

The Old Testament Christians

Pastor Sheldon Emry



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God told father Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, “...*Thou shalt be a blessing, ...and in thee shall all the families of the Earth be blessed.*” Christians are told in the New Testament in Galatians 3:9, “...*So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*”

Has Christendom lost sight of its roots in the Old Testament? Almost all ministers today make frequent mention of God’s promises to Abraham in Genesis 12. However, almost without exception, they apply those promises to the people who call themselves ‘*Jews*’ and who are now trying to establish a nation in ancient Palestine, the country of Israeli. And yet, as we will see in the booklet “***The New Testament Israel***”, the New Testament writers addressed themselves to those who believed in Jesus Christ, and applied the Abrahamic Covenants and promises to those Christian believers.

I am going to show you some of the covenants and promises that God made to Abraham, and we’ll see not only what the covenants and promises were, but we’ll be able to see in what people those covenants and promises have been kept. My contention is that they have been kept in and among the people and nations we call collectively, Christendom; that they have been, and could only be, fulfilled in the people to whom Jesus Christ came.

This is why I am calling this booklet, “***The Old Testament Christians***”. After all, Jesus was the messenger of the covenant, and said that He came to do the will of the Father, and finish His work. Paul writes in Romans 15:8, “...*Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises {made} unto the fathers:*”

We will see in “***The New Testament Israel***”, that it was the Israelites who were called Christians, after Christ. In Galatians 3:29 we read, “...*And if ye {be} Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*”

I will start this booklet, “***The Old Testament Christians***”, by proving that the great men of the Old

Testament were exactly that: Christians! Get your Bible and check this out for yourself. We'll read about the covenants, the prophecies and their fulfillment later, but first I want to prove that the great men whom God blessed and used in the Old Testament were Christians. We have so often heard them called '*Jews*', that we tend to believe that. But let's find out what the Bible actually says. I'll have to use, of course, the New Testament to find out what a Christian is, and then compare that to some well known characters in the Old Testament.

Would you agree that a Christian is one who has found grace in the sight of God?

"...For the law was given by Moses, {but} grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17). After Pentecost, the believers in Christ: *"...And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."* (Acts 4:33). Similar phrases with the word 'grace' are used several times in the book of Acts. Paul writes of Jesus Christ in Romans 1:5: *"...By whom we have received grace."*

Scores of times in the New Testament, believers in Christ are identified as those who have received the grace of God. Let's see what the Old Testament says. We read this of Noah in Genesis 6:8, in the story of Noah and the flood: *"...But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."*

Being a Christian is often called *"a walk with God."* For instance, in Revelation 3:4 the believers in Christ are promised they will walk with God. We even sing songs with the phrase *"Just a closer walk with Thee."* In Genesis 6:9, *"These {are} the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man {and} perfect in his generations, {and} Noah walked with God."*

These are just two of the marks of a Christian - 'the grace of God' and 'walking with God'. Christians are promised protection, even a saving out of great tribulation. In Genesis 6:13-14, God told Noah He was going to bring destruction, and He said to Noah: *"...Make thee an ark of gopher wood;"* and then God told him how to make it, so that God would save Noah.

In the New Testament, Christian believers are promised that God will save their household, or family. At Pentecost, the men asked Peter, *"What must we do to*

be saved?" in Acts 2:38-39. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children."

The same question was asked by the jailor of Paul and Silas, in Acts 16:30, "*Sirs what must I do to be saved?"* They answered: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" The next verses tell us his entire family was saved and was baptized. After God gave instructions to Noah to build the ark, we read in Genesis 18:6 that God said to Noah: "*...But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.*" God saved Noah's whole family.

In the New Testament we are told that Christians are to be and will be obedient unto God. In John 15:10 Jesus said: "*...If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love;*" John told how we would know who were Christians in 1 John 2:3, "*...And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*" Even in Revelation 12:17 we find the remnant of the seed of the woman, who, of course, are God's people, as those "*...who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*"

Of all the people in the New Testament, the only ones who are commanded to, or credited with, obeying God's Commandments, are the believers in Christ Jesus, the Christians. In Genesis 6:22, what do we read of Noah? "*...Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*" Noah was obedient to God; the mark of a Christian.

In the New Testament, Christians are identified as those who are righteous before God. Not because they never sinned, but because God sees them as righteous. In other words, they are righteous in God's sight. In Romans 4:5, it is said of the believer, "*...his faith is counted for righteousness.*" This is said a hundred times in the New Testament, and it is said only of Christians. "*...And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.*" (Genesis 7:1).

Christians are the blessed of God. There is no

indication in the New Testament that God Almighty would bless the heathen or the people who would deny Jesus Christ. Take a look at the Communist, or anti-Christ nations. You will find nothing in them that could be called a blessing from God. In Genesis 9:1, after the flood, we read: “...*And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.*”

How many marks of a Christian does that give Noah?

1. Grace in God’s eyes.
2. Walking with God.
3. A promise of personal protection.
4. A promise for his family.
5. He was obedient to God’s word.
6. Righteousness was imputed to him.
7. He was blessed by God!

Seven marks of a Christian on Noah. But my fundamentalist friends will say: “Oh, but did he know Jesus? How could Noah be a Christian, if he had not confessed Jesus Christ and come down to the altar and let Christ come into his heart?” Well, who said one had to go through the altar ritual in a church to become a Christian? I don’t find it in the Bible; though I hear it on a thousand TV and radio stations and in tens of thousands of churches. To hear some of them, you would believe that every person who lived before Jesus Christ and ninety-nine percent of the people who lived after Him, are all bound for hell and torture, and only those few in their church will be saved. Not so my friend, not so!

Even New Testament preachers read Hebrews 11, they call it the faith chapter, but perhaps do not even realize its real implications. “*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*” (Hebrews 11:7).

What did Noah become when he believed God, and obeyed Him? An heir of righteousness which is by faith. By any test of the Scripture, those words tell me Noah was a Christian. And, that verse is in the New Testament. How dare ministers not teach their flocks that Noah was a Christian? The last verse of Hebrews

11 says quite plainly, “...*that they without us* (meaning Noah and the others listed there), *should not be made perfect.*” That phrase “*be made perfect*” is used in reference to the resurrection of the just, to everlasting life in Christ’s Kingdom. Noah will be there, according to the plain statement of Hebrews 11:7 and 10. Of course he was a Christian!

How about Abraham? Will Abraham be in the resurrection of the just? Most Christian ministers insist that only believers in Christ whom they correctly call *Christians* will be in that resurrection. Does that exclude Abraham? Or does Abraham meet the test of Christian faith? Some claim that Abraham was the first ‘*Jew*’, but the truth is that Abraham wasn’t even an Israelite! His great-grandchildren were the first Israelites, and neither they nor Abraham were ever called ‘*Jews*’ in the Bible, although several hundred thousand ministers in Christendom have been taught, like parrots, to speak of Abraham as being a ‘*Jew*’. The modern meaning of the word ‘*Jew*’ is anyone who believes in the religion of Judaism.

Well, Abraham fits every tenet of the Christian religion that Noah did. He found grace in God’s eyes; he not only walked in obedience to God; he physically walked with God, on one or more occasions, depending on whether you believe that one of the messengers to Sodom was God or not. Abraham’s household was saved and blessed; Yes, both Isaac and Ishmael received blessings and covenants with God.

Righteousness was imputed to Abraham, as it is to Christians. “...*And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*” (Genesis 15:6) . In Romans 4, Paul twice states that of Abraham as an example to Christians. Would God have the New Testament writers hold up before Christians a non-Christian and tell them to follow his example. Nonsense!

Abraham was also obedient. God speaks of Abraham’s obedience in Genesis 22. He repeats His promise of multiplying Abraham’s seed, as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore, and then ends that promise in verse 18: “...*because thou hast obeyed my voice.*”

In Genesis 18:19, God says of Abraham, “...*For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the*

Lord.” The way of the LORD has to be the true religion. Today we call it the Christian religion. It was the same religion or faith then, although it was not called by the same name.

In Matthew 3:3 we read of John the Baptist who was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, “...*For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.*” That phrase is repeated at the beginning of every one of the four gospels. In fact, after Jesus’ death, the faith or religion of Christianity was called by the term “*The Way*” for some years in the New Testament before it was finally changed to ‘*Christian*’. You’ll read that in Acts 9:2.

In Acts 18:24-28, it tells of a man who preached “...*in the way of the Lord.*” We find Aquila and Priscilla telling him of Jesus, which is called in Acts 18:26, “...*the Way of God more perfectly,*” after which the man preached Jesus, still calling it “...*the Way of The Lord.*”

In Acts 19:9, it is called “...*that Way*”. In Acts 22:4, it is called “...*this Way*”. In Acts 24, where Paul defended his preaching of Jesus Christ, he said in verse 14: “...*after the way which they (meaning the Jewish Pharisees) call heresy, so worship I, the God of my fathers.*” Verse 24 states specifically that “...*that Way*” was “...*the faith in Christ.*” In each case the word ‘*way*’ comes from the Greek word ‘*hodos*’, which means a highway or a journey; a way of getting from one place to another. In the epistles, faith in Jesus Christ is called “*The Way of Holiness*”, “*The Way of Truth*”, “*The Right Way*”, “*The Way of Righteousness*”, “*The New and Living Way*”.

All the followers of Christ considered themselves to be following the religion of their Israel fathers; of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After all, it prophesied of a Messiah, a Savior to come. That Savior had now come. It did not change the religion, it just added a fulfilled prophecy to it. It was the same religion; it was the same faith spoken of in the Old Testament. It is only in recent centuries, particularly in the last one hundred years, that false prophets have tried to convince the Christians that, somehow or other, our religion is different than the religion of Noah and of Abraham, Isaac and of Jacob. No! It is not! It is the same religion with a new

name, the name of the Messiah which was to come and who has now come.

As our study on the “*New Testament Israel*” will show, it was the Israelites who were to be, and who did become, the Christians, so we can now show from the Old Testament and Christianity that it was the same Israelitish religion which became Christianity. The same people - the same faith!

Would you now say Abraham was a Christian? If you are still unsure on that, turn to Hebrews 11:8-19, and you’ll find Abraham listed there, as another man of faith. Abraham, and by implication the others listed with him, such as Noah, “...*desire a better country, that is an heavenly, where God is not ashamed to be called their God for He hath prepared for them a city.*”

What was it they desired and looked forward to? The city of God, the New Jerusalem. The Kingdom of God upon the earth! That is the same thing the Christian faith teaches us to look forward to, is it not? No other religion professes to believe in such a Kingdom of God upon the earth; only the Christian religion of which Abraham was a part. We even find that Abraham believed God could raise Isaac from the dead. He believed in God’s power to resurrect the dead. No other religion but that of Christianity believes in such a resurrection from the dead.

Oh, I know that many religions teach re-incarnation, but that is not resurrection from the dead. They actually teach that men never die in the first place, they just go on living in some other form. Only the Christian religion teaches that the wages of sin is death, or cessation of life, and our only hope then, is in the resurrection. The Christian religion teaches “...*it is appointed unto a man once to die, but after this the judgment.*” And “...*as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

Every religion but the Christian religion keeps man alive, in their doctrine at least, and thereby deny one of the fundamental tenets of the Christian Faith; that men die and depend upon God for resurrection to eternal life. By every measure by which you wish to measure, the religion of Abraham can be only that of the Christian religion.

By the way, and this may come as a surprise to

many Christians, the religion of Judaism teaches reincarnation. This was expounded in some detail in a Jewish newspaper which was sent to me, *The Jewish Press* by Rabbi Scheinberg, in the issue of August 2, 1974. You will probably be able to verify the teaching of reincarnation through some of your Jewish friends, or by asking a Jewish Rabbi. It is not a secret, but it is perhaps not well known, only because the Jews are not evangelistic, and make no effort to secure conversions to their religion as we Christians do.

The God which Abraham believed in, and the God of the Christian's Bible teaches no such thing as reincarnation. So Abraham could not have been a follower of the religion of Judaism, but instead a follower of the true faith, of the Christian Bible. Abraham was a Christian.

Abraham's son Isaac followed in Abraham's footsteps as far as his faith and religion was concerned. He was blessed by, and believed in, the same God and in the same promises. And by the way, he is also listed in the New Testament in Hebrews 11:20, as a man of the same faith. Jacob, Isaac's son, then received, of his father and of God, the promises God had made to Abraham and to Abraham's seed.

You probably had not thought of these progenitors of the Israel race as Christians, but in the context of modern religions, it is true their religious faith and dogmas match perfectly to that of true Christianity.

Try raising this subject with your minister, using the following two questions: Do you believe that only Christians will be in heaven? Do you believe that Abraham will be in heaven? If he answers yes to both questions, then ask him one more: Do you believe that Abraham was a Christian? Chances are you will get some long and involved explanation of how or why Abraham was not a Christian, but don't worry about that. You will already have proven your point.

If you wish, you might add a fourth question, but first quote Jesus' words in John 8:56, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw {it}, and was glad.*" Then ask the question: If Abraham looked forward to Jesus, and believed Jesus would come, would that not make Abraham a Christian? In spite of that, many will call Abraham a *Jew*, and they call Isaac

and Jacob *Jews*, and they call Moses a *Jew*.

I am giving you evidence from the Bible that these Old Testament saints fit the modern definition of *Christian*, and if we are going to label them with the name of any religion, only the label of *Christian* fits them. You should read all of Hebrews 11, and you will see why the only religious name of today which can fit those people is *Christian*.

In Genesis 21, Jacob vowed that, “...*then shall the LORD be my God.*” In Genesis 32, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel; the name means “*ruling with God*”, which of course, is the promise to Christians, as we read in Revelation 5:10 that Jesus has “...*made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*”

In Genesis 27, Jacob’s father Isaac passed on to Jacob what is called the *Abrahamic Covenants*. Isaac said to Jacob: “...*Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee: cursed {be} every one that curseth thee, and blessed {be} he that blesseth thee.*” (Genesis 27:28-29).

That last part is a repeat of the Abrahamic promise is Genesis 12:3 where God said to Abraham: “...*I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.*”

There is much confusion on this today, because so many ministers teach that this promise to Abraham pertains to Jews. But, if it is true what we read in Galatians 3:29, that “...*if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise,*” then, as Christ’s people, or Christians, that promise is about us. God will bless those who bless Christians, and will curse those who curse Christians. To interpret it otherwise is to deny the truth of the New Testament.

When we understand that Abraham’s religion, and Jacob’s religion, and their God, is the same religion and the same God as the Christians, then the truth of that promise having to do with Christians makes perfect Biblical sense.

Paul even writes in Galatians 1:8-9, that anyone preaching a different religion other than the religion of

the true gospel, meaning true Christianity, “...let him be accursed!” In Philippians 3:19, he speaks of the enemies of Christians this way, “...whose end is destruction.” Just think of the following passage in relation to who it is that God will bless or curse. In 2nd Thessalonians 1:7-9, where it’s talking about the return of Jesus Christ, “...And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”

It is not one’s relationship to members of a non-Christian religion which is important but one’s obedience to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In 2nd John 9-11, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into {your} house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

So here in the New Testament we are warned not even to wish anyone well who does not follow the doctrines of Jesus Christ.

In 2nd Corinthians 6:14-18, Christians are most sternly commanded to have nothing to do with followers of other religions. The teaching that Christians must somehow uphold and bless the followers of a non-Christian religion is not only nonsense but dangerous nonsense, for if obeyed it places the Christian in disobedience to God himself.

On the other hand, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must have been followers of the true God and the true religion, otherwise we would be warned against them, and we are not. Instead they are held up to us as examples of Godly men. They could not have been the followers of any religion except the true religion of the Bible, faith in Jesus Christ.

I want you to read some passages from the New Testament which prove that Jesus Christ is the same God called Yahweh, or Jehovah in the Old Testament. Ministers very seldom even mention that in the

churches anymore, so many people think there are somehow two gods, one of the New Testament and one of the Old Testament. When the Pharisee Jews asked Jesus in John 8:53, "*Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?*" This is part of Jesus answer in verse 58, "*...Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*" This not only speaks of Jesus' existence prior to Abraham, but the phrase, "*I am*", is the name of God, as given to Moses, in Exodus 3:14.

In John 18, when the Pharisee soldiers were arresting Jesus he uttered the phrase according to the King James Version "*...I am He*". However in the original Greek the word "*He*" is missing. So Jesus identified himself with the phrase "*...I am*".

John 1:1, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" In verse 14, Jesus is called "*...the word made flesh*". It follows axio-matically - Jesus Christ, the Word, WAS and IS God. Even those who still insist that Jesus is somehow different from the God Yahweh or Jehovah, must admit that if we believe the New Testament writings at all, none can be a believer or a follower of God, except those who believe in and follow Jesus the Christ.

How about Moses? The story of Moses bringing the children of Israel out of Egypt is quite well known to most church goers, so I won't take time to read long passages but instead refer you to them. As we read of Moses and the Israelites, I'll point to more evidence that this is correct theology; that there is one God, his name is now Jesus Christ. Only the name has been changed, not the God. So Moses, and the Israelites under Moses, because they were believing in one God were, to use the modern term, *Christians*.

In Exodus 2, in the last verses, the children of Israel cried because of the bondage, and it tells us that God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So these people are the people of those covenants. God contacted Moses, and sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. In Exodus 4:22-23, God said to Moses: "*...And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel {is} my son, {even} my firstborn: And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and*

if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, {even} thy firstborn.”

That would make these Israelites sons of God. What are Christians called, in relation to God? SONS!

John 1:11, is often quoted by ministers, in their attempt to prove the Israelites rejected Jesus: *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”* However, they should read on to verse 12: *“...But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.”*

Romans 8 uses the term, *“sons of God”* for believers, twice. In Galatians 4:4-7 the believers are identified as both Israelites AND SONS of God. It ends with: *“...and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”* In Exodus 4, Moses had convinced the elders in Israel that he had really been sent by God, they bowed their heads and worshipped. Who were they worshipping? Well, the same God we call Jesus Christ. His name was the equivalent of Yahweh then, but He was the same God, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, as God had said he would, so God sent the plagues upon Egypt to prove that He alone is God over all the earth. Then, in Exodus 12, God gave Israel the Passover, the ritual of the shed blood of the slain lamb, that would save these Israelite Sons of God, when the death angel killed every firstborn of the Egyptians. Christians keep that same ritual with Jesus Christ as their Passover Lamb. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, whose death pays for our sins that we might not die eternally, but rise in the resurrection to everlasting life. The Passover, another direct link proving the religion of ancient Israel is the same as the true faith of Christianity.

You know the story of Israel being brought through the waters of the Red Sea, and then of Moses bringing water out of the rock, for Israel to drink. Here is what the New Testament says of those events in Corinthians 10:1-4; *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that*

spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” (i.e. ‘Anointed’).

How else can that be interpreted, than to say that God Almighty in the New Testament was telling us those Israelites were as much Christians as we are. They ate the same spiritual meat and drank from the same spiritual rock, *“...and that rock was Christ.”* God made the Law Covenant with these Israelites in Exodus 19:5-6 where God said to them: *“Know therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth {is} mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”*

Peter says of the Christian believer, in 1st Peter 2:9: *“...But ye {are} a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.”* Here is another set of titles common to both these Israelites and Christians. At the end of the giving of the Commandments in Exodus 24, the Israelites said: *“All that the LORD hath said, we will do and be obedient.”* That is the same thing Christians try to do: Obey what God has said. How dare ministers tell us that the ancient Israelites were followers of a non-Christian religion!

And some say, “Oh but Pastor Emry, they were a stiffnecked and disobedient people, they didn’t obey God.” Well, neither do we. We are all sinners by scriptural definition. Why do we try to make ourselves more righteous than these Christians who came into the wilderness of Sinai in the heat and the dry land? I wonder how many Christians today would question God like they did? Most, I would dare say! No, let’s not say they can’t be Christians, because God had trouble with them. They worshipped the same God we do, however imperfectly.

By the way, in case you missed it, these Israelites are all listed in the New Testament, in Hebrews 11, right along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Hebrews 11:29-30, *“By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry {land}: which the Egyptians attempting to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.”*

Who passed through the Red Sea? Who brought the walls of Jericho down? Well, the whole congrega-

tion of Israel did. So they were included in those who will be "...made perfect with us" according to verse 40; they will be in the resurrection; they were *Christians*. Hebrews 11:32 lists a few more and implies that the writer would name more if he had time and space. He says, "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and {of} Barak, and {of} Samson, and {of} Jephthae; {of} David also, and Samuel, and {of} the prophets."

How about that? David is listed in the roster of Christians. And why not? God said David was a man after God's own heart, and he had all the marks of a Christian. And what about the prophets? Oh, I thought all the prophets were Jewish?. No! That may be what many ministers today call them, but God included them in the New Testament listing of those of the true faith, those who will stand in the resurrection.

You have read a score or more passages which show that the religion and God of the ancient Israelites is the religion and God of the Christians of today. We need make no apology to anyone. We have the true faith. They had the true faith. It is one and the same!

I realize this shoots down one of the favorite doctrines of many ministers today, that the Christian church began at Pentecost. No, the Christian church existed in Israel many centuries before Pentecost. Pentecost was actually the pouring out of God's spirit on the Israelites, for the sealing of the New Covenant, not the forming of some new church. It certainly could not have been the forming of some non-Israelitish church, since, from the account in the New Testament, we find that all the participants at Pentecost were Israelites. The Apostles were there, who were all Israelites. When Peter explained to the people how they could hear every one in their own language, he not only said it was according to the Israelite prophet Joel, but he called his listeners in Acts 2:22, "Ye men of Israel."

I will explain in detail in the booklet "***The New Testament Israel***" that the word 'church' in the New Testament comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia' which means literally, "the called ones" or "the called-out ones". In Acts 7, where Stephen is recounting Israel history, he speaks this way of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness in verses 37-38: "This is that Moses,

which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness.” So in the New Testament, the Israelites under Moses are called “*the church*”. The church, or the ‘called-out ones’ was formed at Mount Sinai, not at Pentecost!

Another word which means the same as the English word ‘*church*’ is ‘*congregation*’. Israel is called “*...the congregation of the Lord*” in the Old Testament scores of times. Look it up in your concordance. Ministers are in error when they teach that some new church was formed in Acts 2. It was not! It was really the sealing of the New Covenant to the Church of Israel; the church formed at Mount Sinai of the *Christians* who were brought out of Egypt.

I have a little more to add, and then we’ll summarize what we have learned. Our people have been taught a lot of wrong things, and we have much to unlearn. The Bible if we will study it, and use BOTH the Old Testament and the New Testament, will lead us to the truth.

How would you answer the question: Was Abraham, the patriarch of Israel, a Christian? Many would say: “No, Abraham was a Jew”. But the New Testament makes it plain that only believers in Christ Jesus (today we call them Christians) will be sanctified, justified, and will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. We know that the Israelite disciples of Jesus Christ who were first called Christians at Antioch, according to Acts 11:26, will be in the Kingdom.

In fact, when Jesus blessed the fruit of the vine at the last supper, He is recorded as having said to them, “*But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.*” (Matthew 26:29). Obviously, Jesus expected these Israelite disciples to be in the Kingdom. In scores of places in the New Testament, believers in Christ are promised the Kingdom. And in Matthew 8:11, Jesus said to the centurion, “*...and I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*”

I’ll repeat the questions I gave earlier to ask your

minister:

1. Do you believe that only Christians will be in the kingdom? If he says "Yes," then ask,

2. Do you believe that Abraham will be in the kingdom? If he says "Yes," then ask,

3. Then you believe that Abraham was a Christian, do you not? Don't accept any argument on that third question. If he has answered "Yes" to the first two, the only answer to the third is "YES"!

The same is true of Isaac and Jacob who are mentioned by Jesus as being in the Kingdom. All three of them, and more Old Testament patriarchs, are listed in the 11th chapter of Hebrews as "*...those who died in faith, not having received the promise...*" but who are then prophesied to "*...be made perfect with us*". If only Christians are to be resurrected to perfectness, than those listed in Hebrews 11 must have been Christians. (All things equal to the same thing are equal to each other).

Actually there should be no confusion on this, for we have one Bible, one religion, and one God, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. In Colossians 1:16-17 we are told of Jesus: "*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether {they be} thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" Who can that Jesus be, but the Yahweh God of the Old Testament who created the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein. In case you think verses 16-17 are talking about another god, and not about Jesus, the next phrase says of this same person "*...and he is the head of the body, the church.*" (Colossians 1:18).

Ephesians 5:23 says that, "*Jesus Christ is the head of the church.*" We are not talking of two gods but of one. The God of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ. The God of the New Testament is Jesus Christ, one and the same. So it is Scripturally correct to call the followers of the God of the Old Testament by the name "*Christian*".

In 1st Corinthians 10 is the New Testament account of the Israelites coming out of Egypt. We read this in verses 2-4: "*And were all baptized unto Moses in*

the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” They were baptized in the Red Sea, ate and drink of Christ, and made into a church at Mount Sinai.

No, the so-called Christian church did not come into its first existence at Pentecost in Acts 2. It was at least thirteen centuries old when Jesus came in the flesh. God came in the flesh as Jesus Christ over two thousand years after the time Abraham had lived, and Abraham believed. He was a Christian. I think Christians would find themselves much less on the defensive when religion comes up in conversation, if they realized the antiquity of their faith. Non-Christians, especially the so-called atheists, seem to enjoy talking about the world’s “older religions”, and comparing them to this “new religion”, Christianity.

No, Christianity is not new; it’s only a new name for the first religion. All others are later religions, false religions created by men, in contradiction to the true religion. Some claim Judaism is older than Christianity. But the Bible doesn’t even mention ‘Jews’ until one thousand years after Abraham, in 2 Kings 16:6 to be exact. So, if I am right in calling father Abraham a Christian, then Judaism is a “Johnny-come-lately” on the religious scene.

Now we are going to go back beyond Abraham, back to righteous Job. The book of Job is quite long, and for our study, I’ll just go through it and point out passages which show us that Job’s God, and Job’s faith are identical to true Christianity. *“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name {was} Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”* (Job 1:1). A model Christian, wouldn’t you say, according to the very first verse.

You know the story of how Job’s oxen were stolen, his sheep died, robbers stole his camels, and slew his servants, and then all of his sons and daughters were killed. Children, servants, livestock, wealth - all gone in the blink of an eye. *“Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the*

Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Great trust and faith in the God of the Bible in the hour of calamity. Certainly an example for Christians, and Job is used as such by James in the New Testament. In James 5:10-11, Job is given as an example of patience and of God’s pity and mercy upon believers. In Ezekiel 14, Job is listed with Noah and Daniel, as the three greatest men of faith, and we’ve already proven that Noah’s religion was identical with Christianity, and there Job is listed as co-equal with Noah in the faith. In Job 2, Job was smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. In verse 9, *“Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.”* Some tempter, that wife of Job’s. Here is Job’s answer: *“But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”*

Obviously, Job was no pagan. Job knew there was one God, and one alone! Job knew the truths that Christians should know and which God gives us in Isaiah 45:6-7: *“I {am} the Lord, and {there is} none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these {things}.”*

Now many pseudo-Christians teach that a so-called angelic creature called ‘Satan’, or the ‘Devil’ did all that evil to Job. But Job knew better. Job knew there was only one power in heaven and in earth, and that power was God. He knew his state and condition was God’s doing, and he worshipped God for it. Read Job 12:9, Job 19:6, and in Job 19:21, Job tells us who had caused Job’s calamities *“...for the hand of God hath touched me.”*

False religions exalt a false god called ‘Satan’, and give him credit for everything with which they supposedly disagree. They say, “Oh Satan did this”, or “the old Devil did that”, or “the Devil is trying to stop me, but I’m winning”, and all sorts of other nonsense. Job knew this so-called ‘Satan’ had no power to do anything, and Job recognized that all power in heaven and on earth was God’s. That is Christian doctrine. Another proof that Job’s God and faith were the same as Christi-

anity.

Anyway, Job was in pain, and terrible physical suffering. In Job 3, he lamented the day he was born, and wished he had died at birth, in verse 11: *“Why died I not from the womb? {why} did I {not} give up the Ghost when I came out of the belly?”* Then Job tells us what his condition would have been if he had been born dead, in verse 13: *“...For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest.”* Job further describes the place of death and the condition of the dead, in Job 3: 17: *“There the wicked cease {from} troubling; and there the weary be at rest. {There} the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.”*

Job’s beliefs on the state of the dead are quite different from the false pagan religions, all of which teach that men remain alive after their body dies. Even the religion of Judaism, which some mistakenly believe is based on the Bible, teaches reincarnation, the same as the Hindu religion. Some false religions, masquerading as Christian religions, teach that the dead do not die, and that most men go on living in torture and pain for eternity in a place they call ‘hell’. Any good Bible concordance will show you that the word ‘hell’ in the Old Testament, comes from the same Hebrew word ‘sheol’ that is translated ‘grave’ half of the time. The English word ‘hell’ originally meant a hole in the ground (Webster’s 1828 Dictionary). It had no connotation of fire, torture, screaming, or eternity, as false religions have given it.

The Bible, and true Christianity, teach that the dead die; that they are asleep. Both Solomon and David describe the state of the dead as ‘nothingness’, a place of silence and of waiting. In Job 10:20-21, Job calls death *“...a land of darkness.”* That doesn’t sound much like a place of fire and flames does it? In verse 19, he says that if he had died at birth, *“...I should have been as though I had not been.”* If he had died, he would have been without existence; he would be dead. In Job 7, in a prayer to God, Job said of his death, *“...for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I {shall} not {be}.”* Job said, “If I die, I will sleep in the dust; I will not be; I will not exist.” In other words, death is the absence of life: nothingness.

That is true Bible doctrine; that is Christian doctrine. That is not what the pagan religions teach, but that is what the Bible teaches, and that is what Job believed.

But what about the resurrection? Well, Job, a good Christian, believed in Jesus Christ and in the resurrection. In Job 14, while still lamenting his painful and sad state, and wishing he were dead, Job prays, *“O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave...”* (the word here is ‘sheol’, in other places translated ‘hell’: Job wanted God to hide him in hell; the place he said was a place of rest; of silence; a place in the dust) *“...that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live {again}?”* And here is Job’s answer, Job’s belief: *“...all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.”*

Job believed that even though he were dead, his God, his creator and savior would call, and that he Job would answer and live again. Did Job believe that Jesus would resurrect him? Job 19:25-27: *“For I know {that} my redeemer liveth, and {that} he shall stand at the latter {day} upon the earth: And {though} after my skin {worms} destroy this {body}, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; {though} my reins be consumed within me.”* The margin of my Bible says that last phrase could have been translated *“...though my reins within me are consumed with earnest desire for that day.”* Job fervently desired the day of resurrection, when he would see his redeemer upon the earth. Only Christians believe such a doctrine.

Jesus said in John 5:28 that all who are in the graves would hear the voice of the Son of God and would live. The entire 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians is on the resurrection. In verse 19 *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* When will they be made alive? The next verse, and remember, this is New Testament Christianity! *“But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”* (1 Corinthians 15:23).

False religion tells us to look forward to the day of our death, as the beginning of a new life. The true religion tells us we are asleep, that we know nothing; that we are non-existent, and will not live again until we are resurrected at Christ's return. That is what Job believed, when he said that he knew that his *"...redeemer liveth, and will stand at the latter day upon the earth."* And when He called, Job would come forth to life again, after he had spent his appointed time in 'sheol', in the grave, in silence, in the dust of the earth.

False religions teach that man is inherently immortal; that he never dies; that he just goes on living in some other form, and in some other place. Every pagan and heathen religion in the world teaches that false concept of death. That falsehood was the original lie in the garden of Eden, when the serpent said to Eve, *"Ye shall not surely die, but your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods."*

I heard one famous American evangelist once say *"After I die, I will be more alive than I am now."* That is NOT what God's word says. God says: "The dead know not anything; they sleep in the dust; they await the resurrection at Jesus' coming." That is what Job said. And in Job 42:7, God Almighty Himself told Job's friends that Job had spoken *"...the thing that is right."* Job believed true doctrine. Job's religion fits Christianity in all points.

There are many more individuals in the Old Testament who could be proven to be believers in the true religion. David in his Psalms reveals every tenet of the Christian faith, such as Psalm 32:1-2, *"Blessed {is he whose} transgression {is} forgiven, {whose} sin {is} covered. Blessed {is} the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit {there is} no guile."* The whole message of New Testament salvation, of forgiveness of sins, is revealed in those few phrases. David was obviously a Christian believer.

David also believed in the destruction of the wicked, and Christ's righteous rule upon the earth. Psalm 37:9 is one passage: *"For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."* That is pure Christian gospel. Read Solomon's Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, you will not find one phrase or passage, but that agrees one hundred percent

with true Christianity. How about the prophets? No contradictions whatsoever. Line upon line, precept upon precept. All agree exactly with true Christianity.

Isaiah is full of prophecies about the future kingdom of Jesus Christ. Chapter 53 is well known to most Christians, as a beautiful description of Jesus Christ and His work of salvation. Daniel had dreams and visions and interpretations which revealed the coming of Christ and of His Kingdom. In Daniel 3, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were cast into the burning fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar saw another man in the fire with them, of whom he said, in Daniel 3:25, “...and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Jesus was in that fire with the three Israelites and kept them unharmed.

Oh, my brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, the Old Testament is a Christian book; its saints are Christians; its history is of Christ; its prophecy is of Christ; and it can be applied to no other religion on the earth, except true Christianity. To make it certain, God made its last chapter speak so plainly of Jesus the Christ that it is amazing that any Christian would ever think of the Old Testament as any other than a Christian book. You should read it all, including the promise: “...but unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”

That is the gospel of the Kingdom; the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the prophecy of the reign of righteousness of Jesus Christ upon the earth. The last verses are, I believe, a prophecy of the turning of the Christians to full faith and belief that the Old Testament is the foundation of their faith. “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest he come and smite the earth with a curse.”

I believe that is being done. For we are the children of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. And we will be turned to our fathers. To see and to believe that the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament, and the people of the Old Testament are the people of the New Testament. We will learn to read the Old Testament, and know we are reading about our God, our religion, and we are reading about our fathers. Praise Ye The Lord!

Pastor Sheldon Emry

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The New Testament Israel