

God's Covenant with Israel

***Key Verse: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine."
—Exodus 19:5***

***Selected Scripture:
Exodus 19:3-14***

MANY YEARS AFTER ABRA-ham's death his descendants, the nation of Israel prepared to receive a covenant following their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, when they crossed the Red Sea to safety. As they camped at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses ascended the mountain and received a message from God regarding his purpose and destiny for Israel, based upon what he had already done for his chosen people.

Our Key Verse asserts that if they would obey his commands, they would be a special treasure to him above all other people. The verses which follow add, "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD."—Exod. 19:7,8

God dealt with the Israelites for several centuries in an exclusive manner despite their unfaithfulness in many ways. (Amos 3:2) They were given a priesthood which offered typical sacrifices as an important aspect of their relationship with Jehovah. With much patience and

long-suffering, God honored his covenant made at Mount Sinai, until the due time came for their punishment on account of continued disobedience.

The Jews experienced captivity at the hands of Gentile governments because they walked contrary to the divine statutes. This chastisement was recorded in the Scriptures prior to its fulfillment in various prophecies—Lev. 26:27,28,31-35; II Chron. 36:11,12,17,20,21. After Judah lay desolate, in his mercy, God overruled so that the Jews could return to their homeland and await their Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was sent to be their deliverer.—Dan. 9:24-27

The rulers and religious leaders among the Jews did not accept that as a perfect human Jesus kept the Mosaic Law faithfully, thus fulfilling the prophecy of being their Messiah. Therefore, they conspired to have him crucified. Nevertheless, Christ was resurrected and exalted to the divine nature. He along with his body members, the church, will be the heavenly or spiritual seed that ultimately will bless all the families of the earth.—Gal. 3:16,29

God's desire is that Israel and all mankind worship him in spirit and in truth. During this Gospel Age, true Christians are being tested to determine if they will prove faithful in their path of self-sacrifice and obedience to God's will. At the end of the kingdom, after being bound for a thousand years, Satan will be allowed to test mankind for a "little season." All members of the human family who prove obedient and loyal to God will receive eternal life here on the earth. Evil doers, including Satan and his angels, shall be destroyed.—Rev. 20:7-9; I Cor. 15:24-28

How wonderful it will be when the New Jerusalem—the church in its heavenly glory under Christ's headship—will assist in eradicating all sorrow, evil and death. This grand fulfillment of the promise of both heavenly and earthly salvation will testify to the majestic grandeur of the Heavenly Father's wisdom, justice, love, and power throughout all eternity.—Rev. 21:1-5 ■