

Spiritual Realities in Old Testament Types

The Old Testament (or Hebrew Bible) is appropriated by both Christianity and Judaism. The Jews accept these scriptures as their physical and spiritual history, as well as prophecy of a Messiah and restoration of their nation. Christians see them as their roots and history, as well as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the church. That being the case, let's look at the Old Testament with its commands and rituals to see their fulfilment as types and antitypes in the New Testament church.

We'll start with a thumbnail sketch of Old Testament history. It needs to be noted that the biblical account is based in reality, but is also a mythological history of a segment of humanity experiencing divine intervention. Over time, as oral tradition and old records had been viewed from a retrospective perspective, the present Old Testament record, much of which started being compiled during and after the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C., had been embellished by imagination and modified by new insights. However, myth and metaphor can be as powerful to present spiritual truths as are literal facts.

Old Testament History

The Old Testament starts with two contrasting creation accounts and the origin of sin. Not to be taken literally, yet rich myths containing universal spiritual truths, the accounts tell us that God is the Creator, humans were made in the divine image, but the relationship between God and humanity had become damaged.

The first human couple, originally created as good and the highest of God's creation, fall prey to pride and disobedience. As a result, they forfeit the potential of becoming like God through transformation of their soul/heart by God-given Divine Love. In that sense they "die" – by forfeiting immortality, which the transformation of soul – the new heart referred to later by the prophets – would have given them. Despite their "Fall", God doesn't abandon them, and they and their descendants are *not* doomed to a helpless and hopeless state of depravation, as taught by the doctrine of the "original sin".¹

They give birth to children, the first of whom are Cain and Abel. In the course of time, Cain murders Abel out of jealousy, and from then on, evil starts multiplying in the human race. Natural disasters can be consequences of human sin – civilizations have been destroyed in ages long ago through cataclysmic events like floods, earthquakes or volcanic activities, which have remained in the records and mythology of their contemporary descendants throughout the world. While the Bible account of God destroying all humanity save Noah and his family through a flood is not completely accurate, heavy rains and widespread flooding with great loss of life had occurred and are therefore recorded in the legends of many cultures.²

Fast forward, and God appears to a man by the name of Abram, later renamed to *Abraham*. He is called out of idol worship and told to leave his land (Haran) to go by faith to where God shows him – the land of Canaan. Abraham is advanced in years, married to a beautiful woman, Sarai (later renamed *Sarah*), who however has been unable to bear him children and is now long past child-bearing age. Yet, incredibly, God gives Abraham promises of innumerable descendants and a land flowing with milk and honey that his descendants will also be given. In addition, there will be a special descendant down the line, through whom all nations are to be blessed. Even more unbelievably, Abraham believes God's promises and this amazing faith is counted to him for righteousness.³

All in all, Abraham does as he is told – though there are times when he and Sarah take matters into their own hands and reap the consequences. Abraham ends up begetting two sons – Ishmael, borne by his young Egyptian servant Hagar, and *Isaac*, miraculously borne over a decade later by his wife Sarah, now 90, fulfilling the divine promise.⁴ God also makes a covenant with Abraham, reconfirming that all the amazing promises will be fulfilled. Male circumcision becomes a sign of the covenant. This physical sign too will

¹ Genesis 1:26;-29; 2:4-24; 3:1-3:19; Ezekiel 36:26; See also <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol2/bible47.htm>

² Genesis 3-4; 6-9; see also <http://new-birth.net/contemporary/fab29.htm>

³ Genesis 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:5-6; 17:2-4; 18:18; 22:17

⁴ Genesis 16:1-16; 21:1-7; Galatians 4:21-31

later take on spiritual significance as circumcision of the heart by the Holy Spirit imparting Divine Love into the soul.⁵

Isaac marries his cousin, Rebecca and they have twins, Esau and *Jacob*. Favoritism and deception bring about all manner of problems. The outcome is that Jacob swindles Esau out of his birthright as the firstborn and his father's special blessing. As a result, he has to flee for his life to avoid Esau's wrath. He ends up with his uncle Laban, who breaks one promise after another – deception runs in the family. Two decades later, Jacob has four wives, twelve sons, and at least one daughter. After reconfirming the promises given to his grandfather Abraham and father Isaac, God changes Jacob's name to *Israel*. His twelve sons become the foundation of the future nation of Israel.⁶

In the course of time, *Joseph*, the second youngest son, is sold into slavery by his own brothers, who are jealous of his father's favoritism and his dreams. Through a long chain of up-and-down circumstances, he eventually becomes the head of Egypt under the pharaoh and invites his whole family to settle in Egypt to escape the famine in their land. They settle in the area of Goshen and life goes well until a new dynasty comes to power. The people of Israel multiply and begin to be seen as a threat. Hence the Egyptians decide to oppress and enslave them. Male babies are not to live and the people are subjected to hard labor.⁷

One male child, *Moses*, miraculously escapes the infanticide and is brought up by an Egyptian princess. Later, with divine help, he becomes the instrument to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt – in what has become known as the Exodus. This is preceded by an awesome series of natural and supernatural events and plagues – ten in all – demonstrating God's power to both the Egyptians and Israel.⁸

The people pass through the sea, being protected from the pursuing Egyptian army. They are then led through the desert to Mount Sinai. There God gives them his law – the Ten Commandments, and later other laws – and offers them a *covenant relationship*, whereby they are to be obedient and in turn, God will protect and bless them. Their proposed role is to become a *kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and an example to other nations* who would then also seek to serve the creator God. The people agree to be obedient, but history shows that they failed and reaped the consequences.⁹

One of the major tasks during Israel's thirteen-month stay at Mt Sinai is the building of a *tabernacle*, which will serve as a visible presence of God and a source of divine guidance. Detailed specifications are provided, and only certain people – the descendants of Israel's son Levi – are permitted to do the set-up and take-down, as well as other ministering tasks. The tabernacle will accompany the people through their wilderness journey into the Promised Land and beyond – all the way to the time of the yet future monarchy, until King Solomon builds a temple to the Lord. Both the tabernacle and temple are again symbols of spiritual realities as shown later.¹⁰

The covenant made with Israel, now known as the *Old Covenant*, is based on obedience to law and commandments which include the Ten Commandments, as well as feast days, tithing (giving 10% of their gains to God), dietary laws, purification rites, and ritual sacrifices and offerings. The *Sabbath* is to be a special sign of the covenant between God and the people.¹¹ The law as well as the various rituals can be seen as symbols or types of deeper spiritual realities fulfilled and/or superseded in Jesus Christ and the church as will be shown later.

Israel is to not just stay camped at Sinai, but journey to the land promised to their ancestor Abraham. So after thirteen months of being given instruction, building a tabernacle, and ordaining priests to carry out sacrifices and receive offerings, the people are given a go-ahead to start moving. As a result of rebellion, however, the short journey to the land of Canaan becomes a forty-year odyssey of trial and testing, as well as witnessing God's hand at work. Except for Joshua and Caleb, who remained faithful to God, all those who left Egypt die in the wilderness. Only their descendants will inherit the Promised Land.¹²

⁵ Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-21; 17:1-22; Deuteronomy 30:6; Romans 2:29

⁶ Genesis 24:1-67; 25:19-38; 26:1-5, 24-25; 27:1-46; 28:3-4, 11-22; 29-39; 32:22-30; 35:22-26; 49:1-28

⁷ Genesis 37; 39-47; Exodus 1:1-22; Hebrews 11:23

⁸ Exodus 2-12

⁹ Exodus 19:5-8; 21:1-23:19; 24:6-8; 32:1-33:6; 2 Kings 17:6-18

¹⁰ Exodus 25-27; 35-40; Numbers 1:51-56; 9:15-22; 1 Chronicles 6:32, 48-49

¹¹ Exodus 20:1-17; 23:15-17; 25:1-30:38; 31:16-17; Leviticus 1:1-7:27; 8:1-9:24; 11:1-23

¹² Numbers 10:11-13; 11:1-35; 13:1-33; 14:1-45

Finally the land is reached and the people become settled as *twelve tribes* under their new leader, *Joshua*. After Joshua, there is no strong leader and the people are governed by *judges*. This period is characterized by several cycles of disobedience, oppression, crying out to God, deliverance through a judge, and short-term gratitude and obedience.¹³

Samuel is the last judge. His sons are corrupt and the people ask for a king in order to be like other nations. God grants them their wish, but not without warning that the king will end up oppressing them. *Saul*, *David*, and David's son *Solomon* become the first three kings. Then, again because of sin, David's dynasty is to continue with only two of the tribes – Judah and Benjamin, with a few representatives of the other tribes. The single kingdom splits into two – *Judah* in the south and *Israel* in the north.¹⁴

King David is best known for his devotion to God, but also for his scheming and warring nature. He desires to build a *temple* for God, but is not allowed to because of the blood on his hands. Instead, the task falls to his son Solomon. After seven years, a magnificent temple is completed and dedicated in Jerusalem, in the southern Kingdom of Judah. Like the tabernacle, the temple becomes the place for people to look to for connecting with God and for receiving guidance. However, if the people rebel and disobey God, He will reject both the nation and the temple, and let natural consequences take place in the form of various curses including being overrun by stronger neighbors. This is what eventually happens.¹⁵

Both kingdoms follow their own policies under a succession of kings. With a few exceptions, most of the kings do what is evil in God's sight and lead their people into idolatry. As a result, they are invaded, with many of the people taken captive and exiled out of their land. History records tell us that Israel was overrun by Assyria in the year 721 B.C. Almost two centuries later, Judah, who had a few more righteous kings, was also overrun – by Babylon, in 539 B.C.¹⁶

The people of the northern kingdom, Israel, are scattered, disappear from the radar, and come to be known in history as the lost tribes of Israel. In contrast, Judah's exile is prophesied to last only 70 years. And indeed this happens when Babylon is succeeded by Persia and the Persian king, *Cyrus*, allows the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Encouraged by the prophets, *Zechariah* and *Haggai*, the people eventually build a new temple – though one that is much inferior to the original one built by King Solomon.¹⁷ This is the same temple, later embellished by King Herod, which will come to play a part in the life of Jesus and Paul.¹⁸ This period is also believed to be the time when much of what was passed on as oral tradition and isolated writings becomes compiled into a coherent whole and eventually results in what we know as the Hebrew Scriptures or the Old Testament.

While many of the descendants of the exiled Jews choose not to return to the land of Palestine – the nation never becomes united again – some do. This is necessary for the remaining promises to Abraham to be fulfilled – one of his descendants, Jesus of Nazareth, is the promised seed to become a blessing to all nations – the anointed, Messiah, or Christ. The rest of the Jewish people remain in small communities, as the *diaspora*, scattered in various areas, but retain their identity and culture by remembering their history and God's law preserved in their sacred writings.

In Palestine, over time, several religious groups form as tends to happen within any religion. They include the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. Some centuries later, this is the situation into which Jesus is born, and which forms the backdrop to the New Testament.

While the Old Testament history as presented in the scriptures is a mixture of myths (stories that have not actually happened but contain universal truths at a metaphorical level) and historical fact, the existence of ancient Israel as a united and divided monarchy, as well as the exile of both kingdoms are historically and archeologically substantiated. The Jewish people, as a remnant of the original twelve tribes of Israel, are still here as a small nation – forming in 1948, having taken the name Israel, and surviving against all odds. They also exist as small communities and as individuals. They are still writing post-exilic

¹³ Books of Joshua and Judges

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 8:1-22; 10:9-27; 15:11-30; 16:11-13; 2 Samuel 2:1-4; 5:1-5; 1 Kings 1:30-39; 1 Kings 11:42-43; 12:1-24

¹⁵ 1 Kings 5:3-5; 6:1-38; 8:10-66; 9:3-8

¹⁶ 2 Kings 17:6-24; Jeremiah 52:27-30

¹⁷ Jeremiah 29:10-14; Ezra 1:1-8; 2:70; 3:1-5, 8-13; 6:13-18

¹⁸ For example, Matthew 21:12-23; Acts 24:1-23; 25:8; 26:21

history, still living by at least some aspects of the Hebrew Scriptures – though today only few are really committed to their God – and still waiting for their Messiah and a restoration of their kingdom.

In the meantime, the Messiah's kingdom is being prepared at another level – Celestial – through the church – those who are being worked with by the Holy Spirit and praying for and receiving the soul-transforming Divine Love and Nature.¹⁹

Old Testament History in New Testament Fulfillments

As mentioned, the Old Testament presents physical types and prophecies that have spiritual parallels, fulfillments, types or anti-types, and contrasts in the New Testament. This section gives some examples. However, discernment is necessary regarding conclusions reached, especially as concerns the life of Jesus, because some Old Testament passages have been taken out of context and misapplied to aspects of Jesus' life in an effort to establish his messiahship.²⁰

The first man, *Adam*, who sinned and caused his descendants to forfeit receiving divine nature and immortality is contrasted with the "second Adam", *Jesus Christ*, who was sinless and brought life and immortality to light through his gospel of the renewed availability of the Divine Love.²¹ *Abraham*, who believed God, is presented as an example of faith for others to follow.²² The *twelve sons of Israel* (nee Jacob) who became the foundation of the chosen nation parallel the *twelve disciples* that Jesus calls to become his "family" and the foundation of the church.²³

As the people of Israel were called to leave the slavery of Egypt, Jesus too is called out of Egypt where his parents had fled earlier to save his life – just as Israel's family originally went to Egypt to survive a grievous famine.²⁴ Jesus is also the prophet that Moses foretold would be like him – yet greater. In contrast to Moses the law-giver and the mediator of the Old Covenant, Jesus brought grace and truth by announcing the availability of the Divine Love and became the mediator of the New Covenant.²⁵

Like ancient Israel, each person who has responded to God's drawing and turned to God has been delivered out a state of *enslavement by sin, fear and evil passions* – a spiritual version of slavery in Egypt.²⁶ The rituals and ceremonies that the Israelites are given to perform, including the *holy days*,²⁷ are physical types pointing to higher spiritual realities, as will be shown later. And Israel's *journey* out of Egypt and through the wilderness figuratively becomes our journey – out of the slavery of sin, through a wilderness dealing with the myriads of life's obstacles and temptations, and, upon meeting God's conditions, into the Promised Land of the Celestial Divine Kingdom where all sorrow and suffering will cease. We are also to learn from the mistakes of the Israelites and not repeat them.²⁸

Figuratively, the people of Israel take on several relationship roles – a *child, covenant people, priesthood and a holy nation*, as well as the *first fruits of God's harvest*.²⁹ These are later reflected in New Testament fulfillments in Jesus Christ, his followers, and the church as a whole. Jesus is the first *son of God* to receive the Holy Spirit and through it the Divine Love, and thus the first of the first fruits of God's spiritual harvest – the first to enter the Celestial heavens.³⁰

¹⁹ Romans 5:5; Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4; Titus 3:4-7; see also <http://new-birth.net/divinelove.htm>

²⁰ For example, Matthew 1:22; 4:14; Luke 18:31; John 15:25; 19:24, 28, 36; Acts 3:18; 13:27

²¹ Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; 2 Timothy 1:10

²² Romans 4:3-25

²³ Exodus 28:21; Joshua 4:8; Matthew 10:1; 11:1

²⁴ Exodus 3:14; Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:13-15

²⁵ Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:17, 45; Acts 3:19-22; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 3:3; 8:16-13; 12:18-24

²⁶ Exodus 6:17-23; Romans 6:16,19; 7:14; 8:15; Titus 3:3

²⁷ Leviticus 23:1-44; 22:17-32

²⁸ Romans 6:6, 16-23; John 15:18-19; 16:53; Romans 8:9-18, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; 1 John 5:4-5; Revelation 21:1-4; <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol2/divinelove15.htm>

²⁹ Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 29:1-15; 2 Kings 17:6-20; Jeremiah 2:2-3; 3:14; 31:32; Hosea 11:1-4;

³⁰ Luke 3:21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:23; <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol2/jesus38.htm>

The church – those led by the Holy Spirit and Divine Love in their souls – are also the *children of God* and first fruits.³¹ They are metaphorically referred to as a holy priesthood (ministering to the world), and a holy nation.³² And in contrast to Israel being under a *covenant* of moral laws and rituals, which they failed to keep and thus forfeited blessings for obedience, the church is under a new and better covenant. Through it, a soul and heart transformation is taking place through the Divine Love imparted by the Holy Spirit, motivating the person to live a life of love and kindness.³³

The church, in contrast to Israel, comprises people of all nations rather than just the descendants of ancient Abraham (though there are many non-Jewish peoples, such as the Arabs, who see Abraham as their ancestor). Like ancient Israel was supposed to do and failed, the church is to set an example to the world by both disseminating Jesus' message of salvation through the Divine Love and by individual lives – in that sense serving as a priesthood.³⁴ (Unfortunately, the history of Christianity shows that the church's example has been far from blameless – may God have mercy!)

Jesus also is the Immanuel or “God with us”, a role he fulfilled *not* as being both God and man who came to live among the people, but as the first divine son of God, whose soul was transformed from divine image into divine essence through the Divine Love. He too is the anointed one (Christ or Messiah); the suffering servant of God – suffering *not* for our sins, but rather for the cause he represented; and the humble king riding on a donkey into Jerusalem shortly before the Passover holy day period.³⁵

By preaching the gospel (good news about the availability of the Divine Love) to the oppressed, poor and prisoners, opening eyes of the both physically and spiritually blind, and proclaiming the year of God's favor (symbolized by the Old Testament jubilee and pointing to the Celestial Kingdom of God now open with the renewed availability of the Divine Love), Jesus fulfilled a major prophecy in the book of Isaiah.³⁶

Hagar and Sarah, with their offspring, metaphorically picture the two covenants – the old and the new. Hagar and Ishmael are types of the old covenant – seeking justification and salvation by obedience to the law – which is humanly impossible. By obeying the commandments, human love can be perfected, but true salvation and immortality are unavailable. By contrast, Sarah and Isaac typify justification and salvation by faith in divine grace, which is a miracle and leads to freedom. Those so justified are being transformed at the soul level by the Divine Love and are less concerned about the details of the law, but rather live a life of love and kindness which fulfills and transcends the law.³⁷

Old Testament Holy Days and Other Rituals

As mentioned, the Old Testament foreshadowed the divine plan of salvation in symbols and rituals. The Law (commonly referring to the first five books attributed to Moses), the Writings (mainly the Psalms and Proverbs) and the Prophets (Kings and Chronicles as the Former Prophets, and the Major and Minor Prophets, also known as the Latter Prophets) contain hidden nuggets of the gospel which is being progressively revealed. Jesus said that everything that had been written about him in the Old Testament would eventually be fulfilled.³⁸

This section outlines some of the ceremonies, and the next section shows how the holy days and other rituals that Israel was commanded to observe year by year had begun to be fulfilled in Jesus and the church age. First a brief introduction to the holy days. Clustered in the northern hemisphere seasons of spring/early summer and then again in the fall, the holy days coincided with the two main harvest periods in

³¹ Romans 8:13-16; James 1:18

³² 1 Peter 2:9

³³ 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:6-13

³⁴ Jeremiah 31:31; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 11:25; Hebrews 8:8-13; 9:11-15; 1 Peter 2:9;

³⁵ Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-25; Psalm 2:1-2; Acts 4:24-28; Isaiah 53:1-4; Matthew 8:16-17; Acts 3:18; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:4-9; <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol1/bible70.htm>

³⁶ Isaiah 61:1-9; Luke 4:17-21; <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol1/bible70.htm>

³⁷ Galatians 4:21-31; 5:1-6,13-14

³⁸ Matthew 5:17; Luke 18:31-33; 24:44; Colossians 2:13-17; Hebrews 8:3-6

Palestine. The first harvest, the smaller of the two, occurred at the time of the spring holy day season, ending around Pentecost. The large harvest came in the fall, before the holy days of that time.

Interestingly, the work of the church in making disciples of those who by a combination of grace and personal choice have responded to God's call to repentance and conversion is metaphorically referred to in planting and harvest terms. This is also true of individual character building – producing the harvest of righteousness – and eternal life in immortality as our ultimate reward.³⁹

Passover Season and Pentecost

The origin of the Old Testament *Passover* goes back to shortly before the Exodus – the deliverance of Israel out of Egyptian slavery following a dramatic series of ten plagues on Egypt. The last plague, according to the Bible account, was the death of all the firstborn of Egypt – from humans to animals. All Israelite households were to kill a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. This would protect their firstborn from being killed during the night by the death angel – he would *pass over* them. The lamb was then to be eaten in haste, with all the remains being burned and none remaining to the morning.⁴⁰

From that point on, the theme of *the firstborn* becomes very significant. In another commanded ritual, God claims all firstborn life in Israel as his own. Firstborn male animals are to be redeemed or sacrificed, and firstborn sons are to be redeemed with sacrificed animals. The firstborn also enjoy special privileges including a double inheritance.⁴¹

Later, when Israel has harvests to reap, the people are given another observance during the *Days of Unleavened Bread* – the seven days following the Passover observance when no yeast products were to be eaten. On the Sunday during this holy day period, an *offering of first fruits* is to be made. A sheaf of the first grain harvest is to be waved before God and only after that can the harvest be enjoyed. From this Sunday, 50 days is counted to arrive at *Pentecost*, the name of which is derived from the word Greek word for “fifty”). This day is also referred to as the Feast of Weeks, as it comes seven weeks after the day of the wave sheaf offering.⁴²

Other Rituals

Another strong theme and a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants is physical *circumcision*. All males are required to be circumcised, including slaves and others that have become part of a household. In fact, those not circumcised are not allowed to partake of the Passover meal. When Israel settles in the Promised Land, their new leader, Joshua, commands all those born in the desert to be circumcised.⁴³ Apart from the physical procedure, the real significance of this ritual becomes already apparent in the Old Testament, and that is *circumcision of the heart* – becoming responsive and obedient to God, rather than being stubborn and resistant. This circumcision is not to be done by human hands, but rather by God – he will circumcise the people's hearts.⁴⁴ This theme continues to be further transformed in the New Testament as will be shown.

The *Sabbath* day (seventh day), Sabbath year, and the Jubilee – the year after seven Sabbath years, or the 50th year – were all connected to Israel's covenant with God and were to be special. The weekly Sabbath was enforced under strict rules as a day of rest and worship pointing to the Creator and Deliverer from slavery.⁴⁵ The Sabbatical year was a year of rest for the land and those working the land. For that special year, the people were promised that the sixth year crops would provide for two years. The fiftieth

³⁹ Matthew 9:35-38; 13:28-30, 36-43; John 4:35-38; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 9:10-11; Galatians 6:8-10; Hebrews 12:11; James 3:18; Revelation 14:15-16

⁴⁰ Exodus 12:12-20, 29

⁴¹ Exodus 13:2, 12-15; 34:19-20; Deuteronomy 21:15-17

⁴² Leviticus 23:9-16; Numbers 28:26

⁴³ Genesis 17:10-14, 23-27; 12:44-48; Leviticus 12:3; Joshua 5:3-8

⁴⁴ Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4

⁴⁵ Exodus 16:23-29; 20:8-10; 31:14-16; Leviticus 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:15

year, or Jubilee, was to be the time when slaves would be released, and sold or lost property would revert back to its original owners. In other words, it stood for liberation, as well as a second chance in life.⁴⁶ It is believed that Israel never observed a single year of Jubilee.

Lastly, a *tabernacle*, and later two *temples* figured prominently in Israel's worship. As related under the History section, in the wilderness, Israel was given strict instructions for building a tabernacle, through which God's presence was to manifest. Many years later, King Solomon built a glorious temple to God in Jerusalem for the same purpose. As a result of Judah's sin, this temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C. About 100 years later, in the post-exilic period, the temple was, over a period of time, rebuilt under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, encouraged by prophets Haggai and Zechariah. While physically inferior to Solomon's temple, God promised that it would end up being even more glorious. This was the temple, later embellished by King Herod, where Jesus would some centuries later teach the people and challenge his opponents.⁴⁷

New Testament Fulfillments of Old Testament Ritual Symbolism

Passover Holy Day Season

Jesus was crucified and died about the same time that the Passover lambs were being killed for the traditional Passover meal. However, contrary to what is commonly taught, Jesus was *not* a "Passover Lamb" sacrificed for our sins, whereby we are made righteous. Rather, as the blood of the slain lambs during the original Passover in Egypt protected the Israelite firstborn from death, Jesus' teachings about the Divine Love and his life exemplifying the Love, when followed, redeems his disciples from the penalty of sin, which is forfeiture of divine life and immortality, or what the Bible refers to as "second death."⁴⁸

While the New Testament refers to Jesus as a sacrificed Lamb over 30 times (mostly in the book of Revelation), this should not be regarded in the traditional sense that we are saved by Jesus' sacrifice and death, but rather that God, through His son Jesus, re-introduced the Divine Love as a result of which those who accept this gift and pray for receiving it are saved, acquiring divine nature and becoming born anew.⁴⁹

The Passover day was followed by seven Days of Unleavened Bread – time during which nothing with yeast or other leavening agents was allowed to be eaten. In the New Testament, *leaven* is a symbol for sin, malice and wickedness, as well as wrong teachings. Being *spiritually unleavened* implies walking in sincerity and truth. So while the Jews still purge their homes from leavened products, and even crumbs, during this period, the New Testament spiritual application is to purge our lives from wrong ways of living. This is accomplished by following Jesus' moral teachings, which transcended and magnified Old Testament commands. The spiritual deleavening is also greatly aided by the presence of the Divine Love within which transforms the heart and soul, creating a new heart and resulting in a new birth.⁵⁰

In his Sunday "resurrection", Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament ritual of the wave sheaf offering performed on the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Upon death, when all human souls leave their physical body and ascend in their spirit body to the spirit world, Jesus did likewise. He then proclaimed the availability of the Divine Love through prayer and the possibility of at-onement with the Father to spirits in the spirit world. Then he returned to the burial cave and materialized a body closely resembling his own from the elements of the universe using unique power given to him. He walked out of the cave with the assistance of spirits who rolled away the stone from the entrance. This was the Sunday morning, when Jesus

⁴⁶ Leviticus 25:5-6, 9-15; 27:24

⁴⁷ Zechariah 4:6-10; Ezra 3:8-13; Haggai 1:1-15; 2:1-9; Mark 11:15-17; 27-33; Luke 21:37-38

⁴⁸ Luke 22:7, 13-22; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Titus 3:4-7; 2 Peter 1:4; Revelation 20:6; see also <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol1/bible57.htm> and <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol2/divinelove2.htm>

⁴⁹ Luke 22:7, 13-22; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Peter 1:4; Titus 3:4-7; Revelation 12:11; 13:8; 19:7-9; 21:9, 14, 22-23

⁵⁰ Exodus 12:18-19; Matthew 5:7; 16:6, 12; Luke 22:7; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

appeared alive to Mary Magdalene, and then later, in the evening on the same day, to his disciples. This bodily manifestation was to them a proof that Jesus was still alive and that he was the Messiah.⁵¹

Jesus is the *first of the first-fruits*, having opened the door for others to follow in his footsteps. The New Testament church (from the Greek word *ecclesia*, meaning called-out ones), becomes the first-fruits and firstborn of the saved, following Jesus' example. He was the first to have possessed the Divine Love in his soul and to become a divine son of God through soul transformation and new birth. His spiritual brothers and sisters, who are also co-heirs with him of the divine kingdom, will join him as glorified and immortal spirit beings in the Celestial kingdom of God upon having undergone the new birth through their own soul transformation by the Divine Love. This can be considered as the meaning of what the Bible refers to as the first and better resurrection.⁵²

The resurrection and manifestation of the risen Christ is a pivotal event – an “epicenter of history” – which opens the door to real salvation through the promised Holy Spirit imparting the Divine Love into the soul and transforming it into divine substance with divine nature. That promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost which came ten days after Jesus' ascension to the Celestial heaven (after having preached the truth of the Divine Love in the lower spheres) and fifty days after the Sunday during the Days of Unleavened Bread.⁵³

Pentecost

The day of Pentecost in the year of Jesus' crucifixion can be considered as the “birth of the church” or, one could say, the Divine Love community. This community includes anyone who sees themselves as following the path of praying for and being transformed by the Divine Love. It can be viewed as the invisible church – all people, wherever they are, who have the Holy Spirit working with them and imparting the Divine Love into their souls. It may well transcend churches and include synagogues, mosques, temples, and the unaffiliated, even those who are not yet conscious of the Divine Love working in their souls. And it stretches into the spirit world.⁵⁴ It is invisible in the sense that no one can see this body in its entirety. Perhaps the tip of the iceberg is a better metaphor – what is seen is much smaller than what is unseen.

On this unique day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples received the real understanding of his Messiahship. Amidst a dramatic display of wind and tongues of fire, the twelve apostles spoke to the startled multilingual crowd seemingly in their own languages. They identified Jesus as the Messiah, witnessing to the fulfillment of an old prophecy that the Spirit would be poured out. What really happened was that through the Holy Spirit, an abundance of the Divine Love was conveyed into their souls, convincing them that Jesus had brought to humankind the essence of the Father. As they exhorted the people to repent, three thousand Jews from all parts of the Roman Empire became convicted, and formed the *foundation of the church – the first fruits of the Divine Love Community*.⁵⁵

In Old Testament times, the Pentecost ritual involved two loaves made with yeast to be waved (offered) before God at the end of the spring harvest. The New Testament parallel is two-fold. The leavened bread (rather than unleavened or without yeast) is a symbol for the converted who while possessing the Divine Love and not habitually sinning are still subject to occasional sin. The two loaves symbolize the two groups who would constitute the new people of God – Jews (the remnant group of ancient Israel who formed the foundation of the church on that first Pentecost) and later also Gentiles (non-Jews, starting with

⁵¹ Leviticus 23:9-11; John 20:16-20; Luke 24:36-42; 1 Peter 3:19; 4:6; see also <http://new-birth.net/ntr/revelation11.htm>

⁵² Romans 8:15-17, 23, 28-30; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; James 1:18; Hebrews 11:35; Revelation 14:4; 20:4-6; see also <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol1/bible57.htm>

⁵³ Acts 1:4-8; Romans 1:4; 8:11-17; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; 3:21; see also <http://new-birth.net/ntr/revelation11.htm>

⁵⁴ Hebrews 12:22-24

⁵⁵ Acts 2:1-41; Joel 3:1-5

Cornelius, who accepted Peter's preaching, and later others as the gospel message reached Antioch and elsewhere).⁵⁶

The church's commission was to preach and teach Christ's message about how to enter the kingdom of God through the Divine Love. Unfortunately, the message has been somewhat corrupted over the centuries to where Jesus' death as a sacrifice for our sins has become the focus.⁵⁷ Yet, despite incorrect teachings, there are many in the invisible spiritual community whose souls are being transformed by the Divine Love imparted through the Holy Spirit – perhaps even without their fully understanding what is happening, but the fruits of this transformation are brightly shining through their lives.⁵⁸

Fulfilment of Other Rituals

The Old Covenant signs included circumcision and the Sabbath. The tabernacle and later temple were also the centers of worship.

In the New Testament, physical circumcision ceases to be an issue altogether. Instead, *circumcision of the heart* is defined in various passages as obedience, faith expressing itself through love, putting off of the sinful nature, inward circumcision done by the Spirit, not through the written code, being “in Christ”, and becoming a new creature or new creation. All of these are manifestations of the presence of the Divine Love in the soul.⁵⁹

The *Sabbath*, while a good spiritual discipline helping committed believers to keep God in their consciousness at least once a week, will of and by itself not lead to transformation of the soul and the new birth. Jesus, in frequent controversy with the zealous Pharisees, freed the physical Sabbath from its legalistic shackles, which had been imposed on the Jews after the exile for fear of another national disaster. He transformed it into a day of love, healings and doing good. The Sabbath is later transformed further into a spiritual Promised Land, a rest that the people of God can enter in contrast to the ancient Israelites who failed. Extrapolating from the passage in Hebrews 4, one can see the difference between Israel and the church in the availability of the Divine Love, or new heart, which the Old Testament prophets pointed to. As a result of it, the true rest in the Celestial Heavens, where Jesus has been preparing places for his followers, and where there is no longer any suffering or sorrow, can be achieved.⁶⁰

The *tabernacle and temple* also take on spiritual meaning, as the physical temple in Jerusalem is destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD and from then on ceases to exist. They pointed to the Celestial heavens, including the place where God resides.⁶¹ On another level, while Jesus predicted the destruction of the physical temple, he referred to his own body as a temple. In the same vein, the bodies of those who have the Holy Spirit / Divine Love in their souls, as well as the church / community where the Divine Love is working are referred to as the temple of God, temple of the Holy Spirit, or a holy temple in the Lord. Jesus, as the messenger of the New Covenant, was prophesied to “come to his temple”. This may signify Jesus' coming to lay the foundation of the church, the new spiritual temple, begun through the twelve disciples and others who during his life heard his teachings and imitated his life guided by the Holy Spirit and Divine Love.⁶²

⁵⁶ Leviticus 23:15-21; Acts 10:1-47; 11:1-30; 1 Corinthians 6:8-11; Romans 3:9, 29; Galatians 2:7-9; 2 Peter 1:3-11

⁵⁷ For a comparison of the two gospels, see <http://universal-spirituality.net/truth-and-perceptions/gospels-reflection>

⁵⁸ Matthew 7:18; 12:33; Colossians 1:10

⁵⁹ Acts 7:8; 15:1-21; Romans 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:6; 6:15; Colossians 2:11; see also <http://new-birth.net/misc/misc31.htm>

⁶⁰ Matthew 12:2-12; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 13:10-16; John 7:22-23; 14:2-6; Hebrews 4:1-11; Revelation 21:1-4; see also <http://new-birth.net/tgrabjvol3/minor289.htm>

⁶¹ Acts 7:44-50; Hebrews 8:2-6; see also <http://new-birth.net/contemporary/hr137.htm>

⁶² Isaiah 42:5-7; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 24:1-2; 26:60; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22

Concluding Thoughts

If there are first fruits or firstborn children of God to enter the kingdom of God in the Celestial heavens through the new birth and soul transformation by the Divine Love, the implication is that others will follow – that there is more than one opportunity and more people and spirits to be “harvested for salvation”. Back to the Old Testament types and history, the spring harvest was much smaller than the fall harvest. Also, in each family there is never more than one firstborn, but several other children may follow that special firstborn. The day of Pentecost is followed by four more holy days.⁶³ Is there any connection in this? If the first three holy days were fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the church age (the firstborn), could the last four have a yet future fulfillment?

Nowadays, as people respond to their soul’s desires and through prayer receive the Divine Love, the energy on the planet is raised, and little by little, more light comes to the human race. These individuals are becoming a growing network of souls harvesting for the Father. I believe that eventually, all, or the vast majority of, souls will return to the Father, in becoming at-one with Him in His Divine Nature.

⁶³ Leviticus 23:4-44