

END-TIMES ISSUES

#6 Blessings of Israel ...
inherited by the church.

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1

The apostle's use of the Old Testament.

1. **The apostles constantly appealed to the Old Testament for teaching.**
 - Issues included salvation, how we are to live, warnings about sin, our identity as the "body of Christ," and much more.
 - Our focus today is on O.T. blessings that now apply to us.
2. **They pointed to:**
 - Prophetic statements about Gentiles (non-Jews) abandoning their false ways, and becoming followers of the true God.
 - Old Testament Scripture that teaches us about Jesus, the Messiah, and what he has accomplished for us.
 - What the Old Testament teaches about our moral obligations.
 - *Promises and blessings that were given to Old Testament Israel, which are now applied directly to New Testament Christians.*

2

Examples of O. T. blessings that now apply to us:

1. **We are recipients of the New Covenant and all that it does.**
 - In several Old Testament passages, God tells *Israel* that he is going to make a *new covenant* with them. The term "new covenant" isn't always present; but it is in this passage:

(Note the contrast God makes between the *new* and *old* covenants.)

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.**

It will not be like **the [old] covenant I made with their fathers** when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—**a covenant they broke**, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 31:31-32 (BSB)

3

- Here are the specific details of this covenant:

"But this is **the covenant I will make with the house of Israel** after those days, declares the LORD. I will put My law in their minds and inscribe it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be My people.

No longer will each man teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquities and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:33-34 (BSB)

- In the New Testament, Jesus connects *himself* to the New Covenant. *This is the reason we can be saved.*

... after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the **new covenant** in My blood, which is poured out for you.

Luke 22:20b (BSB); also 1 Corinthians 11:25.

4

- This new covenant was the focus of Paul's ministry:

And [God] has qualified us as ministers of a **new covenant** ...

2 Corinthians 3:6a (BSB)

- The book of Hebrews quotes the entire Jeremiah passage (which mentions *Israel*), applies it directly to us (followers of Jesus, the *church*) and tells us that *Jesus* made it possible:

[God] said: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a **new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.** ... [He continues here with the rest of the quote.]

Hebrews 8:8b (BSB); see chapters 8-10.

[We have come] to Jesus the mediator of a **new covenant** ...

Hebrews 12:24a (BSB)

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2. **As "God's people," we have a glorious calling!**
 - God told the nation of Israel that *they* were chosen to be a special people with a special calling:

"**[I] brought you to myself.** Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my **treasured possession.** Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a **kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**"

Exodus 19:4b-6a (NIV)

CHOSEN

SPECIAL

PRIESTS

HOLY NATION

- ➡ Note the word "if," at the beginning of the second sentence. An *obligation* is attached to this statement.
- ➡ This is because the Old Covenant *did not change* the people's hearts. They needed to trust God for that change – and few did.

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- In the New Testament, we learn that each of these things apply to us, the followers of Jesus:

But you are a **chosen people**, a **royal priesthood**, a **holy nation**, God's **special possession**, that you may declare the praises of him who **called** you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)

CHOSEN

PRIESTS

HOLY NATION

SPECIAL

CHOSEN

- Under the *New Covenant*, there is no "if" statement attached.
- This is because the New Covenant *changes* the hearts of those who are under it.

3. We are Abraham's seed (children), and heirs of the blessings that were promised to Abraham!

And if you belong to Christ, then you are **Abraham's seed, heirs** according to the promise.

Galatians 3:29 (CSB)

(God *promises* that the promises given to Abraham apply to us!)

- This does *not* mean Israel is *excluded* from the promises. But the promises must come through Christ Jesus.

... through the gospel the Gentiles are **heirs together with Israel**, members together of one body, and **sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus**.

Ephesians 3:6 (NIV)

- Even before the O. T. distinction was made between Jews and Gentiles, Abraham was promised to be "the father of many nations."
- ✓ In the Old Testament, we read about many nations that came from Abraham: Israel, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Midian, and the Ishmaelite tribes.
- ✓ In the New Testament, we discover that "many nations" includes *all* of us who are saved.

He is **the father of us all**. As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is **our father in the sight of God**, in whom he believed ...

Romans 4:16b-17a (NIV)

- This "promise" issue is quite complex, applying also to Jesus – who makes possible its application to those who were originally "outsiders." (See Galatians 3:16.)

4. Many Old Testament concepts now apply to us. EXAMPLES:

- The temple – now, we *are* that temple.

For **we are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: "I will dwell with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people."

2 Corinthians 6:16 (BSB)

- The people of God; God's family (household).

Once you were not a people, but now you are **the people of God**; ...

1 Peter 2:10a (BSB)

... **God's household**, which is the church of the living God, ...

1Ti 3:15b (BSB)

5. Terms used to describe the Israelites (as a group or nation) are now applied to followers of Jesus.

- Family, brothers (in the *generic* sense, implying "brothers and sisters").

O.T. ISRAEL

I will proclaim Your [= God's] name to my **brothers** ... All descendants of Jacob, honor Him! All offspring of Israel, revere Him!

Psalm 22:22a, 23b (BSB)

N.T. CHURCH

... you, O people of Israel ... the entire **family** I rescued from Egypt ...

Amos 3:1b (NLT)

For both the One who sanctifies [= Jesus] and those who are sanctified [= saved people] are of the same **family**. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them **brothers**.

Hebrews 2:11 (BSB)

- Even the word "church" or "assembly" was "taken over" from Israel!

This is difficult to see, *only* because translators tend to consistently translate the concept as "assembly," when it applies to Israel, and "church" when it applies to followers of Jesus.

Consider the following:

I will praise You in the **assembly**.

Psalm 22:22b (BSB)

- In this verse, the *Old* Testament original HEBREW word for "assembly" is: קהל (qahal).
- When this verse was translated into GREEK, they used the word: ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia). (This *Old* Testament translation, called the "Septuagint," was used by the early church.)
- This verse (Psalm 22:22) is quoted in the GREEK *New* Testament. Guess what word is used! LET'S FIND OUT!!

4. Psalm 22:22b is quoted in the *New Testament*." Here, it uses the same GREEK word that is found in the *Old Testament* Septuagint translation: ἐκκλησία (ekklesiá) – and people tend to translate it into English as the word "assembly."

"I will sing Your praises in the **assembly**."

Hebrews 2:12b (BSB)

5. Yet what is this New Testament word *normally* translated as? *Let's find out!*

God's household, which is the **church** of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:15b (BSB)

6. We discover that this same word ἐκκλησία (ekklesiá) is translated as "church," when it refers to New Testament followers of Jesus!

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**WE HAVE BARELY TOUCHED ON THIS ISSUE.
HOPEFULLY, BY NOW, WE CAN SEE THAT...**

THINGS THAT WERE
ONCE APPLIED TO
ISRAEL ...

... HAVE NOW BEEN
APPLIED TO THE
CHURCH.

HOWEVER: This observation causes questions that we don't have time to answer right now... SUCH AS:

- ✓ Are the Jews replaced by the church?
- ✓ Is there any future for Israel in the plan of God?
- ✓ What about modern-day Israel?

(We can look at some of these issues next time.)

14

We can also learn about JESUS in the Old Testament!

THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES US THAT JESUS IS GREATER THAN ANYTHING THAT WAS PART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM.

6. Jesus is like Moses... but is superior to him!

- Moses told the people that "a prophet" like him would come.

The LORD your God will raise up for you **a prophet like me** from among your brothers. You must listen to him.

Deuteronomy 18:15 (BSB)

- In the Old Testament, many prophets *did* come... but none were as great as Moses. The later prophets spoke about someone *greater* who would one day come after them.
- As time progressed, the expectation of this *greater* prophet increased. But it would be a long time before all the details would be understood.

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- When Jesus came, some *recognized* him as the one that Moses (and the other Old Testament prophets) spoke about.

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "**We have found the one Moses wrote about** in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:45 (NIV)

- Others *wondered* if he might be the one. At the same time, they didn't understand the relationship between "the prophet" and "the Messiah." (Jesus is *both*.)

On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely **this man is the Prophet**."

Others said, "**He is the Messiah**."

John 7:40-41a (NIV)

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- In the end, we learn that Jesus *is* the prophet ...

"Moses said, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you **a Prophet like me** from among your own people. ...'

When **God raised up his servant, Jesus**, he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways."

Acts 3:22a, 26 (NLT)

- ... and that he is also *greater* than Moses.

Jesus has been found **worthy of greater honor than Moses**, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.

Heb 3:3 (NIV)

(The book of Hebrews goes on to demonstrate this fact. It shows us *how* Jesus is greater.)

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7. The entire O.T. sacrificial system points to Jesus. He is superior to it all – and he is the reason we can be saved!

- The Old Testament ceremonial activities were important... but they were mere "shadows" of the "reality" – which is Christ!

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.

These are a **shadow** of the things that were to come; the **reality**, however, is found in Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17 (NIV)

- Christ is both *priest* and *sacrifice* in a much greater temple.

But when Christ came as **high priest** ... He entered the Most Holy Place [in heaven] once for all by **His own blood**, thus securing eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:11a, 12b (BSB)

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- As a result, this Jesus would accomplish for us a salvation that Moses could *never* bring to us! (The Law could teach us what is right... but it could not change our hearts.)

Through Him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.

Act 13:39 (BSB)

8. Ultimately Christ fulfills *all* that Moses and the prophets said would happen! This was the basis of Paul's message:

"I am saying **nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen:**

that the Christ would suffer, and as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles."

Acts 26:22b-23 (BSB)

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What is the significance of all this?

Just like Israel...

- ⇒ We don't deserve these blessings; yet they have been "gifted" to us!
- ⇒ We should be aware that:
 - ✓ With privileges and blessings come responsibilities and accountability.
 - ✓ God doesn't give people blessings so that they can waste them and misuse them. (This applies to *Israel*... and also to *us*.)
- ⇒ This means we need to be careful about what we do with these blessings!

From everyone who has been **given much, much will be required**; and from him who has been **entrusted with much, even more will be demanded.**

Luke 12:49b (BSB)

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Our GOAL / MISSION today: Expressions of THANKS to God!

⇒ Consider how *genuine* **THANKFULNESS** should influence the way we live.

⇒ Pursue that expression of **THANKS** in our daily living!



IN CHRIST...

... the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, ...

Romans 15:27b (NIV)

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Credits

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