

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER    ISA. 55:10    FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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## QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIONS

(Re: Israel's Future)

The title of this leaflet has reference to studies set forth in Issues No. SB042, SB043, and SB044 of SEED AND BREAD, in which it was demonstrated by the Word of God that the overwhelming majority of the 2,500,000 Israelites that lived in the land of Palestine during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ were entirely sympathetic to His message, and that by them He was not rejected. It was also shown that after His crucifixion and resurrection, the overwhelming majority of all Israelites upon earth, those in the land as well as the 5,500,000 in exile, became believers in and followers of Him.

The results that came from the apostles and others being endued with power from on high, and their subsequent proclamation of the crucified and risen Savior in Jerusalem and its environs alone, are sufficient to demonstrate the truth of this. James declared to Paul, "**Thou seest brother, how many thousands (myriads) of Jews there are which believe**" (Acts 21:20). A myriad in Greek is ten thousand; and since it is in the plural here and is used in an indefinite manner, it could hardly be less than three myriads or 30,000 believers in and around this city which had a normal population of 25,000 people.

Careful and capable students of the facts of the Acts period (for example, R. C. H. Lenski, the Lutheran commentator) estimate that there were 25,000 believers in and around Jerusalem at the time of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7); but on Acts 21:20 Lenski says, "We saw that at the time of Stephen's death the estimate of 25,000 converts was low, and years had passed since that time."

In the case of many readers, the effect of this truth will probably be that of shining a bright light into unprepared eyes. In this state if they understand at all what is being presented, it is often in exaggerated and distorted forms. They behold "men as trees walking," which was the experience of the blind man when the Lord first opened his eyes (Mark 8: 24 ). It takes time and thought to see things as they actually are, and very few will give the time or do the thinking that is required to lay hold of great and far reaching truths.

Many questions and objections to this truth are based upon the statement found in John's Gospel (1:11), "**He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.**" This statement is given the popular anti-Semitic interpretation that He came to Israel and the people of Israel refused to receive Him. By this they demonstrate that He was rejected by Israel. They fail to consider that these words tell us of the actions of Jehovah, and mankind's attitude toward Him from the fall of man until the first advent of Christ.

It has been pointed out by many expositors that the first occurrence of "**own**" in John 1: 11 is neuter and must be understood as "His own things." Never forget that before He became a babe in Bethlehem, "**He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not**" (John 1:10). He declared, "**For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine and the fullness thereof**" (Psa.50:10-12). All through the centuries before Bethlehem, the Expression (*Logos*) of God came again and again to His own things.

The second occurrence of "own" is masculine and should read, "**His own men received Him not,**" the term "men" to be understood generically. Here we must remember His words, "**All souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine**" (Eze. 18:4). However, the non-acceptance of the divine Expression before His incarnation was not a universal rejection. Some received Him; for we go on to read that, "**As many as received Him, to them gave He authority to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.**" Thus, I reject the anti-Semitic interpretation of John 1:11. That the Word became flesh is not recorded until John 1:14.

Another question asked by quite a few concerns our Lord's reproach of the cities in which most of His mighty works were done, because they repented

not (Matt. 11:20). These were Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. It is to be noted that these words of reproach are spoken against cities, and all actions by cities must be done by those who control these cities. The guilt was that of the cities' rulers, who failed to respond to His mighty works and to desist from their acts of wickedness. What the ordinary people in these cities did is not revealed here, but the Lord's declaration that followed these words of reproach indicates that the common people in these places received Him. **"At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent (intelligent), and hast revealed them unto babes"** (Matt. 11:25). I reject Scofield's heading of this paragraph: "Jesus, rejected, predicts judgment."

Another pertinent question is based upon the statement made by our Lord concerning Himself in Luke 17:25: **"But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."**

The word "generation" here is interpreted to mean all the Jews then living in Palestine, but it is not clear by what logic those who lived outside the land are also included. The word *generation* is a most flexible word, and no fixed meaning can ever be attached to it apart from the context in which it is found. What it means here is clearly established by three passages which any consistent reader of the New Testament will already have come upon (and it is hoped, will have assimilated) before he comes to this declaration.

In Matt. 16:21 we read that the Lord showed His disciples how He must go to Jerusalem, **"and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."** As we read on and come to Mark 8:31, we find the same truth, His enemies being listed as **"elders, chief priests, and scribes;"** and the same groups are listed as His persecutors in Luke 9:22.

From these passages we learn that the phrase "this generation" in Luke 17:25 means that generation of scribes, chief priests, and elders who were controlling all life and thought in Judea at that time. These were the guilty ones in Israel who engineered the crucifixion of Jesus by the Romans.

Questions have been asked concerning the prophecy in Isaiah 53:3 which declares that He would be **"despised and rejected of men."** This prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. However, it does not say what men would despise

and reject Him. Since we know that "**the common people heard Him gladly,**" there is no way that "men" here can be made to mean all men in Israel.

The declaration of our Lord in Matt. 21: 19 is pointed to as proof of God's total rejection of Israel. He said of the fig tree, "**Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever.**" However, this object lesson had nothing to do with Israel or with the rulers of Israel at that time. It concerned those who failed to produce fruit ahead of season. If any who heard His words and saw His works failed to produce fruit, then they would produce no fruit from that day forward in respect to the eon. ("The eon" is another name for the kingdom of God.) And since many in Israel did bear much fruit after this, this could not be true of all of them. Remember, those who did all the heralding in the Acts period were believing Israelites.

The parable of the householder demanding fruit from his vineyard (Matt. 21:33-46) is also brought forth as proof of God's withdrawal and rejection of Israel. But even a cursory reading of this portion will show that these words were spoken to the chief priests and the elders of the people, the ruling aristocracy in Israel (Matt. 21:23). In verse 43 we read: "**Therefore, say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**" This is the new Israel of which we read in Isa. 66:7-14 and Gal. 6:16. At the end of this parable we read that, "**When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet**" (Matt. 21: 46). This is probably as far as they could go in their knowledge of Him, inasmuch as all witnessing concerning Him had been silenced (Matt. 16:20; 17:9).

The declaration, "**Behold, your house is left unto you desolate**" (Matt. 23:38), is found in a long arraignment of the scribes and Pharisees, and has reference to the temple in Jerusalem, not only the building, but the whole system that centered there.

In my own studies of the attitude of the people of Israel toward the Lord Jesus, I believe I have faced every honest question and objection that anyone might raise in opposition. They cannot all be covered in the space available in this study. I established this truth in my own mind and heart by reading carefully through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and the Epistles, noting

carefully every declaration of Israel's attitude toward the man Christ Jesus. The evidence was overwhelming that the majority of Israelites, those in the land and those in exile, became believers in and followers of Him. I also noted all statements of unfavorable attitudes and rejection; and these were always upon the part of Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, priests, elders, rulers, and Romans. If the reader will do the same, this truth will be established in his mind. And remember, as Bishop Butler said, "A truth being established, objections are nothing; the one is founded upon our knowledge, the other upon our ignorance."

**END ISSUE NO. SB04**