

What is Salvation?

By Leroy Surface

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

Acts 16:31

I was asked to be one of several speakers, at a camp meeting I was visiting for the first time. The house was filled with enthusiastic worshipers, of which I knew only a very few. I had noticed that almost everyone who had either preached or given a testimony began their remarks with a question designed to bring an affirmative answer; *“How many love the Lord? Amen!”* *“How many are ready for heaven?”*, another exuberant *“Amen!”* When it came my time to preach, I began with the question, *“How many believe **John 3:16**?”* Everyone in the building must have shouted *“Amen”* at the top of their lungs. They wanted it understood that they believed **John 3:16**. I then asked a second question. *“How many believe **Hebrews 13:12**?”* Silence fell over the congregation. Not a single amen. I then asked, *“Why do you not believe **Hebrews 13:12**?”* After a moment one young man answered, *“We don’t know what it says.”* I asked one last question before taking **Hebrews 13:12** for my text; *“What difference does it make that you don’t know what it says? It’s the word of God!”*

Most people know the scriptures only in short sound bites. They memorize certain key verses when they are small children, and that is the extent of their knowledge of the word of God for their entire lifetime. Some feel superior to these, in that they can *“walk you through ‘**the Roman Road**’ to salvation,”* but apart from a half dozen or so isolated verses which they have memorized, these same people have absolutely no knowledge of what the apostle Paul actually says in the book of Romans. Above twenty years ago, I received an indignant letter from a man, whom I did not know, who had read one of our *“Behold the Lamb”* booklets. He said, and I quote, *“When will you people get it? I believe **John 3:16** and that is all I need to know.”* No brother! That is not *“all you need to know.”* **John 3:16** is commonly known as the *“golden text”* of the Bible. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have*

everlasting life.” This verse tells us **what** the “Father” did for a lost and dying world, but it tells us absolutely nothing **about** His Son who died for us. **Hebrews 13:12** is a “sister verse” to **John 3:16**, which tells us **about** the “Son,” which the “Father” gave. “Wherefore Jesus also, **that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate** (outside the walls of the city).”

Let’s look again at **John 3:16**, to see if it tells us “*all we need to know.*” It is important for us to know that the basis for understanding **John 3:16** is found in these two preceding verses; **John 3:14-15**. “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so (Strong’s #3779; in this way; or, in this manner) must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” (This same Greek word, Strong’s #3779, is also translated so in the 16th verse, and should be understood in the same way. “*For God so [in this way; in this manner; or, in like manner] loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”) These are the words Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, a year or two before they were actually fulfilled by the death of Jesus on the cross. Also, contrary to the fact that the verses, **John 3:16-21**, are “*printed in red*” (in red letter editions) these are NOT the words of Jesus and should NOT have been printed in red. **John 3:16** is the “*confirmation*” of verses **fourteen and fifteen** which was given by the apostle John almost sixty years after Jesus had died on the cross. John is simply confirming the fact that all these things **had** happened exactly as the Old Testament scriptures, and, as Jesus had said they **would** happen.

The Serpent in the Wilderness

Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived. Numbers 21:7-9

I have often wondered why God told Moses to fashion a serpent of brass and “*put it on a pole.*” Today I understand, because today I know that Christ is “*the seed of the woman,*” who God sent into the world to “*bruise the head of the serpent*”

(Genesis 3:15), and that He did it through His death on the cross. In Hebrews 2:14 the apostle Paul, speaking of Jesus, the Christ, confirms Jesus' words, when he tells us "...that **through death** he (Jesus) might (would) **destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (the serpent)**; See Strong's #2673 for the Greek definition of the word **destroy** in this verse. It means: to be (or render) entirely idle (or useless), literally or figuratively. The brazen serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness was a **symbol**, not of the "serpents" that were biting the people because of their murmuring against Moses and against God, but, of the "serpent" that beguiled Eve and brought the "poison" of sin, brought upon the whole world through Adam's transgression. The symbolic meaning of the serpent lifted up on a pole, was not to show the "power" of the serpent, but rather, to show its (his) "destruction" on the cross. Remember that Christ "died" on the cross, but was not "destroyed." Instead, He "died" on the cross to "destroy" the devil (the serpent). The apostle John also says it was "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might **destroy the works of the devil**" (sin, and death; I John 3:8).

Jesus also says, "...as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." The apostle John says, "For God **so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...**" As we have previously shown, the words "**so loved the world**" literally mean "**in this way loved the world.**" The word "**so**" does **not** speak of "**how much**" God loved the world, but "**how**" he "loved the world." Sixty years after Calvary, the old apostle John is still overwhelmed at the thought; "**Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.**" That wonderful "**manner of love**" speaks of Calvary, where God "gave" His only begotten Son "to be lifted up on a cross (like as Moses lifted up the serpent on a pole)," in order that "whosoever **believeth in Him** should **not** perish...."

Let's look at the word "in" for a moment. It is translated from the Greek word "eis" which means "to" or "into." John did not say that if we believe "in" Jesus we would not perish. Multitudes believe "in" the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, and that he died on a cross, but they do not "trust in Him." Instead, many of them never speak "his name" except as a "curse word," and they are perishing even as they speak. Those who "trust in Christ" are, by faith, brought "into Him" and are not perishing, but "have everlasting life" presently, "in Him." The apostle John says, "...this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is **in his Son**" (I John 5:11).

Salvation; Delivered from the Power of Darkness

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Colossians 1:12-13

Our text for this message is **Acts 16:31**, which says, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **thou shalt be saved.**”* The Greek word *“sozo,”* which is here translated *“saved,”* is defined by Strong’s Greek Dictionary as *“to save, i.e. **deliver** or **protect.**”* When the apostle says *“...thou shalt be saved,”* the question arises, *“**saved from what?**”* The act of *“saving”* and the present state of those who are actually *“saved,”* is called *“salvation,”* which is translated from the Greek word *“soteria,”* a noun which means *“**rescue** or **safety.**”* According to the apostle Paul, our *“salvation”* is the result of *“believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.”* This is because He is our *“saviour,”* a word which is translated from the Greek word *“soter,”* which means *“a deliverer.”* I recall the words of the angel Gabriel to Joseph the carpenter: He spoke of the child that Mary would bring into the world, saying, *“thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall **save** his people **from their sins**” (Matthew 1:21).* What is it then, that we are saved from? It is very clear to those who believe. God sent His angel to tell us that His Son, Jesus, would save us *“from our sin.”*

Paul also tells us that God has *“...delivered us **from** the power of darkness.”* The *“power of darkness”* is sin. The only power Satan can exercise over mankind is through sin which yet exists in their heart and nature because of the fall of man in the garden. This is the *“sin”* that Jesus came to save us from. Paul tells us that, *“...by one man sin entered into the world...” (Romans 5:12).* John the Baptist points to Jesus and declares to the nation, *“Behold (this is) the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).* Again, the apostle Paul tells us, *“...as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).* This verse speaks of *“methods;”* first, the method the serpent used to bring sin *“into the world,”* and second, the *“method”* God used to *“take away the sin of the world.”*

Paul tells us that the *“serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty” (II Corinthians 11:3).* This means, by definition, he made *“plausible, but fallacious arguments”* to Eve against the *“simplicity”* of God’s command to Adam concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God had simply said, *“...thou shalt not eat of it: for in*

the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Eve, according to the Greek definition of the word that was translated “*beguiled,*” was “*wholly (completely) seduced.*” First, she was “*drawn away*” from the tree of life to look upon the forbidden tree. Next, she was drawn away from God to trust in the serpent. He “*made sense*” to her; his arguments sounded plausible. Everything he told her about the forbidden tree seemed to be confirmed when she “*...saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise*” (Genesis 3:6). Amazingly, the serpent even convinced Eve that God had a “*selfish motive*” in forbidding them to eat of the tree; “*God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*” (Genesis 3:5). Upon hearing this, **verse six** tells us, “*...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*”

Eve believed the arguments of the serpent and was deceived. Adam, who knew better, transgressed, and thus sin entered their heart and polluted their nature, as well as the heart and nature of all their descendants. In submitting to the words of the serpent, they submitted to the serpent himself, and partook of his nature, which is “*sin.*” It is important to understand that “*sin*” in the heart and nature of man is “*the nature of the serpent.*” At this point, we need to know exactly who “*the serpent*” is. He was not just another creature of the garden that served an evil purpose and passed off the scene. The “*serpent*” is better known to us as “*the devil,*” and “*Satan.*” He is also called “*the god of this world, II Corinthians 4:4,*” because it is **his** “*nature*” that is in the world; by which he “*weakens the nations...makes the earth to tremble...shakes kingdoms... and destroys the cities*” (Isaiah 14:12-17). In **John 12:31**, Jesus calls him “*the prince of this world.*” In the book of **Revelation**, he is referred to as “*...the great red dragon...that (same) old serpent (that seduced Eve) ...the Devil, and Satan*” (Revelation 12:3, 12:9, 20:2). The **seventeenth verse of Isaiah:14** says that he “*...made (caused) the world (to be) as a wilderness...and...opened not the house of his prisoners.*” It is sin that has done all these things to a planet which was created by God to be a paradise for man, whom He also created in the image and likeness of God. For over six thousand years, the serpent has ruled supremely over all of those who do NOT “*believe God (Romans 4:3),*” and therefore, do NOT “*obey his voice*” (Exodus 19:5-6).

Through the disobedience of Adam, spiritual darkness has from its inception prevailed over this “*present evil world*” (Galatians 1:4). Hear the cries and groans of the prisoners of darkness (Isaiah 59:9-14): “*We wait for light, but behold*

obscurity; for brightness, but **we walk in darkness**. We grope for the wall **like the blind**, and we grope **as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night**; we are in desolate places as dead men. **We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment**, but there is none; **for salvation**, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and **as for our iniquities, we know them**; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: **for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.**"

But all thanks be to our God, and to His Christ, Who "...hath delivered us from the power of darkness." Oh! how wonderful it is to "walk in the light, as He is in the light," where "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (**I John 1:7**). But, how sad it is to hear the "groans" of those who continue to "walk in darkness," even after the light has come, because their minds have been blinded to the truth by the "serpent" (the god of this world).

*For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. **Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will (to do good) is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would (do), I do not: but the evil which I would not (do), that I do. **Now if I do that** (which) **I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil (sin) is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and **bringing me into captivity to the law of sin** which is in my members. **O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?** (this inward sin; **Romans 7:15-24**).*

This man of "Romans seven" is not to be despised, he is to be pitied. He is doing everything humanly possible to live for God and be pleasing to Him, but finds that the harder he tries, the greater his failure. He is **walking in a darkness** which is just as great as that in which the children of Israel walked; described in **Isaiah chapter 59**. "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed" (**Isaiah 9:16**). The man of **Romans seven**, however, comes to understand that if he is doing things he doesn't want to do, it is the presence of

sin in him that causes him to do those things. He tries to believe that he is “*saved*,” but increasingly sees that he is not; in fact, it becomes clear that he is both captive and slave to the **sin** which is in him. His spiritual leaders try to console him, saying, “*we are all sinners; we sin every day in word, thought, and deed. Furthermore, we will always be sinners as long as we live on this earth, but when we die we will be changed.*” Oh, what deceitful words to give to one who is perishing in **sin**; one who is crying, “*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death (this sin within)?*” (Romans 7:24). The only true answer to the question is given in the **verse** that follows; “*I thank God (it’s only) through Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

Salvation; Free from Sin...Servants to Righteousness

**Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.
Romans 6:18**

Sin is the nature of the serpent; righteousness is the nature of God. **I John 2:29**, the apostle John says “*If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.*” I paraphrase, “*If you know that His nature is righteousness, you know that everyone who is born of Him has His nature and does righteousness.*” We have been made “*free from sin*” because we have trusted in Him whom God sent into the world to suffer and die as a “*lamb*” to “*take away the sin of the world.*” We, according to the exhortation of Paul, **Romans 6:11**, “*reckon*” ourselves “*to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through (in) our Lord Jesus Christ.*” In the same manner in which we are found to be “*dead to sin*” (through [in] our Lord Jesus Christ) **Romans, chapter six**, we are also found to be “*dead to the law by the body of Christ;*” **Romans 7:4**. In like manner as we are “*delivered from the power of darkness*” and “*translated into the kingdom of his dear Son,*” **Colossians 1:13**, we are likewise “*freed from sin*” to be “*the servants of righteousness,*” **Romans 6:18**, and “*delivered from the law*” to “*serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter*” (**Romans 7:6**). Paul tells us in **Romans 6:14** that we are no longer servants to sin. The reason he gives, “*Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law, but under grace.*” Due to the fact that sin cannot dominate us any longer, because of the grace of God that is given to us, we are freed from the law, which was “*...NOT made for the righteous, but for the lawless and disobedient*” (**I Timothy 1:9**). We are NOT, however, freed from the law that we may break the law, but to be “*married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God*”

(Romans 7:4). We now, as the servants of righteousness, serve God through **His nature**, which He imparts to the heart and nature of everyone who is *“born of Him.”* In **Romans 2:14**, Paul speaks of certain Gentiles who, *“have not the law,”* but **“do by nature the things contained in the law.”** These were those same Gentiles of which he speaks in **Romans 9:30**, who *“...have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.”* Theirs was a true righteousness that the moral law could not condemn. It was the righteousness of God, written in their hearts. There is no struggle in doing those things which have become your new nature, through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the *“rest for the soul,”* which Jesus promised to all who would *“come to Him”* (**Matthew 11:28-30**). This is true salvation.

Salvation; “The Sufferings of Christ”

...receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of THE GRACE THAT SHOULD COME unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, and THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW. I Peter 1:9-11

The apostle Peter tells of the Old Testament prophets who prophesied of **“the grace that should come unto you”** (**I Peter 1:10**). They, like Abraham and all the mighty men and women of faith, saw the promise of a great salvation which was to come. **Hebrews 11:13** tells us that *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them.”* Peter boldly tells us, that *“the Spirit of Christ”* was in the prophets **“...when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”** He says they *“enquired”* and *“searched diligently,”* seeking to understand *“what, or what manner of time”* this would be.

Have you ever tried to put together the pieces of an intricate puzzle when you did not know what the full picture would be? Many *“pieces”* of the *“puzzle of our salvation”* were given to man during the four thousand years between Adam and Christ. In the same day the serpent deceived Eve and sin entered through Adam’s disobedience, God gave a promise of *“the seed of the woman”* who would *“bruise the head of the serpent”* (**Genesis 3:15**). This was the first piece of the puzzle concerning our great salvation. Abraham, speaking prophetically, said, *“God will provide Himself a lamb for a sacrifice,”* and *“in the mount of the LORD it shall be*

seen” (**Genesis 2:7-14**). This was another piece of the puzzle. Moses saw “the serpent” impaled on a pole when he “*lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.*” Just one more piece of the puzzle! In the **twenty second chapter of Psalms**, David writes an amazing description of the sufferings of Christ, beginning with the words “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” which are the exact words Jesus cried out from the cross. He foretold, verbatim, the taunts of the people; that they “*pierced*” his hands and feet, and gambled for his vesture.

Isaiah’s revelation of Christ begins in **Isaiah 7:14**; “*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel* (meaning, God with us). Two chapters later, he sees more about this same child; “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*” (**Isaiah 9:6**). In **Isaiah 42:1-4**, God begins to speak of the virgin’s son (Immanuel) as “*my servant.*” He says, “*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. **He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth.***”

In **Isaiah 52:13**, God says, “*Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high*” (**Isaiah 52:13**). The next verse however, introduces a shocking turn of events; “*...many were astonished* (stunned, devastated) *at thee; his visage* (face) *was so marred more than any man, and his form* (body) *more than the sons of men*” (**Isaiah 52:14**). Can this possibly speak of “Immanuel?” How does this fit with all the promises of a great redeemer who would “*bruise the head of the serpent,*” and “*make an end of sins?*” (**Daniel 9:24**). How does it fit the wonderful prophecy of Zechariah (the father of John the Baptist)? “*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; **As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life***” (**Luke 1:68-75**). How is it possible that this great deliverer would be beaten and bruised beyond

recognition at the hands of sinners and unbelievers? *“So shall He sprinkle many nations” (Isaiah 52:15)*. It was something that had never before been seen or heard, that the great salvation and deliverance of mankind would be accomplished through the sufferings and death of a redeeming savior. *“...kings shall shut their mouths at him: for **that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider**” (Isaiah 52:15)*. The *“Spirit of Christ,”* which Peter says was in the prophets (I Peter 1:11), also spoke in Isaiah 50:6, *“I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.”*

The different pieces of the puzzle sometimes seem to contradict each other. How is it possible that these are all speaking of the same person, or event? One piece depicts a great warrior who would triumph over the serpent and crush his head. Another is a *“lamb”* that God would provide for an offering for the sins of the world. How could these be the same? Then, there is Immanuel (God with us), whose name would be called *“wonderful, counselor, the mighty God,”* of whom Isaiah prophesied, *“**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever**” (Isaiah 9:7)*. *“He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: **But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked**” (Isaiah 11:3-4)*.

When Isaiah begins to preach from his visions that *“Immanuel”* (meaning, *“God with us;”* the same one whose name is also called *“Wonderful, Counsellor,”* and *“The mighty God”*) would be abused and beaten on his back and face until He was marred beyond recognition; who could believe such a message?

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he (Immanuel) shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we

are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:1-6

Consider the apparent contradictions in the prophecies. I say “*apparent*,” because there are no contradictions to those who understand. The Jews have never believed that **Isaiah 53** speaks of their Messiah. Instead, they believe it is an analogy of the nation of Israel, suffering at the hands of their enemies. They continue to wait for their Messiah to come to destroy their enemies and restore the kingdom to Jerusalem. They believe that it is his reign from a literal “*throne of David*,” restored in Jerusalem, that will “*take evil out of the world*” and “*bring in everlasting righteousness*” (**Daniel 9:24**). This view of the Messiah was so strong among the Jews that even the disciples believed that Jesus would one day declare Himself to be the “*King of the Jews*” and immediately drive the Romans out of their land. This view of the people is borne out by Jesus Himself in **John 6:15**; “*When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.*”

When Jesus tried to tell His disciples that He would suffer and die in Jerusalem, Peter “*rebuked*” Him, and said, “*Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee*” (**Matthew 16:22**). After that day, Jesus spoke to them many times about his sufferings and death, but they simply could not hear what He said. After all, He is “*the Christ*” who will “*deliver us from our enemies*” (**Luke 1:71-75**) and “*sit on the throne of David*” (**Isaiah 9:7**). “*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end....*” The very thought of “*Christ crucified*” was repulsive to every Jew, even to those who loved Jesus and believed that He was “*the Christ*.” To them, a crucified Christ was a “*rock of offence*” and a “*stone of stumbling*” that was laid before them, as well as us. Compare **Isaiah 8:14**, “*And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel...*,” to the words of Paul in **I Corinthians 1:22-23**; “*The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness.*” Now, hear the words of Peter, “*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious* (He is our sanctuary; **Isaiah 8:14**): *but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence...*” (**I Peter 2:7-8**).

When the officers of the high priest came to Gethsemane to take Jesus by force, Peter and the other disciples were ready to fight and even die for Him. Peter drew

his sword, and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest before Jesus could stop him. When the disciples saw that Jesus would not fight, but would go peaceably with the officers, the scripture says, *“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled”* (**Matthew 26:56**). Their image of Jesus as *“The Christ,”* was destroyed that night. They could believe in a Messiah that would ultimately raise an army and take the kingdom by force, but they could not, by any stretch of imagination, accept that He would willingly suffer and die. After Jesus was raised from the dead, Luke tells us that He joined two of His disciples as they walked the road to Emmaus. Luke tells us *“...their eyes were holden that they should not know him”* (**Luke 24:16**). They told Him about Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth, whom the chief priests and elders had condemned to death and given over to be crucified. How sad and sorrowful they were as they confessed, *“...we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel”* (**Luke 24:21**). It was the third day since He had been crucified, and they had heard that very day that he was risen from the dead, but they didn’t believe it. They most certainly loved Jesus, but they felt like *“fools”* for believing that he could have been *“The Christ.”* The crucifixion was all the *“proof”* they needed to understand their *“foolishness.”*

Jesus did not immediately reveal Himself to these disciples. Instead, He taught them about *“the Christ,”* saying, *“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: **Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?** And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”* (**Luke 24:25-27**). To this day, *“that old serpent, the devil”* will try to make you feel like a *“fool”* when you trust in Christ, but the real *“fool”* is the one who refuses to believe.

There is no record that any of the disciples believed the report that Jesus was raised from the dead, until they saw Him with their own eyes and handled Him with their hands. In **Mark 16:14** we read, *“...he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them... (for) their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.”* Even the proof of His resurrection, while it brought them unspeakable joy, did not resolve their issues, because the record shows that His chosen apostles returned to a life of fishing on the Sea of Galilee; the life they had forsaken over three years before to follow Him. It was actually with great difficulty that Jesus persuaded Peter to once again *“forsake all”* to *“follow Him”* (**John 21:19-22**). After forty days, during which time He *“shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs,”* and taught them many things *“pertaining to the kingdom of God,”* there was only one hundred

and twenty remaining out of the thousands who once followed Him. These are those who *“believed Him”* and received the mighty baptism with the Holy Ghost which He gave on the Day of Pentecost. His sufferings were past, and those who believed now entered into *“the glory that should follow”* (I Peter 1:11).

Salvation; “The Glory That Follows”

Yet it pleased the LORD (God, the Father) to bruise him (the Son); he (God) hath put him (the Son) to grief: WHEN THOU (God) SHALT MAKE HIS SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN, HE SHALL SEE HIS SEED, he (God) shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD (God) shall prosper in his hand. Isaiah 53:9-10

Isaiah 53:10 has been called the *“transition”* of Christ from *“humiliation”* to *“exaltation.”* The apostle Paul speaks of this in **Philippians 2:8-9**, speaking of Christ, who *“...became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

“It pleased the LORD to bruise Him” and *“to put Him to grief.”* It was His Father who *“made His soul an offering for sin.”* As a result of the sin offering, *“He (the Father) shall see His seed”* (His spiritual sons and daughters). It was the Father who raised Christ from the dead (*“He shall prolong His days”*), and set Him at His own right hand (*“the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand”*). Peter says, concerning the *“seed”* that are born out of the sin offering of Christ, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which (who) according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

In the **twenty second chapter of Psalms**, David depicts almost completely, the events of the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. However, he closes the Psalm with two wonderful verses; *“A seed (those who are ‘born of God’) shall serve him; it (they) shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness (they shall preach the gospel of Christ) unto a people that shall be (spiritually) born ([‘again’] ‘of God’), that he hath done this (the word ‘this’ refers to the wonderful new creation that was birthed out of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ)”* (Psalms 22:30-31).

Salvation; “Born of God”

For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for 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. Romans 9:3-4**

For much of my early experience, I labored under a lie because, I was taught that I was “*only adopted*” by God, and the children of Israel were His true sons and daughters. Actually, this is the exact opposite of the truth. The apostle Paul clearly tells us that Israel was a nation that was “*adopted*” by God, and what a wonderful thing that was. “*The LORD thy God hath **chosen thee** to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*” (**Deuteronomy 7:6**). All the blessings which were promised to Abraham and “*his seed*” were the rightful inheritance of these adopted children, if they would only “*obey His voice*” (**Exodus 19:5-6**). Being “*adopted*” however, they did not have His heart and nature. Serving God was always a struggle for them, because to do so was alien to their nature.

Christ came into the world to “*finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.*” He did not do these things through a royal decree, as a conquering king would have done; but the scripture tells us that “*through death...He destroyed the devil*” (**Hebrews 2:14**), and that “*we were reconciled to God by **the death of his Son***” (**Romans 5:10**). Sin, Satan, our “*old man,*” and “*the world*” were all “*destroyed*” when they nailed the Son of God to the cross. The way was made for a “*new creation in Christ.*” Paul says, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. **For we are his workmanship, CREATED in Christ Jesus** unto good works*” (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). Those who are “*created in Christ Jesus*” are the “*Spirit born*” sons and daughters of God. They, according to the promise, have received “*a **new heart and a new spirit***” and the promise of God that “*I will put **my Spirit** in you*” (**Ezekiel 36:26-27**). These are partakers of the “*divine nature*” of their Father (**II Peter 1:4**). For these to “*obey His voice*” is a wonderful thing, and never grievous, because they are of one heart, and partake of the same nature as the one who speaks to them in a “*still small voice.*” “*...thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it*” (**Isaiah 30:21**).

Oh what glorious excitement there was among the prophets of God as they

*“enquired and searched diligently, **what, or what manner of time**”* this was when they saw *“the sufferings of Christ, and **the glory that should follow** (1 Peter 1:11).* Never, in the history of the world, had there been such a *“time”* as they saw in their visions of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that would follow. Isaiah prophesied of *“The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel”* saying, *“**THY PEOPLE also shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified**” (Isaiah 60:21).* Never had there been a kingdom on earth in which every inhabitant was righteous, but that is what they saw in their visions. Again, God comforts the *“daughter of Zion,”* saying, *“Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And **they shall call them, THE HOLY PEOPLE, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken**” (Isaiah 62:11-12).*

God’s Salvation; Sent to the Gentiles

Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that THE SALVATION OF GOD IS SENT UNTO THE GENTILES, and...they will hear it.* Acts 28:25-28

In the final analysis, our *“salvation”* is everything that God promised to the children of Israel through the coming of their Messiah, *“The Christ”* of prophecy. In **Romans 9:3-5**, Paul speaks of his *“...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; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”* I recall Isaac and Rebecca’s twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau was the firstborn, and as such was the *“birthright child.”* Everything his father Isaac possessed belonged to him, but the scripture says he *“despised his birthright”* and it was given to Jacob instead. Esau *“had it all,”* but he lost it due to his indifference as a young man, and later *“...when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Hebrews 12:17).* Years later, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, which means *“prince of God.”* The descendants of his twelve sons became the twelve

tribes of Israel, and altogether were known as *“the children of Israel,”* until such time as they became the *“nation of Israel.”* Paul said that he had *“great heaviness and continual sorrow”* in his heart for the Israelites, because they had rejected *“the Christ,”* whom God had sent into the world to redeem them. Paul’s love for them was such that he said, *“I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”* (**Romans 9:3**). This was the same *“love”* that Moses demonstrated for the children of Israel when He interceded with God for them, saying, *“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written”* (**Exodus 32:32**).

The apostle understood that Israel, whom God had chosen (adopted to be His very own), placed His love upon, given His word to, brought into His covenant with their father Abraham, and given great and precious promises to, had become a people such as *“Esau”* was; one who *“despised his birthright.”* Israel *“had it all,”* but when Christ came into the world to fulfill the great promises of God to them, they totally rejected Him and caused Him to be crucified. The apostle John records it this way: *“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. **But as many as received him, to them gave he power** (the **privilege**) **to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”*** (**John 1:10-12**).

We were Gentiles, to whom Paul writes, *“Wherefore remember, that ye **being in time past** Gentiles in the flesh.... 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”* (**Ephesians 2:11-12**). Our ancestors were idol worshippers, who worshiped devils, and not God; and so we would be today if Paul had not obeyed God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Even so, at the beginning of his ministry, the apostle Paul always preached the gospel *“...to the Jew first”* (**Romans 1:16**) until such time as the Jews would drive him out of their synagogues; after that, he would preach to the Gentiles. However, after many years of striving to convince the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah, and suffering great persecution as a result, Paul was captured in the temple at Jerusalem by a crowd of Jews who would have killed him if he had not been rescued by the Romans. When the Romans would have released him, he appealed to Caesar, not wishing to fall into the hands of those who had sworn to kill him. After considerable time had passed, Paul was taken to Rome where he was kept under house arrest for about two years. There he was free to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who came to him. Once again, only three days after his arrival in the

city of Rome, he reached out first to the Jews. Being met with indifference, he applied the prophecy of **Isaiah 6:9-13** to them, and said, *“Be it known therefore unto you, that **the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and... they will hear it.**”*

In **Romans 1:16**, Paul tells us that the *“gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.”* Until this time, Paul had preached the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, but always *“to the Jew first.”* It would have been insignificant to say, *“...the gospel is **sent** to the Gentiles,”* because it was God’s will from the very beginning that every nation would receive the gospel. We should notice, however, that the apostle actually said, *“The **Salvation of God is sent** unto the gentiles.”* There, in an obscure setting, one man, the apostle Paul, gave a decree from God that changed the course of the entire world. The *“natural branches”* of the *“green olive tree”* were *“broken off”* through their **unbelief (Romans 11:19-20)**. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of this in his prophecies to Israel, saying, *“The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken” (Jeremiah 11:16)*. Paul gives the analogy of the *“olive tree”* in the **eleventh chapter of Romans**, in which he shows that the *“natural branches (the unbelieving Jews)”* were *“broken off because of unbelief”* and *“wild branches (the Gentiles)”* were grafted in **by faith in “the Christ.”** It is still the same olive tree which now consists of believing Jews, with believing Gentiles grafted in, which constitutes the New Covenant *“Israel of God” (Galatians 6:15-16)*.

Faith in Christ (Believing that **Jesus is ‘The Christ’**) is the means of salvation *“to everyone that believeth” (Romans 1:16)*. But, what is it that Paul calls *“The Salvation of God?”* It is so much more than most *“believers”* will ever believe to receive. Sadly, a growing multitude in the church today, believe that if they repeat a sinners prayer, and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, they receive a guarantee of *“going to heaven”* when they die, regardless of how they live. Most of these have never been saved, but have instead *“believed a lie”* because they *“received not the love of the truth” (II Thessalonians 2:10)*. The apostle says they are *“damned”* by the lie, because they **loved not**, and therefore, *“believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (II Thessalonians 2:11-12)*. There are, however, those who have been truly *“saved”* who never *“enter into God’s salvation.”* Jude, the brother of our Lord says, *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, **having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.**”*

About forty five days after God had delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, they arrived at Mount Horeb, which Moses called *"The Mount of God."* It was there that God gave instructions to Moses for the congregation. *"...tell the children of Israel; 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Exodus 19:3-4).* In these words we see the reason God *"saved them out of Egypt;"* it was *"to bring them unto Himself."* It isn't in *"heaven someday"* that God will *"bring us unto Himself,"* just as it wasn't fulfilled in the land of Canaan. It was at Horeb that God introduced Himself to the children of Israel. They had *"heard of Him,"* but they had never *"heard Him"* and did not *"know Him."* In just three days, God promised to come down on Horeb to speak to the people. He instructed Moses to tell them, *"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."* This is what the *"salvation of God"* is about. It is here that they will *"enter into His rest"* if they will only hear and obey His voice. This is why He saved them out of Egypt, and what He saved them for. He told them in **Numbers 15:41**, *"I am the LORD your God, which (who) brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."*

I have often wondered about the discourse Jesus had with the unbelieving Pharisees in **Luke 17:20-21**. *"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."* I do not wonder any longer; if you are in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God is in you. The children of Israel were looking for a *"kingdom"* in the land of Canaan. They visualized a literal paradise, a land that promised to *"flow with milk and honey."* It was at Horeb, however, that they must receive the kingdom. God said, *"Obey my voice, and keep my covenant...and thou shalt be 'a kingdom of priests' unto me."* They, the children of Israel, would be *"The Kingdom of God,"* but they must first receive Him at Horeb.

The nation of Israel never really became the *"kingdom of God."* When Christ came into the world, He said, *"My kingdom is not of this world"* (**John 18:36**). I can tell you that Christ is the kingdom of God. He is also *"The Salvation of God."* It was revealed to old Simeon in Jerusalem that he would not die until he had seen *"the Lord's Christ"* (**Luke 2:26**). He was led by the Spirit into the temple at the very hour the baby Jesus was being presented to God. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and said, *"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:"*

*For mine eyes have seen **thy salvation***" (Luke 2:28-30).

The Jews were looking for a literal kingdom, with the throne in Jerusalem, from which "*the Messiah*" would reign over all the earth. Their "*Messiah (the Christ)*" was standing before them and they did not know Him. Rejecting Him, they would never see "*the kingdom of God.*" Jesus told Nicodemus, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:3), and again, "*...he cannot enter the kingdom of God*" (John 3:5). The unbelieving Jews are still "*looking*" for the kingdom of God to come. They will never see it, because it "*cometh not with observation,*" but when they receive "*The Christ*" whom God sent, they will see that the kingdom of God is indeed "*within them.*"

It was at Horeb that the children of Israel must "*enter into*" the kingdom of God. This was over a year before they came to the border of Canaan, which they erroneously believed to be their "*kingdom.*" God told Moses that He would speak audibly to all the children of Israel from Mount Horeb. There were two requirements of the people, if they would "*enter in.*" **First**, "*obey my voice,*" and **second**, "*keep my covenant.*" There were three promises to those who did so:

1. "*Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people:*"
2. "*Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,*"
3. "*...and an holy nation.*"

The land of Canaan was of secondary importance. What they do in the day God speaks to them will determine whether they will possess the land of promise. Paul speaks of that day in **Romans 1:21**; "*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God...*" Paul's terminology describes the children of Israel's reaction in the day that God spoke to them from Horeb. God "*introduced Himself*" to them, saying, "*I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" This was the day that they "*knew God,*" that He "*is God,*" and that He "*lives*" (**Deuteronomy 5:24**), but they fled from God, crying to Moses, "*Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die*" (**Exodus 20:19**). These people had met God as it were, "*face to face;*" they had "*heard His voice*" with their own ears, and had "*seen His glory*" with their own eyes, but they did not glorify Him as God. Within six weeks of the day they "*met God*" at Horeb and "*heard His voice*" they were worshiping a golden calf, saying, "*This is the god that has brought us up out of Egypt*" (**Exodus 32:4**). In the

words of Paul, they *“...changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts...”* (**Romans 1:23**). They bestowed the glory that belongs to God alone upon an image they had fashioned with their own hands. About a year later they came to the border of Canaan, their *“land of promise,”* the *“land that flows with milk and honey,”* and found that they could not enter. It wasn’t God that kept them from entering; it was their unbelief. Paul confirms this in **Hebrews 3:19**, *“...we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief.**”* There were only two among them, Joshua and Caleb, who had **believed** God when He spoke from Horeb, and these received the promise. All the rest *“perished in the wilderness.”*

John Greenleaf Whittier said, *“For of all sad words of tongue or pen, The saddest are these: ‘It might have been!’”* I do not know if the children of Israel ever understood *“What might have been”* if they had listened to God and *“obeyed His voice”* at Horeb, but they never received the *“blessing”* that God had prepared for them. The *“covenant”* they would have *“kept”* was the covenant of blessing that God made with Abraham, *“...because thou hast obeyed my voice”* (**Genesis 22:16-18**). The *“Law of Moses,”* which Paul says was *“added because of transgressions”* (**Galatians 3:19**), would not have been given. They would have been a *“kingdom of priests”* rather than having a *“Levitical priesthood.”* Never again would they have offered animal sacrifices to God, but their sacrifices would have been the *“sacrifices of praise”* the *“fruit of their lips, offered up in thanksgiving to God”* (**Hebrews 13:14-15**). God confirms this through the prophet Jeremiah, saying, *“**I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you**”* (**Jeremiah 7:22-23**).

As a *“kingdom of priests,”* every one of them would hear the still small voice of God speaking to them, which if they would obey, they would be greatly blessed (**Isaiah 30:21**). As a *“holy nation,”* they would not have been under the law, because the words that God spoke from Horeb would have been written in their hearts instead of on stone. Finally, as God’s *“peculiar treasure,”* they would have been a people *“above all people,”* as God had said, *“...for all the earth is mine.”* They would have been exalted above every nation on earth. Within a year they would have entered into their land of promise. It would have overflowed *“with milk and honey,”* and *“blossomed as a rose (**Isaiah 35:1**)”* upon their arrival. Their enemies would have

been driven out before them without loss of life to the children of Israel, and the entire world would have seen that the *"God of Israel"* is the true and living God (**I Thessalonians 1:9**).

Moved to Jealousy

They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. Deuteronomy 32:21

Our God is a *"jealous God."* He told us so in the third commandment; *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God..."* (**Exodus 20:4-5**).

The words of our text are part of a song that God told Moses to sing to the congregation of Israel, on what proved to be his last full day on earth before he died on Mount Nebo (**Deuteronomy 32:48-50**). It is a prophetic song that God gave to him as *"a witness against the children of Israel"* (**Deuteronomy 31:19-20**) that would be fulfilled in their *"latter days"* (**Deuteronomy 31:29**). In fact, it is the generation in which we live that these words will find their ultimate fulfillment. Moses said, *"They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God"* (**Deuteronomy 32:16-17**). When God saw His people, whom He had chosen to be His very own, worshiping a golden calf, He was not only *"moved to jealousy,"* but He was also *"provoked to anger."* In His wrath, He would have utterly destroyed them, had it not been for the intercession of Moses. Only God's promise to Abraham sustained them *"until the seed (Christ) should come to whom the promise was made."* When they rejected Christ, and finally, after *"much longsuffering"* on the part of both God and His apostle, rejected the gospel of Christ, the *"Salvation of God"* was sent to the Gentiles (**Acts 28:28**).

Almost **four thousand years** have passed since Moses sang His song to the children of Israel. Almost **two thousand years** have passed since the redemptive promises to Israel were sent to the Gentiles. We are living in the last days of time before Christ returns to earth. Even now we see the Song of Moses being fulfilled in part. Even now, Israel is being *"provoked to anger"* by a foolish nation. The *"foolish nation"* is radical Islam. Led by Iran, those nations are even now being gathered

against Israel. They are “*very foolish,*” because God has said, “*It shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem*” (Zechariah 12:9), and “*This shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth*” (Zechariah 14:12).

All that remains to be fulfilled is for them to be “*moved to jealousy with those which are not a people*” (Deuteronomy 32:21). Peter gives insight as to who the people are that Moses says “*are not a people.*” In I Peter 2:9, he writes to the believers among the Gentiles, saying, “*...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.*” Notice that they have received everything that God promised to the children of Israel in Exodus 19:5-6, because they have “*believed*” and “*obeyed*” the voice of God. This is what Jesus calls “*the promise of the Father*” (Acts 1:4).

The Promise of the Father

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. Acts 1:4

The original “*Day of Pentecost*” was the day God came down on Mount Horeb to speak to His people. It came on the “*fiftieth day*” after the children of Israel kept the first Passover feast, hence its name, “*Pentecost,*” which means “*fiftieth day.*” It was the day the children of Israel would receive the “*promise*” God had made to them just three days before. “*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*” (Exodus 19:5-6). The children of Israel refused to even listen to the voice of God, much less obey Him, and it should be noted that they did not receive the promise. Instead, they cried for Moses to speak to them; they would “*obey Moses’ voice,*” but “*let not God speak with us, lest we die*” (Exodus 20:19), and thus the Law of Moses came into being, not by the will of God, but because of the “*transgressions of Israel.*” The apostle Paul explains this in Galatians 3:19; “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom*

the promise was made.” The Law of Moses served as a “*prison*” to “*shut them up*” (**Galatians 3:23**), and a “*disciplinarian*” to keep them in line (**Hebrews 10:28**), until Christ, “*the seed*,” would come. Though chosen by God to be His special people, Israel was never a “*kingdom of priests*” or “*an holy nation*” at any time in their history.

When Christ, “*our Passover (I Corinthians 5:7)*” was offered to “*take away the sin of the world*” (**John 1:29**), the days to Pentecost began to count. On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead. On the **forty third day**, Jesus ascended to the Father. It was on the **fiftieth day** that the “*promise of the Father*” was fulfilled upon all those who believed and obeyed God. “*When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*”

Peter says, “*This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.*” As wonderful as Joel’s prophecy was, God did much more than Joel told us. When God poured out His Spirit on the hundred and twenty, they received everything God had promised to do on the original “*Pentecost*” at Mount Horeb. He had told them, “*If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, 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.***” The children of Israel could not “*obey*” the voice of God, because their “*hearts*” were polluted with sin. When Christ died to “*take away the sin of the world*,” the “*sin problem*” was forever resolved for “*whosoever believeth.*” They received a “*new heart*,” and a “*new spirit*” according to the promise (**Ezekiel 36:26**), and on this great day, the “*fiftieth from the Passover*,” God filled them with “*His Spirit*” (**Ezekiel 36:27**). A “*nation*” was born in a day (**Isaiah 66:8**). They were the “*holy nation*” of which Isaiah had said, “*...all thy people shall be righteous.*” They were God’s “*peculiar treasure*,” a people above all people on earth. It is no wonder that these “*turned the world upside down*” in their generation. The “*Kingdom of God*” had come, and they were that kingdom. This is the “*Salvation of God*” that will “*move Israel to jealousy*” (**Deuteronomy 32:21**) when it is seen among the Gentiles. It will cause them to “*look upon Him whom they pierced*” (**Zechariah 12:10**), and salvation will come to the Jew also. Oh, people! Heed the voice of the Spirit speaking in your heart; “*Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts*” (**Hebrews 3:7-8**).