The God of Israel Is the Same God Today

By Scott D. Oliver | April 28, 2013

In the Bible we have a complete documentation of God's redemptive and social justice plan. God spoke His plan so all could hear it from Mt. Sinai, when He spoke His Ten Words (Commandments), then Moses received the rest and read it for Israel's hearing, and finally through His only Son holiness that would allow us to have a close relationship with Him, our God. He wants us to be "Holy as He is Holy". Earlier in God's plan only the Jews were elected by God to be a Holy Nation, Israel; they were to be a set apart people (a holy people), an ambassador for God on earth. Today, through the sacrificial death and resurrection of Yeshua, both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Messiah are set apart by God as a Holy Nation, Israel. We Gentiles can only maintain our holiness, as do the Jews, by the covenants that God gave to Israel. We are grafted into Israel by the blood of Messiah as Paul tells us in Romans chapter 11, which means that now God's covenants are ours as well. It is being part of God's Holy Nation that gives both Messianic Jews and Gentiles salvation and the promise of eternal life. Our love for God should motivate us to maintain our holiness by keeping God's commandments or laws. God said "if you love me you will keep my commandments".

The church today seems to want to put its own personal creative touch on God's declared Words for His redemptive and His social justice system. Historically we saw this beginning in the early church when Paul chastised certain groups for apostasy. The distortion of the Word worsened with Roman Catholicism and even though the Reformation was a step in the right direction, church groups did not reform quite enough. The church had lost its conceptual roots in Judaism. The Apostles were able to keep those Jewish roots alive and well, but after their death Paul's worst fear became a reality. Humans did what humans often do, they took the perfect plan of God seated in Jewish roots and put their own twist on it influenced by Greek and Roman thought and other pagan cultures. Evidence of this is God's Appointed Times (God's Festivals, like Passover) and His Holy Sabbath, which were substituted in about 250 -300 AD for pagan festivals and worship, like Easter and Sunday. We pick out the parts of God's Words we like and say those will be "our doctrines", and we overlook the parts we don't like and say "God really didn't mean that for our generation" or "God is only talking to Israel there, not to the church today".

Remember, "God is (was) the same God yesterday, today and forever". If as we read in Psalms "the Law of the Lord is perfect", then something perfect needs no fixing. All of God's future plans were and are built on that perfect Law. Translators have even been guilty of mistranslating the Bible to reflect their own doctrinal bias rather than producing a more literal translation. A clear example of this is when every time the phrase "first day of the week" is used in the New Testament, the original Greek says "on one of the Sabbaths". Some translators want to make sure a false reference to Sunday, as the first day of the week, appears in the New Testament, so we can justify a man-made change to God appointed day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday. There is a Greek word for both Saturday and Sunday, but in the Greek of the New Testament the word used is always "Sabbaton", a Greek word for a new day not known to Greek culture and only found in the Bible and Biblical commentary works of that period; however, the Sabbath is well known to God and Hebrew culture. So we as men even mistranslate the Word of God to support our own doctrines rather than just accepting what God is saying. I believe most of us know what anti-Messiah (anti-Christ) force is really behind all of this, don't we?

> *There is no room in God's plan for our own personal doctrines or opinions, especially when God declares a clear law or commandment and says it is to last forever. We see very clearly that many times the Jewish people several times in the Tenak (Old Testament) tried to rationalize God's Commands and to no avail. God told them it is "My way or the highway" so to speak. God makes up the rules, and if we want to be holy we have to follow them. Is God any different today? Is He not the same God? Why do we think we can ignore God's Sabbath, a day He created and time after time in the Tenak called a very holy day, and one that was to be observed forever. In the New Testament we see the early church under the Apostles'*

guidance always observing the Sabbath and God's appointed times. What gave men the right to change it? Yeshua (Messiah) gives a stern warning about changing God, His Father's, Words and commandments in Matthew 5: 17-19:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." What about those that ignore the Sabbath and God's appointed times? What about those who teach that the Sabbath and the Torah Law is no longer important for the church today? Is it those individuals Yeshua is talking about here? Or just now are you beginning to formulate one of your own personal doctrines or opinions to make Yeshua and God say what you want them to say in this passage of God's Word? It seems to be very clear and simple English to me. Those Gentiles that continue to observe the Sabbath will be rewarded in the end. See Isaiah 6 and 7:

6 "Also the foreigners (Gentiles in Hebrew) who join themselves to the Lord,

To minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord,

To be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath

And holds fast My covenant;

7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain

And make them joyful in My house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar;

For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

Who are we to even dare question the Law and authority of God?

God has a plan and we don't always have to understand all of the component parts of that plan. God wants us to accept certain of His precepts simply out of faith. It is the human side of us that wants an explanation immediately, when God tells us, "It is not for you to know now the reason for what I command you to do; you will have a full understanding later in My Kingdom.

For now, just do what I have commanded you to do".

The experiential and ritual patterns that we see in the Torah are very important in helping us understand the rest of the Tenak and the New Testament. When we study the Torah we are gaining an insight into God's holy justice system and God's redemptive plan for all the generations of mankind. In essence we get a brief glimpse into the mind of the eternal, everlasting God. Also all of Yeshua's teaching were based on His Father's Word, the Torah and the prophets. When he healed the leper, he told him to go and present himself to the priest so that the man healed of his leprosy could perform the necessary rituals of cleanliness instructed for him in God's Law. Yeshua knew that his Father's Law was perfect even though it was administered by very imperfect men (Jewish leaders of his day), and He more than once chastised them for their man-made additions to his Father's Law.

What was the "curse of the Law" that Paul referred to? Paul reminds us that Torah Law is perfect and we know he followed it; then, almost in the same breath he refers to the "curse of the Law". Any Jewish child will tell you that the sacrificial system was only for atonement for unintentional sins or sins we commit by accident. In the sacrificial system there was no way to atone for intentional sins. Paul as a Jew, who meticulously kept the Law for fear of committing a sin that had no means of atonement, was so very excite that God had sent His only Son, Yeshua, to be the atoning sacrifice for not only unintentional sin, but also intentional sin. The "curse of the Law" was the idea that animal sacrifices could not atone for every kind of sin. This makes sense because why would God send His only precious Son to do what the animal sacrificial system already could do. Yeshua's sacrifice had to accomplish much more and have additional benefits in God's redemptive plan. The Jew before Yeshua's sacrifice had to remain clean and holy. If he or she touched a dead

body, for instance, he or she became ritually unclean. Interestingly enough he or she used water immersion to get clean again and an animal sacrifice (blood) to get holy again. Water was used to make the unclean clean and blood was used to make the clean holy. Remember, you have to be holy to have a relationship with God. This is God's rule, not man's rule. It has been God's rule down through history.

When Yeshua was on the cross and the guard pierced his side with a spear, the Gospels tell us, that at the amazement of those who watched, there was an outpouring of water and blood from His body. This was God's sign that His only Son was able, in this one sacrificial act, to, by water and blood, make mankind clean and holy. How amazing is God's plan! We can now touch a dead body and remain clean and holy in our Father's eyes because of Yeshua's sacrifice. Not only are our unintentional sins atoned for but also our intentional sins are atoned for as well.

We need to still make an effort to remain holy today. God's laws tell us the things that will jeopardize our holiness so we can avoid them. It also tells us the things we should be doing to remain holy. We are also held to an even higher standard today, because of Yeshua's ultimate sacrifice and the giving of the Holy Spirit, than even the priests were before Messiah. We not only have the presence of God living in us (Holy Spirit), we are God's Holy Temple as well. We can rephrase "let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father in Heaven" as "let your menorah so shine before men". We are living, mobile temples of the living God. And then we are told that we are also a "Royal Priesthood". Should we not want to find out what God expected of His priests in the Torah, so we might know what our duties are in this temple of ours? And what kind of sacrifices are we to offer in our temples? "Living sacrifices" are to be made to our God. This has to be a daily sacrifice much like the continual burnt offerings in the Tabernacle and Temple.

Again only the Torah can tell us how we can keep our temples holy so God's Spirit will remain there. Remember, several of the animal sacrifices were used to keep the Tabernacle or Temple holy so God's presence could remain there. Many of the sacrifices' purpose was to cleanse the Holy Place and Holy of Holies from the potential sins of man and women (their sinful nature after Adam and Eve's sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden) as they frequented the Tabernacle or Temple; it cleansed their sinful nature and allowed God to remain among mankind in a holy environment. Yeshua's blood is a continual covering for our sinful nature so God's Spirit can reside in us.

We are made clean and made holy by accepting Yeshua as our Messiah, and then a miracle happens when we are baptized; we are transformed by the water and the blood of Messiah into a "new creation". We are "born again". We become a temple for God's Spirit and God's Spirit comes to live in us because we have become clean and holy by the water and the blood of Messiah. However, our temples must remain holy or we could lose God's Spirit and be worse than before. God extended grace throughout the entire history of mankind. When David committed intentional sin, he paid an earthly price, but because of God's grace he did not pay an eternal price and lose God's Spirit. God's grace is not a new thing generated by the blood of Messiah. Messiah's blood definitely broadened God's grace for atonement for our intentional sins and cleansing us from the everyday events that would have rendered us unclean and would have required us to be ritually cleansed.

Holy means that we are set apart for a particular purpose to serve God here on earth and in His Kingdom forever. Righteousness is the continual striving to obey the commandments and laws of God. Our holiness depends on our righteousness. We serve a very holy and righteous God and He expects us to be like Him. He showed us what He is like in His Son, Yeshua. Everything that Yeshua did and said was God doing it and saying it. Yeshua said, "If you have seen Me you have seen the Father".

My prayer is that we will cast aside our personal and/or church denominational doctrines and really study the Bible; the whole Bible. What is God's design for His church today? We already see all around us many different versions of manmade designs for the church in the many sects and denominations in Christendom. In the end what men think is not important at all; what God thinks

is very important. In the end of time we will not have to answer to a theologian, priest or minister; we will have to give an answer ourselves to God Himself. Hopefully we will not be one of those that tell God that we have done many great works in His name and He says to us “Depart from Me; I never knew you”. The God of the Old Testament is the same God as the God in the New Testament. The God of the Old Testament killed a man who was trying to catch the Ark of the Covenant, keeping it from hitting the ground. How cruel that seems until we look at the rest of the story. We find out that the real reason was that God gave David specific instructions on how the Ark was to be transported, and David thought he had a better way. David was being creative when God did not want creativity; God wanted obedience. Let us guard our opinions and our doctrines and make sure they are not creative counterfeits of the perfect plan of our most Holy God.