

December 26-January 1, 2023

The New Testament

“WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR OWN LEARNING”

Summary: *The Holy Land and Jewish insights are being shared with you so that the teacher and student can “go back” to the setting in which the scriptures were given and also to better understand the general Jewish views of those scriptures. Jewish views have varied with time and dispersion. Yet understanding the Jews (basically Judah) will help Joseph in the prophetic mission of reuniting “Joseph and Judah.” This knowledge will restore the original understanding and truths which God gave to his children, yesterday and today as well as tomorrow.*

The 2023 New Testament study material has numerous Christian traditions to consider. Unfortunately, Christian tradition is very competitive. Most traditional Holy Land sites that were significant in Jesus’ life were established hundreds of years after his mortal mission. Allow me to reiterate the four considerations which have helped me ascertain the truth as I professionally, and more importantly, spiritually, guide thousands through Israel. They are archaeology, written accounts (especially scriptures), traditions (notably – names of places) and the spirit that God gives confirming the truth.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

Jesus. It provides some valuable information about his life, describes a short period following his life, and explains what his followers did. In the Greek language (the writing of the New Testament’s first canonized presentation), the word “testament” means “covenant.” “In the Bible we have the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word testament is the English rendering of a Greek word that can also be translated as “covenant . . .” (**Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.52-53**) “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: . . .” (**Jeremiah 31:31**) “For this is my blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28) “. . . Jesus the mediator of the new covenant . . .” (**Hebrews 12:24**) The Hebrew term for covenant is *brit*, meaning “to bond or fetter.” It is translated into Greek as *syntheke*, “binding together” or *diatheke*, “will, testament.” In the Bible,

How does a covenant become a testament?

The New Testament mostly refers to the account of the thirty-three-year life of

then, a covenant is a relationship based upon mutual commitments. It typically involves promises, obligations, and rituals. The terms testament and covenant can be used interchangeably, though covenant tends to be used for the relationship between Jews and God. (**Austin Cline, <https://www.learnreligions.com/what-is-a-covenant-248630>**)

How valuable are “opposite” considerations?

In future lessons we’ll examine and compare the metaphors of “old wine” and “new wine” as compared to the Old Testament and the New Testament. We will see that a chiasmus has a center point of Jesus’ life and atonement. An example of “less meaning more,” using the common Gregorian calendar, Jesus lived approximately 12,053 days (33 full years X 365 days + 8 leap-years). Yet the New Testament only documents a record of 31 days of His life. Wayne E. Brickey (1945-2017), at an Education Week lecture at BYU, taught that in Jesus’ first thirty years, only eighteen events were stated in the New Testament. In the next year, another eighteen events were

related. In the following year, another twenty-seven events were conveyed to us. In Jesus' last year, over one-hundred-fifty events were reported; however, seventy-five of them occurred in the last six days of his life. The more important events and teachings are within a year of His life.

What are Jews taught about Jesus, without reading the New Testament?

The Jewish view of the life of Jesus is shown in the following statement.

"Although the rift between the synagogue and the church caused later versions of the gospels to imply a gulf between Jesus and the Jewish way of life under the law, the first three gospels portray him as a Jew faithful to both the written and the oral Mosaic law, but more extreme than the Pharisaic school of Hillel in uniquely preaching love of one's enemies. He was closer in beliefs and lifestyle to the Pharisees than to the Essenes. His criticism of the Pharisees finds contemporary parallels in rabbinic literature and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Like the Essenes, he held poverty, humility, purity and simplicity to be essential religious virtues." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What reverence is shown for the "Word?"

Gospel writers had different approaches to describing Jesus' life. John's purpose is to explain WHAT He is and begins by describing Him as the WORD. ". . . God was not so much putting Abraham through a test, as making his unswerving obedience a shining example of man's devotion to the word of God."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) To the Jews, the scriptures, the words of God, are so special they must never touch the ground. Many use a pointer to read the words rather than touch the scrolls with their fingers. The scroll cabinet, the "Ark," is

said to contain the "presence of God," meaning the word of God.

What imagery is used to refer to Jesus?

John's book has twenty-one chapters that deal with the period before and during Jesus' mortal life. The last chapter is after His resurrection. Of the first twenty chapters, half are devoted to His last six days in mortality. Connecting us to the truthful symbols of the Old Covenant, John links almost everything Jesus does to a Biblical holiday. He mentions Passover, Pentecost, Sukkoth/Yom Kippur (Feast of Tabernacles) and even a non-biblical holiday of Hanukkah (Feast of [Temple] Dedication). Continuing with some of Brother Brickey's thoughts on John, we find that this Gospel writer connects Jesus to light twenty-four times, to water twenty-eight times, to life fifty-two times, to lamb three times and to bread seventeen times. Quoting Jesus, John says we can see during the "twelve hours in the day." This contrasts with the thought that what we can't see is perceived as "darkness." These metaphors were used prolifically as prophetic images of the life, mission, and gift of the Messiah. In a future lesson, we'll introduce another John, a Levite, whom the temple priests persecuted. He is the forerunner of the Messiah and he reiterates the prophecies of the coming Lord.

How can the imagery used in the New Testament be connected to the Old Testament?

Old testament prophets are often quoted in the New Testament. Moses is mentioned more than any other Old Testament figure, although Isaiah is quoted most often. A comparison of some of the key words that both John and Isaiah use can deepen our understanding of the Savior's mission.

Light . . . “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” (Isaiah 9:2) “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” (Isaiah 60:2) “In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.” (John 1:4-5) “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46)

Darkness . . . “To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” (Isaiah 42:7)

Water . . . “with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” (Isaiah 12:3) “I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.” (Isaiah 41:18) “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-38)

Life . . . “O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.” (Isaiah 38:16) “Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore, will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” (Isaiah 43:4) “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4) “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Lamb . . . “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7) “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)

Bread . . . “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” (Isaiah 55:2) “For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” (John 6:33) “Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” (Isaiah 50:10) “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

How do Jews view the New Testament – even though few ever read it?

Latter-day Saints feel that the doctrinal views within the Old and New Testaments are the same, but few Jews ever read the New Testament, and those that have read it view it mostly as anti-Semitic. “It is only in the New Testament that Satan takes on the meaning it has borne in popular lore to this very day. There, Satan is the very personification of the spirit of evil, an independent personality antagonistic to the goodness of God. He is identified with the anti-Christ and described as “that old serpent called the devil . . . which deceived the whole world. He was cast into the earth and his angels were cast out with him.” It is Satan who is the personal tempter of Jesus, and Jews who would not accept Jesus are referred to as “the synagogue of Satan.” “Strictly

speaking, the ministry of Jesus himself does not come under the heading of "Christianity," but rather is part of the history of different Jewish-Christian sects which developed at the beginning of the common era. The first Jewish sects which followed Jesus' teachings still observed much of the Torah but added the belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The Greek translation of the word messiah is *Christos*, and thus Jesus' followers deemed him Jesus Christ. After his death, these followers came to be known as Christians." "At this point, the nature of Christianity began to change from being a Jewish-Christian sect with partial observance of mitzvot to a sect embracing gentile followers. This development took place largely under the influence of Paul of Tarsus who attracted a gentile following by teaching that the observance of the commandments was no longer necessary. Faith in Jesus could take the place of the commandments and the "Church" could take the place of the Jewish people." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

What view do Jews have of the emerging Christian communities?

"A Christian community began to emerge whose traditions and beliefs concerning Jesus were shaped by the New

Testament. The writings included in the New Testament were written between 66 C.E. and 200 C.E., a period in which relations between Jews and Christians had already begun to deteriorate. Thus, the New Testament portrays Jesus as engaged in violent debates with Jewish scribes and tends to describe "the Jews" as being responsible for Jesus' death. As the scriptural authority of Christianity, the New Testament has served as a basis for Christian anti-Semitism throughout the ages." **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

Ultimately, how can I recognize the Messiah and His eternal purpose?

The key to recognizing the Messiah and the true meaning of his life and those who testified of Him is the SPIRIT. The word for spirit in Hebrew is Ruach Elohim, the breath – the wind of God. Moses knew that gift well and desired that everyone would have it. "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" **(Numbers 11:29)** There are some people who do not have that gift yet, and those that do must exercise patience and love because eventually more will get that gift and be very happy. The gift of belief comes from God.