

From the Inkwell

In this issues of Latter Rain we discuss issues relating to God's will and our calling to follow it. The two brothers who fought showed that God's ways are not always man's ways, but that ultimately God is in control as the Psalm explains. God set out a way of life for all Israel to follow and this is further detailed in the article on Ezekiel. The Sermon by John Wroe written around 150 years ago shows that God's requirements do not change - although our written expressions might a little!

In our society today we have groups of people working in specialized areas - the Police, the justice system, social workers and the whole profession of educators. In early Israel most of these functions were carried out by the Priests. In addition to following the instructions given to all Israelites, the Priests were dedicated to the service of God and fellow Israelites.

There were, however, different Priestly Orders. The most common Order of Priests within Israel was that of the Levites who inherited their position, and who worked mainly in and around the Temple. Then there was the voluntary Priestly Order of the Nazarites – those who were consecrated to God not by birth or profession, but through their own decision to want to serve God in a deeper way in their lives. Then there was the Priestly Order of Melchisidek – the Order which Paul said was taken on by Jesus Christ himself, in the position of High Priest.

In reading this issue may each be encouraged to think about what role each might play in their service to God. Are you prepared to offer your life in consecration and dedication to God – “a living sacrifice” to seek to be preserved wholly unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

INDEX

<i>“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?”</i>	2	Puzzle Page	20
Israelite, Nazarite	5	Statement of Belief	21
My Garden	6	Expand Your Bible:	
God's Requirements for an Israelite	8	Two Brothers	22
Hymn No. 53	13	Psalm 46	24
Debug Your Bible:		2nd Corinthians 5:1-10	27
The Order of Melchizedek	14	Vegetarian Recipes:	
The Prodigal Son	18	Vegetable Curry & Dahl	28

“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?”

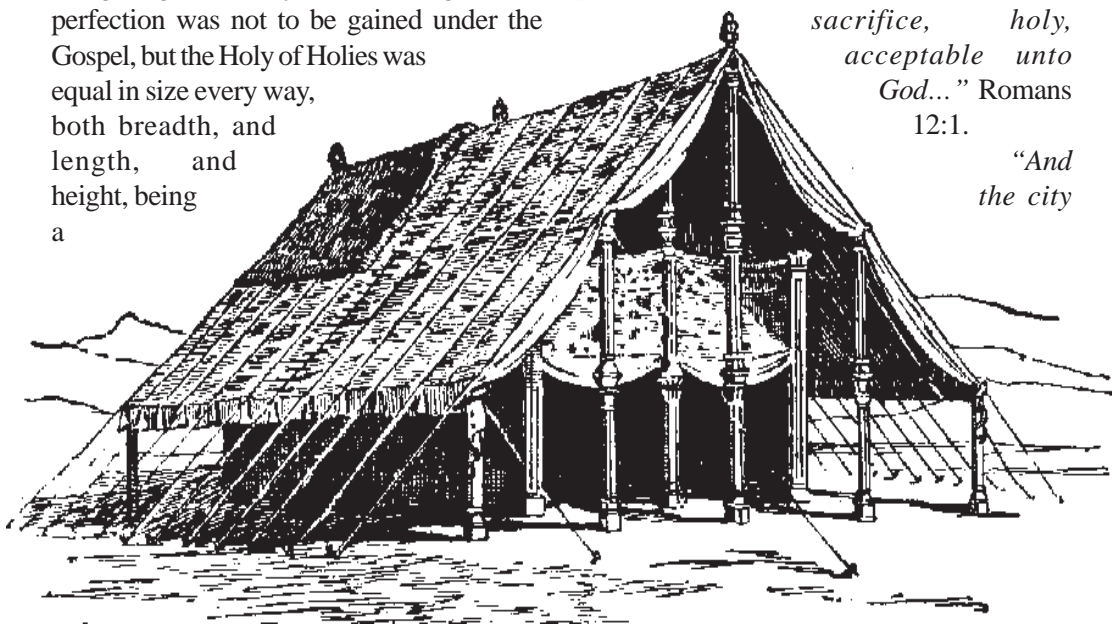
“Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” Psalm 15:1.

The former children of Israel sojourned in the wilderness for forty years, and they prepared a tent, according to the commands of God, which was thirty cubits in length and ten in breadth and height. Now this tent or tabernacle was set as a figure of that other tabernacle in which the latter Israel are to dwell, being the Spirit of God. Now, round this tent was a court, which was a figure of the law given to Moses, which did not admit men to the knowledge of spiritual things but only as it were to view the outside thereof; and the tabernacle itself was divided into two parts, the first called the Holy Place, being a figure of the Gospel, by which man obtained a knowledge of spiritual things and holiness was required: but yet the body was not cleansed from the fall, and so died. This place being longer one way stood as a figure that perfection was not to be gained under the Gospel, but the Holy of Holies was equal in size every way, both breadth, and length, and height, being a

resemblance of that Holy Jerusalem which John saw coming down out of heaven (Revelation 21:2) which was of equal size each way, showing that the inhabitants thereof would have both spirit, soul, and body made holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:27). But between these two places hung a veil, which stood as a figure of the evil in the blood, and if this was not removed they could not pass from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies. *“...he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way”* 2nd Thessalonians 2:7.

“What? Know ye not that your body (that is your whole body) is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1st Corinthians 6:19. *“At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you”* John 14:20. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...”* Romans 12:1.

“And the city



lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth and the height of it are equal” Revelation 21:16. Being the law and testimony, and the fullness of the Spirit should rest upon it, and keep all the commandments which were given to the Son of man to perform and make their mortal bodies like the body of Jesus after His resurrection. *“But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you”* Romans 8:11. *“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself”* Philippians 3:21.

In the holy place were kept the table of shewbread, the golden candlestick, and the golden altar of incense, being figurative of the two sacrifices, the sacrifice of the Jews being the animals, and the other of the Gentiles the bread and wine, which were to be partaken of as a figure of the sacrifice of Jesus as an atonement for the sins of the world.

The first, or holy place, is the life or place of the angels, their lives being lower than God, to minister unto man, between the mortal life and the immortal life – they are to be ministering spirits from the throne of God. *“Who maketh his angels* (being then called that which they were to be in the resurrection) *spirits”* Psalm 104:4. It was the first place from which the rebellious, *“The angels which kept not their first estate”* Jude 6, were cast, and they were permitted to go into the earth to prove the creation, that the works of God might be made manifest.

So there is the evil power, which is

called the devil, to minister to the evil in man, and he attracteth the evil, which by man he sowed in the field – the field being the body of the woman, as the magnet attracts the iron.

“The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one” Matthew 13:38.

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” Ezekiel 18:4. The evil of it. But in the second place, or Holy of Holies, was kept the ark of the covenant covered with gold, being a figure of the last covenant that God will make with man, of which Israel will be the first-fruits, that their spirits, souls and bodies be preserved blameless (1st Thessalonians 5:23) by God fulfilling in them His new covenant, putting His law within them and causing them to keep these laws forever (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10). For thus saith the Lord, *“That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon* (Babylon being called a city, is the body of the woman, wherein the evil was placed, *“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH”* Revelation 17:5. The seventy years is the visitation of the ingathering of Israel from amongst the Gentiles); *I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you in causing you to return to this place”* Jeremiah 29:10. Which is the Holy of Holies.

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” Psalm 126:6.

Jesus wept for man, and He went forth according to His words, *“If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you”* John 16:7. And after He arose, His body became

the tabernacle of God and ascended, fulfilling the text, showing who would abide in the tabernacle; but He promised He would come again and bring with Him His sheaves, which is the Spirit that will make man the sheaf or branch of Him. *“I am the vine, ye are the branches”* John 15:5. They being immortal – equal with Him.

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb...” Judges 13:5.

As the angel ordered that no razor was to come upon the head of Samson – He being a type of Jesus – so will it be with those who are to abide in the tabernacle and dwell in the holy hill, according to the text – **they not marrying the temple of God**, by His Spirit keeping His commands in them – by Him subduing the evil which was placed in the city (Genesis 1:28). *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”* John 14:26. *“Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard”* Leviticus 19:27. He that does this mars the image of God, and his body seeth corruption, which is the first curse that was pronounced on the body of man, unless it be removed by the body receiving the law of Christ (Romans 8:2).

And these are they who will abide in His tabernacle, and dwell in His holy hill, according to the text. The whole race of the first Adam and Eve is three days and a half; but the life of the latter Adam and Eve, which is the Immortal Bridegroom and Bride, is eternal, they being born of God,

“Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life...” Hebrews 7:3.

And these are the sealed number, the hundred and forty four thousand, which are redeemed from amongst men, being the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb (Revelation 7:1-8; 14:1-4); being called the Bride, the Lamb’s wife (Revelation 21:2), being the new world, which the body of Jesus was the beginning of. *“For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee”* Isaiah 62:5.

And now the Spirit of truth, which Jesus said should come, is bringing all things to the remembrance of Israel which are written in the Scriptures, and is opening the seals, and showing unto them the Scriptures which have been hidden and are yet to be fulfilled, causing the uncircumcised in his flesh to become circumcised in heart and flesh; and he that marred the temple of God to mar it no more, and is pointing out the glory that is laid up at the right hand of God, which will shortly be given to all who receive His testimony and obey the command of His Spirit. And thus the Spirit is the Comforter, because it announces unto man the joyful tidings that his sorrows and woes will shortly terminate.

And that He will make the old earth new, and His glory will fill it according to the words of the prophets. And these are they in whom the Lord will delight, and their bodies will be of His tabernacle; and as He abides in His, so will they in theirs, and dwell in the holy hill, as said in the text, which is the new heaven and the new earth. 📖

Israelite, Nazarite – See-a-Light, Show-a-Light

or

THE NAZARITE VOW **Past Priesthood or Future Promise**

In Numbers chapter 6 we read of the Nazarite Vow. The Nazarite Vow was a form of consecration or separation that could be taken on by any male or female from among the Children of Israel. Now many Bible Students may be inclined to just pass over this chapter, but when we look more closely we find that it contains some issues that are pivotal to God's Plan.

The Nazarite vow applied equally to men and woman. The Nazarite Vow admits those who take it into a special Priesthood. Well known Biblical examples of Nazarites include Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. There is much support for believing that Jesus also was a Priestly Nazarite, although the Bible does not say this specifically. A Priest is one who is dedicated to God. The Nazarite Priesthood is a Priesthood that is not male dominated. It is a Priesthood into which either man or woman is admitted voluntarily through personal commitment and consecration.

Now the Israelites had a formal Priestly structure through the Levites which was hereditary and was restricted to men holding positions. In the New Testament references are made to God's people all being Priests to Him. Clearly under the Levitical Priesthood only male descendants of Levi were admitted, so the Priests of the New Testament were not of the Levitical Priesthood. The Nazarite Priesthood, however, allows for any Israelite, male or female, to become a Priest to God.

No doubt many of the Levitical Priests would have had times when they took on the Nazarite Vow for a period, but it was open to

all Israelites. We note then that all Nazarites had to be Israelites (Priests or not), but not all Israelites were Nazarites.

The Nazarite Vow (Numbers Chapter 6) included three main elements:

“He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink”, vs 3-4;

“All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head”, v 5; and

“All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body”, vs 6-7.

Overall, *“All the days of his separation he is holy unto the Lord”, v 8.*

As mentioned above, there were notable Nazarites in the Scriptures. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

Samson

In Judges chapter 13 we read about the birth of Samson, and that he was dedicated before birth to be a Nazarite to God (v 5). Samson was of the tribe of Dan, not a Levite, yet he was chosen to this priestly office. There have been many discussions about how good-a-Nazarite Samson may have been, but clearly the wearing of his hair indicated a dedication to God through which God gave him super-human powers. When he cut his hair he lost his strength. It is not likely that his hair gave him the strength, but his dedication to God exemplified through not cutting his hair.

Samuel

Samuel was dedicated as a Nazarite by his mother prior to his birth. He was of the tribe of Ephraim, again not of Levi, but was chosen to be a Priest in the Temple.

Samuel was perhaps one of the most successful Priests in Israel. Not much is said about his Nazarite connection, but it is clear that he observed all the requirements of the vow all the days of his life.

John The Baptist

The emphasis with the pre-natal dedication of John The Baptist was that *“he..shall drink neither wine nor strong drink”* Luke 1:15. John’s father was of a priestly tribe, so John was entitled to be a priest of the Levitical order. However, it would appear that he was dedicated to his priestly duties under a Nazarite Vow.

Under the Levitical era each person would dedicate or separate themselves to God for a specified period of time. Under the New Testament era, because of the ongoing sanctification provided through the blood of Jesus, a person may dedicate themselves for life, realizing that if they break the vow, the ceremonial termination requirements are immediately met through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Each of the elements of the Vow can be seen in a temporal (physical) and a spiritual sense as is discussed below.

“He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk” vs 3-4.

Now the emphasis here is on strong drink – or anything that has begun to ferment. Even the moist grapes – those which have begun to ferment, or the dried – which went through fermentation in the drying out process were not allowed as they contained residual elements of the fermentation process. Many interpret this passage to indicate that Nazarites should

drink no intoxicating liquor at all, but the intent could well be not to imbibe to excess. At the time the most common drink was a mixture of one part wine to around 8 parts water. The wine had the effect of sterilizing the water, and making it safe to drink. Clearly it was not strong drink in itself, although it contained a component of “strong drink”. This would have been what Jesus drank with the disciples at the Last Supper. Note, however, when on the cross, Jesus refused to take of the strong undiluted vinegar offered to him.

There are, however, a number of analogies that are also drawn from the wine stipulations. The wine, in symbology, can be seen as the blood of Jesus. Whilst all need to be reconciled to God through the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus the Nazarites can look, through obedience, to go on to perfection and not need to again partake of His blood for the forgiveness of sins. In this sense, the consecration of the Nazarite potentially makes him of the same order as Jesus Christ, and in Paul’s words, heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. Thus the Nazarite has the inherent evil removed from within by God, partaking of neither inherited evil (the kernel), nor sin (the husks) that comes as a result of that evil.

We also find, however, the symbology throughout the Scriptures where the woman is likened to a vine. See for example Psalm 128:3 where it reads: *“Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.”* We find in the laws specific instructions about when a man should partake of the vine (the body of his wife), including a requirement for abstinence during the time of separation (the kernel) and the time of purification (the husks).***

“All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come on his head”

v 5. There is a clear instruction here about not cutting the hair on the head. Paul tells us that “if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him” that is in the eyes of the world. The Nazarite in offering his or her life to God is prepared to offer a sacrifice that involves being thought foolish (shamed) by the world for the sake of God. Now if we consider that the life or body of each Nazarite is a stone in the altar on which the sacrifice is offered, there is another interesting parallel. When the Israelites built an altar it was to be built out of natural stones. The stones were not to be cut or fashioned in any way. This was in direct contrast to the custom of other cultures in some of which all the stones had to be finely cut and nicely fashioned, cut and placed together to form an altar. If we take the analogy of the stones not being fashioned in any way, it would seem logical that the command about not marring the temple of God (the body) would apply to the whole of the Nazarite’s body and not only to the head. The head would be used as a type of the whole of the body, being the part that would mostly be seen by other people. Thus it would appear that the command not to cut the hair would apply to the whole of the Nazarite’s body – not just to the head.

The long hair, then, is symbolic of the bride and is an outward symbol of her dedication to her Lord and Master, whom she serves. The Messianic bride exemplifies the natural stones being built into the walls of the heavenly temple.

“All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord he shall come at no dead body” vs 6-7.

The Nazarite was to totally separate himself or herself from death. In a physical sense this meant not touching a dead body, and as a type refers to seeking to

overcome physical death and being changed from mortal to immortal – which will happen at Jesus’ return. Jesus said: *“Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead”* Matthew 8:22.

In Revelation we read that God’s people are called to separate themselves from the evil world in which they live. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Revelation 18:5. The world is dead to the knowledge of God, and as such the Nazarites are not to touch the evil ways of the world which are as a dead body to a living mind.

In all these elements there is a question as to how literally and how symbolically each requirement should be taken. However one would expect that a combination of both would be the ultimate solution.

So God chose Israel to be His special people and as a vehicle through which the World could see the light of God in action in a practical way. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Here was the chance for Israel to see the light of God’s ways, and follow His words. However, nationally as we know only too well, Israel did not rise to the task in an effective manner.

However, from among the Israelites was the call to those who would, to take up the challenge at an individual level and actually show the light that God had intended His whole Israel people to show. *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven”* Matthew 5:16

Given the role of the Nazarite Vow in establishing the Priesthood of those who

will become the Bride of the Lamb, it would seem that the 144,000 would all need to be Nazarites.

How do we know, then who are Nazarites and who has taken on the Vow? There appears to be no formal process to admit people to the Priesthood, so in this age it becomes a voluntary decision, evidenced in a way of life displayed to others. Further it is a vow undertaken between God and each individual.

So whether you believe you have

taken the Nazarite Vow or not depends on yourself, but it would seem from the above that to be Priests to God, and a member of the 144,000 will require that level of commitment and dedication.

“Those Nazarites who are preserved to the end, with their lamps lit, will be completely without guilt. Only they will be able to stand in the divine presence without being annihilated by it. They are without fault. They are victors over the serpent’s bite. They are free of (willful) Sin” (Ref 1).📖

Ref 1: Page 5, The Nazarite Vow, Nazark Web Site, www.Nazark.com

My Garden

My heart is like a garden plot
Where flowers of love may grow;
Where peace and joy without alloy,
May bloom ‘mid winter’s snow:
But weeds of pride and self and sin
Alas! may take a hold,
And then, behold! - a wilderness
Unsightly, drear and cold.

Although I try with might and main
To keep my garden clear,
The ugly, overgrowing weeds,
Refuse to disappear;
They pop up here and spring up there,
As though some unseen foe,
In mischief sowed them purposely,
To spoil my garden show.

I’ve heard about a Gardener
Who tends such plots as mine,
Who rids the weeds and routs the foe,
And makes the flowers to shine.
Lord Jesus make my stubborn heart
A garden sweet and fair;
Come Thou, Thyself, in risen power
And be the Gardener there!

God's Requirements for an Israelite.

*“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. **But** if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, and hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely **live**, saith the Lord God...but if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, **he shall surely live, he shall not die.** All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live”* Ezekiel 18:4-9,21,22.

This is a very good summary of what is required of Israel and what Israel's hope incorporates. Let's have a closer look.

The passage starts with the statement that all souls belong to God. *“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* God created them and God retains them after their death. The soul that sins, though, we are told will surely die. It is interesting to note that the responsibility for the choice between good

and evil, or sinning and not sinning is with the soul, not the spirit or the body, but the soul is the discernor of our actions, the decider of our degree of sinfulness. This promise dates back to Genesis 3:3 when God had one requirement of Adam and Eve, *“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden,... Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die”*. We know this is how death entered this world but not every soul who has lived has died. Does this open up the possibility of escaping death somehow? There are two men recorded in the Old Testament who were raised to God without physical death – Enoch and Elijah. Enoch's history in the Old Testament is limited to one paragraph, *“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him”* Genesis 5:24. If only we could live our lives and have that said about our faith, that we walked with God. This means that Enoch followed God's laws and instructions, that God was the focus of Enoch's life. We have more details on Elijah, one whose faith was such that the Jewish nation still look for his return. Obviously then, there is the possibility of mankind living lives in accordance with God's Will and not experiencing physical death, but rather being changed or raised up and given a new body to co-exist with the Father in eternity.

So, what do we do to be recognised as part of God's Israel? Well let's look at what the verses following tell us.

*“**But** if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right”,* the passage starts with the emphatic word ‘But’ showing that what has just been stated is not a fact for all souls. There is another

option. If a person keeps the law and does what is right then he will gain a reward. This is a big thing these days when temptations come from all sides to get something a bit cheaper, the temptation not to mention when you have been undercharged, not being completely honest with tax returns, or income, the focus on the acquisition of wealth at any cost – all these temptations and more tend to make Israel become ‘of the world’ rather than ‘in the world but not of it’. That is why this first statement is so very important – you must do what is right and lawful by God’s standards, and it is only through the implementation of God’s Laws and God’s standards in man’s life that man can possibly become ‘just’.

“...and hath not eaten upon the mountains...” – similar to the ‘mountains’ in Solomon’s Song (2:8,17) in which the mountains refer to

mankind’s, or more specifically our own, mountain of sin (the evil within us) that separates us from God. God’s Law in Leviticus has numerous dietary requirements for Israel, but those who ignore these instructions and eat contrary to what God has instructed are only adding sin unto sin,

making the mountains of their own sin higher and higher. There is a cause and effect relationship between what is eaten and the physical well-being of our bodies.

“...neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel...” – yes, Israel

in the days of Ezekiel, and before, had acquired idols from various other cultures, which Israel took upon themselves to worship. The incident with Jezebel is one prime example of this. But this is an apostasy. “I am the Lord thy God...thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven 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...” Exodus 20:1-3. This was a direct violation of the 1st and 2nd of the Ten Commandments. Basically ‘an idol’ is anything that holds a greater place in the believer’s heart than God does, so an idol

could even be a car, a job, a child, a parent, a picture, anything, that means more to you than God does. This makes perfect sense for God is to be at the forefront of Israel’s heart and mind – He will inhabit their heart and give them their thoughts and actions, all the while conscious of the temptations on this

The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away...Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

Solomon’s Song 2:8-13,17.

earth to follow earthly things rather than heavenly.

“...neither hath come near to a menstruous woman...” Israel were given very strict instructions with regards to procreation and sexual activity in Leviticus 15:19-33. In very brief form these instructions tell Israel that the husband is not to approach his wife sexually during her time of menstruation (the Jews call this *niddah*) and then to number 7 days (the time of purification) then she shall be free for sexual activity and the conception of children. Approaching unto a menstruous woman is regarded as a gross sin for Israel. The neglect of this Law from God manifested itself with Noah’s ‘drunkenness’ in relation to not verbally telling his sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth) of this Law. His sons were ignorant of this aspect of the Law and henceforth Cainan/Canaan was cursed because of this ignorance. Israel should not be caught ignorant as Ham was, and parents should be responsible and *“...know how to give good gifts to your children”* Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:13. For millennia the time of a woman’s menstruation has been referred to as her ‘flowers’ - it is deduced from other Scriptures that the tree mentioned in Genesis 3:3 and Revelation 22:2, was the woman – so if you take the analogy further using a common fruit tree as an example you wouldn’t take or pick the flowers otherwise you would destroy or damage the fruit – no flowers, no fruit. The time is not one of ‘dirtiness’ as some female liberationists often express, but rather as with nature, part of the natural course through which any of God’s creatures who can procreate must go through to prepare for procreation.

“...and hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath

spoiled none by violence...”. Israel are to deal with people with the utmost honesty. Israel are not to oppress (in other words bully, subjugate, intimidate) anybody. Their behaviour is supposed to be a reflection of the love that the Father has for them, so ‘oppression’ is not an aspect of an Israelite’s behaviour. Israel will also honour their promises – Israel doesn’t try to get out of paying their bills, their obligations and duties, but meet them wholeheartedly with the faith that the Father will provide what they need, when the need it, if they keep their promises to mankind and pay their bills, keep their commitments and honour their obligations. Violence is never an option for an Israelite.

“.. hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment...” - care of those less fortunate has always been a major aspect of God’s Law. This was why the gleanings in the fields were left for the widows and in studying the Law you find that the poor, the orphaned, the widowed, are always accommodated. Those who number themselves of Israel must partake of charitable works – whether they be on a large or small scale. Where there is need there Israel should be demonstrating how God wants mankind to treat each other. *“Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughter, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy”* Ezekiel 16:48-59. Did you notice before that one of the sins of Sodom was its lack of charitable works? So since the days of Sodom and Gomorrah God has had an interest in the orphaned, widowed and poor being looked after by Israel. The orphaned will grow up, if given a chance, and begin their own family and their own life; the

widowed will eventually either die or remarry, and the poor with the 7 year cancellation of debts should only remain poor for a short term. Thus these conditions (orphan, widow, poor) are only transient temporal conditions, compared with the heavenly blessings that come from being aware of these conditions and helping where one can.

“...*he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase...*”. Only give that which you can afford to do without, don’t lend and likewise don’t borrow. Different ideologies for this day and age aren’t they, but look at the dangers of credit card debts, multiple mortgages, and the amount of friendships and relationships that have disintegrated because ‘money’ was involved. If you only give what you can afford to do without you don’t encompass the problems of money lending. “*Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury...*” Deuteronomy 23:19,20. Even though the Levitical law states that Israel may lend upon usury to the stranger they must never lend upon usury to Israel. Ezekiel takes that one step further and states to not lend upon usury at all to anyone. The acquisition of wealth, even through usury, can become the greatest love in a person’s life. God is saying don’t lend and acquire interest or profit from ill gotten gains. Israel should have the faith to know without doubt that God will provide what they need, when they need it (see Deuteronomy 23:19,20; Isaiah 24:2; Jeremiah 15:10; Leviticus 25:36,37; Psalm 15:5; Proverbs 28:8).

“...*that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment*

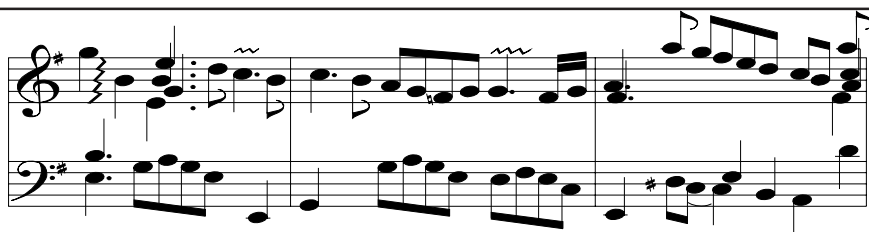
between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly...”. We live in a society where one of the famous catch-phrases of the day is ‘The truth is relative depending on your perspective’. But God says, “...*he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God...*” – this is the description Ezekiel gives of the man that follows all of God statutes and guidelines – he is ‘just’ (taken from the Hebrew *tsaddig* meaning ‘right, righteous, just, rigid’). So, when Enoch is described as ‘walking with God’ we could now say that Enoch was ‘just’ by the above description and we can gain an insight into the life of Enoch by looking at the above requirements for an Israelite. And what is the promise for the ‘just’ man, “...*he shall surely live...*” promises God through Ezekiel. It doesn’t say die and be raised to life again. No it says quite clearly that “*he shall surely live*”, without experiencing death. We know from our study of the Bible that God keeps His promises, so what would make this promise any different to the others He has honoured?

But, you say, I have always done the wrong thing, tried to profit where I could and competed where I felt it was healthy. Isn’t it too late for me, a sinner, to now discover God’s Law and start following it. No. God very clearly tells us “...*but if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.*” This is the magic of the God that we have – He forgives mankind anything if mankind will only turn back to God and away from their sins – God literally wipes the slate clean and allows us to start again in fresh relationship with Him. If any

man accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Redeemer and feels that the Laws of God are meant for him then he should be keeping them. The Laws are the Father's guiding rules for His Children – they are given with Love as we would give our own children guidelines – they are not given to make life harder but to give life. And again we find that special promise, “*he shall surely live, he shall not die*”, not he shall die and be raised again, but that he shall not experience death is the promise and the body will be changed, “*in the twinkling of an eye*” 1st Corinthians 15:52, and all, spirit, soul and body, will be

taken home to Paradise.

Paul said, “*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*” Romans 9:4. It is the desire to seek to obey God's laws and commands that will prove who are Israel and who are not, for Israel will have these laws within their hearts and instinctively want to follow the ordinances which the Father has decreed. “*Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed*” 1st Corinthians 15:51. 📖



From the Hymnal Hymn No. 53

(Solomon's Song 2:1,2; 1st John 3:2)

More fair than the lily, more sweet than the rose,
Are those wh're begotten of Jesus Christ's Spouse,
In spirit conceived, She'll bring them to birth,
'And show God's creation' in immortal earth.

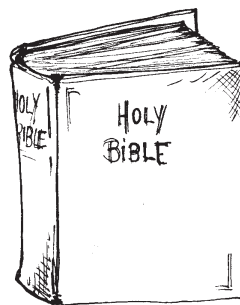
His sons and His daughters He calleth them now,
Who in His commandments and statutes do go;
That when He appeareth they'll like Him be made,
'Triumphant togheter', the Bridegroom and Bride.

For when He appeareth to crown them with bliss,
They'll surely behold Him perfect as He is;
And 'twill not be as in the ages gone by,
'That he who saw God' would assuredly die.

For God doth to man this intelligence give,
His God he shall see and eternally live;
Nor ever his body corruption will see,
'But like unto Jesus' flesh ever be.

Debug Your Bible:

The Order of Melchizedek



Melchizedek is rather an elusive character. There are few references to him in the Bible but he was obviously a very important character. The first mention of Melchizedek is in the first book of the Bible, Genesis: *“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (Abram) after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God”* Genesis 14:17,18.

Abram had just defeated the four kings when he was met by the High Priest, Melchizedek. He partook of bread and wine with the High Priest. This is the first instance in Scripture where the bread and wine are mentioned in the sense of communion. The High Priest was communing with Abram and they partook of bread and wine, which was just as Jesus would do in the Last Supper with his 12 disciples. This meeting sets the stage for the coming of Jesus and the especial significance that the bread and wine would have in His ministry.

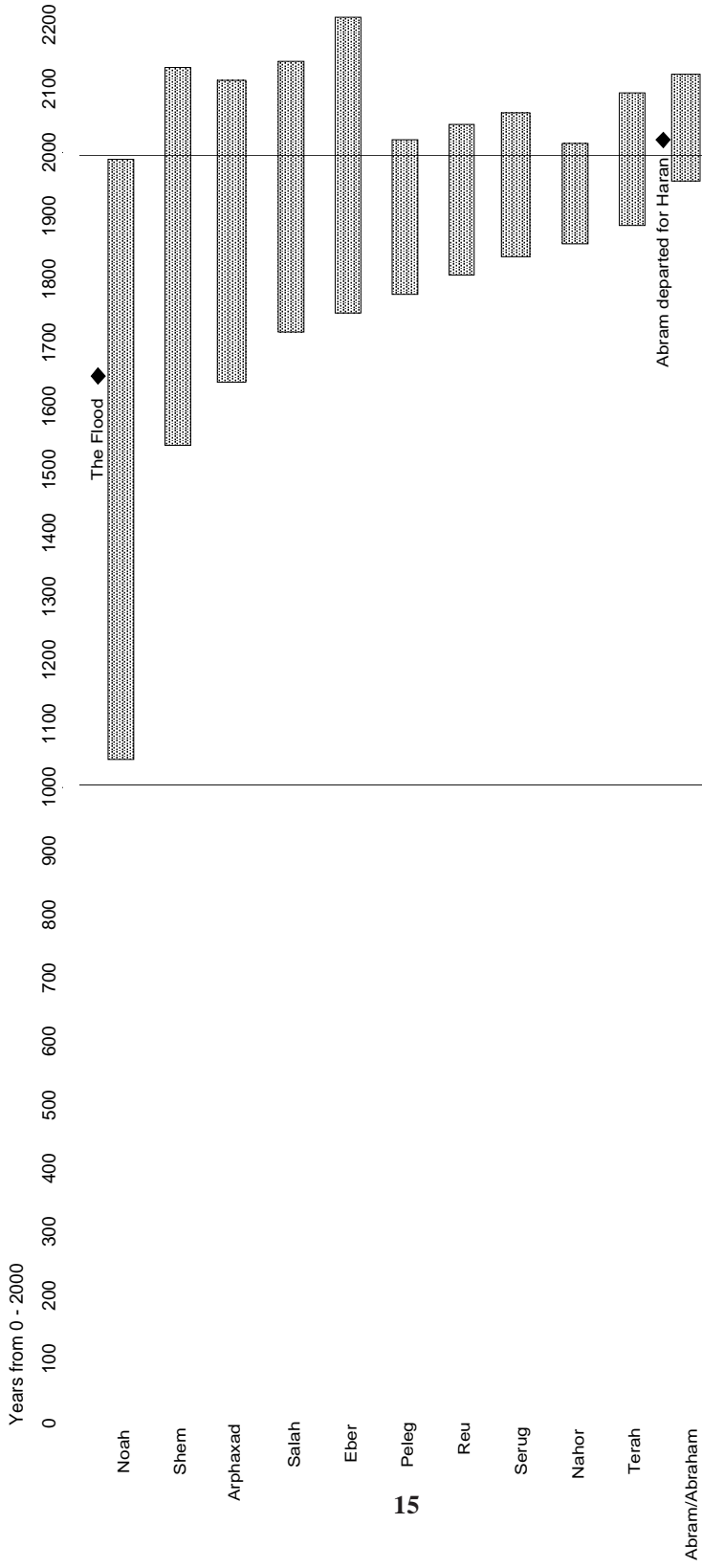
Melchizedek is obviously a figure of some authority, therefore it can be said that Melchizedek was greater than Abram. Abram is likened to a prince or king but the priesthood of Melchizedek must have been greater because Abram accepted Melchizedek’s authority by accepting his blessing. The name Melchizedek can be broken down into two words *Melchi* meaning ‘king’ and *zedek* meaning ‘righteousness’. The ancient name for Jerusalem was Salem

(*Shalom*) meaning ‘peace’ but interestingly the prefix *Jeru* means ‘city of’ thus translated Jerusalem means ‘City of Peace’. So Melchizedek performed a dual role, that of King of Salem and High Priest. Again this could be said to be a prelude to Jesus Christ who also fulfilled these dual roles of King and High Priest. More will be written on this below.

The name Melchizedek has a close parallel with the name Adonizedek (Joshua 10:1-3), which name means ‘my master is just’. Interestingly in the Book of Jasher Adonizedek/Melchizedek is said to be Noah’s son Shem – the first of the priestly righteous line after the flood. *“And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem, the same was Shem, went out with his men to meet Abram and his people, with bread and wine, and they remained together in the valley of Melech. And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth from all that he had brought from the spoil of his enemies, for Adonizedek was a priest before God”* Book of Jasher 16:11,12. This passage is very similar to the Genesis passage isn’t it? Note here also that it is the first instance of tithing (ten percent) mentioned in the Scriptures.

We next read of Melchizedek in the Book of Psalms: *“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek”* Psalm 110:4. This Psalm is about the coming of the Priest-King-Judge that was expected during the latter days. It starts with the phrase, *“The Lord said unto my Lord”* which passage has been much debated. Both Lord’s have a capital signifying

Could Shem have known Abraham? Just look at the chart below and you will see that Abraham was about 35 years old when Noah died.



divinity so it cannot be King David addressing Jehovah, rather it is clearly Jehovah (*The Lord*) talking to Christ (*My Lord*). This psalm also clearly states that the coming Priest-King-Judge would be after the order of Melchizedek encompassing these three roles.

Interestingly the Dead Sea Scrolls talked of the coming of two Messianic figures, a priest and a king, who would be under the authority of the archangel Michael. Melchizedek was a union of kingship and priesthood just as Jesus would be. The Qumran writings were fulfilled with one figure, though, not two - Jesus Christ who was King and Priest in one, and having the spirit of Michael just as the Qumran community had said He would.

“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest: but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec” Hebrews 5:5-10.

The Melchizedekan priesthood was God ordained, not man ordained. Different again to the Levitical priesthood whereby the Levitical priests died, the Melchizedekan priest would be a perpetual priest (immortal/eternal). The Levitical or Zadokian priesthoods did not claim descent from Melchizedek, just from Aaron. There is no record of Melchizedek’s death, but Josephus tells us that 83 high priests officiated from

Aaron to the fall of the second temple in AD70. We are also told that Melchizedek had neither father, nor mother, in other words his genealogy was not important. When we look at this in the light of the Gospels passages such as Matthew 10:37, *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”*. And remember when Jesus’ parents had left him at the temple and came looking for him, what was his reply, *“Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother”* Matthew 12:48,49. Those that do God’s will are brethren of Jesus Christ. It couldn’t be simpler. Your earthly parentage is not what is most important, rather your spiritual ancestry that should guide you, and allowing your spiritual parents (Christ and Jerusalem Above) to work within you would also be of benefit in our relationships with our earthly brethren. The focus, though, should be Godward not earthward.

“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” Hebrews 6:20. *“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a*

tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: but he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him” Hebrews 7:1-10. The whole of chapter 7 is pertinent to Melchizedek but space restrictions limit the quoting of the whole passage.

Even Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because he was in the loins of Abraham his great grandfather. In the biblical sense an ancestor is regarded as containing within himself all his descendants. Therefore this could be taken further down the line – Jesus would also have been in the loins of his ancestor, Abraham, and thus acknowledged the authority of Melchizedek. Therefore all those that claim descent from Abraham to this present day should acknowledge the authority of the priesthood after the order of the Melchizedek and give to God his ten percent. Christians would also acknowledge Jesus Christ in this priesthood.

The Aaronic (Levitical) priesthood did not supercede the Melchizedekan priesthood, rather it was an earthly priesthood. Perfection cannot be attained through the Levitical priesthood – the Levitical priesthood could be said to belong to the Age of Preparation.

It makes sense then, that to be at peace with God, one must be a righteous person, just as Enoch and Elijah had been. All we

are told of Enoch is that ‘he walked with God and was not’. To be able to be at peace enough with yourself and your actions that you can say you walked with God shows the level of righteousness that needs to be attained – and please note here that righteousness is nothing like self-righteousness. This level of righteousness is also called ‘perfection’ but it tells us in the book of Hebrews that the Levitical priesthood could not attain perfection. The Melchizedekan priesthood does pertain to perfection and immortality. The Aaronic priesthood did not supersede the Melchizedekan either, the Priesthood of Melchizedek is forever, eternal, everlasting, one could say immortal.

Thus in summary it can be said that:

- the Melchizedekan priesthood was a divinely appointed priesthood, independent of the Old Testament Levitical priesthood and superior to it;
- God appointed Christ as a priest – it was God’s oath and God does not break promises;
- God appointed Melchizedek as a priest – it was God’s appointment; note here that the first oath from God was given to Abraham in Genesis 22:17;
- the Melchizedekan priesthood is a permanent priesthood, perpetual and never-ending;
- the Melchizedekan priesthood points the reader forward to the coming of Jesus Christ who would be only the 2nd high priest after the Order of Melchizedek since the creation of the earth;
- the Melchizedekan priesthood is only open to those who display true righteousness, perfection and immortality.📖

The Prodigal Son

Here in Australia, it is Winter - a lovely time to sit by the fire and read a book, isn't it? The Bible is a special book in which we read stories called parables - Jesus used this form of teaching, for in each story is a message. It is good if we can understand their meaning. The Prodigal Son is one of these stories. Prodigal is a big word, isn't it? It simply means 'a wasteful son'. I'll tell you about him.

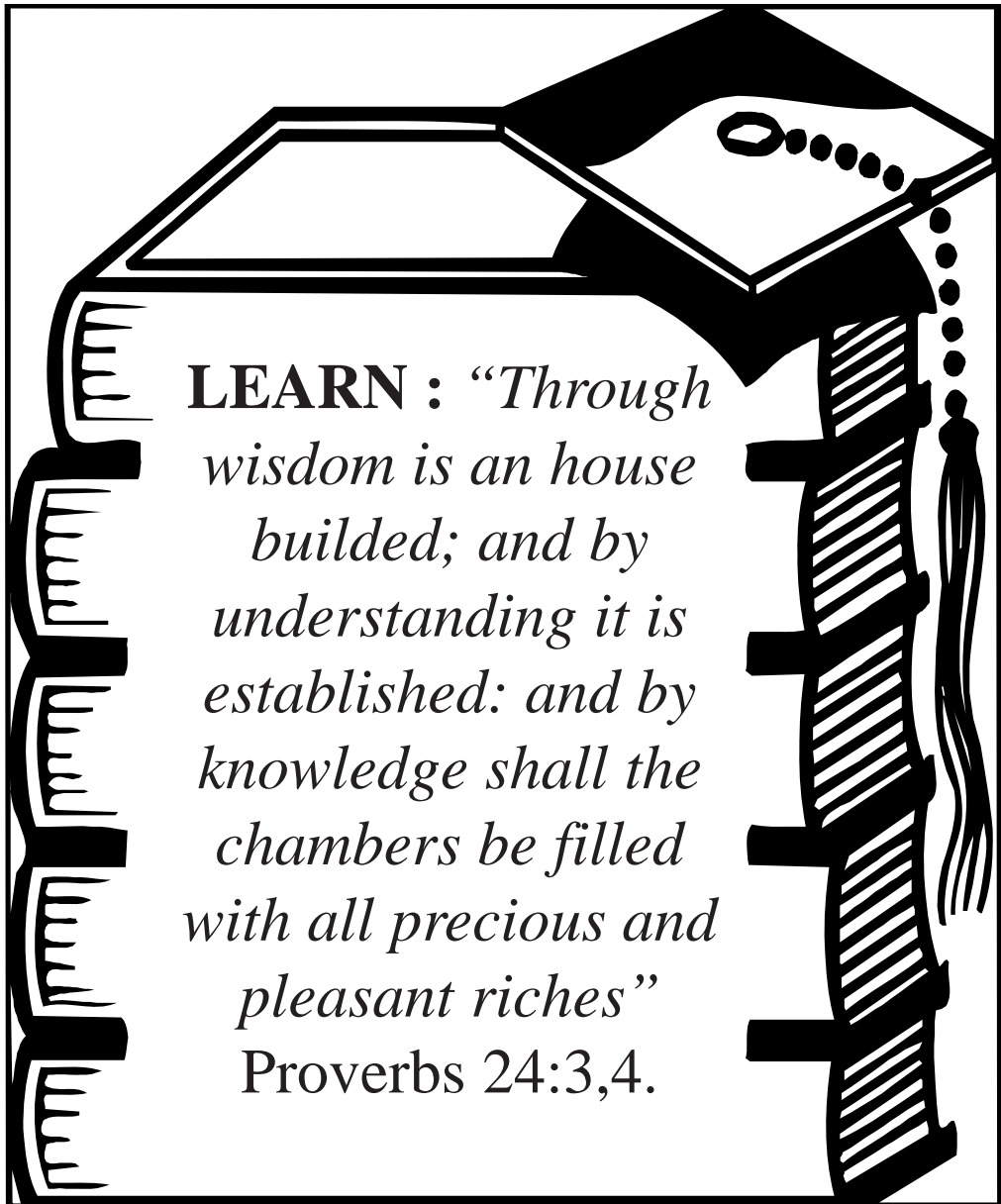
There was a man who had two sons. When they grew up, the younger one wanted to leave home - he thought it would be fun to travel and see other countries. The young man didn't have any money, so, his father divided his possessions, giving half to each son. As soon as possible, the younger son left home - he travelled a long way. However, he did not take care of his money - he wasted it.

Eventually, he found he was many miles from home, there was a famine in the land and he had no money. What was he going to do? No one helped him. Well, he had to look for work and so he was given a job on a farm and was sent to feed the pigs! The young man was so hungry he wanted to eat the pig's food! He began to think of his home - why, his father's servants had more than he did - they had plenty of food and he had nothing. "I will go home and tell my father how wrong I have been and ask him to let me work for him", he thought. So, he made his way home.

How the father must have worried about his son. Can you imagine how often he would look down the road wishing he would come home? So it was that one day he did see his son coming in the distance - he ran to meet him, put his arms around him, and kissed him. The young man said he was sorry and wasn't worthy to be called his son, but the father had his servants bring the best clothes for him and put a ring on his finger. They made a feast of good things to eat, many friends came and they had music and dancing in this welcome home party.

How wonderful that the father forgave this son, who had wasted

so much. God is our heavenly Father and He is kind - He will forgive us too when we do wrong, we only have to ask. My dears, do not waste all the opportunities God has blessed us with. We have eyes to read God's message, ears to hear it in church, we also have hearts that can understand, with God's help. Do pray for understanding. 📖



PUZZLE PAGE

PATIENCE




Use the International Morse Code to decipher a Bible verse about patience.

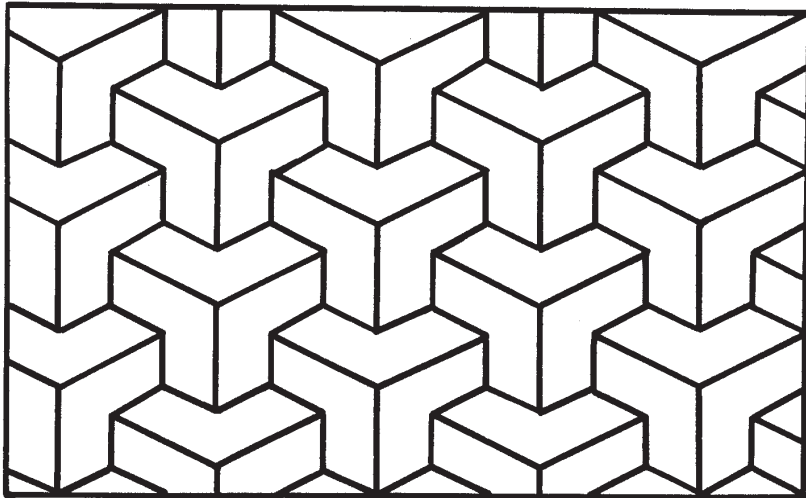
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1 Thess. 5:14

Can you make this design look like a stack of boxes? Color all the  shapes blue, all the  shapes red and all the  shapes yellow. It will take a long time. Be patient!



Statement of Belief

The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures. Here is an outline:

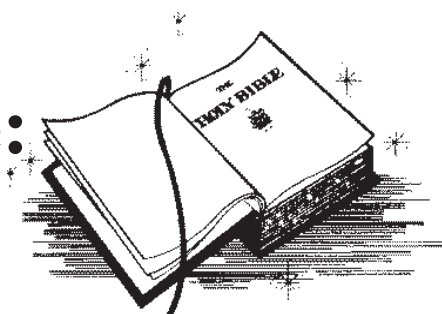
We Believe

- * In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- * In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- * That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6).
- * That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- * That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were "*for their good always*" (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- * That all have sinned and come "*short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19).
- * That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- * That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:44).
- * That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- * That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20).
- * That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21).
- * That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9).
- * That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- * That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation chapter 19).

We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.

Expand Your Bible:

Two Brothers



If you had met them you would never have thought that they were related in any way – especially not as brothers. They bore no resemblance to each other either physically, or in outlook. One was hairy and red in colouring – the other smooth skinned and darker in colouring. The first was out for a good time, and the most important thing to him was to be known as a cunning hunter and a good shot with his bow and arrows. The other brother was of a quieter nature, interested in things spiritual and more interested in staying around the home area tending the flocks and listening to the stories his mother told of the family history and traditions, and of how God had made great promises to his ancestors to be fulfilled in their descendants.

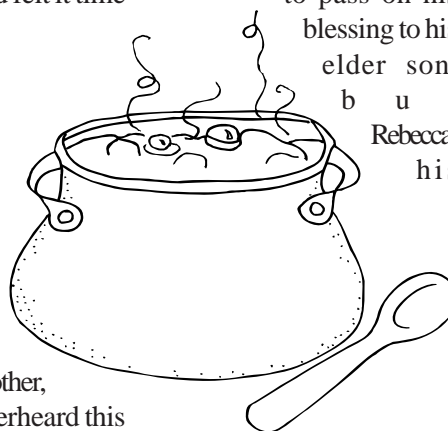
Not only were these two boys brothers – they were twins! When they were born the story was told of how the second boy, Jacob, had grabbed the heel of his brother Esau as they were born. This, according to the tradition of the times, indicated that Esau would serve Jacob, an idea which seemed quite out of the question at that time, as Esau, being the elder, and a boy, stood to gain everything when his father Isaac died in the future. He was heir to the birthright and the blessing.

Whether Jacob pondered often over these things is unknown, but it seems quite likely that he would wonder how it could be that his brother would serve him, and it must have been on his mind when he ‘bought’ the birthright from his brother for
Audrey HARRISON

a bowl of food. Did Esau have so little thought for his birthright that he would even in jest sell it to his brother, or was he so assured that no matter what being the son favoured of his father he would win out? “What use is any birthright to me if I die of starvation?” he asked. His hunger and desire to satisfy his bodily need was obviously first in his mind.

Some years later, Isaac was getting old and felt it time

to pass on his blessing to his elder son, but Rebecca, his



mother, overheard this and devised a plan for

Jacob to supplant Esau to receive it. Did it still rightfully belong to Esau? After all, he had sold it to his younger brother. Did Esau even remember this? Would Isaac have had any idea of what had passed between the brothers?

Most know the story of how this act of deception caused Jacob to flee in fear from his family home, with his brother vowing to kill him, his father angry with him and his mother fearful for him.

In the years ahead, Jacob was to know fear, trickery and deception, as many times

Laban his uncle with whom he made his new home went back on promises and agreements made to him. Jacob knew exile from home and loved ones. He knew the cold of the dessert nights tending the animals. He knew trickery when he was given the wrong sister in marriage (a happening which caused much grief and unhappiness in his camp). He knew fear when Esau and his servants came out to meet him, and grief when he would never again see his beloved mother. He knew deception again from his sons and their treatment of neighbouring tribes as they travelled through the country.

The experience of these happenings helped to mould Jacob's character so that he came to trust in the Lord and his faith in God had been strengthened when he went out to meet Esau. Jacob sent 'waves' of gifts to his brother hoping to appease the anger which he thought Esau still felt towards him and to show him that he was a successful man, and that he had no need of anything belonging to their father.

The night before he met up with Esau was a long and 'soul searching' night for Jacob as he wrestled with his conscience and his relationship with God. All night he wrestled with an unknown opponent, and as the dawn came, the stranger with whom he wrestled said to him, *"Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel, for as a*

prince hast thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed" Genesis 32:28.

Jacob called the place Peniel for he said *"I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved"*.

Further on in Genesis 35:9-12 this name change is again confirmed and a promise given. *"And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land"*.


From then on Jacob's descendants were called Israel or Israelites, described by Paul in Romans 9:3-4, *"My brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises."*

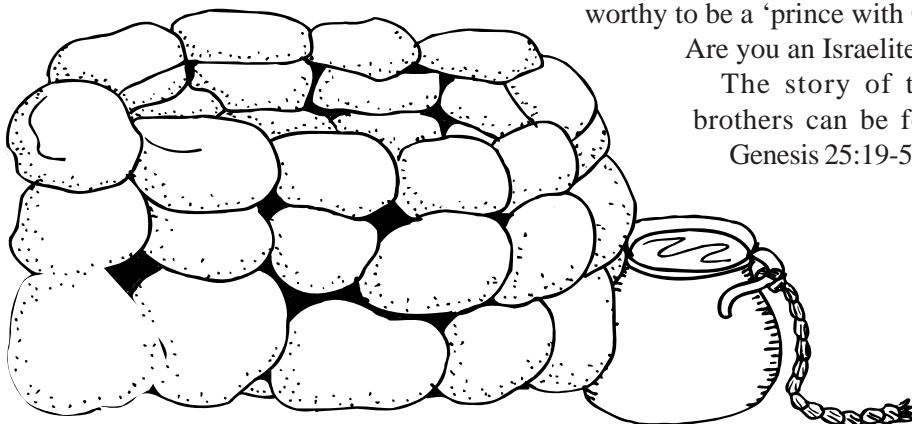
Esau and Jacob were reconciled, and Jacob saw his father again, but what a different Jacob – no longer Jacob the supplanter but Israel, a prince with God.

The descendants of Israel are in the world today, just as in Paul's day. Many are unaware of their hereditary bloodline but many have a leaning toward the promises and teachings handed down.

Has your character been moulded and tried as was Jacob's so that you may be worthy to be a 'prince with God'.

Are you an Israelite?

The story of the two brothers can be found in Genesis 25:19-50; 26. 



Psalm 46

*“God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.
There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.
God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early.
The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.
Come, behold the works of the Lord,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.
Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.”*

This psalm is primarily a hymn of praise in which the focal point of the praise is God’s refuge and protection. The psalm is addressed *“To the chief musician for the sons of Korah”*. Korah was the grandson of Kohath, the son of Levi, who was the ancestor of some of the musicians (1st Chronicles 6:33). The psalm is titled *“A Song upon Alamoth”*. *Almah* in Hebrew means ‘a virgin’, thus the word *Alamoth* is referring to the highness of pitch of her voice, or in other words, sopranos. It does lack, however, the structure of a hymn in that it does not have an introductory exhortation of praise and has a distinctive internal structure. The psalm is believed to have been written during the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib.

In Psalm 46 God is 3 things for us and the world:

1. a refuge
2. strength
3. a very present help in trouble.

The psalm can be divided into 3 sections of approximately equal length. The 3 sections are all separated by the word *Selah*, which is believed to be a pause or musical note. The word is frequently used in the Psalms.

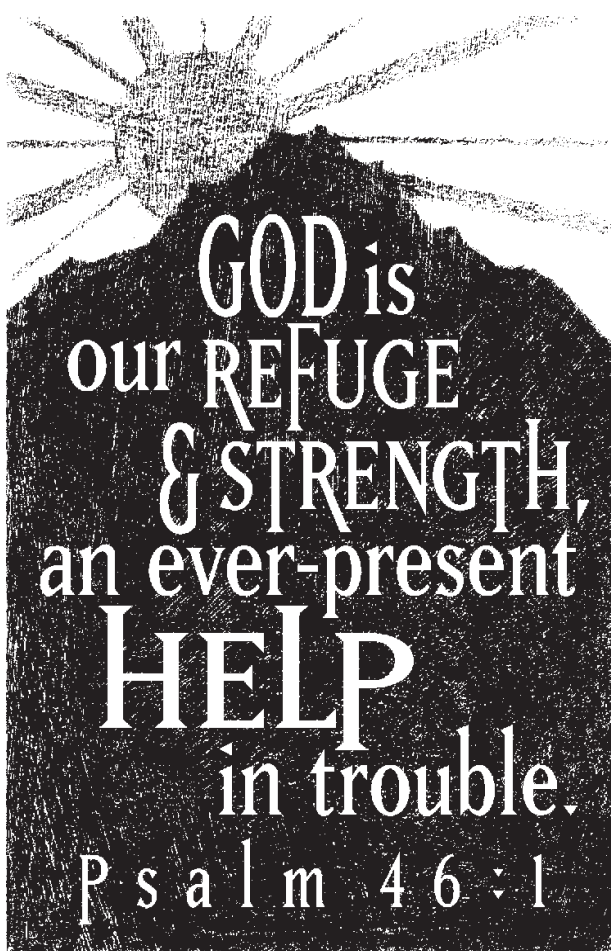
A breakdown of the 3 sections could be seen as follows:

1. Section 1 talks about God’s refuge in the context of natural phenomenon (v1-3),

2. Section 2 talks about God's refuge in the context of the nations of the world (v4-7),
3. God's refuge in the context of both natural and political powers (v8-12).

The common word throughout the psalm is the word 'earth', for the earth is what all three of the above have in common. The central theme of the psalm is protection (v2,8,12) in God's earth (v3,7,9,10,11). We are reminded that this is God's creation and He is still in charge.

Looking at the psalm we will break it down into the three sections because each section is important in itself and even more important when viewed as whole at the end of the psalm. In Section 1 (v1-3) we are given the picture through powerful poetry of God's protection during natural catastrophes. The use of earthquakes to convey the sense of God's message was not a new one. Hearers and singers of this psalm would have been familiar with the powerful destructive force of an earthquake. The Old Testament has numerous references to earthquakes as a way of conveying the magnitude of God's work (Isaiah 24:19,20; Isaiah 54:10; Haggai 2:6). Thus the psalmist was speaking to them from a level at which they could empathize. Secondly, what greater destructive natural force is there other than an earthquake – an earthquake wreaks total chaos on the earth – man cannot fix the natural devastation caused by earthquakes, but God can. We are given the analogy of



an earthquake where the earth will be removed and mountains carried into the midst of the sea. We are given a picture of chaos. Through this natural chaos we are reminded of the chaos that existed at the time of Creation, and God as Creator turned chaos into order (Genesis 1:1,2).

We are then given in Section 2 a beautiful picture of the millennial dream. We are given a description of the City of God (Zion/Jerusalem) with the river that flows of that city. Although Zion/Jerusalem is not mentioned specifically, it is definitely implied in the description given in verse 4. What other city is there which has God in the midst of it (v5)? After this description of the Holy City we are shown again that God is also the protector in national

catastrophes. In verse 2 we have God Himself portrayed as the source of protection, now in Section 2 we have the City of God that is the location of protection. Although dominions and powers will overtake earthly nations, God's Kingdom is steadfast and will not be moved. God's protection gives stability. The Lord of Hosts, reminiscent of a general in the army, is with His people. Thus we are reminded of God's General status in the analogy of the army, He is in control but we are also given a sentimental tug with the reference to the God of Jacob being our refuge. This also reminds us of the protective nature of God. The word refuge denotes protection against evil, someone mightier protecting someone weaker – thus it is with God and us.

Finally in Section 3 we are given the picture of God as a refuge in the context of natural and national powers. We are given a poetic invitation to "*Come, behold the works of the Lord*" (KJV) or "*Come and see*" (NIV). We are given a clear picture that God is in control, even at time of war. God is the one that stops the fighting, breaks the weapons and demands a truce. Through God's work these destructive forces become objects of divine praise. These nations and the earth which are shown as showing the greatest threat to God's peace and orderly existence, are now harnessed in service and exaltation to God. The whole world is aware now of God as protector. This final section interweaves Section 1 and 2 to create a united overview of God's completeness and protectiveness.

The main theme of the psalm is Faith in creation. From the opening to the closing verse of Psalm 46 we are reminded of God's creative power – His ability to create order out of chaos, in all aspects of people's lives.

We are also reminded, with the reference to water, rivers, etc., of the powerful regenerative power of water in creation, the deliverance of Israel through the division of the Red Sea, and latterly in the New Testament of the regenerative power of the act of baptism. We are told by Craigie* that there are 2 focuses in this psalm of creation faith:

1. established God's Kingship and rule in the realm of nature
2. established God's Kingship in the realm of history (Exodus 15:18).

Because God controls both history and nature, the chaotic threat which both may offer to humanity may be faced fearlessly if we have the faith that God is the Engineer of the Creation and faithfully and prayerfully leave the decisions up to Him. Unfortunately this creation is such, at this time, that manifestations of chaos will keep rearing their ugly heads but Christians have to remain steadfast in their belief that "*God is our refuge and strength*". Faith in God's protection is both for today and for tomorrow, reaching forward to the time of the millennium when God's creation will follow God's ways and develop a perfect unity of relationship with Him.

What a pertinent psalm for these current troublesome times, both locally and internationally. We have had the destruction of the World Trade Centres, bombings in Bali and the onslaught of diseases that are difficult to fight. What better psalm could one read to allow one to refocus and see how chaotic the world has become. People supposedly causing such heartache and destruction in the name of God is an insult to God's creative power and God's love. What better psalm to help support those who have suffered from these terrible events and those still to come, as well as the consequences of these events

(talk of World War 3, etc). With a reading of Psalm 46 we are reminded of how powerful God is and how much He loves His people. God will make order out of this chaos, and the closer we come to the

Millennium, the more these irrational events will happen. But we are given the reassurance that God will conquer all, and ultimately will reign His loving way over His people. 📖

Bibliography

* **Craigie, Peter C.**, Word Biblical Commentary, Psalms 1-50, 1983, Word Incorporated. King James Version Bible.

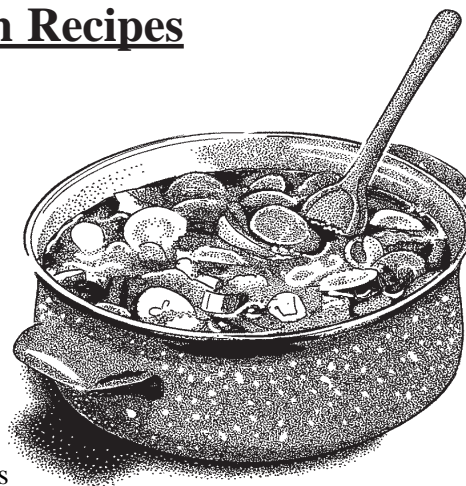
“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”

2nd Corinthians 5:1-10

Vegetarian Recipes

Vegetable Curry

250g potatoes, diced
250g pumpkin, diced
200g cauliflower, cut into florets
200g carrot, sliced thinly
150g yellow squash, quartered
1 tblspn olive oil
2 onions, diced
3 tblspns curry powder
1 can crushed tomatoes (400g can)
250ml vegetable stock
150g green beans, cut into bite size pieces
¼ cup sultanas.



Bring saucepan of water to the boil. Add potato, pumpkin and carrots and cook for 6 minutes, then remove. Add cauliflower, and squash and cook for 4 minutes, then remove. Heat oil in large saucepan, add the onion and cook until starting to brown. Add the curry powder and stir for 1 minute. Stir in the tin of tomatoes and vegetable stock.

Add potato, pumpkin, carrot, cauliflower and squash and cook for 5 minutes, then add the green beans and cook until the vegetables are just tender (around 3-4 minutes). At this stage, if desired you can add yoghurt (90g) as a thickener, or leave it out and add once it is served, also now add the sultanas. Simmer for 3 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges and rice.

Pureed Lentils/Dahl

1 cup red lentils
1 ½ tblspn olive oil
1 onion, chopped finely
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tsp fresh ginger, finely chopped
½ tspn turmeric powder
3 cups water
1 tspn salt, or to taste

Wash lentils thoroughly, removing those that float on the surface. Drain lentils well. Heat olive oil and fry onion, ginger and garlic until the onion is golden. Add the powdered turmeric and stir well. Add drained lentils and fry with the onion mixture for 1-2 minutes. Add water, lower heat, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Add salt, mix thoroughly and continue cooking until lentils are soft, similar consistency to cooked porridge.

Serve the dhal plain or garnish with sliced onions. Eat with boiled rice and Indian breads, pappadams, etc.