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## HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL With Allegorical References

### Forward:

The absolute facts of ancient history, perhaps even modern history to some degree, are an interaction of legend and fact. Most of the stories regarding the lives of the people below come to us in writing only from the accounts documented in the Bible. Some of the earliest stories were recounted by word of mouth for scores of centuries before they were ever written down. What we present here is the Bible's account, and the interaction of these stories, as allegories architected by God, with their intended purpose -- a divine explanation of the reconciliation of mankind with God through the unprecedented appearance of Jesus Christ.

### Abraham

Almost 4000 years ago, a man named Abraham was born in Ur, a town in the southern part of Mesopotamia. The place corresponds today to the southern part of what is now the country of Iraq -- somewhere just above the present country of Kuwait, near where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet. When he was a very young man, his father moved the family several hundred miles northwest to a place called Haran in what is now southern Turkey (a few hundred miles south of the Black Sea). When his father died, God called Abraham to leave Haran and make a journey to the southwest, down to a land called Canaan (now Israel and Palestine), a land whose natives (the Canaanites) bore striking similarities to the Indians of North America. Abraham got his family together: his wife and some slaves, including his mistress, and his nephew Lot, and together they joined Abraham who obeyed God's command. When they got to Canaan, God instructed Abraham to settle there.

Since his wife was barren, Abraham had a son (Ishmael) with his wife's slave-girl, Hagar. Abraham's wife, Sarah, quickly became jealous of Ishmael and Hagar and ordered him to dismiss the girl and her child from their camp. Abraham did as she requested and so Hagar, the mistress, and her child Ishmael returned to the land of the Euphrates, where their descendants grew into a great nation. Both the Arabs and the Persians claim to be Ishmael's descendants, as do all Muslims. A very important allegory in scripture grew out of this

circumstance. Sarah became known in legend as the wedded wife, the lawful bride of Abraham and her children therefore, the his legitimate heirs. The allegorical implication revolves around the spiritual children of God and the physical children of the flesh. Hagar portrays 'this world' and her children all who are born into the flesh under the stain of Satan. Sarah, as the wedded wife, is seen (according to Paul) as the new Jerusalem, the spiritual mother who gives life in the eternal kingdom of God. The theme is repeated again in the story of Esther and Vashti. In this theme also revolves the important prophetic allegory concerning the future pre-eminence of the second-born son (i.e., the 'born-again' son).

For years Sarah and Abraham were childless, but in her very old age, she bore him one son -- Issac. While Issac was still quite young, God asked Abraham to take the child into the wilderness and make a sacrifice. At first Abraham thought that God wanted him to sacrifice Issac to Him, but God showed him that this was not the case. God gave Abraham an animal to sacrifice in Issac's place.

Although some of the stories of scripture seem very strange to us, we need to realize that Hebrew history is a series of allegories structured by God for the development of our understanding of His purpose. The story of Issac is very important in this regard.

In this allegory Abraham represents God. The near sacrifice of Issac represents God's near sacrifice of His son Jesus on the cross. Just as Issac was spared, so was Jesus. God allowed the body of Jesus to be crucified -- but then raised His body out of the dead and brought it back to life so that we would understand the power Christ had given us. God transcends the clothing of the flesh.

Issac did not die -- God saved him by providing a substitute in his place. This mortal tent is only a substitute for an invisible heavenly body that lies invisibly surrounding our soul will be wrapped in later, if we follow Christ.

It is invisible now, because of the exile. We can see nothing of God or of His world, except the glimmer of it revealed by Jesus and the prophets. Abraham's two women, are a part of this revelation. The descendants of the children they bore represent the two covenants and the people who were born into them. Hagar stands for the old covenant and her child Ishmael for the offspring of Abraham who reject Jesus. Sarah portrays the new covenant, and her child, Isaac, Christianity. All of scripture can be seen in a dual relationship that combines both metaphors and history. Abraham's sacrifice of the substitute began a long history of sacrifice in the Hebrew religion. But all of it pointed ultimately to Jesus on the cross -- the sacrifice God had in mind to rescue us from sin.

## **Isaac**

Isaac had two sons, but the first (the oldest) sold his birthright to the youngest for a bowl of lentils. Again, this is metaphor. It foretells how the people of the first covenant would

sell their birthright to those of the new covenant for a paltry sum. Because Issac's first son Esau bartered away his birthright, he lost his claim to it, and it passed to the younger son, Jacob. We can see this duplicated when Jewish authority over the covenant was passed to Christianity. This occurred when Jesus (God) was sold by the apostle of the Jews for 30 pieces of silver, and handed over to the Romans who took him off to Babylon. These examples show how each story and each event have spiritual counterparts which fulfill a meaning written in the books of heaven. Just these few examples are enough to see how all the rest of Hebrew history duplicates this allegorical pattern.

## **Jacob (Israel)**

When he was a young man, Jacob fought against an angel of God and because of this rebellion against heavenly authority he was renamed Israel by God. The name has to do with this rebellion against heaven, but has the special meaning of one who rebels against divinity and still lives. It relates to all mankind, born as participants in the active rebellion of Satan, but being allowed by God the grace of reconciliation. Throughout the rest of scripture, the two names Jacob and Israel are used interchangeably. This leads to much confusion. Israel had 11 sons. Ten of them took the youngest, Joseph, and sold him into slavery. He was promptly carried away to Egypt. There, Joseph secured Pharaoh's favor and became one of the highest officials in his royal court. He was put in charge of Pharaoh's graineries -- the food supply of all Egypt -- and when a famine arose, his skill in managing this supply found Egypt safely stocked with a huge supply of grain. The famine stretched throughout the Middle East.

Starving, Israel (Jacob) and his ten sons heard that there were vast food supplies in Egypt and promptly set off for the land of the Nile. They did not recognize Joseph when they first asked him for food, but he recognized them. Forgiving them for the evil they did to him, he rescued them from the famine. In gratitude, Israel (Jacob) granted Joseph's two sons status with his other ten, and raised Joseph onto a plateau with himself -- i.e., a patriarch of all twelve tribes.

When Israel (Jacob) was bestowing his patriarchal blessing on Joseph's two sons, Manasseh, the oldest should have received the first (right-hand) blessing, and therefore been accorded the higher honor, but Israel crossed his hands, placing his right on the head of Ephraim, the youngest, instead.

"Joseph protested to his father, 'Not like that, father! This one is the elder; put our right hand on his head. But his father refused. 'I know, my son, I know' he said. 'Manasseh, too shall become a people; he too shall be great. Yet his younger brother (Ephraim) shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.'" (Gn. 48:18-19).

This, of course, is a repetition of earlier metaphors, but it amplifies on the allegory to give us a better view of it. Again, the older brother was the Judean nation, a mighty people still. But the younger brother, Christianity, it is shown, will become a vast multitude of nations.

## **Moses**

The family of Israel (Jacob) remained in Egypt basking in Joseph's glory and partaking of Pharaoh's favors. Four hundred years passed. The sons of Israel (Jacob) begat generation after generation of children. What had begun as 12 sons now sprouted into 12 tribes of people. A succession of Pharaoh's mounted the Egyptian throne. Slowly Joseph had been forgotten and the Egyptian benevolence instead turned to bitter racial hatred. The children of Israel were taken captive and held as a workforce in terrible slavery and bondage.

At this point, God raised up a man from among them called Moses whom he directed to bring the Hebrew tribes out of Egypt and lead them back to the land they had previously occupied. Pharaoh would not let them go, so God visited on Egypt a great series of plagues, each one worse than the other until finally Pharaoh relented and allowed them to depart. It was the last plague, the death of the first-born that succeeded in changing Pharaoh's mind, because it killed Pharaoh's own son.

Set free, the Hebrews left their Egyptian houses and followed Moses who led them through the parted waters of the Red Sea into the Sinai desert. At the last minute, as the final departures were in progress, Pharaoh changed his mind and led his soldiers off to pursue them. When they reached the banks of the Red Sea, they could see that God had parted the waters and made the seabed a road for His children to cross. Hoping to attack them on the opposite bank, Pharaoh led his soldiers, in full gallop across the same seabed. But God allowed the waters to collapse on the army, killing them all, but leaving the Israelites safe from harm.

The exodus from Egypt is an allegory for our escape from Babylon. The waters that God parted in the Red Sea stand for the waters of creation that God separated so that He could lead us from this ruined part that Satan contaminated, to an upper waters that still lie in pristine perfection and in which the Promised Land truly exists. The seabed is like a planet in space. The attack of Pharaoh will be repeated at the end and will culminate in a fearful catastrophe that is shown to be as much celestial as earthbound.

## **The Intermediary and the Ten Commandments**

Moses led the twelve tribes to a place in the desert where they could meet God and receive His commandments face to face. They all assembled below the mountain, ready for this meeting, but as God approached, the earth began to quake and the skies clouded up and lightning began to flash. Thunder sounded everywhere and the mountain erupted in fire. The Israelites were terrified and begged Moses to ask God not to come to them in person lest

many of them die.

They asked Moses to have God send an intermediary to them in God's place. God agreed with this request, and in the interim gave Moses Ten Commandments around which Moses was instructed to create a temporary law to keep the people safe until the day came when the intermediary would arrive to finish the commandments and complete the Testimony. When the people asked him if he was to be the intermediary, Moses replied that it was not him, but someone else whom God would raise up for them out of their own people. Thereafter, the twelve tribes of Israel began searching the horizons for the coming of the Messiah.

God also directed Moses to build an '[Ark of the Covenant](#)' to house the two stone tablets. The Law he drafted was to act as a guardian for the people until the coming of the 'Messiah' that this compromise had now structured. Called the '[Torah](#)', the 'Law of Moses' comprised the first five books of what we now call the Bible. To show the difference between this Law and the Ten Commandments, God instructed Moses that the Bible be placed outside the Ark. Only the [Ten Commandments](#) (called the Testimony) were to be held inside of it.

## **40 Years in the Desert**

On their journey, because it was so hard, many of the Israelites rebelled and tried to return to Egypt. All of those who tried to return died. As a consequence of these rebellions, the journey lasted forty years. During that time they wandered to and fro across the burning sands. They had no animals and they had to depend on sustenance from God who sent them a food from heaven to eat -- called manna, a white snow that seemed to fall out of the sky. Throughout this journey across arid and parched sands, they had to live in tents and had no permanent homes or land. Even their place of worship (the Tent of the Testimony) was mobile. They had no temple. Because they had no animals to sacrifice, the Israelites offered no animal sacrifices to God for the entire term of their journey. The prophets talk about this as a part of their denouncement of the bloody animal sacrifices that later came to characterize the religion.

## **Shiloh**

After they reached the Promised Land, Moses cast lots to divide the countryside up among the various tribes, apportioning parts to each ([see map](#)). The Ark of the Covenant, the central object of Hebrew worship because it contained the Ten Commandments was set up in Shiloh, a town belonging to the tribe of Ephraim. At this point, the Jews, who occupied the land containing the town of Jerusalem held no special place among the other tribes. Ephraim, because its founder had received the special blessing of Jacob (Israel) was the center of worship. This did not last long. Because of the evil behavior of Eli the priest and

his two sons who ran the structure, God allowed the temple at Shiloh to be destroyed and the Ark was finally brought to Jerusalem.

## **Jerusalem**

When the temple was removed from Shiloh to Jerusalem, the tribe of Judah (the Jews) became the center of worship for the twelve tribes. It was during this time that God raised up a shepherd boy named David. The twelve tribes of Israel had appointed a king to rule over them, a man named Saul. But God found this king to be evil and instructed the people through the prophets that He was going to turn that king out and raise up another in his place. In the events that followed, Saul was killed and David became king over the twelve tribes of Israel.

David was a Jew, so from this point on, the Jews held a special place among the other tribes. The prophets bore witness to this special place, tying the Jews and the promises of God together. They predicted that the Messiah would be a son of David, and would rule in his lineage. When David tried to build a temple for God in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant, God told him no. It was not David, but David's son that would build God's temple.

## **Solomon**

After David died, Solomon, his son, built the temple that God wanted, just as scripture had foreseen. The temple of Solomon was a beautiful edifice, showcased in Solomon's taste for luxurious trappings. Even so, it was not the kind of temple any of these prophecies were actually pointing to. The son of David as far as the allegories were concerned was the royal heir defined in the prophecies -- Jesus. It was Jesus who was to be the architect of God's true temple. Solomon erected his temple in the city of Jerusalem, on a mountain prominence called Moriah. He built it on top of a special rock that was reputed to be the place where Abraham had almost sacrificed Isaac many centuries earlier. Great holiness was immediately attached to all of these things.

## **The House of Israel Divided**

When Solomon died, a civil war broke out among the tribes of Israel. It was, for the most part bloodless, but it divided the land of Israel into what we now call two houses. The ten tribes to the north of Jerusalem broke away from this city and formed a new government and a new religion. To define their own religious worship in opposition to the Jews, the ten tribes of Israel set up renegade temples in Bethel and Dan.

The Jews and the tribe of Benjamin in the south remained loyal to Solomon's son -- loyal to the House of David. The metaphor, of course, points again to Jesus who is foreseen in scripture as royalty and heir to the throne of David. (See Is.9:6-7). The division between

the two houses of Israel, then, foreshadowed the immense spiritual schism that was created when the Jews and the newly formed Christians divided the House of Israel in Christ. Here were two houses, both of Israel, and both thoroughly divided with respect to loyalty to the Davidic God of Israel. The roles, however are juxtaposed.

Capped by the rebellion, the sins of the Israelites brought them to the brink of the exile that Moses had foreseen. At that point, God sent His prophets to plead with them to change their ways. Some, like Isaiah and Micah were Jews, but others, such as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea came from the tribes of the north.

## **The Ten Lost Tribes**

The people did not listen to any of these voices that warned them from heaven and so the exile began. The first to go into slavery were the ten northern tribes. Assyrian invaders stormed their country and took them all off into what looked like apparent oblivion, because they were never seen again. Where Samaria had been, the Assyrians brought in foreigners and allowed them to occupy the country. Similarly, all the rest of the north was reoccupied by Phillistines and by foreign settlers. The name Phillistine is where our modern word Palestinian comes from.

## **The Jewish Exile to Babylon**

After the ten tribes of the north had been exiled, foreign troops came against Judea and the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appeared and carried the two remaining tribes (Benjamin and Judah) off to the banks of the Euphrates. At the same time, the army of Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem and burned down the temple of Solomon. Just before the temple went up in flames, Jeremiah the prophet spirited away the Ark of the Covenant with the Ten Commandments still inside of it, and, according to one tradition, hid them in a cave on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. They have never been seen since.

At this point the exile seemed complete. But it was only the allegory which had been completed. Additional dispersions remained. Had the idea of Babylon been restricted to the Euphrates valley, the Jews could see themselves as the ultimate meaning of the prophecies, but a far worse captivity still lay in the future. At the time of Jesus, the Jews saw Babylon as symbolic and applied the title to Rome. It was a prophetic transposition of national identities. And it stemmed from the fact that Babylon was shown in the prophecies to be more than a single nation in the Middle East. It encompassed the sum total of world tyranny against the House of Israel -- the whole pagan world. That meant that the Assyrians were every bit as much a part of this prophecy as Nebuchadnezzar or the Roman Empire to come. Therefore, all of the House of Israel -- all twelve tribes -- went into the dispersion of a type of Babylon.

## **Rebuilding Jerusalem**

Seventy years later, when the Persian ruler Cyrus destroyed Babylon, the Jews who wished to return to Jerusalem were allowed to leave their captivity. Cyrus made a decree to this effect. Some of the Jews in Babylon accepted Cyrus' offer and went back to Jerusalem and began to rebuild its ruins. Many others, however, stayed behind, having attained security and comfort where they were.

While it seemed in this return of a remnant of the Jews, that the prophecies were having their fulfillment, most of the House of Israel still remained in exile. Ten tribes had disappeared completely -- not even a remnant remained of their presence, so there was no possibility of their return, it was thought. The Jews who returned to Jerusalem immediately began to rebuild the wall and then the temple. This temple would be the House of Israel's third. The first was at Shiloh, the second, the temple of Solomon, and then this modest construction at the time of the return.

## **Ezra and Modern Judaism**

With the ten northern tribes gone and the tribe of Benjamin absorbed into Judah, the Jews took on a new identity. All the promises to the twelve tribes of Israel seemed to have come to a focus in one tribe alone. This fact completely changed the religion. Under the guidance of Ezra, the new venue for worship became the three fundamental principals of Law, Temple and the Chosen Race. These three principals continue to be the dominant themes of Judaism to this day. The Jews saw themselves as the Chosen Race -- the undisputed heirs of the covenant -- because the other tribes had disappeared.

The Temple was the mechanism for the animal sacrifices which permeated the pages of the Law. And the Law took on the central authority of the religion in the absence of the Ten Commandments. Because the Ark and the stone tablets were gone, the Temple which had been built to house the Testimony, was, from this point on, empty at its core. For this reason, God's word was no longer the central object of worship in the Holy of Holies. In its absence, the 'Law' took on pre-eminant authority. Instead of the 'Testimony', the religion revolved around the Torah and all the legal traditions exploding from the pens of the scribes.

## **Alexander the Great**

About two hundred years after the Jews returned from Babylon, Alexander the Great came and took possession of Judea as a part of his conquest of the world. When Alexander's empire broke apart, control of the world was handed over to his four top generals. Control of Judea passed to Ptolemy, whose headquarters was in Egypt. Wars broke out between Alexander's generals, especially between those who controlled Syria and Egypt. These two, the king of the north and the king of the south, are the models around which the Book of Daniel has been constructed. They and their descendants fought all the time and the



country that separated their forces was Judea, so the Jews became an integral part of the battles. As a consequence, Jerusalem was occupied by invading armies on numerous occasions.

## **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**

This see-sawing between the north and south went on for about one hundred years or so. At the end of that time a particularly evil monarch from Syria -- the ultimate king of the north -- a man named Antiochus IV Epiphanes -- came down and defeated the king of the south and took possession of Judea. Antiochus personified the Rebel of the last days in the prophecies of Daniel -- prophecies which took on immense significance when Jesus directed His followers to watch for the events he had predicted, and to run for the hills when they saw these events begin to unfold.

Antiochus had the Jewish High Priest assassinated, and installed a man of his own inclination in his place. He instituted Greek customs throughout the Jewish population and finally ordered the Jewish religion abolished completely and replaced with his own pagan gods. Anyone who failed to abide by his decrees he killed. His forces desecrated the temple and its altar of worship in Jerusalem and left a group of soldiers in the citadel located just adjacent to the temple to guard it, to make sure the Jews did not worship there any longer.

## **The Maccabees**

Led by a man named Judas Maccabees, the Jews rebelled. Under his leadership, they formed an army of Hassidean warriors and were able to get back control of their temple and cleanse it and reinstitute their sacrifices. The Jewish feast of Hannukah (the feast of lights as it is called) celebrates this cleansing of the temple which took place on a day that corresponds to the 25th day of our month of December, a day that would later be known as Christmas day. Antiochus died (in a catastrophe that foreshadows the death of the Beast to come) and his empire began to disintegrate.

What followed was a long series of battles between various Jewish contenders for control of Jerusalem. The whole era surrounding that bloody period was marked by intrigue and infighting. Because the times were so chaotic, and the need for a defining national leader so great, a charged atmosphere of expectation began to sweep through the people regarding the Mosaic Messiah, who many were convinced was about to appear. It was during this time that the Essenes formed in Qumran and began to proliferate throughout Judea. Their expectation of the Messiah was typical of the time -- a military leader who would vanquish the foreign armies and raise Judea to a pre-eminent world power, greater than Rome.

## **Judea Falls to Rome**

Rome became the ultimate victor in 63 B.C. when Pompey captured Jerusalem. Thereafter, Judea became a province of the Roman empire. This foreign occupation of their country by a pagan military giant vastly intensified the Jewish search for a Messiah who would lead the Jewish nation in a military conquest over Rome by the power of God.

## **The Temple of Herod**

About forty years after Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem, an Idumean Arab named Herod married into the Jewish royal family. He was declared king of Judea by the Roman senate and was able to wrest control of Jerusalem away from those who opposed him. He was a wicked man who loved monuments. He built the Antonia Fortress and the fourth Jewish temple -- a magnificent edifice that took over forty years to complete. This was the temple Jesus came to. The empty temple that had no word in it -- no Ark and no Ten Commandments. Herod was still in power when Jesus was born, and when word reached him that a king had been born to the Jews in Bethlehem, he ordered the killing of all the first born sons in that city a few weeks after Jesus came into the world. This is the reason why Joseph and Mary had to take Jesus to Egypt soon after he was born. Herod died in 4 B.C., and Jesus and his family returned to Judea and settled in the northern provinces -- in the city of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

## **Jesus of Nazareth**

### **The Word of God Returns to the Empty Temple**

When he went to Jerusalem, Jesus was the Testimony of God returning to the empty Temple. But the caretakers of that building refused to allow him in. They would not relinquish their custody of the Holy of Holies to God and, instead, cast him out and in the end sold him to the Romans for 30 pieces of silver. That sale sent the Testimony to Babylon where it quickly grew to dominate the Roman grainery. Thereafter, anyone who wanted to eat the food of God had to go to Babylon to get it.

"To Babylon you must go and there you will be rescued; there God will ransom you out of the power of your enemies." (Micah 4:10).

This brought the allegory of Joseph who was sold into the captivity of Egypt, full circle. Joseph was sold by his brothers and became the head of the Egyptian food supply, and in the same way, Jesus was sold by his brothers and did the same in Babylon. A spiritual famine encompassed the rest of the world, but in Babylon the bread of life was stocked in overflowing graineries. By the power of God all of Jesus' brothers were brought to Babylon, just as famine earlier had brought all of Joseph's brothers to Egypt.

## **A People in Revolt**

The Jews hated the fact that their country was occupied by the Romans, and continually plotted how to overthrow this occupation. Jesus was born and lived at a time when this hatred was just beginning to seeth to the surface. For this reason, scripture was quite correct when it prophesied that Jesus would be born into a people in revolt. When he was crucified in either 30 A.D. or 33 A.D., the Jewish leadership was bitterly dividing itself into rival groups. At the same time, outsiders as well were involved in plots to gain political control over the country. Consequently there was deep and intense intrigue throughout Judea, with many rival groups embarking on separate programs of assassination and rebellion, making the country a very dangerous place. This strife grew worse until finally the rebels grew so bold that they defied the Roman empire openly and defeated a Roman battalion that had come to quell the uprising.

## **The Jewish War**

At this point, Rome decided to end the mutiny once and for all with a full-scale invasion. War was declared and Nero ordered the 60,000 man Roman tenth legion to Palestine. This battle-skilled army invaded Judea starting in the most northern provinces and then swept south. First under the direction of the Roman general Vespasian, and finally under the direction of his son Titus, this professional legion easily conquered the Jewish armies that confronted it and ultimately secured complete control of Palestine. The Roman generals ordered a great many of the leading Jewish citizens and combatants taken away in the chains of slavery.

The depth of the Jewish rebellion can be seen in the closing days of Jerusalem's war with the Roman empire. While they were trying to fend off the Romans on one side, three rival Jewish gangs, each claiming control of Jerusalem, were holed up in different cloistures of the Temple, engaged in full-scale combat against each other. At the very moment they were being surrounded and destroyed by Titus and the Roman army they were battling one another with even greater fervor.

The Roman purge of Judea -- called the Jewish war -- lasted seven years. It began in 66 A.D., breaking out a little more than 30 years after Jesus died, and it ended in 73 A.D. with the famous battle of Masada at the southern tip of the nation. Before it occurred, virtually all of the Christians and their leaders in Jerusalem had left for Rome and safer areas of the Roman empire.

As a consequence of this war, a second major change occurred in the Jewish religion. The Jewish culture of Jesus' time -- all the things we read about in the Gospels -- disappeared. This included the Pharisees, the Sadducees and even the Essenes. Temple worship was at an end, too, and along with it, the two priesthoods. The Jews attempted to reconstruct their Temple by building another modest building on the ruins where Herod's Temple previously stood, but this structure lasted only a few years.

## The Diaspora

Another rebellion by the Jews in 135 A.D. ended the Jewish state completely. The leader of that revolt, the false Jewish messiah, Bar Kocheba was killed. The Romans decimated what was left of the Jewish leadership, marching most of them into slavery, and forbid all Jews entrance to the city of Jerusalem forever. On the holy places (which included the rock of Abraham on the temple mount) they erected temples for the worship of Roman emperors and Greek mythological gods. The exile that followed lasted almost 2000 years. The Jews were not permitted to return to Palestine until this century after a United Nations treaty allowed them to set up a small nation there beginning in 1948.

## Israel and Prophecy

There can be little doubt that the allegorical exile to Babylon described by scripture applied to the Roman conquest and destruction of Judea. Nothing in the history of the House of Israel even comes close to comparing with it in terms of intensity, adversity and length of servitude. Two thousand years is a long, long exile.

Like their ancestors who were freed by Cyrus twenty-five hundred years ago, the Jewish pioneers that are returning to that nation in this century now see themselves as the fulfillment of all the prophecies regarding the ingathering from Babylon. But there are several problems with this vision.

Scripture teaches that the ingathering from exile will be led by a messiah in the image of David. No such figure exists for these returning refugees.

"The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel." (Is.7:14-15). "For there is a child born for us, a son given us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Almighty-God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and forever..." (Is.9:5-7).

Scripture also teaches that this 'son of David' will be so powerful (and of such august stature in God) that he will be able to institute a new covenant, one that will replace Moses. (Jer.31:31-34). This exchange of covenants is to be so incompassing, says Jeremiah, that the ingathering will replace the celebration of Passover. We saw just such an exchange of covenants in Jesus, of course, but precisely the opposite is happening now in Palestine. The Jews are resurrecting the Mosaic covenant there instead.

Third, the prophecies strongly call for the lost ten tribes to return to Israel in advance of the Jews. Jewish leaders still hold to the thought that they are the chosen race of God and that the other tribes of Israel have been unconditionally forsaken by Him.

Fourth, all of the House of Israel, including the Jews were exiled for their sinfulness. That behavior has not changed. Who can tell the difference between Israel and the rest of the world today? The militarism is the same, the violence is the same, the behavior is the same.

Militarism is, in fact, a key issue in today's return. Jeremiah foresaw that a group of military people would go to Babylon and get permission to rebuild Jerusalem in advance of the official end of the diaspora. That permission was granted by God who influenced the leaders of Babylon to allow the undertaking on the condition that the remnant returning remain peaceful and seek God's righteousness. Further, they were cautioned to stay within their boundaries and 'not to go down to Egypt'. At the conclusion of the prophecy, the military remnant broke all three conditions. They turned out not to be peaceful, not to be righteous and they made straight for Egypt. They were summarily destroyed. For the purposes of prophecy it should be noted that a military coalition under very similar circumstances was deeply involved in the construction of modern Israel set up in 1948.

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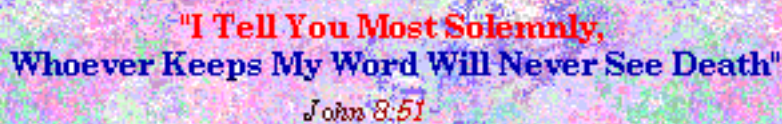
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**"I Tell You Most Solemnly,  
Whoever Keeps My Word Will Never See Death"**  
John 8:51

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## Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was the holy chest Moses built to house the word of God. It held the two stone tablets upon which God wrote the [Ten Commandments](#) on the mountain in Sinai and gave to Moses to take down to the people. He had to write these tablets twice. The first time, Moses cast them down and shattered them out of anger when he found the Israelites in revolt as he descended the mountain. Afterward, Moses went back to the mountaintop of Sinai and secured another set from God.

When we speak about the word of God today, we think of the Bible, but Moses was not permitted by God to put the Bible into the Ark of the Covenant -- only the Ten Commandments.

This fact points out the two different natures of what we call 'the word of God'. There is inspired word where God moves men to speak in His name, and then there is direct dialogue from heaven where God speaks to us Himself in person.

The inspired portion of the Bible is called the 'Law and the Prophets'. The dialogue of heaven is called the '[Testimony](#)'. While both were contained in the Bible, only one was sufficiently holy to be repositied in the Ark of the Covenant.

The ark, an acacia chest built according to the directions of Moses, was the holiest object in the Hebrew religion. The Ten Commandments were shown by their presence in it to be greater than all other writings of scripture. The rest of the Bible (the Torah, the prophets and all the other books of scripture) had to be stored outside the ark.

By commanding this separation, God made clear the difference between His own Testimony and the writings of the Law. He did this in preparation for the Testimony of Jesus Christ -- the unfinished Testimony of God that would come down from heaven to complete the Ten Commandments.

The Ark of the Covenant, then, defined the covenant. And in that definition, it made the Ten Commandments greater than anything else that surrounded it in the Hebrew religion. So when Moses commanded the Israelites to "hold fast to God's covenant", he was ordering them to obey the ten sacred articles of God housed in the Ark.

According to scripture, a relationship exists between the Ten Commandments and the Gospel of Jesus. In the New Testament, the Book of Hebrews says that the 'Good News' (the Gospel) was first preached during the time of Moses at Sinai. (Heb.4:6).

This revelation ties the Ten Commandments of Sinai to the commandments of Christ. In both cases it was God in person who issued the directives.

Because the Israelites had diluted the Testimony of God with so many of their own rules (the traditions of the elders) God commanded a new covenant -- one founded only on the Testimony of Christ.

It was not 'religion' that God wanted the people to have, but salvation. So in the place of the guardian's reflected light, God sent His own. In that new covenant, all the shepherds and all their laws were replaced by one true Shepherd and one true Law. (Ez.34:10-16). This exchange of covenants was one of the major issues predicted by Jeremiah in his writings. (Jer.31:31-34).

**See also:**

[1. The Ark of the Covenant](#)

[2. The Ark Disappears](#)

[3. 'The Clock of God', Chapter 6, 'The Scattering'](#)

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**"I Tell You Most Solemnly,  
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*John 8:51*





## The Torah

The word 'Bible' is Christian and was coined long after Jesus was crucified. Before that, the scriptures were called 'the Law and the Prophets'. This, remember, is the term Jesus used when He talked about the Bible.

The part called 'the Law' was composed by (and in the name of) Moses, and encompasses the first five books of the Old Testament:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

The Israelites termed these five books 'the Torah' (a Hebrew word which means law). As far as the twelve tribes were concerned, these five writings defined the essence of their entire religion. They governed every aspect of Hebrew life. In them were the stories of Adam and Eve, the flood, the creation, Abraham, the Exodus, Passover, and all the definitions of Hebrew worship laid down by Moses.

The Law contained all the admonitions and regulations about sacrifice and religious expression. Repeated in the Torah were the Ten Commandments which God had given Moses on Mt. Sinai, and which the Hebrew leaders kept encased in the Ark of the Covenant which stood at the very center of the Holy of Holies in their 'Tabernacle of the Testimony'.

These ten statements from heaven keyed the Law. To show this in graphic terms, God, through Moses, instructed the Hebrew's to build the Ark of the Covenant, and to put in it, not the Bible, but only God's Decalogue -- the commandments He, Himself, had inscribed on stone.

God did not allow the Torah to be placed in the Ark. He instructed that it was to remain near it, but outside, on a table. In so doing, God gave certainty to the fact that the Ten Commandments were greater than anything written in the Book of Moses.

This was important because it prepared the Israelites for the later Testimony of God which Jesus would issue; the declarations of which would be above the words of the Bible, and equal to the higher words inscribed on the tablets of stone which the Hebrew leaders venerated with such awe.

**See, Also:**

[1. 'The Clock of God', Chapter 23, 'God's Word Declared'](#)

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# The Ten Commandments

(Deuteronomy.5: 1-22).

- 1. You shall have no gods except me.
- 2. You shall not make yourself a carved image.
- 3. You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- 4. Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy.
- 5. Honor your father and your mother.
- 6. You shall not kill.
- 7. You shall not commit adultery.
- 8. You shall not steal.
- 9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbors wife, nor anything else he has or owns.

## See Also:

- [1. The Testimony of God](#)
- [2. The Sinai Compromise](#)
- [3. The Ark of the Covenant](#)
- [4. The Ark Missing](#)

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*John 8:51*

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## The Testimony of God

When we speak about the word of God today, we think of the Bible, but the Bible has three distinct classes of inspiration in it. The highest of these three is the direct 'Testimony' of God'. In only two places in scripture do such elevated words exist. One is the ['Ten Commandments'](#) which God wrote on stone tablets before Moses on the mountain of Sinai. The other was the 'Gospel' revealed by Jesus.

That God's personal testimony was greater than anything else in scripture became evident when Moses was forbidden by God to put the Bible into the [Ark of the Covenant](#) -- only the Ten Commandments.

Made of acacia wood, the Ark was the holy chest that Moses placed in a chamber called the Holy of Holies, the most sacred part of the tent which was called the 'Tabernacle of the Testimony' (because it housed the two stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written).

The Ark itself was believed to be like a throne that God personally sat upon. The tent, used for worship during the journey across the desert from Egypt to the 'Promised Land', was the precursor of the Hebrew temple.

The Ark of the Covenant was made only to house God's direct Testimony. The fact that the rest of scripture (not even the Torah) could be placed in the Ark vividly contrasts the two different natures of what we call 'the word of God'. There is inspired word where God moves men to speak in His name, and then there is direct dialogue from heaven where God speaks to us Himself in person.

The inspired portion of the Bible is called the 'Law and the Prophets'. This is the portion of scripture that could not go into the Ark.

By commanding this separation, God made clear the difference between His own Testimony and the writings of the Law. He did this in preparation for the Testimony of Jesus Christ -- the unfinished Testimony of God that would come down from heaven to complete the Ten Commandments.

God wanted the world to know how much more sacred were the words of His Son than any of the other scriptural writings that had ever existed. The Ark of the Covenant, then, defined the covenant.

And in that definition, it made the Ten Commandments greater than anything else that surrounded it in the Hebrew religion. So when Moses commanded the Israelites to "hold fast to God's covenant", he was ordering them to obey the ten sacred articles of God housed in the Ark.

The New Testament confirms the close relationship between the Ten Commandments and the Gospel of Jesus. The Book of Hebrews says that the 'Good News' (the Gospel) was first preached during the time of Moses at Sinai. (Heb.4:6).

This revelation unites the Ten Commandments of Sinai with the commandments of Christ. In both cases it was God in person who issued the directives.

Because the Israelites had diluted the Testimony of God with so many of their own rules (the traditions of the elders) God commanded a new covenant -- one founded only on the Testimony of Christ.

It was not 'religion' that God wanted the people to have, but salvation. So in the place of the guardian's reflected light, God sent His own. In that new covenant, all the shepherds and all their laws were replaced by one true Shepherd and one true Law. (Ez.34:10-16). This exchange of covenants was one of the major issues preached by Jeremiah in his writings. (Jer.31:31-34).

**See also:**

[1. The Compromise at Sinai](#)

[2. The Ark Disappears](#)

[3. 'The Clock of God', Chapter 6, 'The Scattering'](#)

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*John 8:51*

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# The Sinai Compromise

## Jesus Structured Into the Law

Having led the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses was instructed by the Lord to stop at the foot of a mountain in the Sinai desert. There he was told to gather all the tribes of Israel together in a single body so that God could come before them personally and give them His laws face to face.

This was an extraordinary event, and it crystallized the Hebrew religion to come. At first the Israelites were excited at the thought of God's appearance before them and their hearts swelled with anticipation.

But as God began to approach the people, this expectancy gave way to grave apprehension, and soon a feeling of terror overwhelmed them all. The mountain erupted in fire, the earth began to quake violently and the sky blackened with intense clouds like smoke from a furnace.

Out of the clouds great flashes of lightning spewed. Peals of thunder rolled across the desert together with the sound of a great trumpet whose blast grew louder and louder the closer God came to the terrified Israelites. (Ex.19:16-20).

Suddenly realizing that many of them were going to die during God's visitation the Israelites ran to Moses and begged him to have God send an intermediary in His place. (Ex.20:18-20). God agreed to their request and it is this event which structured Jesus Christ into the Law.

The reason why the Israelite religion demands a Messianic intermediary stems from this legal compromise at Sinai.

At first the people thought that Moses was to be the intermediary (Ex.20:19), but he said no, explaining that the intercessor was to be someone else. (Dt.18:14-16).

Moses told them: *"The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves -- from your own brothers; To him you must listen."*

*"This is what you yourselves asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. 'Do not let me hear again' you said, 'the voice of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die'; and God said to me, 'All they have spoken is well*



*said. I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him to say." (Dt.18:15-19).*

The compromise at Sinai not only deferred God's visit, it left a void as far as the Testimony of heaven was concerned. Most of the Lord's commandments remained unstated.

There were always meant to be more than ten, but the balance of God's commandments had to await the voice of heaven's intercessor.

The proof that the Israelites fully understood all of this was revealed by their consuming expectation ever afterward of the coming Messiah. The entire Hebrew religion was built on the promise of this holy Intermediary defined at Sinai.

That is why the people of Jesus' time were so astir -- they were waiting in fervent expectation of the Christ predicted by Moses.

When Moses said, *"God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves...to him you must listen."* (Dt.18:15), he bound the Israelites to the obedience of Jesus, who was the prophet of God that these words were written for.

But when he appeared, Jesus turned out to be more than a prophet and more than an intermediary. He came as Divinity. He came as God Himself, clothed in flesh. This was the meaning of the Trinity, and it freed the world from the Law's stipulation for an intermediary because the moment Jesus was glorified in heaven, the intermediary became our ruling God.

At that instant of glorification, the master of the Law of Moses became the Master and Lord of all creation. This meant that Jesus' words were far more than mortal inspiration; they were, in fact, the direct Testimony of God.

This put his Gospel on the same level as the Ten Commandments. *"He who comes from above is above all others. He who is born of the earth is earthly himself and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven...speaks God's own words."* (Jn.3:31-34). Jesus brought the missing Testimony which the compromise had blocked at Sinai.

Jesus brought a peaceful visitation by God. There was no theophany associated with His appearance. The sky did not cloud over. The earth did not heave and roll. There was no lightning; no thunder. He did not bring words of judgment. Instead He brought an offer of peace and salvation -- an olive branch.

Accompanying this offer of reconciliation Jesus issued a stern warning of what would happen if that peace was rejected. The theophany of God, He said, would return in a world display that would bring Judgment.

We can see in the great event at Sinai all the overtones of that final day at the end of the

world when, again, because of God's personal appearance, dark clouds will cover the land and terrifying signs will signal the termination of all who have not obeyed God's Messiah and broken with sin in His name

**See also:**

[1. The Testimony of God](#)

[2. The Ark Disappears](#)

[3. 'The Clock of God', Chapter 6, 'The Scattering'](#)

[4. 'The Clock of God', Chapter 28, 'The Architect's of Wormwood'](#)

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**"I Tell You Most Solemnly,  
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*John 8:51*

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## Disappearance of the Ark of the Covenant

When Nebuchaddnezar invaded Judea 500 years before the birth of Christ and led the entire Jewish population of Palestine to a 70-year captivity at the banks of the Euphrates river, his forces burned to the ground the temple of Solomon.

Just before that event occurred, however, Jeremiah, it is written, ran into the temple; into the holy of holies and rescued the [Ark of the Covenant](#). He spirited it away and buried it, together with the 2 stone tablets it contained and on which God had written the Ten Commandments. The location of this burial, scripture claims, is in a cave at the banks of the Dead Sea.

These items have never been recovered. Their absence created a problem when Herod rebuilt the temple just before the time of Christ. The Holy of Holies was empty of the Testimony of God. There was no Ark there and no stone tablets.

According to the decree issued by Moses at the time of the [Sinai compromise](#), the [intermediary](#) sent by God would return with the missing commandments. Not the ten God wrote for the guardian covenant, but all the commandments that God was unable to deliver when the people begged Him not to appear before them.

This missing Testimony was the Word of God the empty Holy of Holies chamber in Herod's temple was waiting to receive. But it was not allowed in by the servants who were the caretakers of this temple. Instead, just as the [parable](#) revealed, they rejected Jesus and killed Him.

Empty and meaningless, the temple was destroyed. It was burned to the ground by the Roman army. It had no meaning anymore because it had been replaced by another, Jesus, Himself -- a spiritual temple that is eternal. A temple within which the Word resides and is firmly entrenched forever.

### See Also:

['The Clock of God', Chapter 2, 'Eden'](#)

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## JACOB'S CHILDREN IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL



## THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL



**At an assembly held in Shiloh, Joshua cast lots** before the gathered tribes, and there according to the way the lots fell, Joshua apportioned the land among the Israelites according to their groupings. These 12 tribes were descended from the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel), borne of 2 wives, sisters Leah and Rachel, and 2 slave-wives given to him by the two sisters.

**Rachel remained barren**, so God opened the womb of Leah first. Leah conceived and gave birth to a son whom she named Reuben. Soon thereafter she also gave birth to Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel, seeing that she herself gave Jacob no offspring, became jealous of her sister Leah who had quickly produced four children for Jacob. So she gave her slave-girl, Bilhah to her husband as a wife that she might have a child through her. Bilhah gave birth to Dan and then Naphtali. Leah did the same, giving her slave-girl (Zilpah) to Jacob who conceived first Gad and then Asher. Afterward, Leah herself conceived Issachar, Zebulun and a daughter, Dinah. Finally, God remembered Rachel, Jacob's favorite, bringing Joseph to birth in her womb. After that, Rachel conceived Benjamin as well, bringing Jacob's male progeny to twelve.

**When Jacob's sons reached early manhood**, they became jealous of Joseph who was his father's favorite. They kidnapped him, and sold him to a caravan headed for Egypt. Living in the land of Egypt, Joseph became very important and powerful, overseeing all of Pharaoh's graineries. When a great famine swept the Middle East, Egypt remained fully stocked with food on account of Joseph's brilliant skill and foresight.

**Knowing that Egypt had ample food**, Jacob gathered his children and wives together and took them there to seek bread so that they not starve to death. Once there he discovered his missing long-lost favorite son. Joseph held no grudge against his brothers. He welcomed them all with open arms and gave them as much as they wanted to eat. As a reward for his generosity and love, Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manesseh, and blessed them that they might also share in the tribal legacy God had promised Jacob concerning his twelve sons.

**Because Joseph had borne two of the twelve**, he became a patriarch himself, rising to a level above his brothers. He was accorded a position of supreme honor, joining Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the progenitors of the twelve tribes. For this reason, he is not counted among the landowners.

**Jacob's third son, Levi**, was removed from landowning status as well, for it was in this

tribe that the priesthood of Israel was formed. The Levites became the caretakers of the religion. That is why neither Joseph nor Levi have their names ascribed to geographical areas on the map above.

**Dan was first given land in an area** that looked on Joppa, east of Benjamin. However, the Philistines resisted them there, blocking their efforts to capture the towns awarded to them in the original inheritance of the tribes. So the descendants of Dan headed north to a city called Leshem. Capturing this city, they renamed it 'Dan' after their ancestor, and settled there instead. This city proved to be the northernmost boundary of the land of Israel, stretching from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south.

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**"Sound the Trumpet in Zion,  
Give the Alarm On My Holy Mountain!"**

**Joel 2:1**

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## The Intermediary

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt he took them straightaways to a mountain in Sinai where a personal visit from God was planned. Moses explained that God would descend before all the eyes of Israel and present them with the words of His covenant.

As He approached, however, there were heart-stopping displays of nature so fearful that the Israelites begged Moses to go to God and ask Him to send an intermediary in His place. (Ex.20:18-20). God agreed, gave them a shortened version of His words on ten stone tablets and told them through Moses that the Intermediary would bring the balance of His commandments when he arrived.

Moses told them: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like myself, from among yourselves, from your own brothers; To him you must listen. This is what you yourselves asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the Assembly. 'Do not let me hear again' you said, 'the voice of the Lord my God, nor look any longer on this great fire, or I shall die'; and God said to me, 'All they have spoken is well said. I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him to say.'" (Dt.18:15-19).

At first the people thought that Moses was to be the intermediary (Ex.20:19), but he said no, explaining that the intercessor was to be someone else. (Dt.18:14-16).

This coming intermediary soon came to be known among the Israelites as a 'messiah', a saviour, who would rescue them from their enemies, and the legal compromise at Sinai is the event that structured him into their Law.

The compromise at Sinai not only deferred God's visit, it left a void as far as the Testimony of heaven was concerned. Most of the Lord's commandments remained unstated. There were always meant to be more than ten, but the balance of God's commandments had to await the voice of heaven's intercessor.

The proof that the Israelites fully understood all of this was revealed by their consuming expectation ever afterward of the coming Messiah. The entire Hebrew religion was built on the promise of the appearance of this holy intermediary defined at Sinai.

But, when Jesus, the prophet that these words were written for finally appeared, He turned out to be more than a prophet and more than an intermediary. He came as Divinity. He came as God Himself, clothed in flesh.



Jesus' divine nature was the meaning of the Trinity, and it freed the world from the Law's stipulation for an intermediary because the moment Jesus was glorified in heaven, the intermediary became our ruling God. At that instant of glorification, the master of the Law of Moses became the Master and Lord of all creation.

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## **See Also:**

['The Clock of God', Chapter 6, 'The Scattering'](#)

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