

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Attached to this email is Saga 6, *In The Kingdom The Holy Spirit Makes The Bible Alive In You*. In this Saga we recount the Spirit-inspired "flavor" of the retreat center. What we mean is that the Holy Spirit instilled in us His goals and methods for conducting retreats. Even before we came to the retreat center, He developed within us some of these goals and methods which were drawn from our own loving trust and obedience-based life under the Lordship of Jesus. Other goals and methods were given to us by people the Holy Spirit sent to give us counsel. Please recognize that training retreaters to increasingly become **collectively obedience-based and love-motivated followers of our Lord Jesus** in a one or two-day retreat was a feat which only the Holy Spirit could have accomplished through us. The major hurdles we had to overcome were several:

- people's passivity to the rightful Lordship of Christ;
- the need for Spirit-led living; *and*
- the vital importance of the Older Testament and its continuity with the Newer Testament.

Sadly, **scribal theology** over the centuries had done much to eliminate these as a way of life throughout Christianity. It's disheartening for the Lordship-committed who have been free from religious mire to see so many in Christianity devoted to Bible study, to their pastor, to their church, and/or to their creed — but not be wholeheartedly committed to the Lordship of Jesus in their lives. **WHY? Because most have not been taught that the Bible is one continuous revelation of God!**

Few grasp how vital the Older Testament is to their spiritual understanding. Most people, who have "given their hearts to Jesus," go on in life unchanged. Is it because Christians have spent so much time developing methods for sharing the "gospel" that we've forgotten to simply teach the Scriptures in the continuity in which they were written?

The Apostle Paul well understood the continuity of the Newer Covenant with the Older Testament. The Hebrew Bible is all that existed when he wrote his letters, and he treasured those God-breathed words (see 2 Timothy 3:16,17)! We've shared this important insight in previous materials: Veteran missionary Trevor McIlwain of New Tribes Missions has gotten a phenomenal response by teaching indigenous peoples the Bible in chronological order, from Genesis to Revelation. When they complete the Older Testament, they see the depth of their own sin and their desperate need to be reconciled to God. Then when they hear about Jesus, they are delighted to respond in grateful love to His sacrifice on the cross and to walk in His ways.

This pattern of teaching God's Word to the unbeliever is the nature of the **biblical evangelist** who stayed on in an area until a faith community was established under faithful shepherd/teachers (2Timothy 4:5; Titus 1:5). Biblical evangelism and Trevor McIlwain's success in taking the time to teach the entire Bible from front to back is a far cry from **evangelistic crusades** that are no more than spiritual "**drive by shootings**." Less than 10% of those who "go forward" are found following Jesus afterwards. All too many return to their old way of life, convinced that nothing has changed in them. But when the crusade organizers are confronted with the dismal results, they have a pat answer: "At least they're saved!" Not in the sight of heaven!

In light of the perceived disconnection between the Testaments that's taught by many scribal theologians, Trevor McIlwain writes that many heresies, misinterpretations, overemphasis of particular verses, and even the development of denominations and sects can be traced back to failing to teach the whole Word in its chronological, panoramic format — from Genesis to Revelation. Consider the vast distinction between man approaching God from man's point of view, and God approaching man out of His great love. Ponder these points drawn by McIlwain in his thought-provoking book, *"Building on Firm Foundations"*:

- "The Gospel is not man accepting Jesus as his Savior, but that God accepted the Lord Jesus as the perfect and only Savior two thousand years ago.
- The Gospel is not man giving his heart or his life to Jesus, but that Christ gave His life, His whole being, in the place

of sinners.

- The Gospel is not man receiving Christ into his heart, but that God received the Lord Jesus into Heaven as the mediator of sinners.
- The Gospel is not Christ enthroned in the human heart, but that God enthroned the Lord Jesus at His right hand in Heaven.”

Christ has already fulfilled the reconciliation requirements of His Father. His payment is complete. His resurrection is a sign to us on earth that the sacrifice for our sin has been accepted by God the Father. He is satisfied.

### **What You Don't Know About The Older Testament Can Be Hurting You.**

Your obedient trust may be compromised by lies from the past! During the second century a businessman named Marcion tried to persuade followers of Jesus that the Older Testament was inferior to the Newer Testament. He even fought to have it removed from the canon! Insisting that the Hebrew Scriptures be dismissed as unauthoritative, Marcion borrowed from the pagan philosopher Plato and maintained that the God of the Older Testament was evil. By association, therefore, the chosen people of that God—the Israelites—were evil as well. Furthermore, Marcion argued that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures demanded sacrifice and blind obedience to unreasonable laws and should therefore be disregarded. But the Newer Testament by contrast introduced Jesus as a “god of love”, one in whom there was no relationship to the wrathful deity of the Older Testament.

Coinciding with Marcion's influence, Greek philosophers who had converted to Christianity allegorized much of the Older Testament into spiritual stories rather than **divine revelation** and **historical narrative**. These men of tremendous influence refused to recognize the Hebrew Bible passages as divine revelation and historical narrative containing just and good laws and commands so that people might be able to have a right relationship with a holy and compassionate God. Instead, the converted philosophers altered the scriptural meaning to “sanitize” the accounts which were actually recorded. Some even divided God into two parts: a vengeful and irrelevant “Older Testament” deity of the Law and a “Newer Testament” Lord of grace who overlooks their sins.

While Marcion's teaching was ultimately denounced and he himself excommunicated, his views permeate Europeanized Christianity to this day by continuing to influence the negative view of many toward the Older Testament. Perhaps even you have ignored or discounted these essential writings as irrelevant to anyone but Jews. But whenever you think (or are taught) that the Hebrew Bible is a secondary (or even immaterial) reference source for your practice of faith and conduct, you are under the influence of Marcion's lies. **You've divided God!** And anytime you hear, “The Old Testament is the law and the New Testament is grace”, you are hearing the **“Marcion effect”** on Christianity. Both testaments are resplendent with God's grace toward humanity. Even giving to us His 613 righteous commands in the Older Testament and 1,050 righteous commands in the Newer Testament is a sign of His grace. It's so we may live a life that's pleasing to Him and reveal His wisdom and His love in Christ to a needy world (Deuteronomy 4:6; 1John 3:22).

(For more on how the Older Testament has been devalued, see *Discussing How To Restore The Early Church*, ***The Loss Of Our Hebraic Roots***)

**God's promise to Abraham: “I will make you a great nation. I will bless you, and make your name great. You shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you. In you will all of the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:2,3).**

We realize that many of the religiously-mired have a hard time believing that God allowed scribal theologians to repeatedly deceive so many people for so many hundreds of years. But keep in mind that for a God of eternity, what's a millennium or two (see 2Peter 3:8)? Until you grasp the significance of Abraham to both the Jew and the *genuinely* born again, you won't be able to understand our sovereign God **Who acts in**

**accordance to His own will.** Nor will you be able to understand the deceitful theology that has plagued Christian history because it has lost the significance of Abraham and the Hebraic foundations — especially love-grounded obedient trust in an Almighty Sovereign God. As we've written in previous materials:

- God gave Abraham an eternal Covenant to be fulfilled through our Lord Jesus (Genesis 17:9; 22:18; Galatians 3:16).
- Abraham's trust-based obedience enabled him to have the Gospel spoken to him in advance (Galatians 3:8).
- God chose Abraham's descendants, the Jewish people, by His own sovereign selection (Deuteronomy 7:6-9; 10:14).

When your faith walk entails a significant understanding of the regard which God has for Abraham as your father (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:7), you will gain a deep and necessary appreciation for the continuity of Scripture. You'll also understand the respect our Lord Jesus and the Newer Testament writers had for the Older Testament by their citing it so often. In understanding the continuity of both Testaments, your appreciation for the sovereignty of God will grow immensely because that reality is illuminated far more explicitly and more often in the Older Testament than in the Newer Testament. The writers of the Gospels and the epistles didn't need to repeat what had so clearly been presented in the Hebrew text.

**Ongoing anti-Semitism toward the descendants of Abraham and rebellion against the vital significance of the Older Testament has caused generations to live law-lessly toward God. Excessive emphasis by clergy to adhere to the scribally-concocted creeds and traditions of their respective denominations and sects has had tragic effects on churchgoers: the Lordship of Jesus in their lives has been ignored while the spirit of law-lessness has undermined the importance of Abraham and the continuity of the Bible. The Holy Spirit warns what will happen if we believe error: "For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie" (see 2Thessalonians 2:7-11). **This is even true over hundreds of years *if* people continue to believe lies!****

**Scribal Theology**  
**Discarded the Hebraic foundations**  
**and replaced them with:**  
**anti-Semitism, Nicolaitanism,**  
**syncretism, revisionism,**  
**Hellenism and Romanism.**  
**Successive "church" councils over**  
**the centuries concocted, from human**  
**reasoning and debate,**  
**"hallowed" creeds and traditions.**



The God of the whole Bible gave a promise to Abraham to take care of his offspring. Even though He justly punishes the unbelieving Hebrew children of Abraham, He has never totally rejected them. But for the past 19 centuries Christianity has been anti-Semitic. Even today significant anti-Semitism lurks within the deluded creeds and traditions of the over 40,000 denominations and sects. Each one believes they are the bastion of truth in their particular views. But in all too many, their scribally-developed creeds and traditions have become in practice more hallowed than our Lord Jesus.

**If those within the Nicolaitan clergy system lived with Jesus as Lord of their lives, they would have frequent vibrant testimonies to His rule in them through His indwelling Spirit. It just isn't happening! As it is, most clergy purposely confine Jesus to His role as Savior but ignore His Lordship in the lives of His own. Too many clergy have induced their congregants to place their trust in scribal theologians from the past rather than in the living Lord Jesus and His indwelling Spirit.**

Finally, if Christianity had been established on the Hebraic foundations which our Lord's first followers experienced, we would see far more unity than divisiveness in Christianity. Leading the way would be the biblical apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd/teachers equipping the followers of our Lord Jesus for collective service in the Kingdom (see Ephesians 4:11-16). No matter what delusion you may have been taught in the past, Jesus requires you to **collectively serve** under His Lordship and to **collectively live obedience-based in loving trust** as you fulfill your heavenly Father's will. To belong to our Lord Jesus is a way of life that's led by His Spirit, not a confusing potpourri of beliefs, creeds, rituals and traditions. The anointings our Lord has given to equip His own are surfacing even as the Nicolaitan clergy system is waning. Some who already have one of these equipping gifts just need to have the confidence in the Holy Spirit to use it in the lives of others.

In His sovereign timing our heavenly Father is offering followers of Jesus the way out of centuries of delusion. Please, have more confident trust in the Holy Spirit and the understanding He gives you concerning God's Word than in scribal theologies which were concocted in the past and relied on reasoning and debate. We will expose more specifics on theological delusions in our next email.

Mike & Sue

Wonderful words to live by! Hebrews 13:20,21: "Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."