

The Old Testament Church

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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Now what I am going to explain here about “Christian” religion today may be a little different from the way you have heard growing up in organized religion. The reason that I believe the church has been in decline and disarray is not because it has the wrong structure and needs a new one (i.e. cell/ small group, new paradigm, new thing), but I believe it is preaching the wrong message. When the true gospel is preached, there were thousands added to the church daily, yet there are pastors preaching the “gospel message” all over the world in churches that are struggling for only one or two to be saved. The rest of the world is turning away from what is being preached in the “Christian churches” today and toward all sorts of different religions of the world (Wicca, Witchcraft, Hindu, Buddhism, Scientology, New Age, etc.). Today the church has responded by starting to preach “unity of all faiths” to bring everyone back under the banner of “The Church”. I think I know why.

This same thing went on in Paul’s day in the Bible. In Paul’s case, hearing the Gospel message alone did not convert Saul (surnamed Paul). Saul heard the Gospel being preached and thought it was blasphemy.

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or woman, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem (Acts 9:12).

At that time Saul was a devote believer in (Jehovah) God and the whole Old Testament, (books of Moses, the Psalms of David, the proverbs of Solomon, the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the minor prophets), and even after all this Old Testament knowledge, Saul (Paul) still went around persecuting Christians in the name of God! He had even sat at the feet of the great Bible teacher of that day, Gamaliel. Which tells me that the true Gospel was hidden from men in the Old Testament.

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; (Ephesians 3:3-5).

Later though something happened in Saul’s (surnamed Paul) life that so radically changed him that the Bible says that he now preached the faith that he once destroyed.

But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed (Galatians 1:23).

WHAT CHANGED? The gospel message was the SAME! The words hadn't changed. What changed Paul and turned his life totally around was meeting the one who the Gospel was talking about and having the witness of the Holy Spirit enter into him. Now Paul's writings are considered every bit as divinely inspired as the Old Testament prophets' words are!

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake (1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Let me explain further. During Paul's day, the Old Testament was being read in the synagogues every Sabbath. People had heard it taught for years, even from their youth, yet the world turned from the Old Testament and toward witchcraft, idol worship, Greek and Roman gods, and many other different religions just like today. The reason being is salvation and peace with God could not be gained through the Old Testament. Its purpose was to make people realize their fallen state and their need of a Savior. In fact the New Testament gospel was so different from what the people were use to hearing in the preaching of the Old Testament that they claimed that it turned their world upside down!

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; (Acts 17:5,6).

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel (Acts 6:8-15).

What I hear being preached in the churches today, and on TV, and radio is a big move to go back to the Old Testament. The "new paradigm" churches are even going farther than the New Testament. The reason for this is I do not think that either group of churches understand the New Testament or the Gospel of Jesus Christ or they would have never left it. And like Paul's day, the world is once again rejecting what is being preached and turning back to other religions for salvation and to try to find peace with God because

they cannot find it through the Old Testament church that has evolved today. The correct order is to get the Jews to embrace the New Testament instead of the church embracing the Old Testament. Please read the chapter "Law or Grace?"

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers (Galatians 1:11-14).

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (Romans 9:30-32).

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people (Romans 10:15-21).

What has happened to "the Church" today? As near as I can figure, the churches line of thinking today is if we go back to the Old Testament and imitate the things that the children of Israel were suppose to do, then maybe we can get, according to the scriptures, what the children of Israel should have gotten for their obedience.

This big move back to the Old Testament is so rampant in the church today, for example, I hear many pastors claim that the verse in 2 Chronicles 7:14 where God was answering the prayer of Solomon for God's people (children of Israel) was also talking to Christians today! On the Global Day of Prayer, it was estimated that 490 million people around the world joined together and prayed this prayer:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in THIS PLACE. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually (2 Chronicles 7:14-16).

Taken in the proper context, God tells Solomon that He will only hear this prayer if it is prayed specifically in SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. Go back and read the other verses before it and after it in a KJV Bible. Many pastors actually wanted Christians to pray this same prayer claiming it for America. This is simple elementary doctrine! The Old Testament holds many wonderful examples and principles for life, but it has to be kept in proper context. It was designed to govern man while man is "alive" walking in the flesh. The law enforced a spiritual commandment that a natural man cannot continuously keep (Romans 7:14). The Christian that has been "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20,21), is born of the Spirit and being led by the Spirit, which gave the inspiration and knowledge to write the Old Testament. Paul said:

Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (Ten Commandments), but in fleshy tables of the heart (2 Corinthians 3:2,3).

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:24-26).

This type of mentality is very rampant in today's church also. I have heard many other people continue to pray this same prayer also and America is still in the full process of self-destruction. When America keeps getting worse, then these people that keep praying 2 Chronicles 7:14, thinking that there must be something wrong with their faith or God is judging America. I am going to let you in on a little secret. The reason why God doesn't ever seem to answer this prayer and America keeps getting worse while religion seems to be growing has nothing to do with the faith of people praying this prayer. According to this very same scripture, if people will would read the Bible for themselves, the only possible chance you have that God would even consider answering this prayer today, is if you went to the exact place where Solomon's Temple was and rebuilt it and rededicated it, and went into it and prayed this prayer after turning from your sin.

There are several more reasons also why God has not answered this prayer? Number one, this prayer doesn't require the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sin because it wasn't offered back then, it required your own repentance and obedience for the forgiveness of sin. Second, this verse was never meant for Christians because the Gentiles did not become "God's people" until Jesus died on the cross for all mankind. Peter was given a vision of the great sheet full of beasts in Acts 11:1-18.

Foreasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:17,18).

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now

the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9,10).

Because of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we not only can be people of God, but children of God, because we are born again of the Spirit. Now if you want to try to make the case that you are Jewish and still go back to the Old Testament, then Jesus gives you this warning. Remember this verse was written to THE CHURCH at Philadelphia!

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee (Rev 3:9).

The Bible does speak of spiritual Jews in the New Testament, but they are not the “children of Israel” as the Jews in the Old Testament were. The relationship that the New Testament Christian has to the Old Testament Jews is they share an inheritance, not a religion. As a Christian I cannot curse the Jews, Arabs or any of mankind. My war is not with flesh and blood, but it is a spiritual battle that I fight. I can pray blessings on the Jewish people as the sons of Abraham and God’s chosen people because it is through Abraham’s inheritance that I am to be a partaker of also (Romans 11:1-32). The Bible says the Jewish people are God’s elect (Isaiah 45:4) and the Christian is Christ elect (Romans 8:31-34). In fact one reason that the Gospel was offered to the Gentiles was to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:26-29).

The inheritance that the Christian also has as an heir with the children of Israel is not a little strip of land in the Middle East that people have been fighting over for years, but the whole world! Every thing you see going on in the Middle East is not for Israel’s land but on who gets to control Jerusalem. If you think that giving away the land of Israel to the Arabs will bring peace to the Middle East or the world, then you do not understand the Abrahamic covenant. The descendants of Ishmael understand the inheritance of Abraham was for the whole world and to be ruled from Jerusalem. That is why they are now calling this planet earth the “Muslim world”. They believe through Abraham that they get the whole planet earth as an inheritance for being the firstborn. It must first be purged of all infidels (non-Muslims).

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are

of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect (Romans 4:13,14).

That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:14-16).

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Ephesians 3:3-6).

The reason that I am sharing this is because there are millions of people who have died throughout history and thousands that are being killed now and in the future who deserve to know why they are being slaughtered like cattle by people claiming they are doing God's service. During the crusades, you had both the Muslims and the Church battling over the Temple Mount in the city of Jerusalem as the place to rule over the world. The Church would rule it for awhile, and then the Muslims would rule it for awhile. Today the Muslims own the Temple Mount and are claiming the planet earth as the "Muslim world". The Muslims understand the seriousness of the Abrahamic covenant and birthright of the firstborn. In the World Church today you also have many that are planning to conquer the whole planet earth for "the World Church". But the World Church will also have to first purge the earth of infidels and heretics (unbelievers in this Global Church) to set up the "kingdom of heaven". For either the Muslims or the Church to except anything less than a total global submission of mankind to their authority would be a rejection of part of their birthright and an insult to God! That is why there can never be any lasting peace on the earth until Jesus Christ comes.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 11:12-15).

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains;

and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:20-24).

The only problem with ruling over the earth from Jerusalem, the Bible says that it is Jesus that smites the nations at His return, not the Global Church or the Muslims.

And the armies, which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treated the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hats on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:14-16).

What is the true Christian supposed to do? Will they be caught in the middle between the World Church and Muslim World? That's an easy question to answer! I have some "good news". The true Christians will be enjoying a great reunion with Christ in the City of Gold.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

Also a remnant of Jews will be hidden and protected by God on earth during this time and will enjoy a future redemption when Jesus comes to rule and reign a thousand years. What many in the world today don't understand is, it is not the World Church or even the Muslim World that is going to bring these prophecies of the Bible to fulfillment. It is the publishing and preaching of the true gospel of the kingdom by true Christians unto all nations.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matthew 24:14).

And the gospel must first be published among all nations (Mark 13:10).

The world must understand that the true church can never be killed or "stamped out" because to destroy the true church you must first kill the head (Jesus). The head of the church is Jesus Christ who already died and has risen from the dead never to die again. Every time the world thinks they have killed a Christian, someone else somewhere in the world is at the same time hearing from Jesus. As many have found out thru out history, trying to destroy the true church is an exercise in futility!

In this study, I am not focusing on the argument between Ishmael and Isaac over the birthright of the firstborn. Jesus Christ will put to rest that issue when He comes to claim

His birthright as the firstborn Son of God and also the seed of Abraham! As many church pastors are getting their congregations focused on Jerusalem on earth and the storms surrounding her, the Jerusalem that I am looking toward for an inheritance is the same one that Abraham looked to for his inheritance. The one that is above in the spirit! That is where Jesus Christ, who is the firstborn of God, is currently sitting with the church of the firstborn, who is also called Abraham's seed!

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:1).

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:8-10).

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:13-16).

This heavenly Jerusalem is the inheritance of Abraham and all that are born of the Spirit through faith, shall rule on the earth with Him.

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:5,6).

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:28-30).

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last (Luke 13:28-30).

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:1-3).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (Ephesians 2:19).

So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more (Joel 3:17).

Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. 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. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth (Isaiah 62:4-7).

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:20).

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1,2).

The true Christian understands that the issue of the inheritance is not an Arab and Jew issue, but a natural man (born of the flesh) vs. spiritual man (born of the Spirit) issue! An earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem.

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now (Galatians 4:22-29).

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Romans 2:28,29).

Isaac, Jesus, and a true Christian are all the result of a miracle birth by the power and will of God that flesh could never accomplish even if it desired to.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:12,13).

What I mainly want to focus on in this study of immortality is reversing what Adam did in the Garden of Eden, which is salvation from death through the cross of Jesus Christ for all mankind Jews, Arabs, and Gentiles alike that will accept that sacrifice. It is the Gospel of Peace, not war.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

You must understand, our high priest (Jesus) came out of the tribe of JUDAH, not the tribe of Levi!

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (Hebrews 7:14-16).

If anybody reading this are going to a church where the pastor, priest, elders, bishops or deacons start referring to themselves as Levities, this should immediately throw up many red flags of danger to the Christian. We have a different priesthood. The Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament was the stewards of the revealed will of God, which is the law. The Christians are the stewards of the mysteries of God, which is the path to immortality!

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Ephesians 3:1-6).

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Hebrews 7:11-19).

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away (2 Corinthians 3:12-16).

The only reason I can see after reading all these verses that anybody would want to go back under the Old Testament law is because the mysteries of God are still hidden from them!

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. (Romans 10:2-4)

Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame (1 Corinthians 15:34).

The Gospel is about reconciling all of mankind, not just the Jews back to God.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

The Jews will be saved, but so will the Gentiles. The Gentiles are saved at the first coming of Jesus, when He died for our sins on the cross, but the nation of Israel will be saved at His second coming as Paul taught.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes (Romans 11:25-28).

Christians also have to understand that God is now on Mount Zion with a new covenant, not on mount Sinai, where the children received the Mosaic covenant, which are the Ten Commandments.

For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:18-24).

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded (1 Peter 2:6).

I listened to an evangelist preach a sermon and describe most people in the church today are like the children of Israel at the bottom of the Mount Sinai and are too scared to step out on faith and follow Moses (the senior pastor) up into the clouds on Mount Sinai to go to the next level to meet God. He taught that only a few spiritual ones in the church had the faith to go up into the cloud on Mount Sinai to meet God, but the rest of the church needed to get off the pews and follow if they ever wanted to go to the next “level” with God. I have some disturbing news for the church today. The church can climb Mount Sinai and the Ten Commandments as high as they want to, but as you can see by these verses, when they finally get to the top they will not find God there. God is on Mount Zion now and Jesus is the mediator of a new covenant!

In the Old Testament, the Word of God was written on stone and paper. In the New Testament the Word of God is Jesus Christ (the mediator of a new covenant Hebrews 12:24)! If I am in Christ, then I am in the Word of God already. When most people say they are in the Word of God they mean they are studying the Bible. If I was to lose my Bible or be somewhere without access to it, I am still in the Word of God, being in Jesus Christ.

Now getting back to why 2 Chronicles 7:14 cannot be referring to the Christian today is because the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26)! There is a major error that is also spread across all denominations in various forms today. People are erasing the term “children of Israel” in the Old Testament and replacing it with “the church” and trying to claim that these same verses apply to the New Testament church. This is similar to “replacement theology”. To claim that Old Testament verses that refer to the “children of Israel” also applies to the “New Testament church” is to declare that the Christian can be spiritually born again as people of God before Jesus ever died on the cross! This is also in direct contradiction to the Bible.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now

the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy (1 Peter 2:9,10).

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:12,13).

Point to Ponder: In this verse, it says that without Christ, we are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and have no hope, and without God in the world. This scripture also shows that all the people that are claiming that God is your sub-conscience mind and trying to get in touch with your “inner god” through yoga meditation techniques cannot claim that the Bible agrees with that doctrine. According to this scripture we were not even born into this world with a divine nature, but with the nature of Adam.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:46-49).

Man was created as humanity, God the Creator is divinity, Jesus Christ the Son of God and Son of man exists as humanity and divinity in one. ***For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).*** We only become “spiritual” in a relationship with God when we truly accept Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit indwells us.

This error is very easily corrected if you understand simple Bible doctrine. You must understand that there is a major difference between the “people of God (children of Israel)” and the “children of God (Christians are born of the Spirit of God)”. Christians are also referred to as the people of God, but not until they are “born again”. Let me explain it this way.

If I were king of a nation, the people of that nation would be “my people”, but they would not be my children. The children of Israel were born of the flesh and called Abraham their father and Jesus rebuked the Pharisees that tried to claim God as their Father. The Christian is born of the Spirit when they are “born again” and now do call God as their Father. It wasn’t till after the cross that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was over shadowed with the difference between natural man and spiritual man.

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26,28).

Mankind could not be born again and become the people and children of God until after Jesus died on the cross! The references to people as “children of God” in the Old Testament are in reference to a Creator / creation relationship as in the “Father of Creation”.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28).

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? (1 Corinthians 6:2,3).

Many pastors also take Old Testament prophecies that were pointing toward the first coming of Jesus, and are applying them to the second coming of Jesus. The Old Testament taken in its proper context is always used for the preparation of the coming of the Messiah, the first coming and the second coming. The first coming of Messiah, which was Jesus, was hidden in the Old Testament, but the preparation for the second coming of the Messiah is declared in the Old Testament. The Jews are looking for the second coming to be the first coming of the Messiah because they rejected Jesus when He came the first time. The Christians accepted Jesus at His first coming and are now looking for His second coming. Many still stumble at this stumbling stone.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech. And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away (II Corinthians 3:12-16).

There is even now an accepted practice in the church today where people are trying to pray back to God the same prayers and Psalms of the Old Testament saints. They don't seem to understand, that many things that the people were praying for and crying out for in the Old Testament has already been freely given to the true Christian by faith in Jesus Christ. The people of the Old Testament were looking for the Messiah. The Christian has found the Messiah (Jesus Christ)! What I have even seen in the church today are people claiming to be Christians and they say they are operating in "the spirit of David", "the spirit of Zadok", "the spirit of Phinehas", "the spirit of Joseph", etc. Whatever happened to Christians operating in the "Spirit of Christ"?

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Romans 8:9).

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

As an example of how ridiculous this has gotten, there are people in the church today asking “where have all the armor bearers gone?”. I will tell you where they have gone, they went back to the Old Testament where they belong! Today the Christian is instructed to WEAR his armor and doesn’t have someone else carrying it for him!

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Ephesians 6:11)

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:13)

What I see today is a great falling away from the New Testament faith and the church is embracing Old Testament works and calling it a “new thing”. Paul said it best when he addressed the Galatians:

I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Galatians 2:21).

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The Bible does teach that the Christian can still use the law today, but as always its purpose is still to condemn the sinner. Any justification now comes strictly from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

In the Old Testament, it was only God’s chosen and sanctified priest that could bear the burden of the law on their shoulders; anybody else that tried to carry it was struck dead. That is why our High priest Jesus Christ bore the burden of the law for the Christian! Yet there are pastors claiming to be Christians that are standing in the pulpits every Saturday and Sunday that are still trying to get the congregation to carry the very same Old Testament law on their shoulders also!

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. (Luke 11:46)

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers

NOR WE were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (Acts 15:5-11).

In fact Paul even tells the Christian to avoid strivings about the law, with people that still say they are under the law!

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself (Titus 3:9-11).

This is why I think the real reason that “the church” has been dying. The church doesn’t need a “new paradigm (cell/small groups)” to be effective, it needs a NEW TESTAMENT! The Old Testament works; the New Testament is grace.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Law and faith also cannot co-exist as a means of justification in the believer’s life, because the righteousness comes from two different sources.

But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them (Galatians 3:11,12).

Under the law, righteousness comes from obeying God’s commandments and must be earned through obedience. Unrighteousness or sin comes from disobeying God’s commandments.

Under grace, righteousness comes from faith in Jesus Christ and is a free gift. Unrighteousness or sin comes from unbelief in Jesus Christ!

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22,23).

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; (John 16:7-9).

You have to understand our righteousness is as filthy rags and cannot be cleaned even by obeying the law. It must be replaced with Jesus’ righteousness, which cannot get dirty!

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone (ten commandments), but in fleshy tables of the heart (II Corinthians 3:3).

I have said this before but I think that it is worth repeating. Some “New Testament” churches are trying to bring back Old Testament Davidic worship as a condition for coming into the presence of God. If you cannot come into God’s presence with the blood of Jesus alone, then praise and worship is not going to get you in the holiest either. Praise and worship was the accepted Old Testament way of entering in because they didn’t have the blood of Jesus to offer as the required sacrifice.

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name (Psalms 100:1-4).

Even then, praise and worship never got anybody in the Bible past the court of the temple, only the high priest could go into the presence of God. In many churches today they are holding “camp” meetings for the church, yet the gospel is for those that are living outside the camp!

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come (Hebrews 13:10-13).

That is why the people in these churches today can never seem to get into the presence of God and their pastor or spiritual leader can. The “New Testament” way into God’s presence is by the blood of Jesus alone and true praise and worship comes as a result of being in His presence not a condition to get into His presence! I believe the real reason this doctrine is being pushed is because some church leadership knows that you are not going to ever get into God’s presence with praise and worship alone, so they are the only ones that can “go behind the veil” or to the “secret place” and talk to God for you. They will then come out preaching and say, “the Lord told me to tell you”. You don’t have a clue whether they are telling you the truth or not, because you are still trying to praise and worship yourself into His presence. The moment a person says to the New Testament Christian, “the Lord told me to tell you” then they are at that point stepping directly between you and God and declaring that you are not worthy for God’s fellowship or presence and they are your new spiritual “mediator”.

According to Jesus own words (“***But the hour cometh, and now is***” John 4:23,24), true worship that God now accepts now didn’t start until Jesus’ earthly ministry and would carry into the future, not go back in the past. Jesus also warned about vain worship (Matthew 15:8,9)(Mark 7:6,7). Paul even spoke about people ignorantly worshipping God, by trying to offer God gifts or money as worship. The work of the hands is the same thing that Cain tried to offer God, and God rejected it also.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an alter with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (Acts 17:23-25).

The worship that God seeks now is generated by the work of the Spirit in your heart.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24).

The reason that I am writing about praise and worship is so you understand its purpose. I do not want to see Christians confined to the “outer court” when they have the right to stand beside any Pope, apostle, prophet, priest, pastor, small group leader, etc. at the throne of God. How you worship God (hands up, hands down, through dance, through praise and worship music (traditional and contemporary), in silence, etc.) is between you and God. I just want to make sure you know that it is the blood of Jesus and not praise and worship that secures our eternal presence with God today. Just knowing that should be enough to cause the praise and worship.

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name (Hebrews 13:15).

