

BASIC CHRISTIANITY

Lecture Number 7

THE MESSIAH

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JESUS THE JEW

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Jesus was a Jew. If we want to understand what he said and did, what he was, we must see him through the eyes of a first-century Jew.

The Jews believed these things:

First, God was acting in history, and whatever happened was God's doing.

He did not just wind up the universe like a clock, leave it ticking, and then ignore it. So we can learn about God from the events of history. This was a great step away from strict puritanism towards sacramentalism.

Second, They were God's chosen people. He had selected them, delivered them from slavery, and planted them in the promised land.

Therefore their land, their capital city, and their scriptures were holy.

Third, They were under contract to God.

The contract was between God and the whole nation, not individuals.

Fourth, God had given them a moral law and a ritual law.

The moral law governed how they were to treat one another.

The ritual law governed how they were to worship him.

Fifth, God had established a priesthood, giving them an official relationship to him.

Sixth, Their national existence had a purpose.

Seventh, There was a pattern in their history:

when God had given them prosperity, it had not been long before they had become unfaithful. That had led to catastrophe in their national fortunes. After they had repented, God had raised up a deliverer who had restored them to prosperity. The principle involved is that repentance has to come before deliverance

However, since the time of Solomon, each time they went through this cycle their new prosperity failed to match what they had known before. It was a downward spiral.

JESUS THE PROPHET

During their history God had given them prophets, men who called the people to repentance and proclaimed the vision of what God wanted to give them when they returned to him. The prophets did not speak in abstractions but in concrete images. They frequently acted out their prophecies in dramatic ways.

For example, Hosea had married a prostitute to dramatize the unfaithfulness of the nation. And Jeremiah wore an ox's yoke in public for two years to dramatize the bondage towards which they were headed.

Both Jesus and John the Baptist expressed their messages in the classic manner of the prophets.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

John the Baptist came on the scene during the time of their national humiliation, proclaiming that the time to repent had come and that the one chosen by God to deliver them was ready to appear in response to their repentance.

To dramatize his message he called the multitudes down to the place on the Jordan River where Joshua had initially led them into the Promised Land.

In effect, he had them go out and come in again. They were thus acting out their confession that they had made a mess of their former life in the land God had given them. He symbolically collected the nation at the Jordan River to await a new Joshua to lead them in.

“...when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, ‘You generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our father;” ‘for I tell you God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.’”

What stones? The monument built 1400 years earlier by the Hebrews when they entered the promised land?

THE NEW JOSHUA

Joshua (in Greek, *Iesous*; in English, “Jesus”) appears. His name in Hebrew is literally “the Salvation of God” or “God saves.” He insists that John baptize him, also.

As we saw time before last in the book of Joshua, after the crossing, in the middle of the night, outside of Jericho, the first Joshua had encountered the “commander of the Army of the Lord” who told him to remove his shoes. [Joshua 5:13-15]

Now John the Baptist declares that he is not worthy to untie the shoes of the new Joshua.

After the crossing, “God exalted Joshua in the eyes of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.” [Joshua 4:14]

After the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove was seen to descend upon Jesus, and God's voice declared that he was his beloved son. Then the Holy Spirit drove him out into the desert to be tempted by Satan.

THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The Jews were obsessed with three great ideas and two mental images to express those ideas:

The First Great Idea: The Covenant.

The Image: Moses with a bucket of blood sprinkling the tables of the Law and the people.

The Second Great Idea: The Kingdom.

The Image: The regal oriental splendor of the court of David, the warrior king, the sultan.

The Third Great Idea: The Messiah.

The Image: Because he had not yet come, they borrowed the image of King David who was also called the Lord's Anointed One (in Hebrew, *Messiah*, literally "he who is smeared with oil"). Hebrew kings were "crowned" by having olive oil poured on their heads.

Furthermore, they believed that there were three things which the Messiah would do. And those three things corresponded to the three temptations in the wilderness to which Jesus said, "No."

He rejected precisely what it was the Jews were hoping for in order to give them, and us, *true salvation*—the real salvation which can only come after *true repentance*.

In each case, Jesus' answer is a quotation from Deuteronomy, referring to the Hebrews' time in the desert under Moses.

The First Temptation: Turn stones into bread, that is, lead an economic revolution and bring them **riches**.

Jesus' answer is, "Man does not live by bread alone." [Deut. 8:3]

The Second Temptation: Jump off the Temple; that is, sweep everyone off their feet, produce spectacles, and bring them national **glory**.

Jesus' answer is "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" [Deut. 6:16]

The Third Temptation: Worship Satan and in return receive Satan's **power** to gain all the kingdoms of this world; that is, lead a revolution against Rome, conquer the world, and force all the nations to obey the Law of Moses.

Jesus' answer is, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." [Deut. 6:13]

Note: These three renunciations correspond to the three renunciations in the Anglican rite of

baptism: “Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?” [More on this subject in class # 14]

When the temptations are over, St. Luke tells us, Satan left him “for a more opportune time.”

JESUS’ CAMPAIGN TO PREPARE THE NATION

Jerusalem

We don’t really know what the mental relationship is between any of the prophets and God except that they speak of God speaking to them and showing them things. We certainly do not know what that internal relationship is between Jesus and his Father. Perhaps at this point he can see the entire course of his ministry including the crucifixion. Or perhaps the Father shows him what lies ahead a bit at a time.

What is clear is that there is a strategy to Jesus’ ministry. *That strategy was to involve the entire nation of the Jews with Jesus, from Judaea to Galilee, in such an intense way that they all project on to him their deepest hopes—and fears. That is an essential step in bringing them to the **true repentance** which is essential for **the real salvation** he has come to give them. So his ministry might also be called his “campaign.”*

That campaign is designed to bring the people to deep self knowledge in order that their repentance can be deep and real.

That Salvation will be the subject of class after next.

Jesus begins his campaign by going into the Temple courtyard and overturning the tables of the money changers. This brings him to the attention of the Jewish authorities and others in Jerusalem as well. That is a classic prophetic act.

At the end of his campaign, when he enters Jerusalem for the last time, he will cleanse the Temple again. We will discuss its meaning at that point. But for now he has certainly gotten everybody’s attention.

About that time Herod arrests John the Baptist, because he has criticized Herod for stealing his brother Philip’s wife. John’s disciples are now “at liberty.”

Galilee:

Jesus then goes into Galilee where he recruits twelve men to be his disciples. Some of them, like Andrew and Peter, have been disciples of John. Some of them, like James and John, are relatives of Jesus, in fact cousins—their mother, Salome, is the sister of Jesus’ mother. The twelve disciples are to correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel

He spends about a year in Galilee mostly performing miracles of healing, forgiving sins, and teaching in parables. Most people can not understand the parables because of their pre-conceptions, or at least can not accept what he says. On several of the greater feasts he goes back down to Jerusalem and performs prophetic actions which keep that pot boiling.

Those who do catch a glimmer of what he means and respond become his disciples also. Most of them do not catch on at all until after the resurrection.

The climax of this part of his campaign is the feeding of the 5000, which is reported by all four gospels. The crowd reacts by trying to seize him and make him king, but he eludes them. [John 6:1-15]

Lebanon

Jesus then takes his twelve disciples up into southern Lebanon to the foot of Mt. Hermon, to the city of Caesarea-Philippi, away from the crowds of Galilee. There he asks the disciples to tell him who the crowds think he is. Their answer is “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, some say one of the Prophets.” Then he asks them, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter answers, “You are the Messiah.”

This seems to be a “more opportune time” for Satan.

Then Jesus starts telling them that they have to go to Jerusalem where he will suffer many things, be rejected by the scribes and chief priests and elders, be killed, and then on the third day be raised.

Peter rebukes Jesus for talking like that. Then Jesus says to Peter exactly what St. Matthew tells us he had said when he had been tempted in the wilderness, “Get thee hence, Satan!”

Jesus proceeds to collect a crowd and declare publicly that following him means crucifixion: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.”

THE TRANSFIGURATION

A week later they go up to the top of a mountain (perhaps Mt. Hermon) to pray. Leaving the rest of the disciples lower down, he takes Peter, James, and John up higher. Peter, James, and John fall asleep; when they wake up they see him shining with a brilliant whiteness. And as they stare, they see two other figures—Moses and Elijah—with Jesus, discussing the “exodus” which he is going to accomplish in Jerusalem. [Luke 9:31]

Then they are hidden by a cloud. And then they hear a voice coming out of the cloud saying, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!”

JERICHO

Then they start back south headed towards Jerusalem intending to arrive at Passover time. And they come to Jericho. This, you recall, is where the first Joshua purged Achan from the sons of Abraham by stoning, because he had kept spoils from Jericho in spite of the fact that the city had been “devoted” to God.

As they pass through the streets which are lined with crowds, this new Joshua looks up and spots a man in a tree who has also been despoiling Jericho, Zacchaeus a chief tax collector.

But instead of doing what the first Joshua had done and setting the mob on him, Jesus calls him down out of the tree and, in front of the crowd, and tells him that he wants to be his guest.

The crowd starts murmuring. But Zacchaeus tells Jesus with great joy that he will give half of his possessions to the poor and pay back four times everyone he has defrauded.

Jesus says, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.”

By this act the second Joshua directly reverses what the first Joshua had done.

LAZARUS

St. John says Jesus does one thing more before entering Jerusalem. In the village of Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, two miles to the east of Jerusalem, Jesus raises a man from the dead.

The man’s name is the same as that of the high priest under the first Joshua, “Lazarus” or “Eleazar”. As a result of the raising of Lazarus, the current high priest, Caiaphas, becomes alarmed and says to the Council, “. . . it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.”

St. John points out the irony of his words: “He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation. . .” [John 11:49-51]

What was it that alarmed the high priest so much?

Perhaps his thinking went this way:

“This man named Joshua has been going around the country for the last three years acting like a prophet and stirring up a mass movement.

“I know that people like those Essenes, and the Zealots, and those people out at Qumran all say that I am a usurper as high priest. They say that the only reason my father-in-law, Annas, and I have been able to stay in office is because the Roman governor, Pilate, backs me and protects us in return for our help in maintaining law and order.

“Now this new Joshua has come through Bethany only two miles away and claims to have raised a man named Eleazar from the dead. Does he plan to have the mob replace me with this guy who has the same name as the high priest under the first Joshua? I am not going to sit still for that. He must be stopped!”

And there is plenty of evidence that Jesus wanted the people to think of him in terms of a new Moses or a new Joshua, the successor to Moses, and not as a new David.

The gospel writers record a number of parallels between the life of Jesus and the life of Moses:

Both of their lives began with the slaughter of the innocents.

Both came out of Egypt.

Both were transfigured on a mountain top.

Both spoke for God on the mountain: Moses on Mt. Sinai; Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

Moses led the twelve tribes out of Egypt; Jesus appointed the twelve to sit on “twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Moses chose seventy elders; Jesus appointed seventy disciples and sent them out in pairs.

Moses fed the multitudes in the wilderness with manna; Jesus fed the multitudes in the wilderness with five loaves and two small fish.

Moses mediated the Old Covenant at Mt. Sinai with an animal sacrifice; Jesus mediated the New Covenant on Mt. Calvary with the sacrifice of himself.

WOULD-BE MESSIAHS

Every few years, some young Jew would decide that he was the new David. Patriotic zeal was always at its height at the great feasts like Passover and Pentecost and Tabernacles. Well, at one of them he would lead an attack on the Roman barracks which was next door to the Temple in Jerusalem.

After slaughtering a lot of the soldiers, he would lead his guerrillas up into the Judaeen hills before the Roman reinforcements could arrive. They would stay up there and build up their strength as other young Jews slipped off to join them. And they would support themselves by hijacking merchant caravans as they passed by on the very important trade route through Judaea.

They thought of themselves as “freedom fighters”, but the Romans considered them to be outlaw brigands. And whenever they captured them they crucified them by the roadside as a warning to any other would-be messiahs.

The Jews believed that the real Messiah could not be defeated. And certainly anyone who got crucified obviously was not really the Messiah after all. So they had a proverb which went: “Cursed is he that is hanged on a tree.”

JEREMIAH

Not only did Jesus want people to connect his actions with Moses and Joshua, he also wanted them to make the connection between his actions and the great prophet Jeremiah. In a moment you will see why.

Six hundred years earlier, Jeremiah had warned the nation of Judah to repent. He told them that they would be carried off into bondage in Babylon if they did not. He spent all of his adult life doing that – in fact, forty years almost exactly.

He stood in the *gate of Solomon’s Temple* and said, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel ... ‘Has *this house*, which is called by my name, become *a den of robbers* in your eyes?”

And he went on to say, “Therefore I will give their wives unto others and their fields to conquerors, because from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain; from prophet to priest everyone deals falsely.

“They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying *Peace, peace, when there is no peace....* Therefore they shall fall among the fallen; *in the time of their visitation* they shall be overthrown says the LORD”

“When I would gather them,’ says the LORD, ‘there are no grapes on the vine, *nor figs on the fig tree; even the leaves are withered*, and what I gave them has passed from them.” [Jeremiah 7:11, 8:10–13]

At the end of the forty years, the Babylonians come and destroy the Temple and carry the inhabitants of Jerusalem into captivity in Babylon. It is fifty years before they are allowed to return.

All this is background for what happens next, when Jesus enters Jerusalem.

THE VISITATION

On Palm Sunday, the first day of the week leading up to Passover, what we call Holy Week, Jesus and his disciples leave Bethany and stage an entry into Jerusalem as Messiah.

He rides on a donkey in the style of the ancient Davidic kings. His supporters line the road from Bethany waving palm branches and shouting messianic slogans: “Hosanna to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” The word spreads that at last the Messiah is coming into the city!

But when he enters the city, Jesus ignores the citadel. Instead he inspects the courtyard of the Temple. He looks around at the moneychangers who are taking advantage of the fact that only Jewish coins can be offered in the Temple.

Roman coins bear the image of the emperor which violates the commandment against “graven images”. The merchants are selling Jewish coins for Roman coins at a mark-up.

After Jesus has looked around, he walks out, and he and his disciples go back to Bethany for the night.

The next morning, on the way into Jerusalem, they pass by a *fig tree* covered with leaves but with no fruit. Jesus inspects it and then says to it, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

Then he goes into the Temple and drives out the moneychangers, the way he had done at the beginning of his ministry. And he says, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people?’ but you have made it a den of robbers!” Then they leave and go back to Bethany for the night.

The next morning, on the way into Jerusalem, they pass by the fig tree. And Lo and behold! It has withered and died.

And you and I remember what Jeremiah had said when he visited the Temple.

We also remember how for forty years Jeremiah warned about the Babylonians and how they finally came and destroyed the Temple.

During Holy week, Jesus warns his disciples that the day is coming, during their lifetime, when “not one stone [of the Temple] will be left standing upon another.” Forty years later, in 70 AD, the Romans come and destroy the Temple—against orders!—and on the very same day of the same month in which the Babylonians had destroyed the first Temple.

After the Jews had been permitted to return from Babylon and rebuild the first Temple, the prophet Malachi had said, “The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his Temple: the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold he is coming, says the LORD of hosts, but who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?” [Malachi 3:1, 2] ... Who indeed?

DISAPPOINTMENT

The Roman soldiers in the citadel next to the Temple courtyard must have been terrified when word came that another messiah was on the march into Jerusalem. Just recently another man named Jesus had led an uprising during which men were killed. His full name was Jesus Bar Abbas. Barabbas was arrested and sentenced to be crucified along with two henchmen.

Rebellion was in the air. And it was just such an attempt which would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple forty years later in 70 AD.

But Jesus ignores the citadel. He drives the Jewish moneychangers out of the Temple. And then he and his close followers walk out of town! This is dramatic evidence of what his kingdom is all about. The crowds probably said, “Well, maybe he is getting God on his side. Maybe tomorrow he will do it.”

The leaders of the council are in a dilemma: should they get on the bandwagon or not?

So they send emissaries to find out his intentions. And until Thursday, the crowds are ready to slaughter anyone who touches him. On Thursday they ask him, “Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?” If he answers “no” it will mean that he is going to lead the revolt. But if he says “Yes, it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar,” the crowd will conclude that he is not going to lead the rebellion.

They think they have him. But they are in the same dilemma.

He answers, “Show me a coin.”

One of the pharisees produces a coin.

Jesus asks, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?”

They say, “Caesar’s.”

Then Jesus answers, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” [Matt 22:15-22, Mk 12:13-17, Lk 20:20-26]

This has nothing to do with whether a Christian should pay taxes or not. What belongs to God? What does not belong to God? When you give God everything that belongs to him, what is left over? If you can serve God by paying taxes, pay them. If not, then don’t.

The disciples and the Pharisees are close enough to hear his complete answer. But as soon as the crowd hears the first part of his answer, there is a groan and the shout, “He is not going to lead the rebellion!”

At any rate, they abandon him, and at his trial they ask for Barabbas to be released. At least Barabbas had tried to lead a rebellion.

After this Jesus does not show himself openly again. The place for the Last Supper is secretly arranged.

THE LAST SUPPER

Thursday night at the Last Supper, Jesus does something which will guarantee that, after the crucifixion, his disciples will understand that his execution is the voluntary sacrifice of the New Covenant rather than a sign of God’s rejection of him.

Over the centuries the offering of sacrifices has become more and more restricted to the temple priesthood. And only one remains for the father of the family to perform.

The family meal itself is sacrificial. In the middle of the meal, the father gives thanks for a loaf of bread. When they each eat part of it, this reconstitutes the covenant.

At the end of the meal, the father gives thanks for a cup of wine, and then each one drinks from it. This is a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the renewal of the covenant.

There is a set ritual for both of these acts.

Jesus radically alters the ritual adding these words: “This (bread) is my body which is given for you, do this to make me present again; this (wine) is my blood of the New Covenant which is given for you, do this to make me present again.”

THE RESURRECTION

To the followers of Jesus, the crucifixion seems to be a sign that God has rejected him after all. They are demoralized and scattered.

Two days later, Sunday afternoon, two of Jesus’ followers are walking along the road out of Jerusalem headed home to the town of Emmaus.

They are joined by a stranger who asks them why they are so dejected. They tell him about how Jesus has been executed, and they say, “We trusted that it was he that should have delivered

Israel.”

Then the stranger opens the scriptures to them, and, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets,” he expounds to them all the things concerning the Messiah and shows them that they should have expected the Messiah to get exactly the treatment that Jesus had received.

When they arrive at Emmaus, they invite him to spend the night and he accepts. But at supper, when it comes time for the host to say the father of the family’s ritual sacrifice prayer over the bread, the stranger performs the role of host.

He takes bread and blesses it and breaks it and gives it to them, and their eyes are opened and they recognize him as Jesus. Then he vanishes out of their sight. [St. Luke 24:13- 32]

Now the image of the Messiah has been supplied: Jesus hanging on the cross.

THE EUCHARIST

After that, for his disciples every formal supper is a *re-knowing* of Jesus and is the sacrifice of the New Covenant – a daily Eucharist.

John Smith’s sacrifice in the clearing had two parts:

Something done—the egg placed on the rock;

Something said to interpret it—“This is for you, whoever you are, thanks for letting me use your place.”

Christ’s sacrifice and the Church’s has two parts:

Something done—the crucifixion on Calvary;

Something said—the words of Christ at the Last Supper, which the Church repeats in the Eucharist.

THE ETERNAL SACRIFICE

Throughout all eternity the Son gives himself totally back to the Father who eternally begets the Son.

Christ’s offering of himself on Calvary and his words at the Last Supper make that sacrifice (that self-giving) a *present* fact in history.

The Eucharist as it is celebrated by the Church extends it throughout time and space and makes it present to us as well as letting us share in it. At every Eucharist we offer the eternal sacrifice to the Father.

St. Paul says: “As often as ye do eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.”

PARALLELS AND CONTRASTS

There are a number of dramatic parallels and contrasts between the Old Testament and the New:

Moses ratified the Old Covenant by sprinkling the blood on the tables of stone and on the people. Jesus gives the cup to be drunk in order to write his law in our hearts.

The Old Covenant meal renewed the Old Covenant. The New Covenant meal (the Eucharist) renews the New Covenant.

The father of the family presided over the Old Covenant meal and offered it as a sacrifice. The president of the Eucharist is called "Father."

The Old Covenant had been renewed a number of times:

After Manasseh's evil reign, King Josiah had renewed the Covenant in accordance with the book of Deuteronomy. (the "Second Law") [II Chronicles 34; II Kings 22, 23, 24]

And King Hezekiah had renewed the temple worship when the Assyrian rule was ended, and he had invited the northern remnant to participate. But most of them refused to do so. [II Chronicles 29, 30, 31, and 32]

And Ezra and Nehemiah also renewed the covenant on return from the Babylonian captivity. [Nehemiah 9: 38]

The story of Achan was an instance of renewal. The covenant was renewed for the whole nation by the slaying of the one disobedient Israelite which was a sort of human sacrifice.

Note: In each case those who did not get in on the renewal were no longer considered Israelites.

The Samaritans of later centuries were in part Israelites who had escaped the exile in Babylon and so were not allowed to take part in the rebuilding of the Temple and the renewal of the covenant after the return from exile.

THE NATURE OF SIN

Jesus exposed the superficiality of the Achan theory: Sin is not *external* but *internal*:

The Law said, "Thou shalt not kill.." Jesus says, "He that hateth his brother without a cause (that is, chooses to do so) is a murderer."

The Law said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Jesus says, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her committeth adultery in his heart."

Jesus demonstrates this when they bring to him the woman taken in adultery. Jewish law said she must be stoned as Achan was.

The Roman law said no local ethnic group was permitted to carry out capital punishment; only the Roman authorities could do that.

They thought they had him in a dilemma; but they were in the same dilemma. “Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.” These words of Jesus cut the ground out from under the Achan law.

There are no righteous ones (except Jesus). The whole nation is corrupt. The righteous remnant this time is one man, Jesus. The Achan situation is reversed. So the corrupt nation casts out the one righteous man and kills him. Where does that leave the covenant?

When Jesus rises from the dead, *HE IS THE COVENANT*. Only he is 100% obedient to the Father. He is the *new Adam*, the *new Joshua*, the *new nation of Israel* in a single man.

THE COVENANT

On Good Friday, while every “good” Jew slept, the blanket of the covenant was taken from him, and he woke up to find himself naked, completely exposed. He must get back under the covenant; otherwise, he has no claim on God’s promises or his mercies. But how to do it?

The Covenant has gone outside the camp where Jesus, like Achan, was sacrificed to purify the nation. So to get under the Covenant, one must go outside the camp of the Old Israel.

That is, one must no longer trust in his own righteousness, but in God’s manifold and great mercies. One must penitently acknowledge that if he got what was coming to him, he would be treated the way Achan and Jesus were.

One must take up his own cross and follow Jesus . . . out there.

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

The only Israel in the world today, the only members of the only covenant there is, are baptized Christians. Christian baptism means returning to the Jordan River and re-entering following the new Joshua/Jesus.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” means believe that man hanging on that cross out there is God’s Chosen One and identify completely with him and you are saved!

To be part of Jesus is to be in God and in the New Mankind at the same time!

The promised land has been spiritualized and eternalized.

Salvation is of the Jews still – and we are they.

To be a Jew was always by adoption: by circumcision for males; for females to be a member of the household of a Jewish man.

Jesus made it possible for all people to become Jews (of the New Covenant).

That is what happens in baptism, which is “circumcision of the heart” to use the language of St. Paul. [Romans 2:28,29]

For the person being baptized, it is an act of repentance, and his sins are forgiven, washed away. In the New Covenant the basis of righteousness, right relationship with God, is repentance, and the only ones who are not forgiven are those who will not ask for forgiveness.

Every time the family of God comes together for its corporate meal, the Eucharist, the Covenant is renewed and Jesus is present!

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Have you been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?

Do you think of yourself as a member of the Covenant People of God—the flesh and blood of Jesus the Messiah?

Is your heart set on something different from what Jesus wants to give you—are you committed to an end different than the one for which you were made?

If so, and you were to achieve it, what would you have?

Note:

St. Luke the Editor

In the Greek version of the Old Testament – called the Septuagint (LXX) – the two verses, Jeremiah 8: 11, 12, which speak of “Peace, Peace,” and of “their visitation,” do not appear.

St. Luke wrote for Greek-speaking readers who would know only the LXX. So he omitted the fig tree incident, and put the following in its place:

“And when he drew near and saw the city, he (Jesus) wept over it, saying, ‘Would that even today you knew the things that make for *peace*! But now they are hid from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and *dash you to the ground*, you and your *children* (Jeremiah: *wives*) within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know *the time of your visitation*.’”

Earlier in chapter 13, Luke says Jesus told a parable about a barren fig tree in a vineyard which is allowed one more year to produce fruit or be cut down.

And in that same chapter Luke says that Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, because he would have gathered “your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold you are forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

RAC+