
- (2) Arba was himself a great giant in Kirjatharba, “among the Anakim.”

Which is correct? Fortunately, we are given enough information to know for sure that (1) above is the right answer:

“And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of YHWH to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron. And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.”

• Joshua 15:13–14 (see also Judges 1:20)

Hebron is west of the Dead Sea about 15 miles, and some 18+ miles south-southwest of Jerusalem. It is in the territory allotted to Judah. Apparently Caleb did not kill the three sons of Anak (who were giants), but rather he drove them out of the territory. This is confirmed later in the Book of Joshua.

“And they gave them [priests of the tribe of Levi] the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; ...”

• Joshua 21:11–13

Prior to the time of Israel’s occupation of the Promised Land, Hebron was originally known as Kirjatharba (spelled Kirjath-arba in most modern translations), as we are first told in Genesis 23:2. Later after he drove them out of the city of Hebron, Caleb and the men of Judah killed the three sons of Anak:

“Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and [1] had taken it, and [2] smitten it with the edge of the sword, and [3] set the city on fire.² And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley. And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron before was Kirjatharba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

• Judges 1:8–10

Such is the narrative of the interaction of Israel with the city of Hebron and its inhabitants, which included the Anakim. But what was the origin of the Anakim? Remember what Joshua, Caleb, and the other 10 spies told the people of Israel upon their return:

¹ Caleb was one of the 2 of the 12 spies along with Joshua (who succeeded Moses as leader of the 12 tribes of Israel) who tried to inspire the people of Israel to obey God and take possession of the land He gave them. When the people were fearful and refused to go (Numbers 14:1–10), God chastised them with a 40-year sojourn in the wilderness. Caleb and Joshua were the only two men over the age of 20 who survived that 40-year punishment. No other adults of Israel (including Aaron and Moses) entered the Promised Land. They suffered for their lack of trust in God (Numbers 14:30–32).

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“And there we saw the giants [*nephilim* in Hebrew], the sons of Anak, which come of the giants [*nephilim*]: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.”

• **Numbers 13:33**

It does not get clearer than this. The Anakim were descended from the Nephilim, although they were called by different names depending on where they lived (Deuteronomy 2:10–12).

So, who cares whether the Nephilim, the Anakim, and the others were descended from Adam? It means they will be in the resurrection, just as you will be. It means Og of Bashan, Goliath and his giant brothers, and the Anakim giants — all of them — eventually will be in the resurrection, glorified as Christ is now. Christ’s salvation will be for them, in spite of their ultra-evil acts, just as it will be for you, me, and every other human being from Adam.

It also means the hybrid offspring of the Sons of God with the daughters of men (Genesis 6:2, 4) are considered by God to be human beings, descendants of Adam. The hybrid offspring of the Sons of God with the daughters of men happened before the flood and after the flood (Genesis 6:4). So far as the Bible informs us the last post-flood descendants of the Nephilim (who were Philistines) were killed by David and his mighty men. Whether you believe there will be another such hybridization and birth of Nephilim again before Christ returns depends on how you read Matthew 24:37–39 and Luke 17:26–27.

See David Sielaff’s other articles at:

Sielaff, David – Church of God, Bismarck (church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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<https://www.askelm.com/>

2 Originally Judah conquered Jerusalem, but probably did not conquer the citadel, or after capturing Jerusalem, they abandoned it and Canaanites moved back into the city (Judges 1:21). See my April 15, 2013 Commentary, “[Jebusite Control of Jerusalem.](#)”

The Oldest Known Jellyfish

(Copyright 2023) by Frank Sherwin (Dallas, Texas)

Paleontologists continue to identify creatures that inhabited the waters of the “ancient” Cambrian Ocean to be just like what we find in the shallow seas of the 21st century.

If you were to swim in the ‘Cambrian seas’ (from the time before the Flood), what would you find? An amazing variety of complex life forms such as echinoderms (e.g., sea stars), lampshells, snails, clams, and perhaps the most complex of all invertebrates: the shelled squids we call the nautiloids.^{1,2} We would also find the complex arthropod called the trilobite³ (extinct today) with its geometrically amazing compound eyes.

Now we can add to this list a recent discovery of the oldest known swimming jellyfish: “The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) announces the oldest swimming jellyfish in the fossil record with the newly named *Burgessomedusa phasmiformis*.”⁴ This creature was found in the Burgess Shale.⁵

The Burgess Shale of British Columbia is arguably the most important fossil deposit in the world, providing an astounding record of the Cambrian “Explosion,” the rapid flowering of complex life from single-celled ancestors. While most of the fossil record is comprised of shells, teeth and bones, the Burgess Shale preserves the softer

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bits—the eyes, guts, gills and other delicate structures—of animals belonging to Earth's earliest complex ecosystems a half a billion years ago.⁶

The discovery was formally introduced in the journal *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*: “Here we describe *Burgessomedusa phasmiformis* gen. et sp. nov., the oldest unequivocal macroscopic free-swimming medusa in the fossil record. Our study is based on 182 exceptionally preserved body fossils from the middle Cambrian Burgess Shale. (Raymond Quarry, British Columbia, Canada).”⁷

There’s nothing simple about the jellyfish. Even though they are about 95% water, that remaining five percent is incredibly intricate.⁸ Their sophisticated life cycle includes both asexual and sexual phases.

Cnidarians, [pronounced “nye-DARE-ee-unz,”] have *complex life cycles* with one or two body forms, a vase-shaped body, called a polyp, and in medusozoans, a bell or saucer-shaped body, called a medusa or jellyfish, which can be free-swimming or not. While fossilized polyps are known in ca. 560-million-year-old rocks, *the origin of the free-swimming medusa or jellyfish is not well understood.*⁴ (Emphasis added.)

Not surprisingly, *Burgessomedusa* is much like jellyfish today, having “a typical saucer or bell-shaped body” and “by comparison with modern jellyfish, *Burgessomedusa* would also have been capable of free-swimming and the presence of tentacles would have enabled capturing sizeable prey.”⁴

As mentioned above, conventional science is unable to explain the origin of these amazing creatures.⁹ There is no evidence that any cnidarians evolved from a non-cnidarian ancestor over long ages, as claimed by evolutionary scientists. Moon et al stated, “Cnidarians are thought to represent one of the earliest-diverging branches of animals, making them key for understanding the origin of Bilateria [an animal arranged such that one plane divides it into two halves that are approximate mirror images], but the origin and early evolution of medusozoans, and of the medusa stage in particular, remains poorly constrained by the fossil record.”⁷

Regardless, fossil specimens found in past decades, including *Burgessomedusa*, “show that the Cambrian food chain was far more complex than previously thought.”⁴

This is exactly what creation scientists expected. What is not found are simple life forms that are hard to classify and that were thrown together by random chance and time. Instead, scientists find a stunning variety of complex forms of life, created complete and fully-formed, interacting in intricate food chains in the world today and as fossils in Flood rocks. The creation model predicts that no ancestral forms will ever be found of the Cnidaria, or any other creatures, for they never existed. Each basic body plan (such as the Bilateria) was created directly by the Lord Jesus without any evolutionary lineages, a conclusion amply supported by fossil data.

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Thought on Isaiah 32:17
(Copyright) by Albert Hudson (United Kingdom)

“The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isa. 32:17).

There is no peace in the world today. Even the U.N. peacekeeping forces are armed with guns and armored vehicles and find themselves the targets of both sides of the contending forces. Even if the great powers settled their differences and began to live amicably together, there are many lesser powers thirsting for war and conquest. Almost a century of League of Nations and United Nations has failed to achieve peace. How certain it is that the mutual rivalries, jealousies, and greed of Nations, great and small, is greater by far than their desire for peace. How clear that, left to man’s own efforts, peace on earth will never be achieved.

Yet it will come. *“The LORD said...as truly as I live, all the (whole) earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.”* (Num. 14:20,21) A time has to come in human history when God intervenes to command the attention and allegiance of men. A world Empire there must be in which men are brought face to face with the realities of life and for a season have their war-like and anti-social impulses restrained whilst they are required to learn the laws by which, alone man must live. Men of God of olden time knew of this and foresaw such an era and described it in words that will never die. Christians today look for it and some perceive in the present well-nigh hopeless state of human affairs the long-foretold signs which herald the imminent dawn of that day, the Age in which the Kingdom of Christ rules supreme amongst men, and the vision of Isaiah quoted above becomes reality.

Since 1983 there have been conflicts beginning and ending. There was the end of the Cold War in 1989. Nevertheless there was the war in former Yugoslavia following the break-up of that country; two wars in Iraq and the invasion of Afghanistan.

In 2023 there is still no peace in the world despite the efforts of people everywhere. The war in Ukraine continues. The recent attack on Israel. Civil war continues in parts of Africa including military coups in Gabon, Niger, and Sudan. The effect of the Revolution in Libya left that nation unprepared for the consequences of the recent storm leading to large loss of life, that one local man there compared it to the flood of Noah. The effects of civil war are still being felt in Syria and Yemen. One commentator said, “is the United Nations fit for purpose?”

See Albert Hudson’s other articles at:
[Hudson, Albert – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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The Family of God (Copyright 2022) by James McBride (United Kingdom)

Over the past six millennia God has selected men and women to become part of His eternal spirit Family. Many, indeed, have been invited (there's no coercion) but few have responded—or they have not finished the course.

Some are well-known: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, Paul—a '*great cloud of witnesses*' (Hebrews 12:1), all faithful. Some lived long productive lives, some were cut short—many martyred. All were in some degree flawed, but lived in faith, trusting in God whatever life threw at them.

A plan, a grand design, was conceived in the heavenly realm to create a being in God's own image, a rational being endowed with the power of choice: to learn compliance with the *laws of life*—or a rebel who would choose the path of self-determination and its terrible consequence, death. The Creator crafted a clay image of Himself [from earth's elements] and breathed into it '*...the breath of life*', purposed to qualify to become part of His spirit Family.

We know their initial choice—self-determination and death'. Instructed the Creator: '*...of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die*' (Genesis 3:3). *Wrong choice!* They thus shattered their intimate relationship with the Almighty God and were cast into the wilderness. Access to God would be only through an intermediary. Life became onerous.

God prescribed animal sacrifice as an atonement for sin, pending the ultimate sacrifice—the death of the Son of God, Jesus—through whom alone can man be part of the earthly *and* heavenly family: '*...Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*' (Acts 4:12).

The faithful from all eras, those living and those now dead, bond in a family relationship, later to become the '*church*', the '*Israel of God*'. It is a body distinct from the visible church which includes seekers and wreckers—to be separated at the return of Jesus when the '*saints*' are transformed or resurrected. They follow the lamb: '*...These are the ones who were not defiled with women [false churches and destructive teachings], for they are virgins [undefiled by false teachings]. These are the ones following the Lamb wherever He may go. These were redeemed from among men as a firstfruit to God and to the Lamb*' (Revelation 14:4).

The invitation remains open—for now.

See James McBride's other articles at:

[McBride, James – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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Count Your Blessings (Copyright 2023) by Gary C. Miller (Pocahontas, Arkansas)

Health, Happiness, Freedom, Family, Food, Water, Wealth, Safety, Peace, Electricity....

IN ALL THINGS; JOB'S EXAMPLE:

"Giving Thanks always for all things." (Eph. 5:20)

"Shall we indeed accept good from Elohim and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10)

WHERE TO BEGIN:

"...begin the Thanksgiving in Prayer..." (Neh. 11:17)



SOW GRATITUDE:

Sowing Thankfulness attracts more to be Thankful for.

"...He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and He which soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully."
(2 Cor. 9:6)

THANKFUL MEANS "FULL OF THANKS"

When we are "*full of thanks*" there is little or no room for ingratitude, dissatisfaction, complaining or self-pity.

"WHERE ARE THE NINE?"

"...and there met Him ten men that were lepers....and they Said, Yahshua, Master ["Jesus"; KJV] have mercy on us. ...and he ...said...Go show yourselves unto the priests. And ...as they went, they were cleansed.

And **One** of them, when he was healed...fell down on his Face at His feet, giving Him Thanks; ...

And Yahshua....said, Were there not ten cleansed? *But where are the **Nine**?*

There are not found that returned to glory to Yahweh, save this stranger." (Lk. 17:12-18)

WHICH ONE?

Are we one of the Nine or the One?

See Gary Miller's other articles at:

[Miller, Gary C. – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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<http://www.icyahweh.org/>

Pray For Israel

(Sent in 2023) by Darwin Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

This link will take you to the mapping of the attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

October 7th Massacre in Israel

<https://oct7map.com/>

See Darwin Lee’s other articles at:

[Lee, Darwin – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

Web Site:

<https://church-of-god-bismarck.org/>

Iron Sharpening Iron

New American Standard Bible (Proverbs 27:17)
As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

In regard to: Anakim Are from Adam

Article by David Sielaff
Comments by Laura Lee (Bismarck, North Dakota)

From the article:

It means Og of Bashan, Goliath and his giant brothers, and the Anakim giants — all of them — eventually will be in the resurrection, glorified as Christ is now. Christ’s salvation will be for them, in spite of their ultra-evil acts, just as it will be for you, me, and every other human being from Adam. (End Quote)

All people will be given a chance to follow Christ, however not all people will be glorified as Christ because all people have free will and some of them may choose not to follow Christ and if that is their decision they will be destroyed.

Special Edition Article **Religious Predilections (Part 2)** **(Copyright) by Rich Traver (Clifton, Colorado)**

All around us, all over the globe, we see religious preferences among ethnic groups. But have we ever adequately considered how certain preferences came to be? And, is there anything concealed within the phenomenon that reveals the Overall Plan of God?

God had tacitly designated Israel with being His “Model Nation”. Whatever happened to that idea? The best assessment that could be made of them is their being examples of how NOT to do things.

Under Kings David & Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel attained significant regional power and wealth on the world scene. They also exhibited the religious precepts given to their ancestors back in the wilderness years through Moses. At least, for a time they did!

Separate Ways

But DISASTER came in the tenth to sixth centuries BC in the form of division and ultimately being conquered and taken into separate captivities. The Kingdom of Israel became divided in 931BC shortly after the death of Solomon. From that point to the present day, TWO Houses have existed (for nearly 3000 years) maintaining a separate ethnicity and separate identities, so far as the world sees it! But do those respective descendants today realize their true ethnic origins?

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Not long after the reign of Solomon, the monarchy became divided under separate dynasties.

Averting Civil War!

The two kingdoms shared a common border, for 200 years. At times they warred against each other. In fact, at the onset, there was an intention to engage in what we would consider a Civil War to reestablish unity in the kingdom. We read of it in 1st Kings 12:24. But the remarkable thing is, God prevented it from happening, making a very revealing statement at the time, by saying, “This thing is from Me...”

What commonly understood historical accounts on the situation offer is that the underlying motivation for such a division was political. The people (not just the northern tribes) rebelled against overly severe taxation. But, in fact, the REAL reason was something quite different. It was due to a deepening religious apostasy!

Cause Leading to an Effect

We can see from this that the real reason for the split of the kingdom was not so much political, but religious apostasy. But that apostasy contaminated both houses’ form of worship at that time.

We tend to think that the Israelite religion was pure and authentic much of the time. In fact, it was not! There were lapses in their fidelity, where they – including the king – weren’t aware for a generation, that there even was the Passover.

So, the stated reason for God dividing the nation was on account of corrupted worship. What they were doing was not at all their authentic worship system. However, division by itself wasn’t the solution to the problem. Religion was the reason / politics was the excuse. There was an eventual situation to be imposed to address their religious infidelities!

Not realizing the underlying intent, we tend to fault Jeroboam for instigating this deep division although it was prompted by the people as well.

The Practical Religion Factor

At first, the House of Israel maintained aspects of their former religious heritage – though misoriented. However, it also included carry-over false worship that had precipitated the division of the kingdom. It wasn’t long before Jeroboam realized that his people, going down to Jerusalem for the annual Holy Days, posed a potential problem. He saw Jerusalem and its Temple-centered worship as creating a reunifying tendency. [1st Kings 12:27]

Though perhaps not opposed to the religion per se it was the location and worship center that might draw the people’s hearts back to the House of Judah.

To counter that element within his people, which had its unifying tendency, Jeroboam ‘saw need’ to establish their own Priestly Caste and center of worship. So, a separate priesthood was established locally after a few years. [1Ki. 12:29-33]

Jeroboam is even credited / faulted for offsetting the Holy Day observances to a later month. [1st Kings 12:26-30] Thus began the religious schism that prevails to the present day.

Preparing a People

What isn’t realized is that the long-term effect of the Tribes being divided was intentionally useful in the long-range Plan of God. It was set-up to ultimately lead to a religious and cultural environment more amenable to accepting the New Testament form of religion and the Person of the Messiah when the day was to come. But we’ll pursue that as we consider further the broader picture.

Ripe for Conquest

After 235 years as an independent nation, the Ten-Tribed House of Israel was taken captive by the empire to their north: Assyria. The Kingdom of Israel was taken captive in 732 BC with an ongoing succession of deportations for much of a decade.

But the Kingdom of Judah to the south was spared such fate at that time. Theirs came under another empire, 145 years later. The empire which succeeded Assyria, is who brought them into captivity.

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Their captors: Babylon, had conquered Assyria in the late 7th century: 625 BC This was about 105 years after the Kingdom of Israel had been taken captive and exiled. As was the case with Israel, Judah also experienced successive waves of deportations over a decade or so.

The southern Kingdom (Judah) was taken captive in 586BC, (145 years after Israel was!). The House of Judah, never reformed their religion prior to their being taken captive. However, history shows that their experience in captivity did prompt serious reform of their religious beliefs and practices.

No Return for Israel

As mentioned earlier, the majority of the peoples of the northern House were deported and exiled to the region between the Black and Caspian Seas, up against the Caucasus Mountain Range, from which their population grew, but they never repatriated.

The southern House of Judah, on the other hand, were allowed to return to the land after about 70-years. Their experience in Babylon was quite different than their northern counterparts. Babylon even set some of their Jewish captives into high offices in the Empire. Thus, the pre-eminent position of the prophet / statesman Daniel! Daniel even held and administered the empire during the 7-years of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity. [Dan. 4:19-37] This too factored into God's overall Plan.

Yet, there was considerable reluctance on the part of these “Jewish” captives to return to the land, due to their being so well treated and accommodated.

While we may regard Babylon as a different empire, we should recognize that it dominated the same region as had the Assyrian Empire. What had been Assyria was assimilated by the Babylonian Empire: The major difference being the cultural make-up of that administration. Daniel referred to it as a ‘head of gold’ administration in his prophecy found in Daniel 2.

Different Empires, Same Region

History shows a succession of empires in the same region: Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, the short-lived one of Alexander the Great (Greco-Macedonia) and his successor, the Seleucids. All as prophesied. Then after these, came the Parthian Empire who dominated the same region, extending from western India to Syria, for 500+ years. The center-point of their longevity being the time of Christ! (Modern historians refer to this region as “Indo-Iranian”).

It's interesting to note, that despite their lengthy predominance as an empire, they aren't listed in the succession of (Gentile) empires prophesied in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Could it be that they weren't actually “Gentile”?

What isn't widely reported is that these Parthians (along with their Scythian brothers) were largely descendants of the former northern House of Israel! Not only do modern Christian denominations not want to know or admit such things is because they realize the implications of such identities.

The Jewish historian Josephus knew, as did his contemporaries, referring to the Ten Tribes as a vast population living “beyond the Euphrates”.

We might wonder why the two houses were taken into captivity at different times, by different conquerors. That too factors into God's long-range Planning.

Religious Preferences

It might be appropriate at this point to step back and consider what we see among the various ethnicities in the world. There's reason to suggest that there's a component that must exist within the psyches of various ethnicities that would account for these cultural preferences. Certain ethnicities are known, rather widely, to embrace religious belief systems particular to their cultures. It's something more than just culture.

Take for example: the Islamic religion pervades throughout the Arabic world. Despite their proximity, it and the Jewish faith do not blend! It's not just regional, but ETHNIC!

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Various ethnic populations all over the world are heavily oriented to a particular religious belief system: Hinduism / Buddhism / Shintoism / the Christian world. Each of these seems to have their appeal within certain ethnic boundaries.

It's as though there's a spiritual predilection embedded in the human psyche. Would it be illogical that the ethnic descendants of the Tribes of Israel might exhibit similar preferences?

Babeling On!

Consider the confusion of languages at Babel. One day they all spoke the same language, the next, they spoke different languages, not realizing what had happened or why the others couldn't understand what they were trying to say.

Think of how God implanted something in the minds at Babel: making a sudden change in their languages. Those new languages were created by God, without any of the recipients being involved!

In comparison, consider instinctual characteristics implanted in animals. They aren't conscious of it, they didn't 'evolve it', they give no thought to their way of acting. Their ongoing generations of their kind don't train each other. Yet, all of their particular genetic kind acts alike. They are imbued with something like a predilection to act a certain way generation after generation.

The Two Houses of Israel

Let's contrast the religious origins of the Jewish peoples and the European (Caucasian) peoples. It has been noted that a connection exists between the peoples who espouse what's referred to as "the Judeo-Christian Ethic". There's a discernable degree of commonality there! Christianity is believed to have originated from within a Jewish religious culture.

Sometimes the true Christian religion is regarded as "too Jewish". Early on it became a discredited SECT of the Jewish religion. [Ac.28:22] In time, it embraced things not acceptable among Jews.

Christianity developed its own distinct character and belief system a generation in. It's that inter-connection that we need to understand for being rooted in the "Greater Kingdom of Israel".

Being that there's a common point of origin between these two religions, why did they diverge as they did and come to harbor such a mutually exclusive polarization toward one another?

This is where the divided kingdom, and there being two separate captivities, reveals God's intention: and why... "this thing is of Him".

Preparing a People

Let's move-into an area we see New Testament evidence of: Jesus' Ministry and Teachings among the Jewish religious culture of His day were largely un-received. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not..." as it says in John 1:11 (KJV).

His Apostles were all Galilean which had a different acceptance level than among Judeans. (Only Paul was of a Judean mindset and look what it took to change his persuasion).

Nor should we overlook the specific Commission He gave to His Apostles, to preach to "the Lost Tribes of Israel". That Commission, given to His Disciples and Apostles regarding taking the Gospel to the world, looked out beyond Judaea. Of Himself, He says in Matthew 15:24... "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He knew what their acceptance level would be.

James sent greetings in his epistle "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad". [James 1:1] To say what he did, James must have recognized that the twelve tribes were not really 'lost' from history!

Tracking Identities

Neither are they 'lost' to God's awareness. "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] (Primarily this is what the situation was with the northern 10 Tribes: The "House of Israel". That term isn't applied specifically to the House of Judah at this time.)" God is tracking this one ethnicity in particular, as He has a purpose for them.

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This too suggests His real Ministry was to others than those of His own ethnic Tribe!

The specific Commission He gave to His Apostles in Matthew 10:6 was similar: “But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” That would suggest a new direction. They were to leave off what they were intending to do at the time. There’d be no need to give such instruction if they were already set upon doing so.

This reflected the intent of His own commission.

The “House of Israel” refers to the Ten Tribes, who were well known to the people of that era!

Detractors of the day reflected a prevailing understanding in Mat. 27:42 where they said, “He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” Mark 15:32 includes, “Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe...”

This speaks to the common term being used among the people in that day. It shows they were aware and were thinking inclusively.

His disciple Nathaniel also reveals what was understood among the people as we read in John 1:49. “Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” There again!

Common people early on understood the same: in John 12:13, where they... “Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

The point being, they were by this including their long-separated Tribal Brethren in their declaration. They were looking to a broader picture.

That picture is also brought out in the disciples’ question: “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6) This wasn’t referring to casting off Roman rule as is commonly posed. They were referring to the reunification of the TWO Houses! Such reunification was prophesied, reuniting both Houses: that of Judah and of Israel. (See Ezekiel 37.) Casting off Roman rule from Judaea would do nothing regarding that eventual outcome! It wasn’t Rome that divided them in the first place!

A Future Assignment

Luke 22:30 and Revelation 7:4 explain the primary ethnicity that will be the religious leadership in the World to Come to be set-up after the Second Coming! Particularly as it relates to the whole “House of Israel”.

But here’s the thing: can we discern who these peoples might be by their religious predilection? We know who the House of Judah is. After all, we identify the descendants of the Kingdom of Judah primarily by their Judaic religious preference.

This too suggests His real Ministry was to others than those of His own ethnic Tribe! It’s commonly thought that His ministry was primarily to “His own”. His own proclamation suggests otherwise!

“King of the Jews”

Research shows that the term King of the Jews is used 17 times, but just within the four Gospels.

King of the Jews is used strictly by the Magi, or by Herod (on account of the Magi), but mostly by Pilate in Jesus’ Trial and Crucifixion. We don’t find where Jesus referred to Himself as “King of the Jews” except once in response to Pilate’s accusation.

The term that Jesus Himself espoused was “King of Israel”. There’s an important difference.

We find that the people of that day and the Gospel writers followed suit. The difference being was their use of a term that was inclusive of the Ten Tribes of Israel, not just Jewry!

It’s the term “King of the Jews” that’s the more exclusive designation.

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The Southern Kingdom, the House of Judah, included primarily the Tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

Not all worshippers today recognize the distinction between ‘Jew’ and ‘Israelite’. The House of Israel proper wasn’t “Jewish”! They were a distinct ethnicity who branched from the Judaic line 2900 years ago. Some 900 years before Jesus’ day.

That’ll be a useful consideration as we continue.

Long-Term Effects of Captivity

The Northern Kingdom, by not being returned and by being long exposed to a different religious and cultural environment while ‘in exile’, changed their religious orientation. There was no opportunity, nor real desire, apparently, to repatriate back to their old ‘homeland’. Their fortunes were elsewhere! God was, in time, to make of them a Great Empire!

The cultural environment where they lived for so many centuries shaped their belief system and their attitude toward religion along different lines than their ethnic brethren to the south. It impacted not only WHAT they believed, but their approach to religious belief development in general.

While it’s thought that the northern Ten Tribes left the original faith, that’s not entirely the case. A contingent retained certain aspects of their former practices and devotions to God’s Covenant. Examples being the Magi who made the arduous trek to Jerusalem to acknowledge the birth of Jesus. They knew about the Messiah and where He would come from. [Acts 2: Isa. 9:6 & 7]

The predominance of Parthian worshippers, seen regularly at Holy Day observances at the Temple, attests to their retention of some of their former religion. It speaks to the fact of some residual affinity for the formal Jewish religion among Parthians, even (and especially) among their elites.

This was into the first century AD, being some 770 years after they were exiled by Assyria, Parthians, (with Scythian counterparts, situated to their north-west also), were descendants of the Ten Tribes.

Paul’s Commission is Revealing

We should notice that Paul’s Commission was to peoples outside of Judaea: People other than those of his own ethnicity. (He was of the tribe of Benjamin.) [Rom. 11:1]

Peoples otherwise regarded by Judeans as “Gentiles.”

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” [Acts 9:15] It’s the “and” that’s interesting!

Jesus makes an important distinction, that there’s an ethnicity that isn’t Gentile, yet isn’t Jewish either.

We know that because Paul was NOT to be an Apostle to the Jews. (See Acts 18:6) Jews were negatively polarized against Paul for his dramatic ‘conversion’. They wanted to kill him! [Acts 9:]

A NEW Covenant

Now, of course, this was commonly known: There’s to be a ‘new covenant’. This prophecy is pointedly repeated in both Old and New Testaments.

Heb. 8:8-10 (and Jer. 31:31) says: “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... [10] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:” (And, where is the “House of Judah” today as it regards the “New Testament”?)

Here again, there’s a subtlety not well recognized, that the Covenant that’s prophesied to be restored is inclusive of BOTH Houses of Israel. And notice which House is mentioned first!

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The fault referred to wasn't limited to the time of the Wilderness years. Quite similar faults, seen in the Kingdom in the 8th century BC that precipitated division, continue to the present. (1st Kings 11:26-40)

A Purpose for Two Houses

There was an important reason for this division. One we might not have realized!

Judahites came out of their captivity corrected – reformed we might say – but then they became solidified, much more hardline in their Traditions. God knew of the Jewish religious tendency with its rigid adherence to their traditional views. [Ac.6:14]

Coupled with disbelief and non-biblical Pharisaical teachings, Jews wouldn't be receptive of the fundamental principles to be brought-in under the New Covenant. They knew of a New Covenant but imagined that it'd be much the same as a restoring of their present orientation.

But the thing is, a people were being prepared: A people who would be more receptive of the Messiah and of the New Covenant. They would be among those peoples of the House of Israel!

Consider what the situation would've been if Jesus left development of the New Testament to the Jewish community of the time? They would've put their stamp on it according to their cultural orientation. It was essential to break from said “Hebrew Culture” to facilitate a more accurate representation of Christianity's ‘spirit-of-the-law’ precepts. It's the ‘spirit-of-the-Law’ that's one major difference between the New Covenant and the Old.

What Was that Preparation?

Consider the religious environment among the exiled northern Tribes. While they retained some familiarity with their Old Covenant religious culture, they retained only a practical vestige of it.

It's at this point that we need to become aware of the religious environment of the Empire of Parthia at and after the first century. That included these northern exiles at the time.

The predominant religion in the Mesopotamian region of the day was Zoroastrianism. Hearing that name, we think of them as rank Pagans. People who look into that religion become curious when they see in Christian teachings the perpetuation of certain elements that we think were derived from that ancient religion. We find many teachings in modern belief systems. It's astounding to find so many ‘otherwise Christian’ concepts pre-embedded in that ancient belief system. How did they get there?

Zoroastrianism was Monotheistic and Messianic, which provided a receptive cultural environment for the acceptance of “the Messiah” when He became known to that world. The Magi attest to that. We can't say the same for the Traditional Judaic faiths can we?

Monotheistic, BUT...

The Jewish faith was also “Messianic”, but it's strictly limited definition of “monotheism” precluded acceptance of the idea of a Dual-Person Godhead, which was the fundamental revelatory aspect of the Christian Faith. This and other major obstacles persisted in the religious cultural belief system that dominated the ‘southern kingdom’.

Those being: the ‘One-Person G_dhead’ idea (‘strict monotheism’). Resurrections and existence of spirit beings also factored in. For example: Acts 23:8 says: “For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.” These were major issues!

The Parthian Empire

The Parthian Empire, by the time of Christ was a major habitation of the populations from the exiled Northern Kingdom. It was huge, encompassing an area from the western boundary of India, all of the Mesopotamian region, and west to the boundary of the Roman Empire. And did I say it was powerful? This is affirmed by Josephus' witness. (see footnote 4)

The Northern House was prepared for what was to come by their exposure to non-Jewish beliefs that they were introduced to in captivity. God was preparing a people who'd be more receptive to the Faith and Grace to be introduced

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under the New Covenant. God knowing full well that the peoples of the Southern Kingdom wouldn't be so inclined by and large! We see their negative responses abundantly in the pages of the New Testament!

This isn't to say that the religion of Parthia was by any stretch the true religion. It merely provided a cultural environment of acceptance (among those 'called') when the True One came along.

This would help explain why God prophesied of and facilitated that division between the Houses of Judah and of Israel.

He severed the majority population from what later became their “Jewish roots” and went on to prepare an otherwise Israelitish people to be accepting of the Messiah, and by them, the furtherance of His Plan. The religious establishment among the Southern Kingdom became so rigidly structured in their 'traditions' that they wouldn't be amenable to another way of thinking. At least, not then!

God knew the ethnic religious proclivity of these people. This helps explain (Ephesians 4:18) (John 12:40) (Rom.11:31-32) (1st Kings 11:33) & (Mark 7:9-10).

While He set up the northern peoples to be accepting of His Messiahship, He 'veiled' the southern contingent!! For that reason, He accommodated their unbelieving nature, concluding them in a blinded state until the fullness of the “Gentile” - calling experience is to be fulfilled. [John 12:40 & 2nd Corinthians 3:14]

He knew it would take a different environment before they could respond to God's Call with a right heart and become truly converted. That environment is likely the millennial age with 12,000 Saints, drawn from each of the twelve tribes, ruling under each of the 12 Apostles, administering the government of each of the 12 Tribes. It's that Israel that's destined to become the Model Nation for being instruments in the salvation of the rest of humanity!

But first, they had to be made ready for it!

Ethnic Forensics

We need to consider IF the religious predilection toward Christianity might offer yet one more clue as to the modern identities of the Ten Tribes of Israel?

The modern Kingdom of Judah tends to 'identify with' the Judaic Faith in its various forms. The Ten Tribes tend to identify with Christian type religions in its various forms!

This condition and developing predilection likely began after the division of the Kingdom under Kings Rehoboam and Jeroboam!

But God had a clandestine PLAN providing a religious climate within at least a portion of Israel to accept His Messiahship and the teachings introduced under the New Covenant. He had a Plan. He's been waiting for centuries to realize the fullest implementation of that Plan.

If we could 'bottom line' this matter, my point is that God instilled a predilection among the Israelite ethnicities to keep their religious preferences within established boundaries. We find the modern-day remnant of the House of Judah having a Jewish orientation, and the remnants of the House of Israel with a predominantly Christian preference.

There have effectively been two “Biblical Faiths” for some 2200 years. That's not saying that either are the 'true faith' by any stretch. One provides a 'schoolmaster' environment to orient the worshipper to accepting the Messiah, and the other sufficiently 'liberated' where they can accept Him for who and what He is! [Gal. 5:1]

That's what the Divided Kingdom was all about!

This situation raises the question as it regards the two religious approaches that we read of that will exist in the millennial kingdom. Ezekiel alludes to there being two different worship systems. Will a similar situation carry over?

What's at issue, beyond what we've been discussing here, is bringing salvation to the rest of humanity. A Great Plan is in progress!

See Rich Traver's other articles at:

[Traver, Rich – Church of God, Bismarck \(church-of-god-bismarck.org\)](http://church-of-god-bismarck.org)

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Holy Days 2024

Passover – April 23, 2024 (Observed at Sunset the Evening Before)

Passover/Unleavened Bread – April 23-29, 2024

Pentecost – June 12, 2024

Trumpets - October 3, 2024

Atonement – October 12, 2024

Tabernacles –October 17, 2024, to October 23, 2024

Last Great Day – October 24, 2024

Notes