General Church Education

The Israelitish Church

Lesson 4

The Five Churches

For ages 11-13

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The Israelitish Church

Teacher Background

While the Ancient Church spread throughout the world, the Israelitish Church only existed in the land of Canaan. The Israelitish Church had a written Word—the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. In addition to parts from the Ancient Word, the Old Testament comprises histories (Moses to Kings) that include the Ten Commandments, prophets, and songs or psalms. Together, these tell the story of Israel. They also hold a deeper spiritual meaning for us.

Focus Points

- The Israelitish Church descended from Abraham's offspring, the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The Israelitish Church worshiped one God, Jehovah.
- The Lord gave the Israelitish church the Ten Commandments and the Old Testament.

Readings from the Writings

"The Israelitish Church worshiped Jehovah, who in Himself is an invisible God (Exodus 33:18-23), but under a human form, which Jehovah God put on by means of an angel, in which He was seen by Moses, Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Gideon, Joshua, and sometimes by the prophets. This human form was representative of the Lord who was to come, and because this was representative so each thing and all things in their church were made representative." *True Christian Religion* 786

The Israelitish Church began when the Ten Commandments were given on Mount Sinai, and ended when the Lord was crucified. See *True Christian Religion* 760

The Ten Commandments were promulgated from Mount Sinai by Jehovah Himself in a miraculous way to make known that these laws are not only civil and moral laws, but also Divine laws. Acting contrary to them is not only doing evil to the neighbor … but is also sinning against God. By their promulgation by Jehovah from Mount Sinai, these laws were made also laws of religion. See *True Christian Religion* 282

The Ten Commandments contain everything to do with love for God and everything to do with love toward the neighbor…. In general, they prescribe that evil is not to be willed, thought or done, either against God or against the neighbor. The reason we are not commanded to do what is directly the work of love and charity, but only to avoid doing their opposites, is that in so far as a person shuns evils as sins, so far does he will the good actions of love and charity. See *True Christian Religion* 329

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Teacher Activity Overview

The student lesson offers the following activity choices:

Projects and Activities (see back of book for answers)

Religious Contributions of the Israelitish Church

The Lord gave the world important religious concepts through the Israelitish Church. Match quotations from the Word with six distinct contributions to religious thought.

How Did They Do It?

Building the temple required thousands of people and various materials. It took seven years to complete. Brainstorm ways in which people might have transported huge stones from the quarry and then lifted them into place in the temple without the use of modern technology.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and the Five Churches

Discover king Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its relation to the Five Churches by cutting out, assembling, and arranging five cubes to illustrate the story. Print on sturdy paper to use throughout these lessons. Online at https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-nebuchadnezzars-dream-and-the-five-churches-daniel-2-true-christian-religion-760.pdf

Build a Scale Model of Solomon's Temple

Make a high quality scale model of Solomon's Temple. All you need is scissors, a ruler, clear tape, glue, and stiff paper to make a full color ready-to-print model. Includes the building, inner walls, Ark, pillars, lamp stands, carts, and altars. Available at https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/project-build-a-model-of-solomons-temple-1-kings-5-6.pdf

The Five Churches Statue Twist

Create a model of Nebuchadnezzar's dream statue and twist the statue to match each segment with one of the five churches, a major figure in the Word, a time of the day, a season of the year, an age of a person's life, and various metals to which it corresponds. Available at https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-the-five-churches-statue-twist.pdf

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Vocabulary

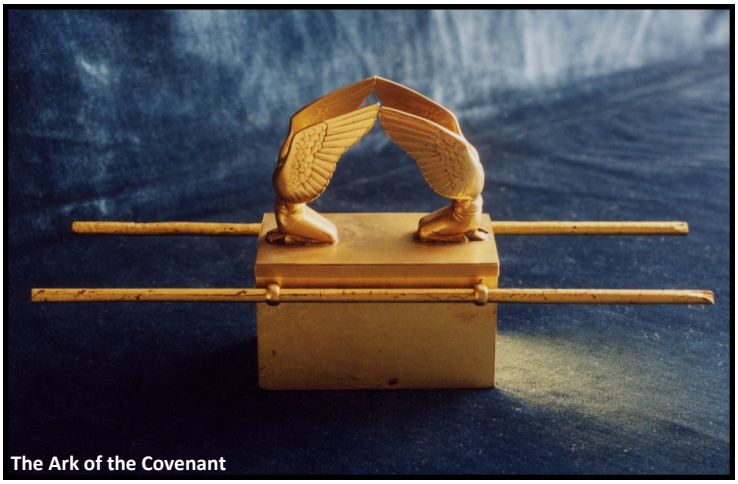
posterity—following generations
monotheism—the belief that there is only one God
remnant—a small group of survivors

Introduction

The Ancient Church was widespread and influenced many cultures. However, by its end it had corrupted the spiritual truths given by the Lord. When the Lord raised up a new church, the Israelitish Church, He did so among a specific people in a small region of the Near East that had relatively little influence on others. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were part of the Hebrew Church which started with Eber. They lived in Canaan, and their descendants became enslaved in Egypt. After suffering ten plagues Pharaoh set them free and Moses led them out of Egypt. The Lord formed their posterity into the Israelitish Church and gave them a new revelation through Moses that included the Ten Commandments and other civil and spiritual laws. By learning and obeying these laws the Lord could build a conscience in their minds so they could be joined with Him. Yet the Lord provided that they could serve as a picture of a true church if they obeyed the laws given to them, even if their hearts were not really in it. This kept alive with the angels the hope of a new church that the Lord would establish by coming to earth Himself.

An Overview of the Israelitish Church

Apart from a forty-year journey through the wilderness, the Israelitish Church was centered in Canaan. It consisted of twelve tribes named for the children of Israel. It existed from approximately 1300 BC until the Lord's coming. At first, the people were led by priests such as Aaron and Samuel. They worshiped in a tent called the Tabernacle. Then after they settled in the land of Canaan, the Lord raised up judges to conquer the enemies that constantly attacked Israel. These included the heroes Samson and Deborah. Finally, the Lord allowed kings to rule. The first kings were Saul, David and Solomon. Israel grew to its largest extent under King David. After his reign there was peace and Solomon built a temple in Jerusalem.



The Ark of the Covenant

© Glencairn Museum

Later, when Israel began to fall away from obeying the Law, it was divided into two kingdoms. Israel, the northern kingdom, consisted of ten tribes. Judah, the southern kingdom, comprised two tribes. These people called themselves 'Judeans'. This was later shortened to 'Jews'. However, in 721 BC Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and dispersed its people throughout Assyria. These are called the 'lost tribes of Israel' because nobody is certain about what happened to them. In 587 BC, Babylon conquered Judah, destroyed the Temple and took its people into exile in Babylon. Then in 539 AD, the Persians conquered Babylon and allowed Judah to return to Canaan. In approximately 516 BC the Jews built a new Temple in Jerusalem. It is often called the Second Temple.

Israelitish Culture

Israelitish culture was based on worshiping and obeying the Lord. They followed detailed instructions or laws about how they were to live. At first, they worshiped in the Tabernacle. As the twelve tribes travelled through the wilderness, they set up this special tent in the center of the camp. After settling in Canaan they continued to worship there until the Temple was completed. The magnificent Temple was like the Tabernacle in many ways, such as the division of spaces.

The Israelites lived in extended families. The family was crucial to their way of life. Most were shepherds who kept sheep and goats, or farmers who grew crops such as wheat, barley, legumes, figs, grapes and olives. Canaan was more lush than it is today so farmers had no need to irrigate their fields. Fathers relied on their sons to tend the flocks and help cultivate the crops. Daughters helped their mothers to draw water from the well, make bread, spin, weave, and care for the children. The land itself affected the food they ate, the clothes they wore, and the kinds of shelter in which they lived. As people settled in Canaan they learned crafts like pottery.

Relationship with the Lord

Israel championed literature and learning. It also gave Western civilization important new ways of looking at things. One of these was the belief in One God or monotheism. The Israelites thought of God as Jehovah. They could not see God, but they knew He was with them. As they wandered in the wilderness they saw God as a pillar of cloud in the day and a pillar of fire at night. Sometimes they heard His voice. He often spoke to them through an angel—the "angel of Jehovah"—since it was important for them to think of God as human.



Shepherd Boy and His Sheeps. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/db/Shepherd_Boy_%26_his_Sheeps.jpg [Accessed 6 June 2025]

The Old Testament

The Lord gave the Israelites a new revelation that was written on scrolls. Today, it is called the "Old Testament". It was the first book to record the Lord's

involvement in human history. It introduced the idea of leading an ethical life because it taught that religion and morality go hand-in-hand.



© Glencairn Museum

Together, the historical and prophetical books of the Old Testament tell the history of Israel. Yet, these books also have a deeper spiritual meaning because they were written for people who lived then, now, and in the future. They were written in Hebrew, the language of the ancient Israelites. Hebrew is also the closest of all languages to the language of heaven. Each Hebrew letter represents an idea, as well as symbolizing a sound.

Throughout the Old Testament important themes return again and again. These include the idea that God cares for all people as our Heavenly Father, that obeying the Ten Commandments brings happiness, and that disobeying the commandments brings unhappiness.

The Fall of the Israelitish Church

The Israelitish Church declined over a long period of time. The Word tells us that many kings that came after Solomon were evil and did not follow the Lord, some even practiced idolatry. So, the Lord raised up prophets who could speak for Him. The prophets tried to remind people about the Lord's laws. Yet, even though the Lord gave prophets like Elijah and Elisha the power to do great miracles, people did not always listen to them. The prophets also predicted that a group of survivors or a 'remnant' would return to Israel, and looked towards the Advent of the Lord and the rise of a new church.

Since the Israelites refused to turn to the Lord, the Lord allowed other nations to carry them away as captives and disperse them. And while Judeans returned and rebuilt the Temple, they did not regain control of the land. After many years the State of Israel was established in 1948 AD. In 63 BC Rome took charge of Israel and was still in power when the Lord was born. The Lord's birth on earth was the final judgment on the Israelitish Church.

The Israelitish Church and Our Lives

The Israelites were happiest when they obeyed the Lord's commandments because doing so brought peace and prosperity. Disobeying the commandments brought difficult consequences. The Lord wants us to obey His laws too. Every time we do what is right, we are practicing to do it again. Over time, doing what is right can become a habit and make it easier to follow the Lord. It can become a joy rather than a burden. It is also an effective way to keep the Lord at the center of our lives, as the Israelites camped around the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

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Activity Overview

Projects and Activities (see back of book for answers)

Choose one or two.

Religious Contributions of the Israelitish Church

The Lord gave the world important religious concepts through the Israelitish Church. Match quotations from the Word with six distinct contributions to religious thought.

How Did They Do It?

Building the temple required thousands of people and a variety of materials. It took seven years to complete. Brainstorm ways in which people might have felled trees and quarried stones, and then transported them to the building site and lifted them into place without the use of modern technology.

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Religious Contributions of the Israelitish Church

The Lord revealed important concepts to the Israelitish Church which changed religious thinking. Six of these contributions are listed below. Match a quotation from the Word with each idea. Write the letter of the quotation next to the religious concept it supports. Note: There is one extra quotation.

Quote	Religious Concept
_____	1. Monotheism, the belief that there is One God.
_____	2. God is a loving Heavenly Father.
_____	3. The Word is holy. It is the Lord speaking to us.
_____	4. God looks at what is in our hearts, rather than what we say.
_____	5. The mission of the church is to save the world, not just the Israelites.
_____	6. There is life after death.

Quotations from the Word

A. "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to every man according to his ways" (Jeremiah 17:10).

B. "Fear not, for I am with you"(Isaiah 41:10).

C. "O am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me" (Isaiah 46:9).

D. "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh" (Jeremiah 32:27).

E. "On the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight" (Hosea 6:2).

F. "I am, a Father to Israel" (Jeremiah 31:9).

G. "The Word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

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How Did They Do It?

Building the temple took thousands of people, many materials, and ingenuity. The temple was 90 feet (27 meters) long, 30 feet (9 meters) wide and 45 feet (13.5 meters) high. Solomon had a huge labor force. 30,000 men felled cedar and cypress trees in Lebanon. 70,000 others 'carried burdens', and 80,000 more quarried stone in the mountains. Stones were cut to size at the quarry so no tools would be heard where the temple was built. 3,300 supervisors managed the work.

Solomon's temple was built long before modern technology. There were no large machines to cut, lift, or transport heavy logs and stones. Brainstorm ways in which people might have transported stones from the quarry and lifted them into place in the temple on the chart below.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Rollers		
Sleds		
Waterways		
Levers		
Ramps		

Which method is the most plausible?

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Answers

Lesson 4

Religious Contributions of the Israelitish Church

1. C, 2. F, 3. G, 4. A, 5. D, 6. E.