

1. Recollecting Giving In the Old Testament: What Went Wrong

i. The Prophets: A Shifting Perspective on the Rituals, Sacrifices, and Offerings, including Tithe

1. *Isaiah 1:11-17*

- a. Criticizes ritualistic practices (sacrifices, offerings) as being meaningless if not done with genuine righteousness and justice.
- b. Isaiah 1:11: "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me? says the Lord. I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats."
- c. Isaiah 1:13: "Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies."

2. *Jeremiah 7:21-23*

- a. Emphasis is on God's primary command to obedience and ethical conduct, not merely ritualistic sacrifices. Sincere devotion over ritual compliance.
- b. Jeremiah 7:21: "This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves.'"
- c. Jeremiah 7:22: "For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices,"
- d. Jeremiah 7:23: "but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you."

3. *Ezekiel 18:5-9*

- a. Emphasis is personal righteousness and obedience to God's law of justice, holiness, righteousness
- b. Ezekiel 18:5: "Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right."
- c. Ezekiel 18:6: "He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife or have sexual relations with a woman during her period."
- d. Ezekiel 18:9: "He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign Lord."

4. *Micah 6:6-8*

- a. Emphasizes that above all God values justice, mercy, and humility over ritualistic practices (including tithing)
- b. Micah 6:6: "With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?"
- c. Micah 6:7: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"
- d. Micah 6:8: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

5. *Malachi 3:8-10*

- a. 3:10--Criticizing Israel for failing to bring their tithes; Key focus is faithfulness and obedience
- b. Malachi 3:8: "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' 'In tithes and offerings.'"
- c. Malachi 3:9: "You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me."

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- d. Malachi 3:10: "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it."

ii. **A New Vision**

1. *The New Covenant (see Covenants above) is anticipated by various Prophets*

a. **Jeremiah: Prophecy of a New Covenant**

- i. Internal Transformation and forgiveness; a new more intimate relationship with God.
- ii. Jeremiah 31:31: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah."
- iii. Jeremiah 31:32: "It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord."
- iv. Jeremiah 31:33: "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."
- v. Jeremiah 31:34: "No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

b. **Ezekiel: A New Heart and Spirit**

- i. Emphasis on internal spiritual renewal and a new relationship with God aligning with Jeremiah. A transformation of the heart and spirit--leading to an faithful obedience to God
- ii. Ezekiel 36:24: "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land."
- iii. Ezekiel 36:25: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols."
- iv. Ezekiel 36:26: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."
- v. Ezekiel 36:27: "And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."
- vi. Ezekiel 36:28: "Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God."

c. **Isaiah: A New Vision**

- i. A coming era of divine favor and salvation where the covenant is extended and fulfilled in a new way. Broader vision of restoration and light to all the nations
- ii. Isaiah 42:6: "I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles."
- iii. Isaiah 49:8: "This is what the Lord says: 'In the time of my favor I will answer you, and in the day of salvation I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances.'"

d. **Hosea: A Vision of Restoration**

- i. Image of betrothal signifies a new intimate relationship between God and his people

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- ii. Hosea 2:19: "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion."
- iii. Hosea 2:20: "I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord."

e. **SUMMARY**

- i. Internal transformation
- ii. Spiritual Renewal
- iii. Broader Scope (not just Israel)
- iv. Intimate Relationship with God

iii. **400 Years of Radio Silence**

1. Approximate time is around the period of the prophet Malachi (c. 430BCE)
2. Called the "Intertestamental Period" or "Silent Years"
 - a. Context Events
 - i. Post Exilic Period: The people had returned from Exile in the 6th century (Isaiah) The Jewish world was influenced by Greek culture and politics (Ptolemaic and Seleucid rule)
 - ii. Second Temple Judaism
 1. Construction of the 2nd Temple: 516CE (6th Century)/Destruction of the 2nd Temple in 70CE in the Jewish-Roman War (1st Century)
 2. Development of various Jewish sects--the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and Zealots
 - a. Each with their own differing views on law, tradition and politics
 - b. Pharisees: Focused on the oral traditions and laws, emphasizing piety and personal righteousness.
 - c. Sadducees: Consisted mainly of the priestly and aristocratic classes, maintaining traditional Temple practices and rejecting oral traditions.
 - d. Essenes: A monastic group that lived in communal settings, such as Qumran, and sought to live a life of strict piety and separation from mainstream Jewish life.
 - e. Zealots: A revolutionary group that sought to overthrow Roman rule and restore Jewish sovereignty in the land.
 3. Synagogue(s)
 - a. With the Temple being the central place of worship, local synagogues became increasingly important for community gatherings and teaching.
 4. Hebrew Bible
 - a. The period saw the development and standardization of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) and an emphasis on interpreting and applying Jewish law.
 5. Other Literature
 - a. This era produced significant Jewish literature, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, which include biblical texts and sectarian writings, and various apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works.

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- b. Various Jewish writings produced are not included in the Hebrew Bible.
- c. These texts reflect the religious and social concerns of the time.
- 6. Roman Control (63BCE)
 - a. Impacted Jewish society--political and religious
 - b. Appointment of high priests and the administration of Jewish affairs
 - c. The period saw a continuation and elaboration of Jewish laws and rituals, including those related to purity, dietary laws, and festivals.
- iii. Jesus was born approximately (6-4BCE)