

## Message #120 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

*"You Are The Living History Of Israel"*

With Randy Smith

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about some of the similarities and some of the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Some of these things that we'll discuss today might sound boring, as it so often does when you discuss facts instead of stories, so prepare yourself for a long dry half-hour of Bible study. No, I'm not kidding. Most times Christians want entertaining messages. And, that's what they'd get most of the time on TV and radio, and also in the churches, for that matter, but unless we study scripture instead of just skimming over it, we won't end up understanding it very well. The Bible tells us that the truth will set us free. Real truth doesn't come by skimming over the surface. But, even so, bear with me for a little bit and I'll see if I can make the facts just a little bit interesting so that you won't be drifting off to sleep by the end of the program.

First of all, let point out a couple of scriptures. First, Malachi 3:6 tells us that God does not change. Hebrews 13:8 tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That God is an unchanging God is a fairly simple Bible concept. We know that God does not change. We know that his principles do not change. We know that the truth of God, the word of God, does not change from the beginning to the end. However, we also know that his plan of salvation for the world is an ever progressing plan, and it is continually unfolding before our eyes since the first day of creation. However, the changes that take place in this world are not changes for God, they are changes for mankind. When God created the earth, he did it in six days. After six days of creating the world, he ceased from his work. Within these works of creation the whole plan of earth exists. Everything that takes place from the beginning of this world until the beginning of

the new heavens and the new earth are a continual unfolding of God's six day creation work. For God, there's nothing new approaching. But for us, there is a continual progression along the timeline of scripture. Things continually change for us.

It's pretty simple to realize that you and I do not live in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve lived there, but we don't. The progression of earth's timeline went from Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to the children of Israel, down into Egypt, up out of Egypt, and into the wilderness. At this point, God introduced to the children of Israel his covenant. It was just between him and them. This was the Old Testament covenant of the law, which was based on the Ten Commandments. This first covenant was not given to the other nations of the world. It was only given to the children of Israel. It was only a covenant between God and the little group of people called Israelites.

There was a good reason why God chose just one nation with which to make his covenant. He needed the nation of Israel to demonstrate to the rest of the world the sinful rebellion of Satan and the ultimate deliverance from that sin. God used the nation of Israel to demonstrate outwardly in simple straightforward physical terms something that could easily be recognized by a world which had no knowledge of the spiritual realm of heaven. Israel was to play out its history in a strictly physical sense so that the world would be able to recognize who and what God was all about.

Now, in order to accomplish this, God caused Abraham and Sarah to have a child. His name was Isaac. God promised Abraham that through Isaac he would bless Abraham. Yet, Abraham received righteousness, not because he kept the Law of Commandments, but just because he believed in God, and believed that God's word was true. Abraham believed God, and trusted in God, and therefore God credited Abraham with righteousness.

Righteousness is the necessary qualification in order for any person to escape the curse of sin and to be able to enter into the presence of God himself. Because Adam and Eve sinned, sin entered into the world. Because sin entered into the world because of this initial sin of these first humans, we all became subject to sin. Once the knowledge of good and evil came into the world, the only solution against the resulting sin was to be righteous. Now, that might seem silly, but that's really all there is to it. We all became sinful, so we all need to be righteous. God is righteous. God is perfect. No one can come into God's presence who is imperfect because the sinfulness of our imperfection would be a corruption to God. God will not allow any corruption to come into his presence. So, the solution for mankind to escape the curse of sin, which would cause them to be cast out of the presence of God forever, is for mankind to become righteous.

Seems like such a simple thing. Stop sinning, therefore be righteous, therefore enter into God's presence. Of course, we know that's not an easy thing to do. In fact the only person who was ever able to do that perfectly was Jesus Christ, who is actually God in the flesh. He fulfilled the Law of Commandments perfectly. However, the children of Israel were important forerunners of Jesus Christ in that this one small nation of people was used by God to demonstrate outwardly to

the world that sin could not be overcome with the strength that mankind has within himself. What the Law of Commandments did was to demonstrate clearly that no matter how hard a person struggled to be righteous, they still came up short. They still could not keep the law perfectly. Therefore, the Law of Commandments, instead of providing a way for mankind to demonstrate righteousness, gave a way to prove that mankind was, and always would be, sinful. Those poor people of Israel continually sinned, no matter how hard they tried. All that first covenant did was to prove man's sinfulness, and that he was unable to attain righteousness by his own power. Therefore, the tiny nation of Israel fell into all kinds of sinfulness. We have historical evidence of their physical lives which demonstrates their sinfulness over and over again.

At the very basis of Israel's sinfulness was their worshiping of idols. These were physical images, and they physically bowed down to them. They put their trust and their hope in them. Of course, today, mankind worships idols, but not in the same way that Israel did. Today, the world, and even the Christian world, puts their trust and hope in things of this world instead of in God himself. But God's purpose for Israel was to demonstrate to the world the sinfulness of mankind through the temptation of Satan. They very adequately demonstrated this. They involved themselves with things of the other nations that God had warned them about. They played with things from the other nations that were not godly.

Of course, we do the same thing today, but it's not quite so outwardly evident. But, think about it. While they were trying to keep the Law of Commandments, they would get sidetracked by the temptations from the other nations. They would get sidetracked by the promise of prosperity or fertility from the idols in neighboring countries. As Israel mingled themselves with the people around them in direct opposition to God's instructions, they became less and less knowledgeable concerning God's commandments, and the laws and rules he had given them. In these times they would stray further and further from God until such time as their whole nation was living wickedly. During these times God would have a remnant, a few people interspersed throughout the nation of Israel, who remembered the true word of God. They would be true to God, but the vast majority of Israel would have given themselves over to the lifestyle of the nations around them who worshiped other gods and delighted themselves in ungodly things.

Now, because Israel was an outward demonstration in physical form of the coming new covenant, their method of worship as well as the blessings of God were also in physical form. In order to worship God, the children of Israel required a temple. It was a physical temple residing in the physical city of Jerusalem. The sacrifices that they made onto God were physical sacrifices. But now, notice something interesting. In the new covenant of grace, there is no physical temple. As Jesus told us, we, you and I, are the temple. It is in us that God dwells. For Israel, God dwelt among them in a physical temple in order that he might demonstrate the concept of dwelling within his people. But, Israel was under the physical covenant instead of under the spiritual covenant. Everything that God did through them was an outward physical demonstration so that the rest of the world could understand the concepts of God. In a sense, Israel was the guinea pig. Israel was the trial run. No, it wasn't a trial run for God, because God

knew from the beginning that he was first going to take the little nation of Israel through the physical pattern in order to later bring the rest of us through the spiritual pattern. When we look back and see how Israel responded to the commandments of God, it helps us to see who and what God is. And, it helps us to see the perspective of God through his eyes.

Therefore, when we read the history of the children of Israel, we are taught what God's true desire is for his people. And, we are also taught how temptation infiltrates through God's people, and how this temptation brings about the deviation from God's true word. Actually, Christians have no excuse when they continually fall into sinfulness because God has given us the Old Testament history of Israel so we would already know the pattern of sinfulness. But, many times people look at the nation of Israel with disdain. Sometimes Christians look at Israel and accuse them of being really stupid. They sometimes accused them of being the scum of the earth. But this is not true anymore for Israel then it is for Christians. Let me give you some comparisons.

Just as in Israel, so we also have in Christianity, those whose hearts only go through the motions of religion without having a true love for God. Just as in Israel, so we also have in Christianity, those who put their trust in objects instead of in God. Just as in Israel, so we also have in Christianity, those who seek stimulation of their flesh by the delights and delicacies of the world around us.

And think of this. There is a very little understood concept for which the church of today is mostly ignorant. And it's this. Israel was just the outward demonstration in physical form, with a physical history, with a physical temple, with physical blessings in physical lands and physical riches, which mirrors the spiritual Christian church of today. Just as Israel's religious leaders were extremely corrupt to the point of crucifying Jesus Christ, today's religious leaders have largely become corrupted to the point where they are Antichrist in nature, and oversee the church from a business perspective instead of from a spiritual perspective. Just as Israel's chief people were selfish and money hungry, the chief of the flock of today's church have largely become selfish and money hungry. Just as the common people of Israel were infatuated with the lifestyles of the surrounding nations, the common Christian of today is infatuated with the lifestyles of the surrounding nations also. The church today is playing out the same history as Israel established, but the church so little recognizes how far we have come away from being a people who are supposed to be separated unto God. And, when the church does hear warning messages from the prophets and teachers of today, they respond in the same manner that Israel responded to the warning messages from the prophets in that day.

We read from Israel's history that God established a covenant with them in the wilderness of Sinai, and then took them into the promised land. Upon entering the promised land they were instructed not to mingle or intermarry with the other nations. They were to be a peculiar people, set aside unto God, and were not to be involved in the lifestyles of the other nations, nor were they to allow their own nation to become corrupted from the infiltration of the other nations. They were to keep themselves pure, and they were to worship only the God of heaven, and they were not to touch the things from the other nations that were corruptible.

We have historical evidence over and over again of how God chastised the children of Israel for giving in to the ways of the other nations. Sometimes the children of Israel would respond positively to the chastising from God, and turn from their wicked ways. At other times they would not respond positively, but would claim righteousness in spite of what God's prophets were telling them. Eventually God brought enemies against Israel who took them into captivity and destroyed their nation, burning their cities with fire and dismantling their temple. I wonder, does the church of today have the same mind set that Israel had in that day? Do they still think they are righteous in spite of dabbling with all the other things that the surrounding people offer to them? Does the church of today claim to know Jesus Christ as Lord, but are really worshiping the image of Baal? Is the desire of today's church to have luxury cars, luxury homes, and gold and silver the same as Israel desired? Does the church trust in God or do they trust in their own abilities to provide for themselves?

I truly believe that the church is exactly in the same place that Israel was just prior to the final captivity from the King of Babylon. In Israel's history, when their iniquity had finally come to the full, God brought the King of Babylon against his people for the last time. The northern 10 nation kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity long before the southern kingdom of Judah, but Judah was also eventually taken into captivity. This northern 10 nation kingdom of Israel is much like the Christian church denominations who represent Christianity only in form, but not according to the explicit word of God. The northern 10 nation kingdom of Israel went into captivity because they had lost the ability to know God at all. But the southern kingdom of Judah was eventually designated by God as being more wicked than the northern kingdom of Israel. After many warnings and pleadings for repentance, which Israel continually rejected, God brought the King of Babylon against his people for the last time and the city was destroyed and the people lost their land.

The Bible tells us that if the time were not shortened, even the very elect people of God would be deceived. Just as the nation of Israel was ultimately deceived, so would the church also be completely deceived if God did not shorten the time. Now, think about this. The time will be shortened. Time cannot be shortened if it has not already been established as longer in the first place. Israel was the established time, and because God allowed the fullness of time to come against Israel, they were taken into captivity completely by the king of Babylon. The church of today is no better than Israel. The church of today is just like them. We have turned away from God and are claiming to be Christians yet we do not follow his word. We love attention. We love trinkets. We love the gold and silver. We love the delicacies. Instead of setting our eyes on things above, we have our eyes focused on things of this world.

I believe there will soon come the day when the time of the Gentile nations is fulfilled, and God will say, "stop the time, for the wickedness of the Christian church is filled up, just as it was for my people Israel." I also believe that the Bible promises that when the city of Jerusalem is in the siege, and we are talking spiritual Jerusalem, not physical Jerusalem, that the Lord will rise up and deliver his people. God will not allow Satan as the King of Great Babylon, to destroy us and

leave our land desolate. But when Jesus Christ's stands up and reveals the great deception that has come upon the church, and reveals to the church how they have turned away from the living God and from his word, just as Israel turned away, then we will be truly humbled. It will be in that day that we will recognize that we are no better than the nation of Israel, and that we, too, have forgotten how to truly worship the living God.

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Many people in the church have no comprehension of the extreme deception that has infiltrated God's people. Revelation, chapter 13, tells us of the image of the beast that the people of earth create in the last days. We know that the world is far past the day of bowing down to a physical idol, and we still cannot comprehend how an image of the beast would be worshiped by a people who have long since ceased to bow down to a block of wood. Yet, we, the people of today, have created the image that both moves and speaks, completely unlike any image in Israel's day. The image of the beast is an image of the beast nature presented to people every day in their living rooms through the secular programming of television and movies. It is not the nature of God that you see on the screen. It is not the nature of God that you hear with your ears when someone uses God's holy name as a swear word. What you see on your television and in the movie houses is a beastly spirit that has permeated the world. Just as Israel was deceived by the gods of the other nations, the church of today has become deceived by the God of this world. Satan has been able to find a way to present his own beast nature be for us every day and every night, every moment of our lives. Our children are indoctrinated with the world system lifestyle by the movies and television programs. The nightly news is the mainstay of indoctrination for the mind set of the world, presenting the world view from a non-Christian standpoint instead of from God's standpoint. Righteousness is rejected outrightly, and yet Christians huddle around their screens, actively participating in the brainwashing.

The deception is great, and just as Israel refused to heed the warnings, so does the Christian church. Yet God has his few, his remnant, just as in the days of Elijah. But, just as in the days of Elijah, it is also so in these last days, that we must keep ourselves pure and untainted from the world in order to retain understanding. If you mourn for the church, if you cry unto God, wondering why there is so little power anymore, if you wonder why there are so many great promises from our pulpits, but so very little actual fruit, if you call out to God in your anguish, and are like righteous Lot who was vexed daily with the wickedness of Sodom, then this message is for you. God is calling his people to take the scales from off their eyes. God is calling his people to turn away from the lifestyles of the world. God is calling his people to come out from among them and to be separate. We cannot be a separate people unto God while we continually allow Satan to present his evil beast nature to us on a daily basis.

You know, I have been asked by people why I don't own a television set. And when I tell them that I can't afford one, they respond with raised eyebrows and say, "of course you can. They cost hardly anything." And my response to them is, "no, I can't afford to have a television set because of the damage it will do to my relationship with Jesus Christ. I can't afford to put my soul in danger by the daily indoctrination of Satan's image that speaks."

