

CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Sometimes the question is asked; why do we read the old testament? To answer this we say that the Old Testament is not intended to be history. It is true that it tells facts (sporadic, episodic) only enough of these facts to make us understand the Theology of salvation; God's plan to save man, which leads us to Christ. The Old Testament is only understandable as a prelude to Christ. To the Jews and non believers this is hidden, a mystery, so it is also to those who profess to be Christians and yet refuse to believe the bible.

We come face to face with Christ in the first chapter of Genesis, in the story of Creation, where we are told that God created every thing by his Word (..and God said let there be light..). Saint John in the first chapter of his Gospel sheds light on this when he tells us: "In the beginning was the Word..." That means that Christ; the Word of God was there since the beginning, active in the process of creation and that only in the last days was the Word manifest to us, when the Creator Word became the Incarnate Word Jn 1|14).

Adam and Eve were created innocent, without knowledge of evil, because you cannot know evil until you have committed evil. They both committed rebellion against God and acquired the knowledge of sin. With this came the sentence of death. But with the sentence comes the good news of salvation to come, that the seed of woman (Christ) will bruise the head of the serpent Satan).

The rest of the Old Testament has only one theme; the fulfillment of God's plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ had to be born from among the children of Eve (seed of the woman) and so a process of selection occurs among the descendants of Adam and Eve. Of the many children born to them, God chooses the line of Seth and of that line ultimately one man, Noah, finds favour with God.

We must realize that Aaron the first priest

After the flood, of the three sons of Noah, Shem and particularly one of the descendants of Shem; Abrahah. God selects Abrahah, takes him away from his family (they worshipped idols) into a far away land where He makes a covenant with him (a treaty) in which God promises to give to Abrahah's children the fertile land of Canaan.

Let us now stop to reflect. As man was driven out of the Garden and hence from the presence of God, his concept of God started to get distorted. Man could not see God any more because of his fallen state, and so he started to imagine what God would look like. He looked at the sun, the moon and the stars and thought they were God and worshipped them, but even these he could not touch, so he started making statues and worshipped them.

God's plan to save man by the birth of Christ was still centuries away, and during these centuries God made himself apparent to his chosen people at various times in history.

God promised Abrahah a son; Isaac, and furthermore that out of the his seed will come Christ ..in your seed the whole earth will be blessed.

Abrahah had an elder son, Ishmael, but God chooses Isaac, and so Ishmael had to go to Arabia. God blesses him too and promises that his children shall be like the sand of the sea, but it is through Isaac that Christ will come.

The fourteenth chapter of Genesis tells us a fascinating story about Abrahah. Abrahah had to rescue his nephew Lot from some enemies who took him as a captive. After the rescue he was met by a peculiar person names Melchizedek, king of Salem which can be interpreted as king of peace (salem=peace). This mysterious person is describes as the priest of God the most high.

was not yet born (he would be born more than

500 years later). So this priest of the Most High God is older than Aaron. He is also described as eternal king, with no genealogy. And this eternal king and priest gives Abraam bread and wine and accepts tithes from Abraam.

Melchizedek was a type of Christ as Saint Paul tells us.

At this time God chooses Moses to lead the people into the promised land. Moses flees Egypt because he killed a man and becomes a shepherd. One day while in the mountain he sees a bush on fire but the bush is not burning. He is interested to go near to see it but a voice prevents him saying donot come close for **I Am** the God of your fathers Abraam Isaac and Jacob. God tells Moses that He will send him to Pharaoh to deliver the Israelis and when Moses asks him what is your Name god tells Moses **I Am who I Am**. What shall I tell the people asks Moses and God replies tell them **I Am** sent me to you. So God's name becomes **I Am** which in hebrew becomes Yahweh.

Centuries later, a man from Galilee uses the same word to talk to the Jews; **I am** the true light, **I am** the good shepherd, **I am** the way, the truth, and the life, **I am** the true vine, **I am** the door of the sheep. And we can easily identify **I am** who appeared to Moses with **I am** who appeared to the Jews.

God delivers His people from Pharaoh and for 40 years He feeds them in Sinai. Two important things happen here;

1- God gives the commandments to Moses (the decalogue). One can relate "logue" to "Logus" or "Word" and indeed the commandments were the word of God and we know that the Word of God is Christ. The Israelis would later on put the Decalogue tablets in a wooden box (arc of the covenant) and this they will put in a tent (the tabernacle) and this will represent to them the presence of God among them, God with us.

Centuries later, the Angel Gabriel appears to a virgin from Nazareth to tell her that she will

The process of selection goes further when God chooses Jacob over Esau.

We are all familiar with the story of the twelve children of Jacob who sold their brother Joseph to the Egyptians and how they later joined him, and for 400 years multiplied to close 800,000.

bring forth the Logos, Emmanuel, which is interpreted God with us. The deca logue, the word of God is a type of Emmanuel, the Word Incarnate. And the Arc is a type of Saint Mary the Virgin.

2- The second important thing is the Manna which God sent to His people. This is described as the bread which came down from heaven. Centuries later Cgrist tells the Jews: I am the bread that comes from heaven.. my body is the living bread that comes from heaven whoso eateth my body and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.

So the Manna which the Jews ate in the wilderness was a type of the body of Christ which is given to us to eat in the Eucharyst, so that we may have Eternal life.

The People of Israel settle in the promised land and 1000 years after Abraham, David becomes the first real king of Israel, God's annointed one (the Messiah). The jews think of this as fulfillment of God's promise, and that man will live happily ever after, but David is followed by Solomon, and all the kings of Israel that follow him reign for a total of 143 years before the jews are taken into captivity in the exile (diaspora). Even after the return from the diaspora, things are not any better, there is no everlasting happiness for mankind or for the jews.

For the 1000 years between David and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70, the jews have been living a dream. They dream of a Messiah, a king, a descendant of David that will deliver them from their enemies, give them everlasting peace, justice for the poor and oppressed. Someone who will end war and famine forever. These dreams were

shattered in 70 A.D. when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem completely.

The problem is, the Messiah King came and dwelt amongst them but they did not recognize Him.

The Logos, the Word of God of whom David was a type, appeared to them, walked among them, performed miracles among them and invited them into His kingdom but they could not see Him.

Even today, 2000 years from Christ, and almost 4000 years from God's promise to Abraham, they are still chasing that dream of a King Messiah that will set up an earthly kingdom and in whose time man will live happily ever after.