Old Testament Introduction
The Bible’s Buried Secrets
Chapter 26, Samaritan Worship

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0>

***About the Video***

What is for the most part an exact copy of the video script follows. There are a few places where individual speakers could neither be heard nor understood: for this we apologize. Every effort was made to be precise: there were just spots that defeated us. Since this is a quote in its entirety it seemed unnecessary to mark it with quotation marks. The notation for each speaker is tedious enough: Narrator, Reader, etc. If you discover bothersome errors, please reply to this website and point them out. You may verify the script more easily by starting to replay it where the “time” stamps indicate discussion begins. The second of the above links is free from advertising and thus easier to use.

***Overview***

We begin with the fallacious idea that Judaism and Samaritanism have a least common denominator. They do have a least common denominator, zero, one cannot divide by zero. The claim of commonality defies all of the real historic evidence, so we should disabuse ourselves of this idea immediately.

The expression of activities at Castle Tel Rehov are accurate enough, yet the analysis leaps to unwarranted conclusions. Much more evidence is necessary to develop a case for Canaanite-Israelite compromise, and that evidence is biblical. We can only learn so much from speechless clay figurines, but the biblical evidence comes with its own built in provenance, and detailed, elaborate descriptions. In any case, Castle Tel Rehov is not Castle Jerusalem, and their activities are not even similar. The principle difference between Castle Tel Rehov and Castle Jerusalem is neither the king, nor the Temple; rather, the difference depends on the Covenant, and even more on Yahweh, the lone giver of the Covenant: there is no Covenant with Tel Rehov, nor will Yahweh meet His people there.

Two significant advances of our understanding of the Covenant have been provided. The Covenant is immortalized in the king’s Son. The Covenant has been hopelessly crushed out of existence. In spite of these things the Covenant claims to remain mysteriously in effect.

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***Script***

Samaritan Worship (time 1:20:10)

Quote:

N: And the ancient Israelites believed their God demanded a very specific form of worship.[[1]](#endnote-1) Evidence of this survives today on Mount Gerizim in Palestine. The Samaritans who live here claim direct descent from the ancient tribes of Israel. According to their tradition for over twenty-five hundred years, they’ve been practicing the ancient Israelite form of worship, animal sacrifice.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Branham: The primary function is to make a connection between our mundane world and the divine world. And the means for the ancient Israelites is embodied in blood. Blood is the most sacred substance on the altar. And blood is the substance that embodies life. So it is the most precious substance in the human world.[[3]](#endnote-3)

N: But while the priests were offering sacrifice to Yahweh in the Temple, many Israelites were not as loyal. At Tel Rehov[[4]](#endnote-4) archaeologists are digging in an Israelite House[[5]](#endnote-5) that illuminates the religious practices of its ancient inhabitants.

Amihai Mazar:[[6]](#endnote-6) Well we just found this beautiful exceptional clay figurine showing a goddess, a fertility goddess that was worshipped here in Israel. Here in this case she is shown holding a baby.[[7]](#endnote-7)

N: Who is this fertility goddess? And what is a pagan idol doing in an Israelite[[8]](#endnote-8) home? Dramatic evidence as to her possible identity first surfaced in 1958. Bill Dever was carrying out salvage excavations in tombs in southern Israel, when a local brought him an inscription that had been robbed from one of them.

Dever: When I got home and dusted it off, I thought I was going to have a heart attack. Executed in clear eighth century script, was the tomb inscription and it just gives the name of the deceased and says, Blessed may X be by Yahweh, that’s good biblical Hebrew; but is says by Yahweh and His Asherah, and Asherah is the name of the old Canaanite mother goddess.[[9]](#endnote-9)

N: More inscriptions associating Yahweh and Asherah have been discovered: thousands of figurines unearthed throughout Israel.[[10]](#endnote-10) Many scholars believe this is the face of Asherah. Dever concludes, God had a wife.[[11]](#endnote-11) Even hundreds of years after the Israelites rise from their Canaanite pagan roots, monotheism has still not completely taken hold.[[12]](#endnote-12)

Dever: This is awkward for some people. The notion that Israelite religion was not exclusively monotheistic; but we know now that it wasn’t.[[13]](#endnote-13)

N: The Bible admits[[14]](#endnote-14) that Israelites continue to worship Asherah and other Canaanite gods, such as Ba’al. In fact the Prophets, holy men speaking in the name of God, consistently rail against breaking the covenant made with Moses, to worship only Yahweh.

R: “The more I called them, the more they went from Me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and offering incense to idols.” — Hosea 11:2

Coogan: The Israelites had made a contract with God.[[15]](#endnote-15) If they kept it, God would reward them. If they broke it, He would punish them. He would punish them by using foreign powers against them.

Unquote.

***Covenant***

Yahweh’s Covenant with Noah guaranteed that annihilation by flood would not be used again to cleanse the world of sin.[[16]](#endnote-16) Sin develops to a point when those who believe in God, are threatened with becoming overwhelmed by sin and the corrupted world. We who believe have the promise of God that we will not be tempted beyond what we can bear.[[17]](#endnote-17) When such a threat looms, is when God intervenes.[[18]](#endnote-18) God does not desire the death of the wicked, he desires their repentance.[[19]](#endnote-19) Yet, when the wicked threaten to overwhelm and annihilate believers, He destroys the wicked rather than letting believers fall into gross sin or perish completely. The wicked commonly believe that God has no such right to destroy His own creation; so they commonly accuse God of wrongdoing, of being a wicked God.[[20]](#endnote-20)

Yahweh’s Covenant with Abraham expanded the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant,[[21]](#endnote-21) guaranteeing to Abraham that redemption, salvation history would increase his family to embrace a vast multitude of people from every ethnicity, language, and nation, from all over the world.[[22]](#endnote-22) Key to this promise is the birth of a son.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Yahweh’s Covenant with Moses expanded the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant again, breaking the chains of Egyptian slavery, and establishing a new nation, bound by Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi.[[24]](#endnote-24) The Decalogue contains that which primarily prohibits slavery: either to demons, idols, or other gods, on the one hand; and on the other hand, slavery to humans in any form. The Yahweh provided remedy to all slavery is right worship; so, from Exodus 20 through Leviticus, elaborate detail, a Lex Orandi is provided. This Lex Orandi centers around three major feasts: Passover (Pesakh), Weeks (Shavuot), and Tabernacles (Sukkōt). Passover is about sacrifice for sin and looks for redemption in the death of the Son, symbolized by the innocent lamb.[[25]](#endnote-25) Weeks celebrates the blessing of Yahweh that comes from the giving of the Law in its perfect fulfillment. Two things are learned in Tabernacles: after forty years in the wilderness, the unbelieving are stripped from the congregation; after forty years in the wilderness, the believing learn that no one enters the promised rest of Yahweh without a life of hardship and suffering: the road to bliss is through the dessert. It is the road of tribulation that hammers out the real Lex Credendi,[[26]](#endnote-26) leading to Lex Vivendi. Anyone can believe on a perfect day, basking in the beauty of the mountain tops, soaring with the eagles. Yahweh wants us to believe because we have endured the terrifying tempest, and learned to give thanks for it. This Lex Orandi also provides for an order of confession, absolution, forgiveness, and restoration; restitution is also required; as well as punishment for gross or heinous sin.

Yahweh’s Covenant with David expanded the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant, promising an Eternal Son.

Say to My servant David, “Thus says the Lord of hosts,

“I took you from the sheep-pen, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. I was with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from your sight. I have made a great reputation for you, like the reputation of the great men of the earth.

“Moreover, I will appoint a place for My people Israel. I will plant them, so that they may dwell in a place of their own, and wander no more; nor shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as they used to afflict them, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel. I have also caused you to rest from all your enemies.

“So the Lord tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are complete, and you sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, which shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My Son. If He commit iniquity, I will punish Him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: yet My mercy shall not depart from Him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.[[27]](#endnote-27)

Obviously, Solomon and all his successors failed to be this Son. Each of them was an icon of the Son; yet none was the true Son. So in 586 BC the kingdom comes to an abrupt end in a great mystery. It appears that Yahweh failed to uphold His end of the Covenant.[[28]](#endnote-28) Not one of the kings of Israel or Judea upheld the Covenant; yet some did better than others.[[29]](#endnote-29)

Coogan’s analysis of this Covenant development throughout the history of Israel-Judea from Noah onward trivializes the whole subject. The central issues are not a carrot and stick approach to religion. It is true that there are specified rewards and punishments for behavior. That being said, such incentives clearly have the intent of bringing about the maturity of Yahweh’s children Israel-Judah. The incentives are never an end in themselves: they are not the point of the Covenant, which has yet to be completely revealed. Coogan wants us to rush past this Covenant without giving it serious consideration. What Coogan minimizes is the heart of the issue.

***Monotheism***

It is true that prior to 586 BC both the Israelites and the Jews were unfaithful to Yahweh. By the same token we must be clear that there were other forms of monotheism or henotheism in the world: there were many people who were devotees of only one idol, even as there are today. We are not interested in those forms of monotheism, which we have ourselves created: gods in the image and likeness of man. We are only interested in that monotheism which Yahweh has offered to us in free conversation and fellowship. So any form of monotheism that does not originate in the Lex Orandi that Yahweh has established is of no interest to us: it simply does not square with the rest of the evidence.

On the other hand, monotheism is a perverse kind of evidence: it readily shows how eagerly the human race runs away from Yahweh, how eagerly the human race choses its own broad path. That being said, this pagan evidence does not show that monotheism is the new “next best thing.” What it actually suggests by its repeated path of degradation, is Adam and Eve started with a pure conversation begun by Yahweh: a conversation from which they and their children rapidly strayed.

If the monotheism that supposedly develops after 516 BC were the pure monotheism of Yahweh, and humanity was really bent on growth toward glory, we would expect to see Judaism blossom into that perfect glory which fills the world. Instead, we see a deterioration into petty conflict,[[30]](#endnote-30) and one superficial kingdom after another throughout the period of Maccabees until at last Judea becomes the vassal state of Edom, and via the puppet Edom, the vassal state of Rome.[[31]](#endnote-31) History returns full cycle to the irony of Genesis 36: for Herod is an Idumaean (Edomite-Arabic mix), and the temple he builds is an Idumaean temple.

So the lapses of the Israelites throughout Judges (1354-1010 BC); continue to plague David throughout his reign (1010-970 BC); overtake and pervert Solomon (970-930 BC); divide the kingdom (930-925 BC); destroy Israel (925-722 BC); destroy Judea (925-586 BC); and never cease from then unto this very day. The clay figurines may be gone…. Nevertheless, the shrewdness of idolatry has only become more clever and devious. The evidence reveals that this is no sort of monotheism worthy of the name. Yahweh’s Lex Orandi, however, continues from Moses, with roots reaching back to Adam and Eve.

This Lex Orandi, this Lex Credendi, this Lex Vivendi has nothing in common with Mount Gerizim or neo-modern Samaritan worship,[[32]](#endnote-32) which is simply more of god in the image and likeness of man. The one is born from human willfulness. The other is born from gentle humble submission. The distance between them is stellar, cosmic, infinite. They could not possibly more opposite.[[33]](#endnote-33) The Samaritans are not Israelites, any more than Herod is a Jew. If the whole world were filled with the blood of Samaritan sacrifices it would not suffice to bridge the gap between Samaritanism and sincere Yahweh worship. That being said, the gap between Judaism and sincere Yahweh worship is every bit as wide. Fortunately, Yahweh still loves His children and has a solution; Yahweh Himself will bridge the gap.

***Conclusion***

We began with the fallacious idea that Judaism and Samaritanism have a least common denominator. They do have a least common denominator, zero, one cannot divide by zero. The claim of commonality defies all of the real historic evidence, so we should disabuse ourselves of this idea immediately.

The expression of activities at Castle Tel Rehov are accurate enough, yet the analysis leaps to unwarranted conclusions. Much more evidence is necessary to develop a case for Canaanite-Israelite compromise, and that evidence is biblical. We can only learn so much from speechless clay figurines, but the biblical evidence comes with its own built in provenance, and detailed, elaborate descriptions. In any case, Castle Tel Rehov is not Castle Jerusalem, and their activities are not even similar. The principle difference between Castle Tel Rehov and Castle Jerusalem is neither the king, nor the Temple; rather, the difference depends on the Covenant, and even more on Yahweh, the lone giver of the Covenant: there is no Covenant with Tel Rehov, nor will Yahweh meet His people there.

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[[34]](#endnote-34)

1. This is because Yahweh did demand a very specific form of worship which He spelled out in elaborate detail. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Everyone roughly familiar with the record of Kings from 1 Kings 11 onward; or Chronicles from 2 Chronicles 10 onward; as well as Ezra and Nehemiah knows that this is not historically accurate.

The Israelites abandoned the worship of Yahweh shortly after Solomon’s death in 930 BC, as Jeroboam Ⅰ quickly moved to establish idolatrous cult centers at Bethel and Dan to prevent the Israelites from going to Jerusalem to worship with the Judeans (1 Kings 12:26-33).

In the days of Ahab (871-851 BC), Israel was so deeply involved in Baal worship that the prophet Elijah fled for his life (1 Kings, Chapters 18 and 19).

In 722 BC, the Assyrians came against Israel and deported the Israelites, distributing them throughout the Assyrian Empire. Only a handful of Israelites remained in Israel, foreigners were imported, the Israelites lost their tribal identities, intermarried, and became a pagan people. The only Israelites that retained their identities were those who had long since found asylum in Judea (2 Kings 17).

In 586 BC, the Babylonians also came and removed Judea.

In Babylon, the Judeans evolved into a new and different body, the Jews. These should be kept distinct from the Judeans and Judean worship: for, even though a temple may be rebuilt, the Ark, Urim, Thummim, Ephod, Sacred original writings, and the Shəkinah could not be restored. Had the presence of God, the Shəkinah chosen to return, all of the other missing items could have been replaced. The second temple had no Oracle, for its Orator chose to remain absent until 4 BC.

In 516 BC, when the Jews returned from Babylon they were bitterly opposed by the Samaritans (Ezra 4, for example).

When Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman it is clear that their worship is incorrect and strange (John 4).

We conclude that the Samaritan religion developed in a very uncertain way and completely out of accord with anything in Judaism. Moreover, they continue with an emphasis on animal sacrifice which is also foreign to Judaism, and long after the Jews had ceased the practice. Already, in Psalms we discover that the practice of animal sacrifice is already waning; it was never more than a temporary typology, destined to be replaced by its living reality. We don’t know exactly how or when the Samaritans invented their new religion; but it was clearly not derived from Judaism, or the worship of Yahweh at Jerusalem. Twenty-five hundred years indicates that it was invented circa 485 BC, after the return of the Jews from Babylon. Still, Jesus does take the time to bring them into the true worship of Yahweh. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Surely, blood is a sacred substance. That being said, it is not animal blood on the Mercy Seat that concerns us; but rather the blood of Christ. It is the blood of Christ alone which is the most sacred substance on earth. It is not the embodiment of life that matters; but rather the embodiment of the life of Christ in us, that matters. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Tel Rehov is a tiny town, perhaps really a small castle or fort of slightly more than 29 acres, hardly more than a small farm field, located near the east end of the Valley of Jezreel (Jezreel is the site of Armageddon). It was attacked by Thutmose Ⅲ (1487-1433 BC) and Shoshenq Ⅰ (943-922 BC). Thutmose, being Mizraim (Egyptian), was most likely intent on driving the Nuhašše (Syrians) and Hatti (Hittites, central Anatolia) away from his northern line of defense. Shoshenq, being Meshwesh, probably desired to support Jeroboam Ⅰ, helping to establish Jeroboam’s control of the northern line of defense. Thutmose is establishing his allies, the Canaanites. Shoshenq is driving out the Canaanites to establish Jeroboam and the Israelites, who were his allies. In between Thutmose and Shoshenq, towns like this are occupied by a Canaanite-Israelite mix: for as the biblical record faithfully shows us, the Israelites failed to drive them out (Joshua 13:13; 15:63; Judges 1:1-2:5, especially 1:31). See also Numbers 13:21 (northern excursion of the spies); Joshua 19:28 (Asher’s border), 30 (Asher’s city); 21:31 (appointment as a Levitical city); 2 Samuel 8:3, 12 (David fought against Hadadezer in this region); 10:8 (David fights the Ammonites and Syrians here); 1 Chronicles 6:75 (from which we learn the shame that Rehov was a Levitical city).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rehov>

It is possibly more significant that the Bible names Hadadezer, than that the Tel Dan Stele names David.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadadezer>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tel_Dan_Stele>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stele_of_Zakkur> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. That it is or is not an Israelite House is an assumption that presumes the conclusion. This could equally well be a Canaanite house. We should remember that a good number of Israelites still lived in tents at 1010 BC (Jeremiah 35). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Amihai Mazar (1942 …), Israeli archaeologist at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Works: Tel Qasile, Tel Batash (Timnah, 1977-1989), Bet She’an (1989-1996), Tel Rehov (1997 …). Eilat’s Cousin

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amihai_Mazar> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This verifies the message of the latter prophets writing after 1000 BC. If the message of the prophets is verified by thousands of figurines found even in Jerusalem prior to 722 BC and prior to 586 BC, how is it that all the prophets preached from a law that did not yet exist? If D (600 BC) does not write until after 722 BC, how did Hosea preach from the law in the eighth century since the law was not finalized until after 516 BC? How does he have such a high regard for a Torah, which does not yet exist? How can the Psalms, many of which are directly attributed to David, exist in part, beginning from the before the tenth century; how can the Psalms be a collection of odes to Torah, which does not yet exist?

Without the biblical information provided, we would have no reason to suspect that this piece of pottery was anything more than an innocent piece of art, much like a Dresden Madonna with child would be to us; or a child’s toy, like a china doll. The mere existence of this pottery does not show that this home had and used an idol shelf, or that the woman portrayed is specifically Ishtar (Astarte). The prohibition is against “making any graven image for yourself;” which is to say for your own private worship. This is not a general prohibition against all art and beauty. We know from archaeology that this object exists; we do not know how it was used. The probability of use comes exclusively from biblical information about towns like Rehov, and about general Israelite behavior in the region. Jeroboam Ⅰ is clearly breaking this commandment. However, everyone who owns an object of art is not clearly breaking this commandment. We must be careful not to condemn, what Scripture does not condemn. Excess scrupulosity leads to a harshness of religion which is equally against the law: it is a form of false witness. The Law calls us to freedom. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. This is using a generic name to support an entirely subjective speculation. An architectural style is used to form conclusions about the people who lived there, then further assumptions are made about the uses of objects found there. We know that the Israelites were deeply involved from direct descriptions of their behavior in the Bible, particularly among the latter prophets. These biblical descriptions explain and support the idea that the figurine is probably an idol, and not some innocent household decoration: not the other way around. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. This proves nothing. This simply affirms what we already knew from the Bible all along. What this does indicate, consistent with Israelite practice from Jeroboam Ⅰ onward, is that Israelites worshipped Baal, calling him by the sacred name Yahweh.

The word tomb leads us to suspect, what Dever is not telling us, that this stolen tomb inscription actually came from the valley tombs, just outside of Jerusalem; or else from tombs at Gezer, where he has worked. The supposed date and location tell us that we must be careful in drawing inferences: neither Gezer nor Jerusalem are Tel Rehov; the specific forms of idolatry are similar, yet not identical. On the other hand, the geography reinforces the idea that such idolatry was widespread. Although, we already knew that from reading the prophets….

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asherah> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. We do understand that such idols and images are found all over Israel and Judea, and even in Jerusalem. This the prophets affirm (Ezekiel 9:4). In fairness to the Jews, we must admit that some of these objects may have been carried in after the Jews were deported to Babylon. What Ezekiel and the prophets affirm by the record of mourning and weeping is that monotheism was nothing new in 586 BC; it was certainly not the invention of 500 BC. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Of course, God has a wife, His people Israel-Judah. The problem is that she, is committing open, flagrant acts of adultery, not merely fornication, adultery with another. The pagan world fornicates with idolatry. The believing people commit adultery. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. From what was monotheism to take hold in the eighth century since, according to Dever, no Torah was in existence to require it? Even the rare presence of monotheism in the eighth century, establishes the fact that Torah is already in existence. The Bible thoroughly documents Israel’s corruption in pagan idolatry, beginning shortly after 930 BC and Judea’s swift punishment in the matter at the hand of Shishak (1 Kings 11:40; 14:25; 2 Chronicles 12:2, 5, 7, 9; see also Isaiah 10:24, 26). For what was Judea punished in 925 BC if there was no law? Why was Israel’s worship considered perverted if there was no Torah to require it? Why was a temple built in Jerusalem if there was no Torah to require it? Why are the Samaritans emulating a Torah and worship which does not exist until after the second temple? [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. What is awkward about this is that our ignorance of the Old Testament is so deep, and so profound that Dever is able to contort the truth and change it into a lie. He takes what the Bible openly declares and makes it seem as if he has just discovered it. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. This is a gross understatement. Persistently condemn would be a more accurate description. Elijah had four hundred fifty prophets of Ba’al and four hundred prophets of Asherah slaughtered (1 Kings 18). Hosea delivers a blistering and scathing condemnation of Israel, which compares Israel to a prostitute who is so loose that she can’t even maintain fidelity while she works out her fee: in this portrayal, Hosea is compelled to painfully act out the role of God (Hosea). In Zechariah 3 the high priest must be cleansed because he wears excrement stained garments. Each of the kings of Israel, the northern kingdom, is characterized as being worse than his predecessor: it is plainly stated that these kings led the multiple practices of idolatry (for example 1 Kings 14:16). Of the kings of Judea, only about half are considered less than wicked. The altar at Bethel was itself condemned along with Jeroboam Ⅰ (1 Kings 13). Jezebel was thrown from a window to her death, trampled by horses, and eaten by dogs (2 Kings 9). How can these be styled as, “The Bible admits”? Only a person who has never read the Old Testament would make such a limp statement seriously: not in sarcasm. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Covenant, not contract, among other things, it is unilateral in nature. How and when, since in Coogan’s view, such a contact could not have been finalized or firmed before 516 BC. Coogan does not disclose any understanding of this covenant. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Psalm 104 [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 8:10; Psalm 11:3; 34:17; 55:22; 112:6; 143:2; Ecclesiastes 8:11; [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Psalm 125:1-3 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Psalm 10:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Each time the Israelites or other people break the covenant; rather than terminating the covenant, Yahweh responds with covenant renewal: such covenant renewal invariably contains fresh provisions and stipulations, until at last we understand that the Everlasting Covenant is about Messiah, Who, is coming again to proclaim the final word. Genesis 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19; 24:8; Numbers 25:13; 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Chronicles 16:17; Psalm 105:10; Isaiah 24:5; 55:3; 61:8; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26; Hebrews 13:20 [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. This “religion” was never merely about the Israelites, the frozen chosen people of God. From square one, this “religion” was always about providing the possibility of redemption for all people. The Israelites were chosen to be nothing more or less than the messengers of the Covenant. When the Israelites failed in their glorious, God assigned, and God enabled task, God removed their commission from them and gave that commission to others, who would be faithful and obedient in accomplishing the task of being the messengers of the Covenant. Today, Christians are mimicking the failure of Israel’s frozenness; the Covenant is being trampled under foot. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Genesis 22:1-18, this is better translated, “God did test Abraham.” The word tempt sometimes used here conveys the wrong idea. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Psalm 105 [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Just as Yahweh provided a substitute for Isaac, so that Abraham could be spared; now Yahweh provided a substitute for all the children of Israel: even so, the day is coming when there will no longer be a suitable substitute. The future death of the Son is a prophetic inevitability. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. The common understanding of faith is trivial, easy believism, a path to heaven on “flowery beds of ease;” a life marked by “health, wealth, and happiness.” Nevertheless, the root word for faith is the same as the root for pathology, which tells us what real faith costs: namely, walking with Yahweh through the harsh experiences of life, a mixture of joy and tears, pain and pleasure, all leading to the rigors of death. Real faith is not so easily acquired as believing that 1 + 1 = 2.

<http://www.chantcafe.com/2014/05/dies-irae-and-history-of-western-music.html?m=1> [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. 2 Samuel 7:8-16, KJV paraphrase; Psalm 132 [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. The great hymnologist and epic poet, Ethan the Ezrahite gives us a heart rending analysis of this collapse in Psalm 89. After the Covenant has been crushed out of all evident existence, Jeremiah adds his epitaph to the gravestone of Judea in Jeremiah 33, especially verses 6-8, 11, 14-17, 20-21, 28-26. And St. John the Evangelist writes John 1:11. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. We pause the discussion of the Covenant here, because this is the place at which we have arrived in Israelite-Judean history. Even so, we are far from having reached the end of our pilgrimage. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Ezra 9:3; Nehemiah 13:25; Proverbs 26:11; 2 Peter 2:22 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seleucid_Empire>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maccabees>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hellenistic_Judaism>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty#Roman_intervention>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_dynasty#Herod_and_the_end_of_the_dynasty>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_the_Great> [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Samaritanism (485 BC) generates the illusion of great age. In reality it is not as old as Judaism (516 BC). It has no roots in Moses (1406-1366 BC). Samaritanism is a modern invention. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Psalm 113:5-6 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)