

A Departure

This post is the second in a series about the LORD God's dealing with His people, the Jews. This series addresses the departure of the Jews from the word of God into Judaism and how the LORD God has dealt with them, particularly in the 20th century. The next post in this series is A Departure, Part II.

A couple of days ago I wrote a post detailing the common logic underlying four distinctively different religions: Mormonism, Hasidic Judaism, Dialectical Materialism, and Taoism. What should have been plain from the quotations given is summed up by the following:

Good and evil are intricately intertwined such that good (righteousness) cannot exist without evil (unrighteousness) and unrighteousness cannot exist without righteousness. Moreover, in all good there is some wickedness and in all wickedness there is some good.

Now, the only distinction that could be drawn between the four religions would be between Dialectical Materialism and the rest. But that distinction exists only due to Dialectical Materialism being focused solely on the physical world and denying the existence of anything spiritual. But the underlying logic of intertwined opposites is central and core to Materialism just as it is with Mormonism, Taoism and Hasidic Judaism.

I ended the post with a quote from Proverbs as it highlights a grave problem man has:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. (*Proverbs 14:12, 16:25*)

This is the problem when man uses his physical senses and reasoning to determine what is right, and how the world functions. Moreover, we take these observations, draw conclusions about the world we inhabit, and then apply those conclusions to understanding the very nature of God.

Now, I was not and am not surprised about three of the four religions named above having the same common logic about the world and God, and how everything works. What surprised me was finding that same logic in Hasidic Judaism. After all, unlike the other three religions, Judaism has long had the Scripture (at least the Old Testament) and they should know what it states. Unlike Mormonism, which started with an incredible presumption, Judaism originally was simply following the Old Testament covenant the LORD God had with Israel. Where Judaism went awry was in holding that following the Torah (the Law) would justify one before God.

However, the Jews were warned about following their own understanding, and were repeatedly exhorted to repent and believe the Gospel, even as we are today. In Proverbs the following counsel is given:

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (*Proverbs 3:5-6*)

Thus, one would expect the Jews to heed this admonition and seek after the LORD in the Scripture, seeking to understand the righteousness of God and how that it is impossible for man to attain that through mere works. I would not, and do not expect that out of the other three religions for the following reasons:

Dialectal Materialism rejects the existence of the spiritual and focuses solely on the physical. Hence, any mention of God is summarily dismissed.

Taoism came about as the result of one man's understanding of the world around him, based upon his observations and reasoning – absent any input from the Scripture or faith. At the time Tao Te Ching was written, that portion of the world had long since rejected the Gospel and the things of God.

Mormonism is also the result of one man's view of things. Even though Joseph Smith was able to convince others to believe him, had the evidence of the Catholic Church's persecution of Christians for over 1200 years been put before all those around him, he could have never made the outrageous claim that the New Testament church was somehow "lost" and he was "selected" to "recover" it. Thus, it is no surprise that he distorted the very nature of God, as he distorted 18 centuries of church history to make the claims he made in founding the Latter Day Saints.

But the Jews are different in that the LORD God has dealt with them for a very long time. Indeed, to them it was expressly given to witness to the world of salvation by grace through faith in the Messiah to come. To them was given the responsibility of holding fast the Scripture inviolate, and teaching everyone about the LORD God. In Psalms, the distinctiveness of the Jews as a nation is recorded:

He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.
(Psalm 147:19-20)

Even though there were Jews who did preach the Gospel, and hold fast salvation by grace through faith, as a nation, the Jews departed seriously from the truth of the Scripture. The extent of that departure is laid bare by the tenets of Hasidic Judaism, which holds the form of Judaism and of serving God, but has departed to the point of being no different in its logic and understanding than those who deny the very existence

of God.

Before continuing, it is essential to understand how the Jews, as a people, had the truth of the Gospel in the first place, and what it meant to depart from it. In so doing, perhaps we can understand what it means to actually have the Gospel, how precious it is, and how critical it is to hold fast every aspect of what the Scripture teaches about salvation. Otherwise, we are subject to experience the same loss of understanding. However, it won't fall on us, but on our children and grandchildren.

Now, it is plain that all the Jews had was the Old Testament, and they did not have all of it during the entirety of their covenant with the LORD God. However, evidence from Scripture indicates that it was not essential to have the Scripture to know of the Messiah to come, and that one could be redeemed by grace through faith in the Messiah to come. Our specific evidence comes from the oldest book of the Bible – Job.

In all of Job's complaint about what happened to him, he makes some surprising statements concerning where he stood with God. In the 19th chapter, Job declares the following:

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me. (*Job 19:23-27*)

At this point, we should understand that Job was a contemporary of Abraham, which was long before Israel entered into covenant with the LORD God at Mount Sinai, and long before Moses penned the Pentateuch under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Thus, as far as we can see, there is no

Scripture for Job to go to and point out where he got his understanding of being redeemed, and that his savior would one day come and walk upon the earth. Moreover, Job's understanding was not limited to Job alone as a young man, Elihu, was sent of God to preach to Job and his three friends concerning the LORD and why He does what He does. Elihu made it very plain that repentance was necessary for salvation:

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. (Job 33:14-30)

To be continued . . .