

## Topic

### ● I ISRAEL: THE PEOPLE OF GOD

#### ● A "THE LAW"

##### ● 1 The "Covenant"

##### ● a) It was an agreement between the people and God

##### ● (1) Exodus 20:1

- (a) And God spoke all these words, saying: 2\* "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- (b) 3\* "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4\* "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
- (c) 5\* you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6\* but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- (d) 7\* "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
- (e) 8\* "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9\* Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.
- (f) 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
- (g) 12\* "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
- (h) 13\* "You shall not murder.
- (i) 14\* "You shall not commit adultery.
- (j) 15\* "You shall not steal.
- (k) 16\* "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- (l) 17\* "You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

##### ● (2) Notes:

- (a) When Moses later refers to them, he describes them as
  - [1] "10 words"
  - [2] "10 statements"
  - [3] Or, in the context, 10 things God said
- (b) Language scholars believe "Thou shalt not kill" should be translated more accurately as "Thou shalt not murder"
- (c) And later rabbinic interpretation claimed "Thou shalt not steal" means "Thou shalt not steal another person" (i.e. "kidnap")
- (3) Some Jewish sages held that these 10 Statements were a summary of the whole Torah
  - (a) Others claimed other passages were more central
  - (b) Jews traditionally held that the phrase "who has taken you out of Egypt from the house of slavery" meant that the Decalogue applied specifically to them
    - [1] A shorter set of laws applied to non-Jews
    - [2] They called these abbreviated rules "The Noahchide Laws"
- (4) There is no agreement on how to count the rules
  - (a) Jews consider the line beginning "I am the Lord your God" as the first "commandment"
    - [1] Exodus 20:1
      - [a] And God spoke all these words, saying: 2\* "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
  - (b) Catholics hold (1) that verses 1 through 6 are the first commandment and (2) verse 17 should be divided between (a) coveting a neighbor's wife and (b) coveting his other goods

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- [1] Exodus 20:1
  - [a] And God spoke all these words, saying: 2\* "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
  - [b] 3\* "You shall have no other gods before Me. 4\* "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
  - [c] 5\* you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6\* but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- [2] Exodus 20:17
  - [a] "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."
- (c) Protestant divide (1) the law against worshipping other gods from (2) the law prohibiting idolatry, making idolatrous images
  - [1] Exodus 20:1
    - [a] And God spoke all these words, saying: 2\* "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
    - [b] 3\* "You shall have no other gods before Me.
  - [2] Exodus 20:4
    - [a] "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
    - [b] 5\* you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6\* but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
- b) The covenant form was based on a particular type of treaty standard at that time
  - (1) This covenant was not a treaty between equals; rather it was a treaty between a vassal and his superior
    - (a) There were standard features to such "suzerainty treaties"
    - (b) All of these features are present in the Torah,
    - (c) Most, but not all, are present in the terms of the covenant at Sinai
    - (d) But they are **scattered in the Law books**
  - (2) (1) Identification of the superior -- "I am the LORD your God"
  - (3) (2) History of his goodness toward the underling -- "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."
  - (4) (3) Terms -- Decalogue: a summary of the terms
  - (5) (4) Blessings and curses --
    - (a) These are not included in either of our two copies of the Decalogue
    - (b) But they are part of a solemn comment made by Moses to the whole people in the Book of Deuteronomy
      - [1] Deuteronomy 30:15\*
        - [a] See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 "in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.
        - [b] 17 "But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 "I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.
- (6) (5) Witnesses
  - (a) Usually the local gods are used
    - [1] Of course this was not possible with Israel's covenant since Yahweh alone need speak

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- [2] And His Word is all sufficient
  - [3] But Deuteronomy pictures Yahweh calling upon the "spirits," the forces, of heaven and earth seen as living beings superior to us
  - (b) Deuteronomy 30:19\*
    - [1] "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."
  - c) The covenant was sealed in blood (Remember: blood is symbolic of life, not death)
    - (1) Exodus 24:7
      - (a) *Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."*
      - (b) 8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."
    - (2) There are two actions with the blood
      - (a) Part of the blood was poured upon the altar
      - (b) The remaining blood was sprinkled upon the people
    - (3) The sprinkling and pouring were symbolic actions
      - (a) These external actions were supposed to express an already existing internal condition
      - (b) The meaning was that the same life now unites God and this people -- so the People of Israel should live out their unity with God
  - d) Mutual terms were expressed
    - (1) God took the initiative and bound Himself to a people
      - (a) Jeremiah 7:23
        - [1] "But I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you"
    - (2) The people of Israel must respond to God's gracious initiative by keeping the terms God was offering them for the privilege of being His people
      - (a) Exodus 24:7
        - [1] Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."
        - [2] 8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."
      - (b) We see the rules often as limitations, almost as punishments
      - (c) Actually they are signs showing how blessed and fortunate we are
    - (3) They must reflect in their lives, as a people, God's order, and harmony
- 2 Commandment/Law
  - a) We must never forget laws are responses to God's adoption and help
    - (1) Biblical laws are not ways for us to find God
    - (2) They are responses to a God who has found and adopted us!
      - (a) We do not "Get good to get God"
      - (b) We do "Get God to get good"
  - b) "The Law," we must remember, includes far more than the Decalogue
    - (1) It touches every important aspect of life
      - (a) Religious Ritual
        - [1] What sacrifices to offer on specific occasions
        - [2] How the levites and priests are to conduct themselves
      - (b) Relations
        - [1] With others and with the world
          - [a] How to treat the poor, the widows, and aliens in their land
          - [b] How to avoid adopting and serving the gods of their neighbors

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- [2] With clean and unclean
  - [a] What actions render a person, man or woman, unclean with the consequent need to be isolated
    - {1} The touch of a dead person
    - {2} Leprosy
    - {3} A meal of certain animals like shell fish and pigs
    - {4} All sexual relations -- even between spouses
  - [b] The specific, differing requirements required in each case before the person is again rendered clean
- (2) All of life must be holy because we are God's people and He is Holy
  - (a) The Law is given to a People, not to persons, not to individuals
    - [1] Its goal is to keep the remainder of the People clean, isolated, from the person rendered unclean
    - [2] The OT Law does not consider the plight of the unclean individual
    - [3] The People as a whole must remain clean to reflect the holiness of God
  - (b) Leviticus 11:43
    - [1] Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them.
    - [2] 44 I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground.
    - [3] 45 I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.
- (3) All life must be lived in harmony
  - (a) With God
  - (b) With self
  - (c) With others
  - (d) With the universe
- (4) The guidelines of the Law are attempts to establish and retain these harmonies according to the culture of the People
- c) God is concerned with the entire life of this people
  - (1) The covenant is not solely a matter of Temple worship
  - (2) It includes a concern with the Temple but it involves an equal concern with
    - (a) What they eat,
    - (b) How they relate with each other,
    - (c) Who they must defend: the defenseless
      - [1] The widows isolated from families
      - [2] Orphans isolated from families
      - [3] And aliens living in their land
  - (3) Other religions do not include law codes as fundamental
    - (a) The Greek and Roman gods violate the moral codes of the Decalogue again and again
    - (b) Greek and Roman religions were based upon loyalty to the gods, not moral living, not creating a People reflecting the holiness of one or of all the gods or goddesses
- d) Notice that Laws are given to
  - (1) The People as a collective, not individual persons; they are given to a nation
    - (a) They are rules, guidelines, teachings, for a **healthy society**
    - (b) They are not primarily rules for healthy persons
    - (c) All the actions that are forbidden can cause social unrest
      - [1] Murder

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- [2] Adultery
- [3] Theft
- [4] Destroying a person's right to respect
- [5] Insane jealousies for a neighbor's goods (including, in the thought of the culture, his wife)
- (d) Adultery, not fornication, was forbidden in the Old Testament
  - [1] Leviticus 20:4
    - [a] *If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, 5 I will set my face against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.*
    - [b] *6 "I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people*
  - [2] Leviticus contains an interesting condemnation
    - [a] Not a ban of all prostitution
    - [b] But only a prescription against prostitution connected with the worship of a foreign god, Molech!
  - [3] Fornication (that is, sexual intercourse between two unmarried people,) and regular (non religious) prostitution do not threaten the People's holiness and peace
    - [a] Adultery does -- because social strife is possible in a society where there are no secrets and where a wife is seen as the exclusive property of her husband
    - [b] Pagan prostitution does -- the People can lose Yahweh's protection
- (2) Males
  - (a) We must never forget that women enjoyed no legal standing in Israel
    - [1] 10 adults were needed for a synagogue
    - [2] 9 men and 10,000 women could not legally constitute a synagogue
  - (b) Women were seen as the property of a husband
    - [1] Exodus 20:17\*
      - [a] *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."*
      - [2] Wives are simply listed with all the other property of a man -- and not listed first!
  - (c) Notice, that the command against coveting is spoken only to husbands, not to wives
- (3) Adults, not children
  - (a) A son received the Law at his Bar Mitzvah, at the age of 13 -- not before
  - (b) Adult men, therefore, are the people told to "honor" their parents, (the command does not say they are to "obey" them)
    - [1] This command was not enjoined by God upon children
    - [2] Adults are to keep the order needed in any society if there is to be lasting harmony from generation to generation -- to respect the social structure
    - [3] Our society needs to understand this commandment, this guide
  - (c) Respecting the family and clan social-pyramid is especially vital in societies where the unity of the extended family was the main provider of security and peace against violence
- e) Remember: the Decalogue has nothing to do with being Christian
  - (1) If you kept all its rules perfectly, you might be a good Jew
    - (a) And this is not said as an insult to Jews
    - (b) It is said to remind us that being Christian includes the commands to love (actually, so did being Jewish)
      - [1] John 13:34\*
        - [a] *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another."*
  - (2) The NT testament demands far more than negative restrictions

- (a) The easiest way to keep the Decalogue would be to buy your own island
- ▼ (b) And you must live there all alone

[1] It would be nearly impossible for you to be able to break any commandment (except the "coveting" commands)

[2] But, at the same time it would be impossible for you to love your neighbor -- the fundamental Christian mission

[a] John 13:35 : "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

[b] Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.....

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

- (1) The Decalogue has no requirements for loving others

▼ a )Biblical Laws must be understood

▼(1) Not according to our cultural norms

- (a) We see laws as having an independent existence
- (b) We see laws as always applying equally to all
- (2) But according to the Bible's culture

▼ b) The best example of the nature of Biblical laws is a dietician offering a menu to a diabetic or parents offering advice on healthy living to their children

▼(1) The advice is based on the needs or nature of the person receiving it

- (a) Its purpose is to **enable healthy living**
- (b) Its purpose is **not to restrict the quality of life**

▼(2) God made us

- (a) He knows our nature
- (b) Therefore, He offers us a menu for spiritually healthy living

▼ c) Who punishes offenders?

(1) The dietician and God don't punish violations

(2) The diabetic punishes herself or himself automatically by ignoring the directions for healthy living

(3) We punish ourselves; we are less healthy spiritually when we ignore the guidance God offers

▼ A THE WORSHIP

▼ 1 Sacrifice

▼ a) Sacrifice was the central act of worship which united the people as long as the Temple existed

▼ (1) Leviticus 6:1 The LORD said to Moses: 2 "If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving his neighbor about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him, ...He must make restitution in full,...

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- (b) 6 And as a penalty he must bring to the priest, that is, to the LORD, his guilt offering, a ram from the flock, one without defect and of the proper value. 7 In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any of these things he did that made him guilty.
- b) Killing animals to please God seems strange, almost morbid
  - (1) It makes God petty if the action is misunderstood
  - (2) God seems pleased by death
  - (3) Worse: God seems pleased by the death of an innocent animal
- c) The death of the animal was not the essential part of Temple sacrifice
  - (1) The person offering a sacrifice, (there were different kinds of sacrifice) made the animal symbolic of himself -- the person imposed hands on the animal; a gesture that signaled out unity
  - (2) The animal was killed in order to obtain the animal's blood, the life of the animal
  - (3) This blood, representing the life of the person offering the sacrifice, was poured on altar
    - (a) Leviticus 7:1
      - [1] "These are the regulations for the guilt offering, which is most holy:
      - [2] 2 The guilt offering is to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and its blood is to be sprinkled against the altar on all sides.
  - (4) The goal of all sacrifice was "at-one-ment"
    - (a) The pouring was an outward sign that we were one with God again
    - (b) The harmony between God and the person offering the sacrifice had been weakened or broken earlier by some violation of the law
      - [1] Moral -- the social order of God's People was threatened
      - [2] Kosher -- the health, wholeness, of God's People was threatened
    - (c) Chaos resulted as a consequence, disorder
    - (d) Harmony was restored by the sacrifice
    - (e) True sacrifice was to be the outward expression of an inward attitude
      - [1] The gesture of sacrifice did not restore this harmony
      - [2] The individual had earlier re-established this harmony with God within himself
      - [3] The gesture of sacrifice merely acted out, made visible, to the community this restored harmony
- d) While auditing a course on Jewish history at OU, I received an insight into why sacrifice was popular
  - (1) Most people, certainly most poor people, (about 85% of the population,) never ate meat during regular meals
    - (a) They would eat it only on the Passover with a group that could afford a lamb
    - (b) Fr. Neyrey taught that a goat for sacrifice required two years wages!
  - (2) Most kinds of sacrifices allowed the person offering the animal the largest portion of it to eat
    - (a) The fat was burned as an offering to God
    - (b) A small portion of the best part was offered to the priests
    - (c) And the remainder was shared in a family meal
    - (d) This meal with its rare treat of meat must have seemed like Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving rolled into one
- 2 Tithing
  - a) Sharing one's income is a sign of stewardship
  - b) It is a reminder that everything belongs to God
    - (1) What we possess is ours to use and manage
    - (2) But it remains the property of God
    - (3) All that we are belongs to God
      - (a) Our talents are God's gifts to others
      - (b) They are gifts to be used properly

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- c) Sacrifice of first born males and first fruits are reminders of this
  - (1) Exodus 34:19
    - (a) "All that open the womb are Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, whether ox or sheep.
    - (b) 20 "But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem him, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.
  - (2) Exodus 34:26
    - (a) "The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God
  - (3) All belongs to God; so a portion is offered to Him
  - (4) What is owed to God can be ransomed back
- d) No sacrifice is done for God's sake
  - (1) God never went hungry
  - (2) God had no need for offerings
  - (3) Isaiah 1:11
    - (a) "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats.
    - (b) 12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts?
    - (c) 13 Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.
    - (d) 14 Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.
    - (e) 16 "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.
- e) It is offered for our sake
  - (1) Tithing was done to remind us that everything we possess, everything we are, been given, loaned to us, by the Father
  - (2) His Universe is offered as one gift to all humanity
    - (a) Genesis 1:27
      - [1] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
      - [2] 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."
      - [3] 29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.
    - (b) Genesis 9:1
      - [1] Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.
      - [2] 2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.
  - (3) Remembering God's universal gift reminds us how good God was
- f) Tithing is paying God our rent
- g) It reminds us that the universe is to be treated as God's property
  - (1) We need this reminder today
  - (2) It might stop or moderate our polluting and wasting of the earth's resources

## ● 3 The Priesthood



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- a) Israeli priests were sacred: they were set aside by anointing to honor God by offering the People's public worship
- b) The priests were intermediaries between God and man
  - (1) Their only real jobs were offering sacrifice in the Temple in Jerusalem
  - (2) They had no leadership positions in the many synagogues that began to spring up all over the Jewish world
  - (3) Strangely, they were never mentioned as even being present at these services!
- c) In Israel, the priesthood was not a vocation that a person was able to choose
  - (1) A priest automatically was a priest solely by birth, by ancestry, by blood
  - (2) They belonged to the tribe of Levi or were descendants of Aaron
- d) Because of their privileged position, they did become teachers of the Law and protectors of the Law
  - (1) But they were never regarded as experts in the Torah
  - (2) These experts were referred to as "lawyers" or "scribes"
- 4 Worship/Liturgy
  - a) The purpose of Israel's public worship was not a celebration of history, not done to recall history
  - b) Rather the worship was offered to make this history present anew in the here and the now to make this generation part of the covenant
  - c) The original covenant was made between those people who had left Egypt and who had formed a pact with God at Sinai [Horeb]
  - d) The Exodus was divided into a few of its separate events that were recalled in three main feasts
    - (1) Deuteronomy 16:16
      - [a] Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose:
        - at the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
        - the Feast of Weeks
        - and the Feast of Tabernacles.
      - No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed:
    - (b) 17 Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.
  - (2) (1) Passover: each generation's "Amen" to the covenant -- the People's escape and delivery was recalled and renewed
    - (a) Celebrating the Unleavened Bread (a feast originating with the grain farmers)
      - [1] The first grains of the new year were offered to God hoping for a productive harvest
      - [2] Since the feast celebrated the newness of the grain, nothing old, like yeast, was used
    - (b) Celebrating the Unblemished Lamb (a feast originating with the sheep herders)
      - [1] No one was to offer God a defective creature
      - [2] The first males of the new year were offered to God hoping for productive herds
    - (c) These two earlier celebrations were joined and adapted to honor the Passover
      - [1] The ban on yeast was used as a symbol of the need to leave Egypt in a hurry
      - [2] The people couldn't wait for bread to rise before baking it to eat
      - [3] The Lamb's blood was used to mark door posts so the Angel of Death would "pass over"
      - [4] The entire meal symbolized community with the whole people as well as with God
  - (3) (2) Pentecost
    - (a) Originally, this was a feast celebrating the end of the grain harvest,
      - [1] Barley first
      - [2] Then wheat
    - (b) Later the feast was interpreted to recall the covenant at Sinai
  - (4) (3) Booths/Tents
    - (a) It celebrated

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- [1] The end of the fall harvest
- [2] The new grape harvest
- (b) This was the favorite feast of the people
  - [1] The people went into the hills where the vines were located
  - [2] They lived in booths, (tents,) in order to be close to the vines
  - [3] The entire period was marked with revelry and wine drinking
- (c) The feast was used to recall Israel's time in the wilderness -
  - [1] Israel's perspective of these 40 years changed with time
  - [2] The period became a time symbolic of a honeymoon period between God and Israel
- e) All sacrificial worship disappeared both times the Temple was destroyed
  - (1) After the Babylonians conquered Judah, the southern kingdom, and destroyed the first Temple (Solomon's), the Jewish religion began to accent the laws
    - (a) The Sabbath rest became important -- it identified the Jewish people publicly
      - [1] Leviticus 23:2
        - [a] *Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.*
        - [b] 3 "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the LORD.
    - (b) The kosher rules became important -- they identified the Jewish people publicly
    - (c) And circumcision became important -- it identified the male baby child as belonging to Israel, not Babylon
    - (d) Remember: Judaism was a religion of a people, not of individuals
  - (2) After the Romans captured Jerusalem and destroyed the Third Temple, (Herod's,) the Jewish religion accented the local synagogue
    - (a) Synagogues began because diaspora Jews needed someplace to gather for worship
    - (b) A synagogue could be started anywhere if there were 10 adult (13 year old or older) male Jews
    - (c) It had no official leadership; it was "overseen" by elders
      - [1] The "elders" probably consisted of the family heads of all the families
      - [2] These men were, of course, among the eldest members of the clan
    - (d) It existed for prayer and Bible readings and sermons
    - (e) Because the focus on the Bible, the teachers, Rabbis, gradually emerged as its spiritual leaders

### ● C CONCLUSION

- 1 God is experienced as electing and selecting this people
- 2 He enters history to deliver and establish them
- 3 He enters into a unity, a marriage, with this people
- 4 He desires to continue to offer them His blessings
- 5 He asks only that they remain true to Him and to His nature
- 6 All the incidentals of religious life were intended to help Israel as a people
  - a) Continue to experience the presence of God
  - b) And respond to this God who adopted them by witnessing as a people to this God in their world
- 7 Israel should see its election as an opportunity to witness, not an occasion to gloat

### ● II ISRAEL AND JUDAH'S HISTORY

- A THE WILDERNESS: The people who left Egypt, wandered for 40 years in the wilderness
  - 1 During this period, God guided and protected them
  - 2 God's dwelling was tentative: in a tent, in a "tabernacle"

## Topic

- 3 Centuries later, idealizing this period, the prophets saw this time spent between God and His People as a honeymoon - no disloyalty was possible by the people toward God
  - a) There were **no foreign gods to lure the people away from God**
  - b) The **People were completely dependent upon God to provide everything**
- 4 But the people quickly forgot all that God had done to rescue and provide for them
  - a) They **grumbled against God**
  - b) On one occasion, they refused God's instructions to invade the Holy Land
    - (1) They **feared the awesome nature of the inhabitants**
    - (2) They **forgot the power of the God who would march with them**
- 5 As a consequence of this disloyalty, only 2 of all the people who left Egypt entered the Holy Land, Joshua and Caleb, because they alone urged the invasion God had directed
- 6 Israel's failure to obey God's command to invade Palestine should serve as a caution to Christians
  - a) Sometimes we **balk at walking roads God wants us to take because of a natural fear of obstacles**
  - b) In balking, we **exile ourselves out of the security, the serenity, God intends for us**
- B JOSHUA
  - 1 God appointed him successor to the role of Moses
    - a) His name is the Hebrew and Aramaic form of the Greek name "Jesus," "God is helping"
    - b) Deuteronomy 34:5
      - (1) 5 And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. 6 He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no-one knows where his grave is.
      - (2) 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. 8 The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.
      - (3) 9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses.
  - 2 He led the tribes into Palestine in a series of raids that conquered the land
    - a) The **book of Joshua gives the impression that the tribes completely conquered the land**
    - b) Later references in the Bible show that the tribes claimed only parts of areas, mainly the midland between the sea and the mountains
  - 3 The first place Israel conquered in Palestine was the town of Jericho
    - a) Jesus is presented in 3 of the Gospels as the new Joshua
    - b) He **enters Jericho as the last place He visits before going to Jerusalem where His death establishes the New Kingdom of God**
  - 4 Jesus is the true successor to Moses whom God uses to give His People the eternal security of the true Promised Land -- the Kingship of God itself
- C JUDGES
  - 1 First we must understand that the term used does not refer to our kind of "judge"
    - a) The word refers to one sent by God to protect the rights of the poor and the helpless
      - (1) There were no police powers to prevent crime during this time
      - (2) Widows and orphans and resident aliens were always the three most helpless groups
      - (3) When we call Jesus "Judge," we need to remember the Biblical meaning
      - (4) He was sent to protect the spiritually poor: sinners!
    - b) The "Judges" in the Book of Judges were individuals God called when His People were threatened by foreign invaders
  - 2 Next we need to understand that there was no "nation"
    - a) There were 12 clans
    - b) Some of the tribes had friendships with each other
    - c) All 12 of the tribes were **united only by their worship of the same God, only by being part of the same covenant between God and this people**
  - 3 The "Judges," then, were charismatic leaders sent to the threatened tribe(s) by God

## Topic

- a) Their position was so unique, they couldn't pass their mantle of leadership to their sons
- b) The tribes always experienced an element of **uncertainty**
  - (1) Rising up to lead a group of tribes to repel an enemy invader was not a position one selected
  - (2) There were no rules for this election —
    - (a) Gideon was the village idiot when he was called
    - (b) One of the "Judges" was a woman -- Deborah
    - (c) She, incidentally, was the **only "Judge" who actually functioned as a judge, hearing a case, an action which was incidental to her role as "Judge"**
- 4 The book reflects a constantly repeating pattern
  - a) (1) The people, enjoying their security, turn from God to worship the idols of their neighbors
  - b) (2) God removes His protection from the tribes
  - c) (3) An enemy nation, almost always the Amorites, invaded, threatening, raiding, killing, one or more tribes
  - d) (4) God eventually sends them a military leader, a "Judge"
  - e) (5) This judge rallies one or more tribes
  - f) (6) The enemy is defeated
  - g) (7) The Judge continues to lead the people throughout the rest of his/her life
  - h) (8) During this period, the people remain loyal to God and prosper
  - i) (9) The Judge dies
  - j) (10) The people, enjoying their security, turn from God to worship the idols of their neighbors
- D KINGS
  - 1 The people wanted stability: they wanted to be assured they had leaders
  - 2 They asked for and were given kings
  - 3 Now there was stability
    - a) The kings succeeded each other
    - b) Except for Saul and David, they were not selected by God
    - c) Most oppressed and misled the people
    - d) The rulers of God's People introduced the worship of pagan gods -- usually to please their pagan wives
  - 4 Thus Israel knew two types of leadership
    - a) Both strains continue in Christian life
      - (1) God continues to offer us charismatic leaders, servants: saints arise to deal with the needs of the helpless
      - (2) And God offers us stability in spiritual Kings: stable leadership in priesthood
    - b) And Christians experience the same problems with each of these that the Jews did
      - (1) We have no guarantee we will have a charismatic leader when we want one
      - (2) And our stable leadership is not guaranteed to offer us good service
    - c) As Catholics, we must be open to both
  - 5 The history of the monarchy covers
    - a) Saul
      - (1) Giving in to the requests of the people, Saul was anointed by God's prophet Samuel
      - (2) His kingship was taken from him because he failed to obey God's command to wage a holy war -- to exterminate all and destroy all in a city he conquered
      - (3) His sons do not succeed him in God's eyes, (although one, not anointed by Samuel, will rule the "northern tribes" for 7 years before he is defeated by David)
    - b) David
      - (1) He led the 2 southern tribes and, after 7 years, won control over the 10 northern tribes

## Topic

- (2) It is important to note that the tribes had no allegiance to each other -- they were united by their allegiance
  - (a) (1) To God
  - (b) (2) To David
- (3) The court prophet, Nathan, promised David that his sons would rule forever in Israel
  - (a) 2 Samuel 7:12
    - [1] *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13\* "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*
    - [2] *16 Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'*
- (4) David conquered a city never before conquered: Jerusalem
  - (a) Shrewdly, he made it his capital
    - [1] The city was near the border between the 10 northern and 2 southern tribes
    - [2] Its independent history and its location meant it was not identified with either the north or the south
  - (b) Therefore, it became identified with David! David's City
- (5) Tradition credited David with writing the psalms --
  - (a) He didn't compose most of those we have in the Bible -- they are from later times and reflect later experiences, including the exile
  - (b) Since the tradition is so strong, and since we know from the historical books that David was a musician, we can be sure he did author psalms
    - [1] 1 Samuel 16:23
      - [a] *Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.*
    - [2] Psalms 3:1
      - [a] *A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom. O LORD, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!*
    - [3] About 80 of the 150 psalms include a claim they were composed by David
  - (6) Great as he was, David remained human, committing acts of adultery and pride
- c) Solomon, one of David's sons and his anointed successor
  - (1) He built the temple, adding an additional tie between the disparate tribes and his capital
  - (2) As David was known through the ages as the author of the psalms, **Solomon was known for his wisdom**
    - (a) 1 Kings 4:29
      - [1] *And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.*
      - [2] *30 Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men-*
  - (3) And as David did not write most of the psalms we have today, Solomon did not compose most "wisdom literature" — most are **very late Biblical literature**
  - (4) He, too was human -- he introduced pagan worship
- d) The division of Israel -- the nation was divided after Solomon
  - (1) There was only a weak unity during the long reigns of David and Solomon
    - (a) The tribes had no bonds to the nation and the Temple -- both were too new
    - (b) The traditional unity still existed -- a unity to the tribe
    - (c) The confederation of the whole nation focused on each tribe remaining attached to it
      - [1] To the person of the king
      - [2] And to God
      - [3] And to the Covenant with God through the tribes
      - [4] And, in a very new way, to the one Temple, where sacrifice was to be offered

## Topic

- (2) After Solomon's death the 10 Northern tribes rejected David's line and Temple
  - (a) They still felt that they were God's people
  - (b) And God continued to see them as His people -- He sent prophets to them
    - [1] This sending is proof that God continues to care for sinners!
    - [2] He sends them to call sinful people back to Himself
    - [3] The sending warns them that in their sin, they court disasters
    - [4] Strangely, the prophets do not denounce the northern tribes for breaking away
    - [5] The prophets denounce them (as they do the southern tribes)
      - [a] For turning from God to idols
      - [b] And for ignoring the widows, orphans, and resident aliens
  - (c) After the secession, the two nations had a varied history
    - [1] At times they **warred against each other**
    - [2] At times they were **allies in warring against other foes**
    - [3] And at times **they just existed besides each other**
  - (d) The northern tribes broke from the Davidic line and from allegiance to the Temple
    - [1] Broke all allegiance to the Davidic line --
      - [a] They never had any successor of David as their ruler
      - [b] And the prophets never denounced them for this failure
    - [2] And broke all allegiance to the Jerusalem Temple -- they established their own temple
- (3) Eventually the Northern Kingdom, Israel, was conquered in 722 BCE, by Assyria
  - (a) The 10 northern tribes vanished
  - (b) Most of the people were resettled in other parts of the empire, never to return to Israel
    - [1] These are the famous "Lost Tribes"
    - [2] They are pictured as being gathered back to Israel at the end of time on the Day of the Lord
  - (c) Other peoples were brought in and resettled in Palestine
    - [1] These settlers mixed with the few Israelites who did remain
    - [2] And some of these people were the ancestors of the Samaritans
    - [3] The Jews hated them because they did not have "pure" blood traceable back to Abraham
- (4) The Southern Kingdom continued David's line
  - (a) 2 tribes, minor Benjamin and massive Judah composed the nation called "Judah"
  - (b) This nation always had a Davidic king
  - (c) It was decisively defeated by the Babylonians in 572 BCE
  - (d) All the leaders and most of the elite of the people were exiled to Babylon
  - (e) About 70 years later, all the Jews in Babylon were allowed by Cyrus, the Persian leader who conquered Babylon, the option of returning
  - (f) Many -- not all -- accepted the offer and returned to the Holy Land
- e) After the exile
  - (1) The runt nation lasted awhile
  - (2) Eventually, it was conquered by Alexander the Great
    - (a) From that point on some Greek influences affected Biblical thinking
    - (b) These influences were reflected in the views of very late OT books like the Wisdom literature and Daniel
      - [1] The idea of creation from nothing appeared
      - [2] The belief in life after death also propped up in some Jewish circles
  - (3) After Alexander's death, his lands were divided by 3 of his generals

## Topic

- (4) Two of these set up dynasties that bounced possession of Judea back and forth
  - (a) One dynasty, the Ptolemies, ruled in Egypt
  - (b) The other, the Seleucids, ruled in Syria
- f) The first religious persecution of the Jews
  - (1) A major persecution under one of Syrian rulers, Antiochus Epiphanes was a very important event in the evolution of Biblical theology
  - (2) For the first time Jews were persecuted for being Jews, for their loyalty to God
    - (a) All earlier oppositions to the Israelites were for political control of the people and land
    - (b) They knew they were God's People,
      - [1] Therefore, their enemies were God's enemies
      - [2] And God's enemies were their enemies
    - (c) But this persecution was different
      - [1] Antiochus was impressed by Greek culture
      - [2] He felt Jewish culture was crude, barbaric, a drag on the people's vitality
      - [3] For the good of the nation, he wanted there to be one culture: the Greek culture
    - (d) Consequently, he outlawed all obedience to Yahweh
      - [1] Circumcising children
      - [2] Keeping the kosher rules
    - (e) And, far worse, he put a statue of a pagan god in Yahweh's temple -- the "abomination of desolation"
      - [1] Daniel 9:27
        - [a] He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. "
    - (f) Punishment and death were the penalties he inflicted upon Jewish martyrs for obeying God's law
  - (3) This persecution had a profound effect on the peoples' thinking: it forced Israel to confront puzzling issues
    - (a) The Justice of God needed to explain The Mystery of Evil
      - [1] The good were not prospering -- they were dying painfully
      - [2] Evil people prospered and lived
    - (b) This dilemma produced, demanded, the first ideas of life after death -- as a reward for the martyrs
      - [1] These ideas were **very limited at first**
      - [2] There was no belief yet that evil people were punished after death — Evil people didn't resurrect
      - [3] But, the Jews at first did not even think all good people resurrected
        - [a] Those who died peacefully were not included among the few who resurrected
        - [b] These were rewarded during their lives on earth -- the traditional view of God's justice
      - [4] Resurrection was reserved for those who were martyred because of their loyalty to God
- **E THE PROPHETS**
  - 1 Israel's prophecy was not founded on our ideas of what a prophet is
    - a) We think of a predictor -- a Jean Dixon
    - b) Most of the Biblical prophets do make predictions -- but this predicting is not the heart of their call and mission
      - (1) They predicted disaster to a comforted nation to keep it from straying away from God
      - (2) They sought loyalty to God
      - (3) They predicted confident victory to a shattered, defeated people
  - 2 A prophet was a spokesman of God: he spoke God's word, not his own

## Topic

- 3 Israel enjoyed a long tradition of prophecy
  - a) The first references to them occur during the early monarchy
    - (1) The earliest prophets were important in the history of the nation even though they were not responsible for any written booklets, the "Non Written Prophets"
    - (2) This did not make them any less important than the written prophets in the history of the people
      - (a) Samuel and Nathan
      - (b) Elijah and Elisha
    - (3) Then God sent the Written Prophets --
      - (a) In the Bible their works were divided by length, not by historical importance
      - (b) The Major Prophets included Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel (not a true prophet)
      - (c) There were 12 Minor Prophets (one of whom was Jonah)
  - b) Each of these had different God experiences -- a few recorded their experience within their booklet
    - (1) Amos
      - (a) He experienced a God of social justice
      - (b) Therefore for his God religion does not consist of ceremonies of worship, but in caring for the weak and the poor
      - (c) He warned Israel about "The Day of Yahweh"
    - (2) Hosea
      - (a) He experienced a God of passionate love
      - (b) He knew a God of mercy
      - (c) He married a prostitute and took her back after she returned to prostitution -- just as God had done with Israel
      - (d) And he compared the relationship between God and His people to that of a dad dandling a child on his knees
    - (3) Isaiah
      - (a) He experienced a God who was all holy,
      - (b) This God couldn't support an evil nation
      - (c) But He was a God who would save a remnant
      - (d) His booklet contained the work
        - [1] Of Isaiah (the first 40 or so chapters)
        - [2] Of a later disciple of Isaiah (Deutero-Isaiah)
        - [3] And, of a much later disciple of Isaiah (Trito-Isaiah)
    - (4) Jeremiah
      - (a) He experienced a God who dealt with individuals, not just with clans
      - (b) He saw Israel as beyond redemption
      - (c) Yet he or a disciple of his offered final redemption by God
    - (5) Ezekiel
      - (a) He experienced a God so holy and loyal that we should never lose hope
      - (b) God would resurrect dead bones -- the bones stood for the nation, not for individuals in the nation
      - (c) There would not be individual resurrection but a new life for the "dead" and "decayed" nation
    - (6) Second Isaiah
      - (a) He included the surprising concept of the Suffering Servant,
      - (b) His four "Songs of the Servant" were among the most unusual parts of the Bible
      - (c) They were crucially important to a Church looking for Biblical support for the passion of Jesus

## ● III CONCLUDING NOTES

### ● A THE ESCHATON



## Topic

- 1 There was a constant tension in the Bible
  - a) Between the experience of God's blessing
  - b) And the experience of problems, serious threats, in the world -- the reality of daily life
- 2 Since God must win out, there must be a day when God perfects, finalizes, what He had begun among His People
  - a) This confidence in the future flows from an experience of the power of God
  - b) Order, complete order, will be achieved one day
  - c) And all chaos ended, ended forever
  - d) The time of fulfillment was referred to as "The Day of the Lord," "The Day," "The Day of Yahweh"
    - (1) At first the threat to end evil was applied to the nation's foes
    - (2) But Amos and other prophets applied it equally to Israel, to all who threatened social harmony within the nation
  - e) At first people thought God always punished good and rewarded evil
    - (1) Experience with history soon proved this was not always the case
    - (2) Especially was this so once Antiochus began his great persecution
      - (a) Those who denied God prospered
      - (b) Those who remained loyal to God suffered horribly and died
  - f) People could only conceive one possible solution and explanation
    - (1) God for His own reason was biding His time
    - (2) But eventually He would enter history and completely establish His Kingship
    - (3) The world (externally) would be perfected as God ended all threats to social harmony
      - (a) Evil would end
      - (b) Chaos would end
      - (c) Everything else, everything harmonious in society, would endure forever
  - g) God would start a New Age in this world
    - (1) All evil would be gone forever
    - (2) And people would live (on earth) "happily ever after"
- 3 Some felt God Himself would personally intervene;
  - a) Because of the stress on the awesomeness of God, most thought God would use a human agent
  - b) He would set this person aside for a special place in His plan -- He would "anoint" the individual
  - c) Most thought this person would be a king from the line of David because of the promise which had been made through the prophet Nathan
    - (1) 2Samuel 7:12
      - (a) "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13\* "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
      - (b) 16 Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'
  - d) A few thought he would be a prophet like Moses
    - (1) Deuteronomy 18:15
      - (a) The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet.
  - e) And a few more thought both a king and a prophet would be sent
- 4 Christians knew that Jesus was the Messiah
  - a) But Jesus acted differently from the traditional expectations of His mission
    - (1) He didn't use power to externally defeat all God's foes
    - (2) He used love to accept these foes, trying to change them by giving Himself to them in service

## Topic

- b) The NT had two views regarding the Last Days
  - (1) One view maintained that they began with the birth or resurrection of Jesus
    - (a) Matthew had an earthquake and saints coming from tombs as Jesus died, signs the eschaton has begun
      - [1] Matthew 27:50
        - [a] Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. 51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.
        - [b] 52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, 53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.
    - (b) John more than anyone else reflects this **"Realized Exchatology"**
      - [1] Everything that ever is to be was all here
      - [2] Our experience was only partial, but in Jesus it was "completed," "finished," "perfected"
        - [a] John 19:28
          - {1} After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29\* Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.
          - {2} 30\* So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.
        - [b] A paraphrase of "it is finished" was "everything has been done"
  - (2) Other New Testament writers held that the finals days were still ahead
    - (a) 1 Thess. 4
      - [1] 13 Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. 14 We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage each other with these words.
    - (b) This view was reflected in Mark and in Paul
    - (c) The view was named **"Future Eschatology" or "Finalized Eschatology"**
    - (d) The Final Days would begin when Jesus returned to complete life, the "parousia,"
- 5 The "Rapture" appeared in one strange text
  - a) This was a Christian idea from the early days
  - b) It was based on one text in Revelation
    - (1) Revelation 20:6
      - (a) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.
      - (b) 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.
    - (2) Jesus returns
    - (3) Believers join Him in a 1000 year reign
    - (4) Only at the end of this period is Satan released and the final battle waged
      - (a) The final seduction of the world begins
      - (b) An horrendous battle is waged between the forces of good and evil
  - c) The view was never a dominant idea in Catholic thought
    - (1) Not even during those centuries when the Bible was read literally

## Topic

- (2) The view is called "Millenarism"
- 6 "The End of the World" is not a dominant Biblical thought
  - a) The thought was never a dominant teaching in the Bible
    - (1) The Jews felt that some world was needed
    - (2) Our bodies needed someplace to be
  - b) Instead of the "End of the World," the Bible usually teaches the "End of an Age" of history
    - (1) Matthew 28
      - (a) 16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
    - (2) Everything in the universe is subjected to Jesus
      - (a) He rules by loving, by serving
      - (b) The whole universe will allow itself to be loved
    - (3) Then Jesus will offer the universe united in His love to the Father -- for the Father's love
- 7 When will the Age end?
  - a) All the details are secret
  - b) Even the Son and the angels who usher in the end do not know the timetable
    - (1) Mark 13:32
      - (a) "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."
  - c) In every age since Easter, people read the mysterious signs of apocalyptic literature
    - (1) Every age sees itself as the last age
    - (2) Instead of seeking signs to discover the timing of the end, people need to hear Jesus' advice as reported in Mark
      - (a) There is a way to be prepared whenever it occurs
      - (b) We should take our focus off tomorrow and live today well
  - d) Footnote: I guaranteed that Jesus would not return in the year 2000 AD
    - (1) I was on solid ground because the year had already occurred
    - (2) For centuries everyone continued to date events from the supposed year of the founding of Rome
    - (3) A monk, Dionysius Exiguus, in 525 tried to figure out when Jesus was born but he made an error in setting the year
    - (4) But the Bible says Herod was alive for at least 2 years after Jesus was born
    - (5) According to his dating, Herod died in 4 BC
    - (6) Thus the year 2000 occurred somewhere between 2004 AD to 2006 AD
- B BIBLICAL POETRY
  - 1 Hebrew poetry was different from ours
    - a) It wasn't based on rhyme but on thought patterns
    - b) And it featured regular patterns of stress
  - 2 The poetry had three basic forms
    - a) The Same thought was repeated using different words
      - (1) Isaiah 40:3
        - [a] A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
      - (2) The thought of the Psalms was often redundant

## Topic

- (a) In the wilderness/in the desert
- (b) Prepare the way/make straight a highway
- (c) The LORD/our God
- (3) The repetition helps us grasp the meaning of some Hebrew words -- like "justice" which means protecting the poor
- (4) Note that Mark and others misquote Isaiah
  - (a) They put the voice in the wilderness
  - (b) Isaiah makes no mention of where the voice was
- b) Opposite ways to phrase a thought were put together
  - (1) Proverbs 27:12
    - (a) The clever see danger and hide;  
but the simple go on, and suffer for it.
  - (2) Contrasting ideas are opposed to each other
    - (a) The clever/the simple
    - (b) See danger/go on
    - (c) Hide/suffer for it
- c) There is a development in the thought pattern
  - (1) Psalms 23:6
    - (a) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.
  - (2) The second line develops the thought of the first line
- C THE WISDOM BOOKS
  - 1 These booklets were among the last parts of the OT written
    - a) Mostly they were a series of proverbs offering advice for healthy living
    - b) Wisdom was seen as offering people an advantage in life
  - 2 The scribes then progressed to question what wisdom itself is
    - a) They made wisdom an attribute of God
      - (1) It was the pattern of all the universe -- wisdom's way of saying that God saw everything He had made and pronounced it good, whole
      - (2) Our universe is orderly, not chaotic
    - b) A few of these booklets questioned the suffering of the faithful
    - c) The meaning of all life was examined
      - (1) One writer experienced all life as meaningless
      - (2) It all ends with death -- whether we are
        - (a) Good or evil
        - (b) Rich or poor
  - 3 This literature was most important for the Jews whose religion and sacred writings had been viewed as primitive, crude, by the Greeks
    - a) More than religious thinking, the Greek world valued philosophy, the product of human reasoning seeking to give rational meaning to life
    - b) The Wisdom literature showed that the God of Israel was a God whose main trait was wisdom
      - (1) Wisdom was with Him as He created
      - (2) Wisdom continued to guide His providence of the works
  - 4 The literature covered
    - a) Proverbs
    - b) Psalms

Topic

- c) Job
- d) Essays wresting with the mystery of evil
- e) Essays on the vanity of life
- IV REMEMBER
  - A Don't get lost looking at leaves or trees and miss the beauty of the forest
  - B Don't get lost looking at words, phrases, chapters and miss the beauty of God communicated by each separate booklets of the Bible
  - C The scope of the OT shows
    - 1 A God who wants us
    - 2 A God who intervenes in our lives to save us from our own follies
    - 3 A God who never gives up on us
    - 4 A God who warns us of the folly of misusing freedom
    - 5 A God who offers us loving guides for peace
    - 6 A God preparing for the greatest revelation of His love -- Jesus