STUDY GUIDE

GOD'S PLAN

By Rabbi Nate Seitelbach

G-D'S PLAN

JEWISH HISTORY

LESSON 3

I. B.C.E.

A. Patriarchal Age -- 2250 to 1800.

(1) Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.

(a) Genesis 32:28: And he said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

(2) Joseph.

B. Moses and the Exodus.

C. The Promised Land.

(1) Joshua

(2) The twelve tribes

(3) Judges

(4) The United Kingdom -- Saul, David and Solomon

(5) The Divided Kingdom

(6) The Prophets

(7) The Babylonian Captivity

D. Restoration:

(1) Zerubbabel -- the first group.

(2) Ezra -- the second group.

(3) Nehemiah -- the last group.

E. Greece

(1) Alexander the Great

(2) Ptolemids

(3) Seleucids

(4) Hellenism

(5) Antiochus IV

(6) Judah the Maccabee

(7) "Greeks"

F. Pharisees and Sadducees.

II. C.E.

A. Herod the Hated.

(1) Archelaus

(2) Antipas

(3) Phillip

B. Sects.

(1) Nazarenes

(2) Others

C. The early church.

(1) James

(2) Simon, son of Cleophus

(3) Luke 21:20-24: "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart, and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

(4) John 16:2: "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."

D. 70 - 132 C.E.

(1) Rabbinic Judaism:

(2) Shmoneh Esreh (the 18 benedictions):

(3) Other incidents:

E. Bar Kochba -- 132 to 135 C.E.

(1) Rabbi Akiva

(2) Aelia Capitolina

III. The Diaspora

A. Change in the Nature of the Church:

(1) Second & third centuries:

(2) Justin Martyr:

(3) Prayer and brotherhood:

(4) Hippolytus:

B. State Religion:

C. Deterioration.

(1) Non-believers:

(2) Cyprian:

(3) Chrysostom (died 407):

(4) Augustine:

D. Rupture:

Jewish Views of Salvation, Faith and Freedom

(Last updated 4/10/00)

Although there rarely if ever was a single Jewish view on any specific subject in the first century, we can determine some overall conceptions regarding important topics such as salvation, faith and freedom.

JEWISH VIEW OF SALVATION

Judaism of the second Temple period (and prior) considered the concept of salvation more national (corporate) than exclusively personal, as modern Christianity views it. The salvation of the individual Jew was connected to the salvation of the entire people. This belief stemmed directly from the teachings of the Torah. The idea of corporate salvation of Israel is reflected in Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly in chapters 9-11.

Although God, in the Torah, taught His people sanctification of the individual, He also expected them to function together (spiritually) and be accountable to one another. This was (and is still today) perceived to be a source of conflict, as it often meant having to "limit" your personal spiritual experience on account of someone else.

The concept of salvation was tied to that of restoration for Israel. It included such ideas as:

- Rescue from national enemies
- Restoration of national symbols
- State of shalom among peoples
- Inauguration of the age to come
- Liberation from Rome
- Restoration of the Temple
- Free enjoyment of their own land
- Inauguration of a new covenant between Israel and her God

Some of the Scriptures that testify to these things are: Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:9-10; 27:12; 33:22; 42:1-6; 45:14,23; 49:5-6; 23; 51:4-5; 52:7-10; 54:3; 56:1-8; 60-66; Ezekiel 17; 20:42; 34; 36:9-12; 39:26; 47:13-48; 48:35; Daniel 7; Micah 2:12; 4; 5:10-15; 7:17; Amos 9:11-13; Zechariah 2:11; 8:20-23; 14:1-11; Zephaniah 2:9;10; Joel 3:17.

The Jews of the first century expected to be rescued from foreign dominion. This would occur after they suffered (a purification process) for past breaches of their covenant with God. (See: Deuteronomy 4:32, Isaiah 40:1-2, Jerermiah 31:27-40, Ezekiel 18; 36:24-28, and Hosea 14:2.)

Ideas regarding the Messiah did not have a concensus. The exception to this would be the Qumran community, whose literature has a highly developed sense of Messiah. Even in the Qumran literature however, one can see evolving thought about Messiah. They seem to go from a two-Messiah theory to a belief in a single Messiah as represented by Melchizadek, who resolved the "conflict" of Messiah being both King and Priest. This will be discussed later in this study.

Perhaps the one view of Messiah shared among the groups was that His main task would be directly related to the restoration of Israel. (Hence some of the opinions expressed by the people about Yeshua, in the Gospels.)

JEWISH VIEW OF FAITH

This is an important topic when discussing faith in Jewish texts such as the book of Romans in the "New Testament." A 20th century "western" definition of faith is often used to support theologies that claim to be based on the (Hebrew) Scriptures.

For instance, within modern Christianity there is a range of belief regarding faith:

- The idea that faith is totally separate from "works" based on verses such as Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 3:28 and others (as taught by some Protestants)
- The idea that works must be performed to "earn salvation" (i.e., penance and purgatory, as taught by some Catholics)
- The idea the works (following some of the Torah's commandments) are somehow part of the equation, but we are "not under the Law," as we have "freedom in Christ" (as taught by both Protestants, Catholics and others)

When dealing with the texts of the "New Testament," the English language word "faith" must be interpreted in the Hebrew context it was originally conceived in by the author. As such, the word "trust" may be a better one to use, at it conveys a combination of belief and action.

The Jewish view of "faith," including that of Paul, is established in ideas such as:

- Faith is active and includes the "works" of following Torah. The foundational statement of faith in Judaism is the "Shema," from Deuteronomy 6:4. The term "hear" (as in "Hear O Israel ...", means t*o hear and respond obediently.* Faith and obedience are woven together. This is clearly reflected in the words of Yeshua, Paul and James.
- Walking in God's Torah is a sign of established faith, as founded in: Exodus 16:4; Leviticus 18:3-4; Deuteronomy 28:9; Joshua 22:5; Jeremiah 44:23; Ezekiel 5:6-7; Daniel 9:10 and Micah 4:2. We are told in James 1:23-25 to *look in the perfect law (Torah) of liberty* to make sure we are living correctly before God.
- Judaism had an established yet evolving halakha (standard) for "walking in faith" for gentiles. The "New Testament" gives us a "snapshot" of what the current practice was, as seen in: Matthew 3:8; Acts 15:19-16:4; Ephesians 2:10; James 2:19-20 and John 14:15.
- The Tenakh taught that the same Torah applied for gentiles following God who were living in the Land. (Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 19:33-34; 24:22; Numbers 9:14; 15:15-16, 29.) This teaching can be seen as continuing in both Acts 15:21, where it states that new gentile believers will continue Torah learning as they attend synagogue,

and also in Ephesians 2:10-12, where Paul tells gentiles that before they came to faith they were not part of the commonwealth and covenant of Israel. This latter verse implies that these gentiles now DID have a relationship to this covenant, which is based on the Torah -- *both knowing and doing it* -- as Paul and James both attest to:

> **Romans 2:13** - *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.*
>
> **James 1:22** - *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

The concept of *obedience of faith,* is one that we will see as our Romans study goes forward.

JEWISH VIEW OF FREEDOM

In the old movie, "The Ten Commandments" with Charlton Heston, Moses decends Mount Sinai and sees the golden calf. He then holds the two tablets above his head and shouts to the Israelites, *"There is no freedom outside the Law!"*

For once, Hollywood got it right. It is a truly unfortunate situation that today, many people believe that freedom **in** their "Messiah" means freedom **from** the Law. (It should be made clear before going any further, that "Law" is an inaccurate translation for "Torah," as it actually means "revelation" or "instruction" from God.)

This belief ("we are not under the Law") can be traced back to the development of the early "Church" (and its anti-Semitic roots) and was amplified by later gentiles such as Martin Luther, and the other "Protestant reformers." Of course, by the time of Luther, "the Church" already had no regard for Torah. The Protestant reformation initiated the process of defining a theology that separated itself from its Catholic origins. However, this was not a return to the faith of Israel as followed by Yeshua, Paul and the rest of the Jews in the pages of the "New Testament." (There are several articles in the YashaNet Library on these topics.)

Freedom in the mind of Paul and other Jews of his time was founded in the events surrounding the giving of the Torah (Exodus 4:22-23; Exodus 7:16; Exodus 8:1). Although the Hebrews experienced a physical freedom when God led them out of Egypt, their true freedom came when they received the Torah. Ask anyone what Moses said to Pharaoh on multiple occassions, and they will probably recall him saying, *"Let my people go."* However, this is only half the message. As Scripture shows, what God told Moses to say was, *"Let my people go, so they may serve me."* They were then given the Torah to enable them to do just this.

Freedom also involves serving a higher purpose. In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul speaks of having freedom to eat meat that may have been sacrificed to idols, as an idol is a meaningless thing to the believer. He cautions however, that if this action may cause another person grief, that the higher principle is to defer from doing anything that may cause the other person to stumble. Hence freedom means having the ability (and responsibility) to NOT partake of certain things. This concept will be important when we study the text of the Romans letter.

Of course the ultimate example of this is Yeshua, who had the "freedom" to not die on the