

THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND POLITICS : PART 1

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An overview of the ancient Israelites and early Judaism, and an exposé on corrupt worldly governments and our place in them as servants of Jesus Christ

Since the beginning of time, a war has been waged between the King of Heaven and the King of the Earth, between the Seekers of Light and the Dwellers of Darkness, between the Children of God and the Children of Satan. This rebellion against Divine Rule and authority first manifested itself on Earth some six thousand years ago when Satan tempted the first human pair in the Garden of Eden. In spite of the wonderful world God had created for them, Lucifer set about to convince Adam and Eve that they could have more; that in fact, that they could become as gods and rule over themselves:

"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Genesis 3:5-6, KJV

Shortly after their fall and ouster from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had two children. One was a righteous son named Abel, a sheep herder who pleased the Lord. The other was Cain, a man who thought his own hard labor in the fields was enough to make him righteous. In the end, Cain rose up and slew his younger brother in a jealous fit of rage:

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

Genesis 4:1-8, KJV

What had started out as a seemingly innocent decision to eat of the forbidden fruit in Eden, had now resulted in the first murder of man by man, the murder of a man submitted to God by a man influenced by Satan. From the events in Genesis up to this very day, the schism has continued to grow between those who submit to the theocratic rule of the one true God in Heaven, and those who would govern themselves influenced by Lucifer and his demonic horde.

As a result of the murder of righteous Abel, the bloodline of Cain was cursed by God:

"And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;"
Genesis 4:11, KJV

Five generations later, we find Lamech, the descendant of Cain, committing another murder, and from that point on, things only continued to get worse:

"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt."
Genesis 4:23, KJV

In Genesis chapter six we read of another great rebellion against God's authority when the sons of God, what some believe were spiritual beings, made love to the beautiful women of Earth, which resulted in evil giants being born. For a more in-depth look at this incident, please refer to my other articles such as "Nephilim: The Giants of Genesis" and "The Book of Enoch: Truth or Heresy" In speaking of the great evil which filled the Earth in those days, Genesis chapter six informs us of the following:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."
Genesis 6:5-6, KJV

The Lord was so upset by the way His own creation had rebelled against Him and had committed such horrendous acts of violence, that He decided to put an abrupt end to it:

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."
Genesis 6:13, KJV

Imagine, the world was full of thousands, perhaps several million people by this time, but the only man who found grace in the eyes of the Lord was Noah, a descendant of the righteous line of Seth, the third son born to Adam and Eve after Abel's murder. Together with his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah labored for quite some time building the Ark while an unbelieving world looked on and scoffed at him as some crazy old fool. But in the end, those who had rejected God's rule over them, soon found themselves treading water for dear life, while Noah and his wife, and

his three sons and their wives, along with all of the animals, floated safely above the rising waters. For more comments on this event, please see my articles "Noah's Ark and the Genesis Flood" and "Noah's Flood: The Urantia Book Exposed Again".

After The Flood, the world began to be repopulated by Noah's family, but it wasn't before long that Satan managed to stir up rebellion again in the hearts of humanity. Despite God's mercy in sparing Noah and his family, only a few generations later in Genesis chapter eleven, we find some of the descendants of the sons of Noah rejecting the Lord and trying to set up their own earthly government. In Genesis chapter eleven we read the following:

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."
Genesis 11:1-4, KJV

"Let's make ourselves a name" they said. "Let's be somebody! We don't need the Lord ruling over us anymore! Let's build a great city and tower that will reach up to Heaven! Maybe we can defeat God! Let's start our own government here on Earth!" Those may not have been their exact words, but that was surely the intent of their hearts. This city and tower they built would become known as the Tower of Babel, what some say was actually the beginnings of what would eventually become the powerful Babylonian Empire.

There is speculation that the rebellion at Babel was led by Nimrod, the son of Cush, who was the son of Ham, the third son of Noah who was cursed by his father and destined to live a life of servitude to his two brothers. From the Biblical record, we know that the descendants of Ham, which included the Canaanites, settled in ancient Israel and also migrated down into Africa. For this reason, some believe that Ham may actually be the father of all the negroid races of the Earth which were later taken into slavery thus fulfilling ancient Bible prophecy.

As a result of the rebellion at Babel, the Lord confounded the people with a diversity of tongues so that they could not understand each other, thus preventing them from accomplishing their goals. Prior to this incident, the people of the world were concentrated in a small area of the Earth, and they all spoke the same universal language. According to one apocryphal source, this language may have been Hebrew. One speculation is that it was also during the days of Peleg, some one hundred or so years after the Flood, that the Lord physically began to divide the Earth into its present continents after He had already divided the people into different tongues and nations following the incident at Babel. It is indeed plausible that after the people had begun to spread out across the face of the Earth, that the Lord caused the Earth's crust to crack, thus creating rift

valleys which slowly divided the super-continent which existed at that time. This would have ensured that the people couldn't have a repeat performance such as what happened at Babel . . . at least for a few thousand years. Once again, it seems that we have the development of a universal language -- that is, English -- and certain individuals and societies are bent on creating a New World Order with scientific technology as their god. Please refer to my other papers for more information on this.

Several hundred years later begins the story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, descendants of the righteous line of Seth. According to Genesis chapter eleven, Abraham, his father Terah and their family were natives of Ur, the land of the Chaldees, or Chaldeans, if you prefer. I discuss this topic more at length in articles such as "One From Beyond: Hebrew of Hebrews". The Chaldeans were the rulers of ancient Babylonia. What may surprise you to know is that Abraham and his family, in spite of their heritage from the line of righteous Noah, worshipped pagan gods. This is clarified for us by the words of Joshua the son of Nun in the Book of Joshua, as we see by these verses:

"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and THEY SERVED OTHER GODS. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac."
Joshua 24:2-3, KJV

The fact that Abraham's family were pagans from Babylon is also confirmed in various of the apocryphal works. In essence, the Lord told Abraham -- who at that time was still called Abram -- to forsake his own country, to forsake his father's family and his old religion, and if he would do so, God would mightily bless him:

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
Genesis 12:1-3, KJV

After Terah had taken his family as far as Haran, Abraham then obeyed the Lord and continued on from there, and God blessed him mightily. Unlike the other peoples of the Earth who involved themselves with setting up cities and localized power bases, God had called out Abraham to be a nomadic herdsman, who over the years, slowly travelled westward towards the promised land of Canaan, later to be known as Palestine and Israel. His only king and ruler was the Lord Himself who watched from Heaven above; who and occasionally paid Abraham an earthly visit. Please refer to the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis for details. It was because of the very fact that Abraham accepted the absolute sovereignty of the Lord, as his one and only true King as opposed to worldly governments and pagan religions, that God blessed him

Eventually, Abraham, his wife, and Lot his nephew reached Canaan. At that time, the Canaanites, the descendants of Cush and Ham, dwelled in the land. In addition, there was a great famine in progress; so Abraham took his family down into Egypt. Being as Abraham's wife Sarai -- that is, Sarah -- was so beautiful, Abraham had to pass her off as his sister for his own protection. This however created quite a problem, as Pharaoh king of Egypt wanted to marry her. The Lord then sent plagues to Pharaoh which resulted in Pharaoh discovering the whole truth of the matter, and sending Abraham, his wife and all of their servants out of Egypt. So, Abraham re-entered the southern part of Canaan and eventually made it back up to Bethel where he had previously built an altar and sacrificed unto the Lord. This is discussed in Genesis chapters twelve and thirteen. One interesting point which some people may find a bit shocking, is the fact that Sarah was actually Abraham's half-sister. According to the following verse, Abraham and Sarah had the same father, but different mothers:

"And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife."
Genesis 20:12, KJV

Thus, he spoke a half-truth as he and his wife had agreed to do during the course of their travels to the land of Canaan for their own protection, particularly Abraham's.

One result of the journey into Egypt is that Abraham became quite wealthy and had lots of gold and silver, cattle, and servants, both male and female. One of these was Hagar the Egyptian handmaiden. After having lived ten years in Canaan, and now in his mid-eighties, Abraham still did not have an heir as Sarah was barren. It was then that Sarah devised the plan that she would give Abraham her handmaiden, Hagar, to be his wife. Abraham consented, and shortly thereafter, Hagar conceived a son, later to be called Ishmael. Unfortunately, this resulted in friction between Sarah and Hagar, as Hagar despised Sarah her mistress. Sarah thus dealt with Hagar causing her to flee into the wilderness. While there, the Angel of the Lord appeared to her and told her to return and submit herself to Sarah. As a result of her obedience, God blessed Hagar and her descendants, beginning with her son, Ishmael, who became the father of the twelve princes of the Arab nations. These events are discussed in Genesis chapters sixteen and seventeen. Consider the following verses:

"Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham: And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto

Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren."
Genesis 25:12-18, KJV

It wasn't until fourteen years later, shortly after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, that the Lord finally blessed Abraham and Sarah with a son in their old age. Abraham was one hundred, and Sarah was ninety. When the Lord announced to each of them that she was going to bear a son, they each doubted; but in the end, the wisdom of God's plan was revealed; and His covenant with Abraham was fulfilled with the birth of Isaac, as we find discussed in Genesis chapter twenty-one. Sarah lived another thirty-seven years after the birth of Isaac and died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven. As a result of Isaac's birth, Ishmael, who was now a teenager, mocked Sarah, just as his mother Hagar had done some fifteen years before. This resulted in Abraham finally sending them both away. But even then, God did not forsake Hagar and her child. He still fulfilled His promises to them. This too is discussed in Genesis chapter twenty-one.

Of concern to Abraham was that his son Isaac would not marry a pagan woman of Canaan, the land wherein he and his family now dwelt. Having done so may have caused his son to fall back into worshipping pagan gods. At the same time, he did not want Isaac to return to the land of his nativity, i.e., Ur of the Chaldees, because the Lord had promised to give him the land of Canaan and to multiply his seed there as the stars of the heavens. And again, the temptation to desert the one true God may have been too strong for his son to resist. Thus, Abraham sent one of his servants to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor, which was named after Abraham's brother, to find a wife for Isaac his son. It is there that the Lord does a miracle and provides Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor to be Isaac's wife. This can be found in Genesis chapter. In essence, Isaac married his second cousin. According to what we read in the twenty-fifth chapter of Genesis, Rebekah and her brother Laban are both referred to as Syrians, so this tells us that Syria was considered to be a part of Mesopotamia in those days, and actually, this whole area was under Babylonian jurisdiction:

"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian."
Genesis 25:19-20, KJV

After Sarah's death, Abraham took another wife named Keturah, who bore him an additional six sons to give him eight in all including Ishmael, but to Isaac went the inheritance of the Lord. In addition, Abraham had various concubines. In Genesis chapter twenty-five, we are also told that Abraham died at the ripe old age of one hundred and seventy-five:

"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people."
Genesis 25:7-8, KJV

One of his final acts before his death was to send away all of the sons of his concubines with gifts to the east country. It is not stated exactly why he did this, but it could be so that there was no rivalry with Isaac who was his sole heir according to the Lord's promise.

One interesting point to note is that in spite of the rivalry which may have existed between Isaac and Ishmael in earlier years, they were both present for the burial of their father. At that time, Ishmael would have been about eighty-nine years of age, and Isaac would have been about seventy-five years old; so perhaps with age, they gained some maturity and respect for each other:

"And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;"
Genesis 25:9, KJV

After twenty years of marriage, the Lord blessed Isaac and his wife with the twins, Jacob and Esau. The Lord had prophesied that two very distinct nations would arise from Rebekah's womb, and that the descendants of Jacob would be stronger than the descendants of Esau. From an early age, Rebekah had favored Jacob, while Isaac favored his elder son, Esau. Although Esau -- who was later called Edom -- was the elder son, he sold his birthright to his younger conniving brother for a bowl of lentils and bread, as we see here:

"And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright."
Genesis 25:21-34, KJV

But Jacob's conniving did not stop there. When his father Isaac was old and ready to pass on the blessing, Jacob and his mother schemed together to trick Isaac into thinking

that Jacob was actually the elder brother who rightfully deserved the blessing. Being that Isaac's eyesight had already failed him, it didn't take much to pull off this scam. These events are discussed in the twenty-seventh chapter of the Book of Genesis.

What is interesting to note here is that, just as Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, Jacob likewise lied to his father three times to convince him that he was Esau and thus secure the blessing of the Lord's inheritance for himself. To show how serious men took their words in those days, even after the treachery had been discovered by Isaac, and after Esau had wept bitterly and pleaded with his father, Isaac couldn't take back his blessing from Jacob. It had to stand, and just as the Lord had prophesied at their birth years before, Esau was forced to submit to the younger deceitful brother.

As a result of this particular incident, Esau became very embittered against his brother and planned to kill him. Becoming aware of it, Isaac and Rebekah decided to send Jacob to Laban, Rebekah's brother, who still lived in Haran, which is the place where Terah had first taken Abraham, Sarah and their nephew Lot after leaving Ur in the land of the Chaldees. Please refer to Genesis chapter twenty-seven. Another reason they did this was because, just as Abraham did not want his son Isaac to marry a pagan woman of Canaan, so too, Isaac was responsible for ensuring the purity of their lineage.

As we read in Genesis chapter twenty-nine, Jacob went to Haran where he ended up working for his uncle Laban for fourteen years to obtain the hand of his beautiful daughter Rachel. This had occurred because after working the first seven years, Laban gave Jacob his eldest daughter Leah first, as was the custom, instead of Rachel, whom he had expected. So, he was forced to work an additional seven years in order to marry Rachel as well. Jacob was deeply in love with Rachel while Leah felt rejected. But the Lord was good to her and she bare Jacob four sons in a row while Rachel remained barren. These were Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, the first four sons who would become the fathers of four of the tribes of Israel, as we see by these verses:

"And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing."
Genesis 29:31-35, KJV

By this time, Rachel had become quite jealous of her older sister. Since she couldn't have any children herself, she gave Jacob her handmaiden Bilhah who then bore Jacob two

more sons. These were Dan and Naphtali:

"And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali."

Genesis 30:1-8, KJV

The animosity between the two sisters continued, and when Leah had stopped bearing children, she also gave her husband Jacob her handmaiden Zilpah who then gave Jacob two more sons. These were named Gad and Asher, and brought the total number of sons to eight:

"When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher."

Genesis 30:9-13, KJV

Following these events, Leah bare Jacob two more sons who were named Issachar and Zebulun, and then a daughter named Dinah:

"And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah."

Genesis 30:14-21, KJV

But the Lord was also favorable to Rachel, and she finally bore a son whom she named Joseph who was later sold into slavery:

"And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son."

Genesis 30:22-24, KJV

By this time, Jacob and his family had been living with his uncle Laban for quite a few number of years, and he was yearning to return to Canaan. Laban, however, had come to realize that since Jacob had arrived, the Lord had blessed him -- meaning Laban -- greatly, so he asked Jacob to stay longer. He asked Jacob how much he wanted to pay him to convince him to stay with him. Jacob's reply was that he wanted nothing. As can be seen, from the minute he had been born, Jacob was an astute, clever and deceitful person. So once again, he made a deal with Laban regarding their flocks of cattle and goats.

From reading the story in Genesis chapter thirty, it appears that Jacob had somehow mastered some type of early genetic engineering which employed the power of suggestion. In conjunction with his astute manner, this resulted in his flocks increasing much more than those of Laban, to the point that it caused contention between them. Also what was at issue is that Laban had not been paying Jacob fairly for his labors. But the Lord was aware of his dealings, and in the end, Jacob's wealth overshadowed that of his uncle. After this incident, the Lord told Jacob to take his family and return to Canaan, the land of his father, Isaac. Fearing reprisal from his uncle Laban, Jacob rounded up his family, their belongings and great many flocks and secretly fled away. These events are discussed in Genesis chapter thirty-one.

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND POLITICS : PART 2

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An overview of the ancient Israelites and early Judaism, and an exposé on corrupt worldly governments and our place in them as servants of Jesus Christ

At this time, it is worth mentioning an interesting point concerning Jacob's feelings towards the God worshipped by his father Isaac and by his grandfather Abraham. The reader needs

to remember that Abraham's family worshipped pagan gods. They did not worship the God of Abraham and Isaac. As stated previously, this may be one of the reasons why Abraham was concerned about sending Isaac back to the land of his nativity to find a wife; and also why he didn't allow him to marry a Canaanite woman. Like his father Abraham, Isaac had this same concern with his two sons Jacob and Esau. Incidentally, Esau did displease his parents by marrying a woman of the Hittites. Considering all of this, and Jacob's whole nature of being somewhat of a wheeler-dealer, it should come as no surprise that Jacob actually had doubts about the God of his father and grandfather. If we look closely in Genesis chapter twenty-eight, we discover that even before he arrived at Laban's house many years before, Jacob's belief in the God of gods was conditional:

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:"
Genesis 28:20-21, KJV

In other words, he would accept the God of his father and grandfather IF He proved Himself to Jacob. Now, twenty years later, after the Lord had greatly blessed him giving him two wives, many children, huge flocks and many servants, Jacob was now willing to admit that it was indeed due to the God of his father Isaac that he had been blessed, as well as protected from Laban's evil intentions"

"And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me."
Genesis 31:5-7, KJV

When the Lord told Jacob in a dream that it was time to leave his uncle Laban's country, He also reminded him of the vow he had made to Him twenty years before:

"I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred."
Genesis 31:13, KJV

And with that, Jacob made haste, obeyed the Lord, and departed from Laban's house in secret. However, what was not known to him at the time, is that his wife Rachel had stolen the images of the gods of her father Laban. Later, when Laban finally caught up with them, he said to Jacob:

"And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"
Genesis 31:30, KJV

Although Laban searched high and low in Jacob's property, he wasn't able to find the idols because Rachel had hidden them in a chest of sorts and sat upon it pretending she was

having her period:

"With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images."
Genesis 31:32-35, KJV

This is again additional proof that it was no easy task for Abraham's family and relatives to forsake their pagan gods. I expound more fully on this in my article "Revelation's Babylon the Great".

Eventually, the two men come to an agreement not to step over each other's bounds, and Jacob continues on his journey back to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. Sometime thereafter, Jacob finally arrives at the land of his brother Esau. It is just prior to their meeting that Jacob has the all-night wrestling match with a mysterious celestial visitor who refuses to identify himself. As a result of this encounter, three things happen:

First, he receives a special blessing from the Lord. Second, his name is changed from Jacob to Israel. Third, he is crippled in his thigh. In a later event in Genesis chapter thirty-five, after warning his family to get rid of the false gods and idols they have carried with them -- which they apparently do -- the Lord God again appears to Jacob in Bethel where Jacob is building another altar as before. The Lord again blesses him, tells him that He will give him all the land of Canaan, and that many nations and kings will arise from his descendants. He also tells him a second time that his name will now be called Israel, as we see here:

"And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel."
Genesis 35:9-15, KJV

It is after this last event that Rachel again becomes pregnant and has another son whom Jacob names Benjamin, making him the final son of the twelve sons/tribes of Israel. Unfortunately, Rachel dies while giving birth to this child.

Jacob finally makes it back to Arbah -- later to be known as Hebron -- where his grandfather Abraham and father Isaac dwelt. Isaac finally dies at the ripe old age of one hundred and eighty and is buried by Jacob and his brother Esau; that is, Edom:

"And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him."
Genesis 35:27-29, KJV

At this point we are going to move forward to the betrayal of Joseph by his jealous brothers. As is well known by many people, Joseph had the gift of dreams. In one of his dreams, the Lord showed him the future in which his family would some day bow down to him. This did not sit well with his brothers who were already envious of him because their father Jacob -- or Israel -- loved him the most because he was born in Jacob's old age. To show his love for the lad, he had made him the coat of many colors. Initially, some of his brothers wanted to kill him. However, due to the oldest brother Reuben saving his life, Joseph was instead sold to some Ishmaelite -- Midianite -- merchants who were on their way to Egypt. Joseph eventually ended up in the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers and captain of the guard. You can read about this in Genesis chapter thirty-seven.

Through a series of events, including a false accusation, Joseph found himself unjustly thrown into prison. But this was all a part of God's plan, and he eventually rose up to be the second most powerful man in all of Pharaoh's court. This came about as a result of the Lord giving him the gift to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, much like what also happened to the prophet Daniel, centuries later. During Joseph's time in Egypt, a severe famine caused Jacob to send his sons down into Egypt to secure some grain lest they die. As a result of this, Joseph and his family were finally reunited when Jacob's whole family, which numbered seventy, moved down into Egypt where life was good. Eventually, Jacob died at the age of one hundred and forty-seven after having lived seventeen years in Egypt. His last wish was that he would be buried in the land of his fathers, in Canaan, in a cave in the plain of Mamre which Abraham had bought. Please refer to Genesis chapters thirty-seven and thirty-nine through fifty.

After the burial of Jacob in Canaan, which included a great ceremonial procession of Egyptians, Joseph, his brethren and their families returned to Egypt to dwell in the fertile land of Goshen. This is a really interesting point which most folks are not even aware of. Had they remained in Canaan, they would never have suffered the four hundred and thirty years of Egyptian bondage. On the other hand, we should not underestimate the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. At that time, Canaan was overrun with the pagan descendants of Ham who were much more numerous than the families of the twelve sons of Israel. Had they remained there at that time, they probably would have been wiped out.

For this reason, the Lord had them return to the fertile lands of Egypt where they would grow and multiply into a great nation totaling about one million souls. With time, Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten, along with all of his generation, and a new Pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph. Because of this, the children of Israel soon found themselves in bondage to the Egyptians. For four hundred and thirty years the Hebrews served the Egyptians building many of their pyramids under very harsh conditions. This is all covered in the first chapter of the Book of Exodus.

But God had not abandoned the descendants of Israel. Within time, He sent them a deliverer, a man who, while being Hebrew, was raised in the house of Pharaoh amidst the royalty. This man of course was Moses. After spending forty years in the courts of Pharaoh, Moses was forced to flee Egypt after he slew a man and hid his body in the sand. After another forty years of being broken and humbled by the Lord, at the age of eighty, Moses was finally ready to become the Prophet and Liberator that God wanted him to be. By the time of the great liberation, the children of Israel had grown from the original seventy, to over six hundred thousand adult males alone! This was obviously quite a handful for one man to lead all by himself. Thus in Numbers chapter one, we find the Lord appointing one man from each of the twelve tribes to assist Moses in his administrative duties. In addition, the Lord also chose the tribe of Levi to serve as the priesthood for the children of Israel. For the next forty years after their liberation, the children of Israel would wander through the desert of Sinai until the Lord could purge out the murmuring and complaining older generation. The story of Moses and the children of Israel can be found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

After the death of Moses on the top of Mount Nebo -- or Pisgah as it is also known -- at the age of one hundred and twenty, the Israelites were led by Joshua, Moses' chosen successor, who victoriously led them into the promised land. Joshua also was assisted by the Levites and the tribal elders. Following the death of Joshua's at one hundred and ten years of age, we read the following in the Book of Joshua:

"And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for them."
Joshua 24:31, KJV

Following the death of Joshua, Israel was ruled for a period by judges/prophets. Some of the better known ones would be Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Samson and Samuel. In Judges chapter eighteen we are told the following:

"In those days there was no king in Israel . . ."

While other nations did set up their kings to rule over them, the Israelites continued to be led by their leaders who served both as Prophets and Judges. In Judges chapter nine there was a certain man named Abimelech who did succeed in setting himself up as king, but this was not the Lord's doing. To even do this, he had to kill seventy members of his own family. Only his younger brother escaped by hiding

himself. But the Lord eventually caught up with Abimelech. Three years later while besieging the city of Thebez, a woman dropped a piece of millstone from a high tower and cracked open his head. He had one of his men put a sword through him to finish him off so the people wouldn't say he had been killed by a woman.

Thus begins the sad story of what happens when God's children try to set up an earthly ruler over themselves. While children of the world may become involved in their politics, this was not the original plan God had intended for His children, in this case, the ancient Israelites. When Samuel the Judge and Prophet had grown old, once again the children of Israel desired to have a king over them, as we can determine from the following verses:

"And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD."
1 Samuel 8:1-6, KJV

And now we come to the main reason why the Lord never allowed the children of Israel to have a king over them, and why even today, He does not like His children becoming involved in politics and worldly affairs:

"And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."
1 Samuel 8:7-9, KJV

In the following nine verses, Samuel describes the ruthless King which the Lord is going to give them since they have rejected Him as being their one and only true King. He finishes his sober warning to them by telling them:

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day."
1 Samuel 8:18, KJV

Despite this, in their stubbornness and hard-heartedness, they continue to insist on having an earthly king:

"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king

may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city."

1 Samuel 8:18-22, KJV

Thus, with Saul the son of Kish, begins the long sad story of ancient Jewish politics. Why did this happen? Because they rejected the Lord as their one true King and wanted to be like other earthly people. From the Books of Samuel up to the end of the Old Testament, we read of one king after another, the majority of whom displeased the Lord and were eventually rejected by Him. Sadly, even David and Solomon who were blessed and loved by the Lord committed acts of murder and adultery and did other things to upset the Lord. The one thing that makes David stand out from among his peers, is that he depended solely upon the Lord's mercy to save him in his time of need, despite his own mistakes, sins and shortcomings. Overall, the Old Testament is a continuous story of periods of peace, followed by periods of war, invasion, occupation and chastisement as the Israelites under their kings and earthly politics rebelled over and over again against the Lord. Prophet after Prophet was sent to warn them to get right with the Lord, to accept Him as their only true King and rightful Government. To some of the Prophets they took heed, while others they just ignored, persecuted, rejected and killed.

It must be pointed out that, while some of ancient Israel's kings were "good" leaders compared to some others, this was still not God's highest and best will for His chosen people. Many times in the Old Testament we are told that the Lord is a jealous God. He wants to commune with us directly. He wants to rule over us directly without the need for any kind of intermediary earthly government. In setting up an earthly government and king, the ancient Israelites were in effect putting a god before the God of gods. Eventually, God became so fed up with them that He just stopped talking to them, and we find the Old Testament closing with a period of some three to four hundred years of silence. As I explain in the series "Revelation's Babylon the Great", it was during this time that great emphasis was placed upon the Law -- that is, the Torah -- and oral tradition. The adulterous Israelites had become so hard-hearted that they no longer wanted Prophets prophesying against them, so the Gift of Prophecy was shunned by the spiritual hierarchy of Israel. The Israelites had made their choice; they only wanted the Law and an earthly king to rule over them.

Thus, from Eden, to Babel, to Abimelech the man who would be king, to rebellious Saul, to many of the other Old Testament kings, we see Satan's attempt to convince man that he can rule over himself without help from God; that he can in fact be his own god and the chooser of his own destiny; that he can make his own rules and govern himself through earthly politics. But the point of the matter is, an imperfect people cannot be ruled by an imperfect government; and all earthly governments are imperfect. The only True, Righteous and perfect Government, is one which has not yet arrived.

It will be noticed that thus far, this article has been written from the perspective of God's ancient people, the Hebrews/Jews/ Israelites, with limited mention of other cultures or religions. The reason for this is quite simple: In Old Testament terms, there is a clear distinction between the children of God and the children of Satan, the Israelites/Hebrews and the Gentile nations, the followers of YHWH/Jehovah and the pagans/heathen who rejected the God of Israel. After The Flood, the Earth was pure again. There were only eight God-fearing people to begin re-populating the Earth. God had abundantly shown His mercy and love to these eight people; yet they had to make a conscious choice to continue to obey and follow the Lord. Unfortunately, as each successive generation was born, the people began to rebel again and follow after other gods. Through the hardness of their hearts, they forgot their godly heritage and the Divine Mercy which had been shown to their forefathers. In fact, as explained previously, the Tower of Babel occurred only a few generations after The Flood. For this reason, while the high level of slaughter of pagan nations by the ancient Israelites may seem repulsive, it must be remembered that those people became pagan by their own rebellious choice, while the Israelites, beginning with Abraham, likewise chose to believe in and follow the one True God.

We will now leave the Old Testament behind and look at the New Testament to see what it has to say about God's children and earthly political involvement.

At the time Jesus was born, the Israelites once again found themselves under foreign occupation; this time by the powerful and iron-fisted Roman Empire. While there was opposition to the masters of Rome and their puppet tetrarchs, it was a time of relative peace; a perfect time for the Savior to be born. Prior to the announcement of His public ministry, God had sent the Prophet John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord, as is discussed in the first chapter of the Gospel of John.

It has been suggested by some that John the Baptist was politically active due to the fact that he exposed the corruption in King Herod's court; in particular, that Herod married his brother Philip's wife. John's ministry was one of warning and repentance. God's whole purpose in choosing him was to show the people of Israel their fallen dismal spiritual condition. Several hundred years had passed since the Lord had last sent them a Prophet. In Jerusalem, Temple worship had been reduced to a meaningless religion full of spiritless tradition. The Scribes and Pharisees, in spite of the Roman occupation, were sitting pompously and comfortably as the spiritual elders of Israel. They were not the least bit interested in upsetting the status quo they had with the Caesars in Rome.

It was at this time that God sent them His wild Prophet of doom, John the Baptist, to wake them up to the fact that a great Light was about to enter the world, and also a great sword which would divide the true sheep from the goats. John was a fiery Prophet of God. He was not a politician; neither did he have political ambitions. He was not part of the Roman government; or even a part of the Jewish spiritual

hierarchy for that matter. He lived in the wilderness area, was clothed with garments made of camel's hair, and ate wild locusts and honey. The only Government John was politically active for was the coming Kingdom of God in the hearts of men. In the end, it was the Roman puppet, the Jewish King Herod Antipas who had him beheaded. You will find the story discussed in Matthew chapter fourteen.

John had his eyes on the one true Government and its one true King as prophesied by Isaiah:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6, KJV

Like the Bible Heroes of Hebrews chapter eleven, John looked forward to a Heavenly Country whose Builder and Maker is God:

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."
Hebrews 11:10, KJV

Now, some have suggested that Jesus Himself was very politically involved. Consider this quote from one user:

"Another suggestion was Jesus was apolitical. FALSE. Jesus stood nose-to-nose with the politicians of his day. Anyone who can read can determine this to be true simply by reading the accounts of the encounters with the Pharisees and the Sadducees (the Jewish political leaders of the time.) Today, Christian's must take a very active role in the political environment of this nation, or else we are in danger of losing our rights on a grand scale. "Go to sleep, lose your seat." Wake up!!!"

----- End Of Quote -----

In my view, the above quote reflects a lack in understanding who and what the Pharisees and Sadducees really were, as well as what God's whole view is of earthly governments who ignore His righteous rule. In the back of my KJV Bible, we find the following definitions:

----- Begin Excerpts -----

"Pharisees- Members of a Jewish sect devoted to carrying out every rite and ceremony of the Law (Mosaic Law, not political!) with great strictness. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for neglecting the important things in religion. Paul was a Pharisee as was Nicodemus. The Pharisees adapted the old written Law to the new conditions of their day by means of oral interpretations."

"Sadducees- A priestly group claiming to be the legitimate line from Zadok, the high priest under Solomon. They accepted only the written law and rejected the oral interpretations of it which the Pharisees had developed. Jesus warned his followers against the teachings of the Sadducees."

----- End Of Excerpts -----

This is a very clear definition of both groups and is borne out if you read the Gospels. These groups were strictly spiritual leaders. Like the puppet Herod, they were kept under control by the Roman governors who were in turn controlled by the Caesars in Rome. When it came time to crucify Jesus, it wasn't Caiaphas the high priest who condemned Jesus to die, it was the Roman governor Pontius Pilate who performed the evil deed under pressure from the Jewish religious leaders. If you read the Gospels and the Book of Acts, the Roman military presence is apparent everywhere. Furthermore, crucifixion was a Roman means of punishment. Thus, while the Scribes and Pharisees did in fact condemn Jesus in their hearts; and while Herod was a pawn of the Romans, they did not possess the political power to actually judge, condemn or crucify Jesus. They were viewed by the Romans as puppets who helped to keep the people under control and nothing more.

If one conducts a thorough honest study of the New Testament, there is absolutely no place in Jesus's or the Disciples' teachings where we are told to become politically or militarily active. Quite to the contrary. Jesus and the Apostles said a lot to show otherwise. Consider these for example:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
John 15:19, KJV

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word . . . I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine . . . And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee . . . I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world . . . As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world."
John 17:6, 9, 11, 14-16, 18, KJV

Notice that while we are not of the world, we are sent into the world to preach the Gospel. It is also interesting to note that Jesus did not pray for the world, He prayed only for His disciples whom He had chosen out of the world. Notice again what Jesus says in the Gospel of John:

"My kingdom is not of this world: if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my Kingdom not from hence."
John 18:36, KJV

On one occasion, in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, after Jesus had done the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the people wanted to make Him their king. They just couldn't

get it in their heads that God didn't want Jesus or anyone else to be an earthly king over them. He wanted to rule them directly from Heaven. Consider these verses:

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."
John 6:14-15, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND POLITICS : PART 3

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An overview of the ancient Israelites and early Judaism, and an exposé on corrupt worldly governments and our place in them as servants of Jesus Christ

Sadly, this mentality continues today in the land of the Savior's birth. Strife, war and earthly politics continues to dominate the scene. Until they accept the Prince of Peace, they shall have no peace. Until they stop depending upon their military, economical and political arm of the flesh; until they stop depending upon the government of the United States of America, God will not let them have the peace they desire. The Lord is simply waiting for them to acknowledge Him as their only horn of salvation:

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."
Psalms 18:2, KJV

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."
Psalms 20:7, KJV

"For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me"
Psalms 44:6, KJV

"O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me."
Psalms 25:2, KJV

The only way the Jews will ever safely dwell in the land of Israel is when they accept the Lord Jesus and trust in Him for their protection:

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

Psalms 37:3, KJV

The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psalms 34:7, KJV

"And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him."

Psalms 37:40, KJV

"I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

Psalms 91:2, KJV

"O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield."

Psalms 115:9, KJV

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."

Psalms 118:8-9, KJV

It might even surprise you to know that Israel's trust in her peace accord with Egypt is a farce; and someday soon the Lord is going to blow on it. Jesus prophesied this very thing when He said:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke 13:35, KJV

In the Old Testament there are many deep prophecies pertaining to the past, but also to the future. Some of these have had partial fulfillments. Their final fulfillment is yet to come. Consider some of these:

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!"

Isaiah 31:1, KJV

"Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him."

Isaiah 36:6, KJV

All of the above verses pertain not only to Israel; they apply to ALL peoples and nations who claim to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, especially the United States Of America. If we are truly obeying the Lord with all of our hearts,

then we have absolutely nothing to fear. If we are obeying God and within His Will, whether as individuals, as a community, or as a nation, then the Lord will give us His Divine Protection without the need for military forces, just as He did in the days of ancient Israel before they went astray by choosing an earthly king to rule over them.

As I said previously, Israel of old learned quick that if they stepped out of line, God would punish them by allowing their enemies to invade and persecute them and destroy them. As long as they pleased the Lord, He gave them peace with their enemies round about. This is Biblical fact:

"Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days."

1 Chronicles 22:9, KJV

"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Proverbs 16:7, KJV

If Israel's ways were pleasing to the Lord, they would not now be surrounded by their Arab enemies who, according to prophecy, will someday invade Israel and take over at least the eastern half of

Jerusalem. As I explain in such articles as "Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?", do not doubt that war is coming to Israel; and it will occur by the very hand of God who will allow it. This will be a direct judgment of the Lord for Israel's rejection of her true Messiah and Savior. God is going to punish his wicked adulterous wife who has had two millennia to repent of her spiritual whoredoms. Please consider reading "Once Upon A Time: A True Story".

Folks can disagree with my view as much as they want, but they cannot deny what the Lord's Word says, and that is what I quote left and right. His Word is very clear on this issue of politics and military forces. The reason that countries the world over have armies today is because they do not have faith in the One True God or in His Son Jesus Christ. Neither do they have His unselfish Love burning in their hearts. They cannot trust in God for His protection because they know that they are not pleasing or obeying Him in the least. Many of them don't even believe in Him! They follow after false gods and false religions! This applies to rich selfish America and the Westernized world as well. There are those who believe that America today is the spiritual Israel, the wilderness of the Endtime. If this is so, then God is very displeased with America, because according to the Prophet Jeremiah who prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, we are told:

"And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children

will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit."
Jeremiah 2:7-11, KJV

America today is just as defiled as Israel of old! Does the same fate await her despite her vast political power and long-stretching military might? Again, all of man's reasons and excuses for having his armies and his military machines and his political machines will not stand up to the scrutiny of God's Word. God wants to be the Ruler of His people. He doesn't want us to have earthly governments and rulers. That is why when Jesus returns, He will wipe them all out and set up His Own Government as is perfectly depicted in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
Daniel 2:44, KJV

This is not what the human rulers of this world who serve the god of this world, want. They will not willingly give up their seats of authority. They want to continue to bow down to the prince of the power of the air! If you don't know who that is, please considering reading my article entitled "Satan: King of Tyrus, King of Empires".

Returning to our central theme regarding Jesus' so-called "political" involvement, Jesus did confront the Scribes and Pharisees on occasion, but it was usually when they attacked Him first by purposely tried to trap Him in His words. For the most part, His early activities in the Gospels centered around preaching salvation, healing the people and teaching other spiritual lessons, as well as preparing His closest Disciples for their future ministries. It wasn't until His last week of earthly life that Jesus became indignant with the money changers at the Temple in Jerusalem. It was also during that last week that He blasted the Scribes and the Pharisees for their hypocrisy in Matthew chapter twenty-three. In like manner, nowhere do we find Jesus or His Disciples directly and purposely confronting the Romans who were the true pagan military and political power of the day other than on that one occasion in the Garden.

Driven by his own understanding, Peter made the mistake of chopping off the ear of the servant of the high priest. And what did Jesus do and say regarding this incident? First He healed the ear of the servant of the high priest, and then He told Peter the following:

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."
Matthew 26:52, KJV

That was one of His final messages to Peter, ordained to be the leader of the Early Church. The Lord wanted to make sure

that Peter understood that ours is a spiritual warfare, and not a physical one as the Apostle Paul so elegantly showed us in Ephesians chapter six. He wanted to make sure that Peter passed on the right message to those who would follow in his footsteps. For a fuller explanation regarding this incident in the Garden of Gethsemane, please refer to the articles "Killing and the Phinehas Priesthood" as well as "Killing, Murder and Military Duty".

Other than this one recorded incident, the only times where we see Jesus or His Disciples having direct dialog with the Romans is when they are either healing them, or else giving them the message of Salvation. In most cases, this was after they had been arrested on false charges and incarcerated. Consider the many afflictions and persecutions of the early Disciples in the Book of Acts. Paul being taken to Rome and eventually being beheaded by orders of Emperor Nero was a primary example of this. But before this happened, Paul had a great opportunity to preach to the household of Caesar, so they were without excuse. The Lord gave them the chance to believe.

Besides Judas Iscariot who committed suicide following his betrayal of the Lord, the other Apostles likewise suffered at the hands of their Jewish and Roman persecutors. In Acts chapter seven we witness the martyrdom of Stephen who was stoned to death by a mob of demon-possessed Jews;

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."
Acts 7:57-60, KJV

In Acts chapter twelve, James the brother of John is killed with a sword by King Herod, the Idumean -- or Edomite -- puppet of Roman, as we see by these verses:

"Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."
Acts 12:1-2, KJV

In the case of Peter, he suffered persecution and imprisonment a number of times. Jesus Himself prophesied what manner of death he would die in the Gospel of John. According to what I have read, Peter was crucified upside-down because he felt unworthy to die in the same manner as our Saviour:

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."
John 21:18-19, KJV

In the case of the Apostle John, he lived to a ripe old age at which time he wrote the Book of Revelation while exiled on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. From what I have read, they tried to boil him in a pot of hot oil, but the Lord wasn't quite through with him yet. In fact, if we take the Scriptures for exactly what they say, there is a mystery surround the end of John's life:

"Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"
John 21:20-23, KJV

But returning to the Crucifixion of our Lord, in the end, the Jewish religious leaders made a bigger mistake than they had made centuries before when they demanded of Samuel the Prophet that he give them a king -- that is, Saul -- to rule over them. This time they rejected their true King and Saviour. In their own sinful pride, they sold out the Prince of Peace to the Roman politicians, first when they traded Him for a thief and a murderer -- Barabbas -- and second when they pledged their allegiance to an earthly king -- Caesar -- whom they utterly despised. At Jesus's trial and execution, they are recorded as having said:

". . . His blood be on us, and on our children . . ."
Matthew 27:25, KJV

". . . If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar . . ."
John 19:12, KJV

". . . Away with him, away with him, crucify him . . . We have no king but Caesar . . ."
John 19:15, KJV

Ironically, only forty years later, Titus -- who was the son of Emperor Vespasian, and who would become the next Caesar of Rome -- would utterly destroy Jerusalem, casting down their sacred Temple stone by stone, just as Jesus had prophesied in His Olivet Discourse that is found in the Gospel of Matthew. Consider the following verses:

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
Matthew 24:1-2, KJV

God's only true Temple is the temple of our hearts. His only true Kingdom is a spiritual one of which He is sovereign Lord and King. While the peoples of the Earth have for the most part chosen to reject Him, someday they will all know

that He is truly the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. As is clearly outlined in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, someday, hopefully soon, Jesus will return to reclaim what is rightfully His. When He does, He will destroy all of man's earthly governments and armies which are filled with corruption and deceit, and He will set up His own Government policed by His own angelic agents, we the Saints of the Most High, just as it was prophesied in Isaiah so long ago.

Based on all of these atrocities committed by the Roman political and military machine, how is it that some in the armed services today can claim that being in the military is a part of God's Will for one dedicated to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How can they possibly point to the Roman soldiers to justify their own position within the military? These Roman military men were the very ones who arrested and killed Jesus at the instigation of the Jewish Elders! They mocked Him, they scourged Him, they stuck a crown of sharp thorns into His flesh, they drove nails into His hands and feet, they pierced His side with a lance. They are the very same ones who slew Christians by the thousands in their sports coliseums! They are the murderers who crucified thousands of Christians on crosses along the Apian Way outside of Rome! Yet, as unbelievable as it may seem, we have Christians in the military today who justify what they do by pointing to these bloody Romans! Actually, they point to the life of one Roman in particular, a Roman centurion by the name of Cornelius. His story can be found in Acts chapter ten. If you would like my personal opinion on the events which transpired in Cornelius' life, please read my companion article, "The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion".

From the scriptures and stories I have shared thus far, it should now be understood quite clearly that under normal conditions, we are not to partake of the things of this world nor become involved in their corrupt political or military systems. Only in rare instances has God purposely put some of His children in positions of authority within the governments of their day for the sake of His people, but these instances were the exceptions to the rule and not the norm. We have already discussed the story of Moses who by a decision made by his mother to save his life, ended up growing up in the courts of Pharaoh. But when the time was right, God had him flee for his life so that he could be broken and re-molded into a humble yielded Shepherd who would return to Egypt, not in his own might, but in the Power and Spirit of the Lord. And then there is the dreamer Joseph who was sold into Egyptian slavery where he likewise learned his lessons in humility, so that God could later mightily use him to save his family, and thus cause the seed of Israel to multiply. We can also add the story of Esther, who married the heathen king Ahasuerus of Persia and ended up saving her people from the murderous hand of evil Haman and his cohorts. And finally, there is Daniel, who acted as a counselor and interpreter of dreams for the heathen kings Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus and Darius which eventually resulted in their people converting to faith in the One True God.

Yes, God has had His man or woman for the hour, but for the most part, we are to remain outside of man's political and military systems. In fact, we are at war against them.

Ephesians chapter six makes it clear that we are fighting a spiritual warfare with spiritual weapons against spiritual beings which control physical men and empires. I suggest you read the whole chapter.

Consider also what the Apostle James tells us in his epistle:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

Regarding being yoked with the unbelieving world, the Apostle Paul also informs us:

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

As Christians, we are in the world, but we are not part of it as previous verses have shown. How can we say we have come out of the world when we are still embroiled in their political and military affairs? How can we say we have come out of the world when we are trying to make Satan's system better by voting or by running for political office? When you become so deeply embroiled in politics to the point that you are seeking political office, I think it consumes all of your time, time which could be better spent preaching the Gospel. Yes, if you are an honest politician, you may be helping people in a physical sense by passing good laws which will help them in some way, but God is more concerned about our spiritual state. After all, some day we will leave this old model -- our body of flesh -- behind, and acquire a brand new one. As Christians, we should be more concerned about the things of the Spirit, and not our physical temporal existence here. We are meant to be ambassadors of His government, not of the worldly governments of man:

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

2 Corinthians 5:20, KJV

How can we say we have come out of the world when we join the military forces and fight in foreign lands? When you go to another land to fight, you are not doing it for the Kingdom and Glory of God. You are doing it to spread the military, political, and economical power of your mother country. When you go killing people blowing them up, or zapping them with a laser, or poisoning them with biological weapons, it has absolutely nothing to do with winning them to the Kingdom of God. You are only one more puppet in the hands of Satan, the King of Empires who is the author of confusion, chaos, and destruction. In fact, the Book of Revelation refers to him as the Destroyer; that is, Abaddon and Apollyon in the respective Hebrew and Greek languages, as we see by this verse:

"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon,

but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."
Revelation 9:11, KJV

We are strangers and pilgrims on this Earth. We are just passing through on our way to a much better Country, a Nation of God's people as is made so clear in Hebrew chapter eleven. We are to work for that Country and that Government, not those of this world. We are to work for King Jesus only, as we see by the following verses:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

In the thirteenth chapter of Romans, while Paul tells us that the powers that be are of God, and that we should submit to them. Nowhere does he say that we are to actually JOIN them. After all, that would contradict what he said above regarding coming out from among them:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."
Romans 13:1-3, KJV

Joining the military service or political party of some country would also contradict what Jesus said in John chapter fifteen about not being a part of the world. It is those who have rejected God's direct rule over their lives and who do not know how to follow His simple rules of love, who need a worldly government over them to keep them under control. But those of us who know the Lord, realize that we have a Higher Authority to answer to; and so we do our best to please Him, regardless of what man's laws might say or not say.

According to many prophecies in the Bible, in spite of what we do, the governments of man will continue to get worse until the reign of the Beast of the Book of Revelation and his False Prophet. God's Word must be fulfilled. It is not our responsibility or duty to try to prevent it. We can't anyway. Things must get worse before they can get better. Man must be allowed to fill his cup of iniquity. That is the only way he will ever learn the lesson that God has been trying to teach him for the past six thousand some years. Until man has just about destroyed the Earth and its environment, and its inhabitants through his own selfish poor decisions, he will never get the point. In short, government by man is just bad news and has been a dismal failure for six millennia now!

Self-government was just not a part of the original plan. In fact, in Genesis and in other parts of the Old Testament, there are quite a few indications that the Lord's presence and intervention in human affairs was much more direct in times past. He wasn't just governing from the heavenly realm; He was here on Earth in one form or another. Imagine Earth's history as being a full-length feature film in which some famous star makes cameo appearances throughout the movie. That is basically what the Lord did in the Old Testament. It has only been in the past few thousand years as man has drawn further and further away from the Lord, that the miraculous events have ceased to occur. God isn't the one Who has moved; we are. We have blocked Him out. By our lack of faith and our stubborn willful ways, we have put up a wall which separates us from the wonderful and the miraculous. At the same time, we are creating a dreadful vacuum of darkness which which will soon be filled by the most dreadful Beast the world will ever know. Possibly within a very few short years, the epitome of evil will be manifested in the form of a ruthless world leader, a king of a fierce countenance as described in the Book of Daniel, a man understanding dark sentences, a man who will sit in the temple of God claiming, and in fact proving, that he is "God":

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:"

2 Thessalonians 2:3-11, KJV

The peoples of the Earth will have their final king, who with the aid of ten other earthly kings, will dominate the world, destroying any nation that resists his tyrannical rule. He will be the King of Tyrus, the King of Empires, in the flesh! Satan himself!

Please go to part four for the conclusion of this series.

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THE CHILDREN OF GOD AND POLITICS : PART 4

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An overview of the ancient Israelites and early Judaism, and an exposé on corrupt worldly governments and our place in them as servants of Jesus Christ

Exactly how should we Christians react to this coming One World Government? Should we oppose it? Of course we should! Nobody should go along with it! But exactly how should we oppose it? By joining man's political bodies and military forces? No! Our best testimony against the demon-inspired Beast, his deceptive False Prophet, and their oppressive government will be our very lifestyles, and our willingness to win souls in spite of the government's mandates which will undoubtedly include the prohibition and suspension of our right to share our Christian beliefs with others.

As you will no doubt understand, this is where we will run afoul of the One World Order of the Beast and his False Prophet. They will try to extinguish our light, because this demonic Beast will declare himself "God" and the "Savior" of the world, while we will be saying "Accept Jesus! He is the true Saviour and Redeemer!" Even now the forces of antichrist are working against us. Christian evangelism is becoming more taboo each day. Many shopping malls and other public areas now prohibit the passing out of Gospel tracts to their customers or employees. Many foreign countries are becoming closed to the Gospel, particularly Muslim and Buddhist nations.

Yes, the closer we get to the day of Christ's coming, the darker and worse things will become for us Christians; but that is the way it must be. Let us not forget that we have the promises of a brighter and better future. But for now, we are told:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
2 Timothy 3:12, KJV

On a final note, Jesus's final commandment to the Early Disciples was to abide in Jerusalem for the Gift of the Holy Spirit so that they could be witnesses unto all nations. But notice that it took eight whole chapters and persecution before God finally forced them out into all the world. They were getting quite large there, sometimes even winning thousands of new converts at a time. Perhaps they were even enjoying their popularity, and maybe even beginning to comprise their message as I have pointed out in other articles.

Sadly, as I point out in such series as "Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope", it was only a few

short centuries later, that some of the leaders of the Early Church had comprised their beliefs and convictions so much, and become so fat and lazy, that they were assimilated by the Roman Empire, and it became known as the Holy Roman Empire. Constantine -- who was both the emperor of Rome and the "Pontifex Maximus" -- for all intents and purposes became a Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. He held literal power over the Church.

Tragically, it was at that point that politics and a backslidden form of Christianity became intertwined; married to each other, very similar to Babylon the Great riding the political Beast of the Book of Revelation; and it has been that way ever since. According to some views -- which I don't fully embrace at this current time -- Rome and the Catholic Church will play a vital role in the revelation of the Antichrist.

In conclusion, the worldly system is not our home. It belongs to the Prince of the power of the air; that is, to Satan himself, as we see here:

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"
Ephesians 2:2, KJV

In the book of Job he is referred to as the sea serpent Leviathan, who is the king over the children of pride, as we see by this verse:

"He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride."
Job 41:34, KJV

As you may know, the Bible has absolutely nothing positive to say about pride. Consider this verse, for example:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16:18, KJV

If you are a child of pride, a member of the system of men, and a member of Satan's Kingdom of Darkness, be advised that when it falls, you will fall with it if you are not careful:

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
1 Thessalonians 5:3, KJV

That is exactly what will happen to those people who depend on their own human might and wisdom, their own arm of the flesh, and their own political and military machines. That is what may soon happen to Israel; and that is what will soon happen to you too if you belong to Satan's false kingdom. As for me and my house, we will trust in the Lord. Consider this verse:

"Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor

by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."
Zechariah 4:6, KJV

It is better and wiser to let the foolish children of the world try to save, better or reform their governments if they so desire; but they are building on a foundation of sand which will soon be washed away in the Great Flood of God's judgments on the world! Our duty is to the King of Kings. His is the only Government to which we owe our allegiance; and its Capital is the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly City, and not Washington D.C. or any other capital in the world.

Jesus made it very clear in the Gospel of Matthew, yet folks refuse to believe it. They try to twist its meaning in order to justify their own selfish living which is sustained by their corrupt politics and their war machines. They try to say that this verse doesn't really mean what it says:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
Matthew 6:24, KJV

We cannot serve both God's Government and man's corrupt earthly governments and military machines. In the words of the Prophet Elijah:

". . . How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him . . ."
1 Kings 18:21, KJV

So, let's all do what really counts. Let's help win souls to the only true and everlasting Kingdom of God! It may be later than you think! You have now been given the full counsel of God directly from His Word. What are you personally going to do about it? Are you going to humbly and meekly accept it admitting that you have been wrong? Or are you going to reject it and rebel against it? Are you going to harden your heart to the Truth? Just remember, we are told:

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
Matthew 12:37, KJV

God's Word is a two-edged sword. It metes out Salvation to some, and damnation to others. What will this series do for you? The choice is up to you. With these verses I will bring this series to its conclusion. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

Killing and the Phinehas Priesthood
Killing, Murder and Military Duty

Nephilim: The Giants of Genesis
Noah's Ark and the Genesis Flood
Noah's Flood: The Urantia Book Exposed Again
Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?
Once Upon a Time: A True Story
One From Beyond: Hebrew of Hebrews
Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope
Revelation's Babylon the Great
Satan: King of Tyrus, King of Empires
The Book of Enoch: Truth or Heresy
The Mystery of Cornelius the Centurion

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