PIERRE II

The biblical course

www.pierre2.net

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This 'Spiritual Itinerary' is directed to those who want to discover Truth, happiness and inner peace – peace of the soul; it is aimed at YOU reader, if you care for Truth.

This Itinerary entails three phases. The first two (the 'Preliminary' and the 'Awareness' phases) are a preparation of the 'Spiritual Itinerary'. They are not indispensable, but are recommended in function of individual needs.

1. The PRELIMINARY phase provides a psychological preparation towards the goal. Before getting started, you have to know exactly what you want and if you are sufficiently motivated to reach the Truth.

2. The SELF AWARENESS phase invites and prepares you to penetrate and discover your own self, to become aware of the state of your soul.

3. The SPIRITUAL ITINARY phase places you in front of the Supernatural and opens the path for you to reach it freely...if you really care...

1.2 PHASE I - THE PRELIMINARY

Truth and happiness are inseparable: if you have found the Truth you can only be happy. If you are not, it is because deep in your heart you do not have the real Light that warms up and comforts your soul. The more truth we accumulate, the happier we are. Only Knowledge of the Truth makes a man free (see John 8,32).

Before you commit yourself, make sure that you are in good psychological conditions and that time has come for you to launch yourself into such a search. Answer conscientiously the following questions:

1. What is your present psychological condition? And why? (Happy or unhappy due to your financial situation, social rank, culture, philosophic ideas, human love, etc...)

2. What is your present spiritual condition? And why? (Believer or nonbeliever due to inherited ideas, to your upbringing in a confessional community, to habits, or to submission to customs and biases of your society, etc...)

3. Are you satisfied with your condition? Or would you like to evolve? If you do not want to elevate your existence, this Itinerary is not addressed to you. But if, on the other hand, you
Jesus in prayer
1.2 - PHASE I - THE PRELIMINARY

long for Truth in order to evolve, you will have to make an **effort**. In this case, continue reading this Itinerary.

Consider now carefully the way you have chosen your spiritual commitment: if you have not done **so freely, of your own accord**, starting from a healthy and objective base; if you have not embraced your ideas after a meticulous and conscientious research, you will always be submitted to religious, racial, or other type of prejudice, and you will never be totally fulfilled. Confused by ignorance, you will always be an easy pray for anxiety and anguish, which are the subconscious results of insufficient knowledge. These harmful fruits of ignorance have generated fanatic and religious wars, as well as pernicious sects whose ideal is suicide or even murder...

The brightness of knowledge enlightens and revives the human soul. Conversely, the darkness of ignorance atrophies it, rendering it lifeless and dissatisfied. This will be reflected in aggressive and impatient behavior, or in sad and depressive moods.

Lack of certainty in your beliefs will expose you to doubts and lack of confidence in yourself. Always searching for that "new" that might satisfy you, you will continuously face deception and you will end up despairing in real happiness or be satisfied with the mediocre.

Be aware of the sort of sad "nostalgia" that occasionally fills your soul: that state is fed by ignorance. It should be defined as the "nostalgia of happiness", the happiness which has been lost, but which can be recovered under its own conditions. Time is given to us to retrieve it through **knowledge**. He who seeks shall find.

### 1.2.1 The Deconditioning Process

In order to free yourself from the harmful grip of ignorance, you must start to **de-condition yourself**, to get rid of the personality imposed on you by your family or social customs. Therefore, forget your given identity, your social rank, your past memories (good or bad) that mark you deeply; wipe out the prejudices that fill you with a false personality, in order to **find yourself**. Finally, search rationally, logically, for Truth, whose fruit is happiness. You are capable of knowing the Truth, to discern It and to free It from lies.

- You have intelligence. Use it.
- You have a heart. Open it.
- You have logic. Draw your **own** conclusions.
- Continuously stimulate your enthusiasm. Add love and joy. Do not allow negative forces to paralyze you through laziness and fear of the unknown.
- Rise and take your first steps into your **inner** domain. It is yours! Don't feel a stranger nor be afraid within your own self, otherwise others will steal your soul.
- With good will and perseverance, you will reach the great happiness that awaits you like a trophy at the end of the way, at the summit of the mountain within yourself.

### 1.2.2 Indispensable Conditions to Reach the Truth

1. **Genuine thirst for Truth**: no one can force you if you are not eager to know.

2. **Sincerity**: you must pledge your entire self to the quest for Truth, engaging your will and intelligence in order to discover It; you must commit yourself to conform to It conscientiously without hypocrisy or restrictions. You must be in good faith.

3. **Courage to break away**, though gradually, from old habits, ideas, even friendships and social relations that slow down your spiritual evolution and prevent the liberation of your soul.

4. You must begin from the principle that Truth **is one and it is objective**: in fact a concept and its opposite can not be both right. No one can make his **own** subjective truth: the sun either exists or it does not for everyone. The same for God.
5. Freedom of choice, but you carry the responsibility of your option. If you are capable of reaching your own conclusions, supporting them with valid arguments, then you have gained maturity worthy of trust.

The main pitfall is to make up a subjective, illusory "truth" of your own size, rather than questioning and forcing yourself to embrace the one and only Truth.

1.2.3 Conclusion

After considering this 'Preliminary', do you feel ready to undertake the search in this spirit, motivated not by mere curiosity, but by firm resolution to change and to become a new self? You will end up richer and more mature, to the point that you will recognize no longer the old person you used to be.

If your heart says 'yes' do not deceive it. Answer its call. You will, by perseverance, discover the world of Happiness in which many people believe no more; this world, although not belonging to the materialistic world, is nevertheless in this world, existing within you. Yours to discover. Do not let yourself be distracted by the vicissitudes of daily life.

An old Hindu legend recounts that:

There was a time when all men were gods. But they abused so much their divinity that Brahma, the god master, decided to remove their divine power and to hide it in a place where it would be impossible for them to find it. The major problem was to find a suitable hideout.

When the lesser gods were convened to solve this problem, they proposed the following: 'Let’s bury man’s divinity in the earth'. But Brahma answered: "No, it is not enough, man shall dig and find it".

So the gods replied: 'in this case let’s throw the divinity in the deep oceans'. But Brahma answered back: 'No, because sooner or later man shall explore the deep oceans, certainly one day he shall find it, and bring it back up to the surface.'

So the lesser gods concluded: 'We do not know where to hide it, since there doesn’t seem to be a place on earth or in the oceans that man should not be able to reach one day.' So Brahma said: 'This is what we shall do with man’s divinity: we shall hide it deep inside him, the only place where man shall never think of looking.'

Since then, the legend concludes, man has toured the earth, explored, climbed, plunged and dug in search of something that lies within him.

1.3 PHASE II - SELF AWARENESS

Self-Awareness is a psychological work program, an effort of introspection that will help you discover yourself as you are, and prepare you to evolve into what you should be. It is a "Psychological Itinerary" complementary to the "Spiritual Itinerary". I therefore invite you to refer to this second phase all along the way, if you deem it necessary; it will provide a good measure of your spiritual condition.

Socrates said: "Man, know thyself". This is an invitation to become aware of your own self. What follows is an outline to assist you in exploring your inner universe.

The human being is composed of three vital complementary levels:
1. Corporal: relative to the physical and material aspects. It is the body.

2. Psychological: relative to the intellectual and emotional aspects. It is the soul.

3. Spiritual: relative to the supernatural. It is the spirit.

The last two aspects are physically non-seizable, yet they are intimately related to the body. A perfect harmony has to reign between these three levels. Any unbalance will perturb the human personality. To insist on one level and ignore the others will disturb our being. We have to take into consideration the hierarchy that exists among these three levels: The most important is the spiritual followed by the psychological and finally the corporal. This last part of our selves -The body- is certainly important. It is the tangible part of our being and can hide the rest of our personality. Being the most perceptible and immediate, the body may overshadow the other levels as we can often notice. But on the other hand, the body should serve as an instrument to discover our other two invisible dimensions, because the have a greater vital importance. That is why we should strive to make of our body an instrument of discovery by disciplining, educating and guiding it wisely towards the inner self, where lies the center of the soul and the spirit.

Man’s only obstacle, his only enemy is himself.

"Self Awareness" means to know oneself. We have to apply ourselves to explore the depths of our being in order to discover our soul and spirit.

This task is both easy and hard at the same time:

- It is easy because it does not require any means besides ourselves, any instrument besides vigilance and determination to change ourselves in order to reach inner harmony, at any cost.

- It is hard because of several obstacles (conscious or unconscious) like psychological laziness, fear or refusal to discover ourselves as we are, and attachment to materialistic and social pleasures. It takes a lot of moral courage to admit one’s shortcomings and have the will to get rid of them.

A good way to reach self knowledge is to apply the following three points:

1. Personality appraisal
2. Discovery of our complexes
3. Calm

1.3.1 Personality Appraisal

It is an exercise that allows us to check our starting point, our progresses or our failures. This assessment keeps us in a state of a dynamic evolution on which our transformation depends. The key to this transformation is the discovery of our soul’s condition, our qualities and our defects, like the following example:

- **The qualities:** moral courage, desire for perfection, self-confidence, patience, tenacity and perseverance, gentleness, love, altruism, sociability, joy, optimism etc...

- **The defects:** laziness, carelessness, arrogance, vanity, sensuality, susceptibility, jealousy and envy, egoism, intolerance, fanaticism, avarice, lack of openness etc...
The discovery of our soul’s condition is indispensable; it is the first step towards evolution upon which the remedy to be applied depends entirely. We should not panic upon the discovery of our faults, but should calmly consider this state from which we want and can evolve if we feel concerned.

The next step is to compare our present condition to the ideal state we want to reach on the three vital levels of human personality:

1. **The corporal level** concerns our physical life: vitality, health, robustness, good reflexes etc... Concerning food, quantities and qualities must be looked after in order to avoid any excess that causes sickness, like obesity and drunkenness. The body must be cared for with physical exercises: "healthy mind in a healthy body".

2. **The psychological level** concerns the intellectual and affective life of the soul:
   - The intellect comprises intelligence, the power of attention and concentration, the memory, the imagination etc...
   - The affective life is related to love. Love for ourselves as well as for others must be balanced. A cautious and selective sociability – depending on the moral quality of others – supports our evolution (read Ecclesiastics 12)

3. **The spiritual level** concerns our spirit and is tied to the supernatural. It is the level that manages our personality. If we are well enlightened on this level, happiness overflows our entire being. It is why this level is by far the most important. It has to be discovered in order to be fed with the fullness of Truth. This is the goal of our search.

Having detected our faults, we have now to apply to each and every one of them the opposite virtue: to carelessness, interest; to pride and arrogance, modesty and humility; to laziness, effort; to vanity, renouncement and simplicity; to avarice, generosity; to fanaticism, tolerance etc... In order to be happy, a price must be paid and in order to heal, a change must be made. It is vain to criticize others, to attempt to perfect them, to want to change the world without changing ourselves. The greatest revolutions are started within us and by us. It is through self-evolution that we shall be able to elevate others.

1.3.2 **The Discovery of Our Complexes**

Many people surrender along the way, due to some inner wounds that discourage them, or feelings that create confusion in their spirit. These are the complexes.

Certain facts of life might mark some of us since childhood. Following an emotional shock or other, their effect remains buried in our memory, producing powerful negative feelings (inferiority, superiority, aggressivity, guilt, etc...). They run some of our actions without our knowledge, being stored in a subconscious area of our soul.

The feeling of inferiority does not always mean a diminished moral value. It is necessary to look for the roots of this feeling: physical defect, need of affection, domestic tragedy, lack of culture, poverty etc... On the other hand, one might feel superior without being so. These complexes cause some discomfort at the subconscious level. Our work will consist in detecting these complexes, in becoming aware of them in order to be healed; this is the "Self Awareness". But in the beginning, courage is needed in order to admit what we are! Sometimes friendly or professional help (psychologist etc.) is necessary, but it is not always easy to find.

We must be able to discern the real source of the discomfort that bothers us: is it due to our complexes or to bad treatment from others? The effect that others produce on us is not to be underestimated. It is not easy to cope with the system of modern society; to live in it, one must protect and defend himself... or sometimes survive and learn to adapt to various situations.
1.3 - PHASE II - SELF AWARENESS

All this requires an objective observation of our own behavior towards others. We all have the tendency to project onto others negative or positive feelings that are within us: "we judge others according to ourselves", without discernment or consideration.

For example: the aggressive person sees other people as aggressive and complains about it. On the other hand, an honest person believes that everyone is honest and is shocked when he finds out that someone, whom he had believed honest, has cheated him. This can lead to great deceptions mainly in the affective domain where the heart is involved.

1.3.3 Calm

To master our faults, it is necessary to work on ourselves with patience and calm. We must accept ourselves as we are! If we can not accept and reconcile with our own selves, how can we expect others to accept and bear us?

The habit of calm protects us from outside attacks. This is the way to gradually progress towards self-control. He who can control himself can control the most critical situations, can calm down violence, calm down audacity, operate the most favorable diversions towards inner peace and social harmony.

The inner calm is favored by physical and mental relaxation, as well as though controlled respiration as taught in yoga courses.

The effects of calm:

- It facilitates the normal function of the nervous system.
- It increases the output of effort and reduces fatigue.
- It dominates impatience and tendency to anger.
- It favors reflection and better decisions.
- It reinforces assurance and self-confidence.
- It attracts the confidence of others.
- It is a powerful weapon to face and have better mastery over adversities.

1.3.4 Practical Advice

This simple appraisal can be written down in a notebook, through observing ourselves with sincerity and objectivity and receiving help, if possible, from someone who has greater experience.

Perseverance will transform our personal inner life as well as domestic, communal and professional life with a lot of happiness and love.

This procedure always generates progressive, efficient and definite results. Time is given to us for this. One should not be impatient nor hasty in order to reach satisfactory results. By being so, we risk losing everything. To reach healthy maturity, normal growth must be given the necessary time. A man can not reach the age of forty without passing through thirty.

Providence will help us; in as much as we have faith and perseverance.

Faith is the antidote to fear.

The worst is to be expected from fear, the best from faith.

We must be confident in ourselves and in the Creator’s help.
1.3.5 Meditation

Meditate deeply the following ideas:

Master Eckhart (German Dominican from the XIVth century) said:

'... it is not outside, but inside, deep inside...'

The psychoanalyst Jung used to say:

'One must patiently observe what happens silently in our souls, because every man has, by his own nature, within his own soul, something that can grow.'

Jung said also:

'The soul has, by its own nature, a religious function...the main task of adult education is to pass the archetype of the divine image, or its emanations and effects onto the conscious.'

Finally remember Socrates’ words: 'Man, know thyself'. But this is not enough, as we can only know ourselves through the one and objective Truth. It should be said: 'Man, know the Truth and you shall know thyself'. This is what Jesus meant when He said: 'You will come to know the Truth and the Truth will set you free' (John 8,32). The Truth will only set us free if we accept It.

1.4 PHASE III - THE SPIRITUAL ITINERARY

This 'Spiritual Itinerary' properly said is composed of four steps:

1. **God**: does He exist?

2. **The Religions**: are they all the same?

3. **The Option**: the divine Revelation, the Bible (the Biblical Course)

4. **Happiness**: living within the found Truth

We are going to examine these steps, one by one, methodically.

There is not much to say about the Happiness stage: it is the outcome of the Itinerary, the happy terminus that we want to reach. There, you will find rest after your labours and will be able to speak about it better than I. Therefore, we are going to study only the first three steps.

Arm yourself with patience, focus your attention and your concentration in order to reap a good harvest.

1.4.1 FIRST STEP - God

1.4.1.1 **God: does He exist?**

The first question to answer is about God: does He exist or not? It is from here that the spiritual paths fork: one way for the believers and the other for the atheists. I suggest that you answer intelligently to ten questions so that you can personally make these discoveries.

Before you think about these questions, you must take the time to reflect in order to ensure that the answer is really yours, coming freely from a personal and logical search without any external influence (religion, family, prejudices, materialistic interests etc...).
To reach this, you should have already made the effort of deconditioning yourself: the liberation of which I have spoken in the Preliminary.

Take your time to think, do not claim lack of time; we can always find the time and the means to do what we want. Time is given to us to look for the Truth. Let’s not waste it elsewhere (abuse of TV, sports, card games, alcohol etc...). Let’s give priority to important activities.

Place yourself in an environment conducive to reflection. Alone, in a quiet place -preferably mother nature - imagine that you have just been born. This means that you do not have either a domestic identity or a social status. Forget your name in order to discover your Self. There you are all alone in this silence, surrounded by trees swaying in the wind, listening to the murmur of leaves and chirping of birds. You are alone in the world. You are becoming peaceably aware of your body, of your person. You simply exist.

Answer the ten questions which I propose further on. Take all the necessary time to answer them carefully. You may have a ready answer or may need to wait a long time to get one, to dispel all the doubts concerning it. Never mind the time it takes, so long as it is well spent.

Never draw back, once you have discovered the Truth on a particular subject. Never give up, after perceiving the Light, for the sake of materialistic advantages, or pressured by prejudices. Some people might criticize and discourage you. You hang on! Insist on listening to your own heart and your intelligence: do not give up your own logic. It is important that you feel with certainty that you are answering freely and using your own intelligence to reach a conclusion, after a mature reflection, just the way a wise detective would do in front of a complex situation.

These are the questions; make an effort to answer them honestly although they might seem too naive:

Do you believe in the existence of God? Why? This is the first question addressed to the spirit; the results of our search stem from it.

Start, if this suits you, by not even using the word "God", and in your own language, give a name to this 'Vague Supernatural': Force, Energy, Perfection, Beauty, Love, Chance, Fire, Light, etc. Now let’s keep, if you wish, the name of God for the purpose of our search. Do you believe in God? Yes or no? What are the reasons for your answer? You have to conclude it by yourself in a deductive and intelligent spirit.

For example: a policeman walks into a room, sees a body lying down in a pool of blood, and the room is in a state of disorder. What must his conclusion be? Another example: you believe to be the only one to have the key to your room. You leave the room and lock it with your key. You come back and notice a watch on the table. What is to be intelligently concluded? Chance? Or that someone else has the key to your room? It is certain that someone has entered. Only a stupid policeman would not see a crime in the first example and would not realize that someone else has the key to your room. It is with this same elementary intelligence that you should conclude what concerns the existence of God, starting from the existence of the universe and the cosmos.

A materialistic universe exists. Where does it come from? The majority of believers base their conclusions about the existence of a Creator on the creation and its admirable harmony. For example, this has been the case for Voltaire and Einstein, the dean of modern science.

Voltaire said:

"I can’t believe that the watch (creation) exists without a watchmaker (God)."

Most scientists, when referring to the wonders of the universe, its vast forces, its origins and rationality, tend to avoid using the word "God". Yet Einstein, who is supposed an atheist, has no such inhibition. He wrote:
"The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead.

To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in its most primitive forms. This knowledge, this feeling, is at the center of true religiousness. The cosmic religious experience is the strongest and noblest main spring of scientific research.

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the Illimitable Superior Spirit who reveals Himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a Superior Reasoning Power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God' ("Living Philosophies", 1931; and "Des Savants Nous Parlent de Dieu", by René Courtois, Ed. Foyer Notre Dame, Brussels).

I quoted these two examples - among others - of scientific and logical conclusions to help you arrive by yourself, drawing your own rational conclusions, to the real cause of the universe. Meditate on them carefully.

As for the atheists, they base their claim that God does not exist, among other arguments, on the fact that Evil exists in the world. This is a non-valid argument, because Evil is not an entity by itself, it is only conceived in relation to Good: Evil is a lack of goodness, a destroyed and amputated Good (crime, stealing, physical or mental sickness etc...). We thus perceive hatred only because we know love; and recognize sickness as a lack of good health. You will discover further that Evil can not have its source in God, who is the Perfect Good. You will also understand that man himself introduced Evil into the world.

Others pretend that social disorder, religious wars and evolutionist theories are also proofs that God does not exist. Nevertheless, this disorder and these wars are due to the bad management and bad faith of man, and not to the non-existence of God. As for evolution, it would not only reveal an organized structure in the creation, but it would also reveal the "Illimitable Superior Spirit" who programmed such evolution: God. On the other hand, there are no rational proofs of the non-existence of God.

Question: a watch, a car, and a meal can they be produced accidentally? The same question for an organized and meticulous creation, can it be produced accidentally? Yours to answer intelligently! And what would this 'accident' be? Where would it come from? Let’s then call God 'Accident' or 'Chance'.

If at this stage, you believe that God does not exist, we can no more help you in this search. Here our ways part, but our human brotherhood must be kept in order to build together, in harmony, our earthen City and society, accepting to be different and yet respectful of our mutual convictions.

But if on the other hand, you conclude that God does in fact exist, we can then pursue together our search to know Him better, deeply convinced as we both are of His existence. Let’s now tackle the second question.

**Is He Person or not?** A person has intelligence, self-awareness and reason; man for instance. On the other hand, matter, animals and plants have none. Animals are endowed with instinct that is not yet intelligence. Bees, for example, build their hive in a hexagonal way, driven not by intelligence but by instinct. They are, so to say, "programmed" and can not do differently, nor can they surpass themselves to do better. It will always be like this for them. They are not capable of inventing a machine to gather the nectar of the flowers in their place. Furthermore,
we do not put in prison a dog for biting a man, the animal can not be held responsible for its actions, not being a person. Furthermore, we will never see a group of donkeys organizing a public demonstration to claim better working rights, or limited working hours. This type of activity presumes intelligence.

To believe in a personal God is to believe that He is the Supreme Intelligence, Knowledge, Love, Awareness and Responsibility. (Read again the previously quoted text by Einstein)

Is He alive or inert? Do you think that God is alive, active and productive, or lifeless like neutrons and protons, without any intellectual and emotional activity? An active and productive being is alive.

We believe that there is in God an intensity of infinite life, total knowledge, perfect intelligence and love. He knows and perfectly loves His Own Self as well as His creations, which are the product of His love.

Is He Matter or Spirit? The matter is perceived by senses. It is detectable by precision instruments. In the past, men worshipped the sun, the moon, the idols, thinking that God was matter. We think that God is "the Unlimited Superior Spirit" (Einstein). This Spirit can only be perceived by Man’s spirit, in the intimacy of his conscience, enlightened by intelligence and love of Truth.

Is there a direct link between Him and us? We believe that a link exists between the Creator and the creature. It is a link of cause (God) and effect (us, His creation).

Is this link established in you or is it broken? Let your intuition answer.

If this link is broken in you, would you like to reestablish it?

Can we get in touch with Him? How? This contact is possible and can only be spiritual, taking place between spirits. In the 'Awareness' phase you have seen that man is body, soul and spirit.

Certain people call this contact "prayers"; it is a simple 'dialogue' with God. You must rid yourself of the cults and fearful attitudes imposed by some religious leaders. These cults are inspired by paganism. God is a tender Father who desires to talk with His children with simplicity, yet respectfully.

If you do not desire ardently to reestablish this link with God, it will never happen.

Can He help you in your search? If you believe that He is Almighty and Wise, you will conclude that He can, because He desires to assist you by enlightening you because he loves His creatures: He loves you... ardently.

Are you ready to ask for His help? Some prefer to look for God without God’s help.

We are convinced that no one alone can discover God and understand Him without God’s help. Human science already surpasses us, and we seek the assistance of various teachers in order to understand a small part of creation, so much so when it comes to the Creator. Humility is needed, in order to seek God’s help and to know Him, as He and He alone can reveal Himself to those who love Him. We already encounter difficulties in understanding man. Moreover, if God does not reveal Himself, we can neither understand nor know Him.
Contact Him through your heart, from the depth of your heart and tell Him: "Please help me to know You, to love You". You will discover that He is perceptive to love, tenderness and humility as many people are.

**Is He silent, secretive and unseizable or does He reveal Himself?**  God expresses Himself not only within Himself, but also to those who seek Him. He can not be indifferent to the man He created. We are convinced that God yearns for contacting men, He eagerly wants to reestablish the link broken by man throughout History. Being a personal God, therefore intelligent and caring, He reveals Himself to those who seek Him passionately and desire to contact Him.

**Did He revealed Himself throughout History?**  This is the matter at heart: we want to know if God revealed Himself to Man. Among the various spiritual creeds or religions that are presented to us, we choose the one of the Divine Revelation, in which God Himself revealed Himself to man.

Without this Revelation, we would have not understood the real essence of God, nor how He behaves with man. It is through the words of the prophets, who spoke on behalf of God, that we were made to understand that He is 'Good and Compassionate', that He dwells in the hearts of the believers. The opposite of the imaginary despotic gods of various mythologies, external to man, remote and inconsistent, whose demands were inhuman, and to whom men used to sacrifice animals, people and children.

Here ends of Phase I of our Itinerary. We now believe in a **Personal God Who revealed Himself**. We are now facing a crossroad of various religions existing in the world. Which one to choose? We should get to know them first. Let’s move then to the Second Step: 'The Religions'.

**1.4.1.2 Reflection**

**Atheists and faith in God**  Some 'atheists' think that they don’t have Faith. This is often due to the distorted and false image of God which is given to them by certain 'believers'. In fact, many so-called believers, even amongst the different clergies of the various religions, don’t reflect God’s True Spirit. We think that whoever genuinely thirsts for Truth shall definitely discover, one day or other, God’s true Face after the inevitable Deconditioning Process mentioned in Phase I of this "Spiritual Itinerary". Therefore:

If you **really** love God, you will definitely end up by believing in Him.

But if you do not love Him,

You will find a thousand and thousand pretexts to refuse Him,

Masking your hatred with non-belief.

In short, it’s all a matter of love:

To love or not to love! This, in fact, is the question...

If you love God, you will certainly find Him!

Because He Himself will then come to you.

And finding God is finding Happiness!

’Cause in Him, is the Completeness of Truth, Peace and Happiness.

**The problem of evil - Why is there evil in the world?**  God being good, why has he "created" evil?

We often hear about these questions.
To find the answers we have to think very hard and use our logic. For example, we must convince ourselves that God being good can not have created evil. A tree only can give its fruit.

Where does evil come from?

Let’s reflect on evil. Evil is not an entity in itself, but a lack of goodness, an infirmity: sickness is a lack of health, blindness is a deprivation of sight, stealing is a dispossession, murder is a deprivation of life, lie is truth deformed, and injustice is a lack of justice, irregular sexual pleasures are deviation of the human energy. All these infirmities stop man from evolving spiritually. By defining evil in such a way, it becomes clear that God cannot enjoy "creating" it, nor taking pleasure seeing human beings suffering. He has no interest doing so. Every logical, impartial person can notice that.

On the contrary, God gave sense to His creation. There is an orientation, a direction to take in life: we must not go against traffic nor drive too fast, nor drink and drive etc... in order not to hurt oneself or the others. However, many refuse to follow the way shown by God and prefer to go in their ways. This is were the source of evil is to be found in the world. We drive up to two hundred kilometers an hour drunk and provoke accidents, death and then... it is all Gods fault!!!

Men introduced the bitterness of evil. He doesn’t stop watering his devilish plant by selfishness, passion of power and domination. Men’s lust is at the origin of wars between brothers. Man kills the man his brother, to dispossess him and submit him to his demands. And all this occurs against the precepts of the divine Creator. Whose fault is it then?

The divine revelation of the symbolic story of Adam and Eve's fall, tells us about the source of evil in the world. Men and women chose to believe bad advises inspired by the devil, instead of trusting the divine instructions and attaining the fullness of life. This is how they introduced diabolic thoughts in men’s sub conscience. This was the first sin, the split between God and man. The unbalance was introduced between men and God. "Cain' carried on the devilish act by killing his brother "Abel" and introduced evil between man and the man his brother. God who alerted man was certainly not guilty.

The goodness of God manifests itself towards sinners through the grace of forgiveness. This grace is symbolized by the 'tunics made of skins' that God gave Adam and Eve to hide their shame. In fact, God reaches out his Hand to all men to take them out of their misery. But, he cannot force the hand of man who is free and make him practice goodness, nor stop him by force of committing evil. Also, God will not oblige man to seize the divine grace and to take advantage of God’s help to reach salvation. He reaches out his hand. It is for us, to grab it.

God solicits; He proposes. He never imposes Himself.

So man can not be obliged neither to do goodness nor to avoid committing evil. For two reasons:

1. The Creator’s nature: God is not a dictator. He advises, but does not oblige his creature to practice goodness. Being free Himself, he created spirits and man to His image: Free.

2. The Human nature: Man is neither a slave, nor an ordinary animal, a dog that is tied or muzzled so that he does not bite. Free and dignified, he must use his affective and intellectual faculties on his own and general interests. To commit evil, man must loose heart and intelligence. This is the worst of infirmities, because here is the source of all evil.

It would be justified to blame the Creator if He would have created infirmity from the beginning. However, in the beginning the creature existed in its human impeccable dimensions, but subject to evolve towards God. It is human pride that rejected any possibility of collaboration, any synchronization with the work of the Creator. From here comes the unbalance and the source of all evil on Earth.
It is man who by his own will commits freely actions unadvised by his Creator. This is the Father who does not want to harm men. Why would He want to see his creatures groan? He is not a sadist. On the contrary, he never stops giving advices like a father, to avoid actions and attitudes that harm body and soul (drugs, illusionary pleasures, injustice, egoism, pride etc).

Why has God created?
Life, true life, the one conceived by the genius of the Creator is beautiful. He wanted us to share it with Him. The base of creation is an altruistic good act. Few reach within themselves and recognize their faults that are the true causes of their misery and their harmful prejudgments. They would gain a lot, even everything, by overcoming themselves. They would find themselves free of misconceptions by an act of humility and objectivity. The one who seeks sincerely, objectively and with detachment, without bitterness and stress, finds infallibly.

Why then create, knowing that the devil and man who have fallen would not enjoy life? Why then create knowing that evil would come out?
The Creator is free. Infinitely free. Out of His upheaval, He created and expressed a feeling of infinite love toward those whom He called for life. However, if He had not created that -among spirits and man- some creatures would become bad due to jealousy and challenge, God would not have been free. He would have depersonalized Himself. If He had not created due to such an opposition, He would have been submitted to enemies before they existed. This is clearly illogical, because the Creator is infinitely free. As man acts freely within his own nature, likewise God does whatever He wishes within His own infinitely free nature. The creation's opposition is incapable of stopping the Almighty Will of the Great Architect of creation.
Angelical spirits and fallen men are free to self-destruct. Everything created by God in the beginning was perfect, according to its own nature. Such is the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Through Jesus Christ, again God gives His eternal Life with a huge love to those who contribute to this redemption. 'No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends', said Jesus (John 3,16; 15,13 / 1 John 4,9). Therefore, one should be humble and thankful enough to accept and reach out and grab the grace offered for free. Unfortunately, there are so few who wish to understand.
Through Jesus the wise man will know how to recover what the devil took away through Adam.

1.4.2 SEGOND STEP - THE RELIGIONS
Having completed the phase of God's existence, let's now see the various religions.
There are in the world a variety of religious paths. In order to be able to choose one of them, we must know them first. They are divided into two groups: The 'Philosophical Religions' and the 'Revealed Religions'.

1.4.2.1 The Philosophical "Religions"
These are not strictly speaking religions but individual researches, human quests striving to find the peace of the soul. They have been founded by men of high morality such as Krishna, Confucius, Buddha and others who were stimulated by an ardent desire of purification of the soul through detachment from earthly interests. They set a standard of high morality: the respect of human beings and the renunciation of superficial and materialistic considerations. Various rituals of purification (such as baptisms and other physical purification with water, various ceremonials with incense and songs etc...) are supposed to raise the soul to peaceful spiritual zones.
Some practices are conducive to reflection and meditation. Certain physical disciplines master the agitation of the body, particularly through specific respiratory exercises. These
practices are found in 'Yoga'; they are excellent and can be practiced without adopting creeds such as reincarnation and veneration of so-called sacred animals (white cows, monkeys etc...). Such teachings are merely human suppositions. In fact, one does not find in these philosophical currents any direct divine revelation or prescription, the unique God is not even mentioned, neither are His qualities (good, just, merciful etc...), no divine plan is expressed to save man as we find in the revealed religions. An abundant literature exists on this subject. I mention thereafter a summary of the most important philosophical currents:

**Buddhism**  Buddhism was founded by Gautama in the VI century B.C.on Himalaya mountains, India. At the age of 28, Gautama left his wife and family to search for Truth. He frequented the various schools of Wisdom but did not find the Truth he felt within himself. After having wandered for years, he sat one day to meditate under a fig tree and suddenly entered in an intense ecstasy, he felt overwhelmed, enlightened and he knew what he had to do. On that day he became the Buddha, The "Enlightened one", "The Wise", the 'One who is Awake'. He understood that he must not be attached to materialistic interests nor to worldly pleasures. At a glance, he perceived the vanity of strictly material preoccupations. He decided, on the spot, to communicate to others this "Knowledge", this 'Light' ('Buddhism').

In short, for the Buddha, the world of senses is illusory. Only our desire can tight us to it...and loose us. Pain comes from our attachment to the earth. Reincarnation is a punishment process which aims at purifying us by teaching us how to be liberated from materialistic fascinations. But the circle of reincarnations can be interrupted through detachment and renunciation of pleasures. After having given up all desire, one perceives the illusion and vanity of sensuality, and becomes, thereafter, enlightened and has access to the "Nirvana" which corresponds to peacefulness of the conscience after its liberation from the chains of physical pleasures.

Buddha did not distinguish between the legitimate, harmless and the illegitimate harmful pleasures which, being irregular and unbalanced obstruct the life of the soul and prevent the spiritual pleasures. Moreover, Buddha did not see these spiritual delights which accompany the discovery of Truth and the immense pleasure to live within It. His Nirvana consisted purely in obtaining an untroubled soul and a clear conscience. It is true that, on one hand, we must strive to liberate ourselves from the desire of what is not good but on the other hand, we must desire, with enthusiasm, all the things that can elevate the soul. This feeling: the desire, is a powerful motor; it is a part of our human nature and must not be frustrated. Without an enthusiastic desire to find the genuine Life, we can neither thrive nor produce good deeds and life on earth would be insipid and an unbearable nonsense.

Rather than a philosophy, Buddhism is a system of ethics, a know-how of life consisting of eight directives: direct ideas, direct intentions, direct speech, direct actions, direct life, direct effort, direct attention and direct meditation. For a Buddhist, these directives form the 'Noble Path of Liberation'. Buddha never pretended that his teachings were inspired from God. The Divine Revelation tells us that through true and pure Love of God and mankind one can reach summits far above the Nirvana. This latter may satisfy man's psychological life, his soul, whereas the Revelation transcends this level and reaches man's spirit. There is located our vital intensity, the highest and most vibrating summit of our being.

**Hinduism**  Hinduism preceded Buddhism by approximately two centuries. The Buddha was Hindu at the start, but felt unsatisfied and searched elsewhere after frequenting many Hindu schools. After having been "enlightened", he decided to work alone in search of the Truth.

Hinduism is a system difficult to define. It has no list of doctrines common to all members, nor a unique philosophical system, no hierarchy and no holy books equivalent to the Bible and the Coran, no uniform ritual exists because hindus are divided in a multitude of sects (similar
to the many christian and muslim confessions). Every hindu group has its own ritual and each hindu follows the ritual of his group, according to the rules of conduct and worship established by the custom, particularly concerning food (often vegetarian), marriage and adoration of the gods.

Hinduism gives each individual nearly full liberty in the domain of speculation and research but imposes very strict rules of conduct. Thus, a monotheist and an atheist, a skeptical and an agnostic (unbeliever) can be good hindus as far as they admit hindu mode of culture and existence. What really matters is the conduct, not a doctrine nor faith. Gandhi - who believed in God - said: "A man may not believe in God and still consider himself a Hindu. Hinduism is the pursuit of the Truth without respite, and the Truth is God".

The speculations vary as to the essence of the divinity. Some Hindus are polytheists, others are pantheists. Metempsychoses (the return of the soul on earth after death in form of vegetations, animals or human beings according to the degree of purification necessary) is generally taught, whereas Buddha admitted only reincarnation (the return in a human body). This was already a progress because the human body alone is worthy of a human soul.

Hinduism has a vague notion of a Spirit who is neutral (neither masculine nor feminine), eternal, original cause and source of all that exists, and the end to which all returns. This spirit is a "Triade" or Trinity of gods, the "Trimurti": Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Conserver) and Shiva (the Destructor) who produces a new life by destroying an old one. Further more, the Hindus believe in a multitude of minor divinities, demons, spirits and sacred objects which they worship. The cow is considered sacred. Hindus offer food and gifts to animals producing milk and butter as well as to undernourished animals belonging to no one, the law forbidding to slaughter them even to put an end to their sufferings in case they are sick. During famines, certain Hindus deprive themselves of food and offer their small ratios to cows. Monkeys are also considered sacred and Hindus accept generously to be deprived of food in their benefit.

Confucianism Confucius was born in China in the VI century B.C.. He was a politician and was not interested in matters of religion. His teaching consists in a high politico-military morality in order to obtain peace and order. He believed in Heaven but refused to comment life after death. He used to say: "Since you already cannot understand life, how can you understand death?". He taught nothing about spirits: "Since we cannot serve man, how can we serve spirits?", he also said. Nevertheless, he used to offer sacrifices to his ancestors "as if they were physically present".

The teachings of Confucius aimed at producing 'a Superior Man', cultivated men who would follow 'the Medium way' and guide the others in this Way of moderation in everything.

Confucius existed in a polytheist environment but he taught that there is only One Supreme Sovereign nearly inaccessible who decides the fate of those who appeal to Him, beyond the established various creeds. The Divine Revelation, on the contrary, tells us that God is accessible and desires to be contacted. The respect owed by Confucius to the Creator gave him a spirit of tolerance based on his great awareness of the immense gap between what man thinks he knows about God and about himself, and what he still ignores. Confucius never pretended teaching on behalf of God.

In China, Communism fought Confucianism because this latter was considered too tolerant and moderate and also because of the worships of the ancestors.

There is an illimited number of "religions" in Africa, Asia and America, various creeds and sorcelleries. I have mentioned only some examples in order to be able to distinguish between the human search for spiritual life and the Divine Revelation where we find our Goal. All the human interpretations of man’s thirst for understanding the reason of his existence on earth are just a human scream, an anguished call man unconsciously addresses to God asking Him "Where are You? What are You?".
1.4 - PHASE III - THE SPIRITUAL ITINERARY

God answers by revealing Himself in the Holy Scriptures: 'Here am I!'

1.4.2.2 The Revealed Religions

In the Revealed Religions, God Himself answers to those who seek Him. Through this Revelation, the Creator presents Himself to be known as He is. This knowledge of the Creator elevates man to his true dignity first, then to God in Whom is found the fullness of Truth, Happiness and Peace.

Therefore, amongst all the spiritual paths, which one to choose? The one, of course, where God revealed Himself.

There are three religions considered revealed by God: Judaism, Christianism and Islam. These three, in fact, are one, because they teach that God did reveal Himself to Abraham and are all accomplished in the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, sent by God 2000 years ago to unite all men of good faith from all races, colors and nations. The split between the believers is due to fanaticism, ignorance, human interests and bad interpretations of the texts.

Judaism  Four thousand years ago, God interfered directly, for the first time, in our world, revealing Himself to Abraham, the Syrian. Through him, God formed a community of believers, the Jews, to spread the message and prepare the Advent of the Messiah, the Savior of mankind. The Jews wrote down their history and teachings in the Bible. Today’s Jews are still waiting for the promised Messiah who, according to them, will reestablish the political throne of David and rebuild the Temple of Salomon. Misunderstanding God’s universal messianic plan concerning all mankind, the Jews in the past, as well as the contemporary ones, reject Jesus’s universal Messianism.

Christianism  Christians believe in God’s Revelation to Abraham and they believe as well that Jesus is the Messiah. Christianism started therefore 2000 years ago with Jesus of Nazareth recognized as the universal Messiah by the Christians. The first Christians were the jews who believed in Jesus. They spread the news of the Advent of the messiah to the four corners of the Globe. Many biographies of Jesus were put down in writing, four of which only were considered inspired by God: The four Gospels, Matthew, Marc, Luke and John. Letters were also written by the first converts, the apostles Peter, Paul, James etc, and were carefully kept by the following generations. These letters and the four biographies of the Founder are known as 'the Gospel' or 'the New Testament'. They were added to the Jewish Bible and are considered by the Christians as an unseparable part of the Bible.

Christians split throughout history because of human circumstances or spiritual controversies, this resulted into three major Christian currents: the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches.

Islam  In the VII century A.D. appeared Mohamed, the prophet of the Arabic Peninsula. He revealed the one and only God to the Arabs who were polytheists, explaining that this unique Creator had revealed Himself to Abraham and had already sent ‘the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary’. Mohamed said that he was sent to confirm ‘the Bible and the Gospel’. He condemned the Jews because they refused to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. The basic book of Islam is the Holy Coran.

The three revealed religions agree therefore that God revealed Himself to Abraham. We shall therefore study this revelation closer starting chronologically by the Bible. We shall see the books of the Old Testament, then those of the New Testament. Finally, you will have to read the book ’A look of faith at the Coran’ which will prepare you to read the Coran with an
open heart.

1.4.2.3 Reflection

This Spiritual Itinerary demonstrates the reasons of our faith which is based on the Divine Revelation, not on any human philosophy. We banish all sectarian and fanatical feeling because these are opposed to the teaching of this Revelation. You who declare being Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu etc..., had you not been born thus, would you have chosen to be what you are? Why? From your answer you will know whether or not you succeeded in deconditioning yourself. I must repeat here that this deconditioning, this liberation is indispensable before undertaking the study of the books of the Divine Revelation. Faith is not inherited, it is a personal choice enlightened by knowledge. If you feel liberated from fanaticism, considering that all men are equal and are all called to find the Truth, then you can pursue, with an open mind, your search for It. I therefore invite you to go forth by studying the "Biblical Course".

1.4.3 THIRD STEP - THE OPTION: THE DIVINE REVELATION

1.4.3.1 Introduction

Now that you have chosen the Divine Revelation as a guide, you will increase your knowledge by studying the Holy Books. I propose therefore to examine the Bible by "The Biblical course" and the Koran through the text "A Look of faith at the Koran".

Only a pure heart will reach the end of the search. It is, therefore, to you "Pure Heart", that I address myself and address this 'Biblical Course'. You have purified your heart through the Deconditioning Process, you have liberated yourself from the chains of prejudices and hatred. The thirst of knowing the naked Truth will allow you to hear its sweet and vivifying melody. 'Pure Heart", to you alone I address myself, to you who are ready to sacrifice everything in order to climb high above this world, to you who suffer from ignorance, who try to understand in order to love, to you who want to revive from darkness and embrace the Sun, to you who is fed up of sleeping and decide to get out of the coffin of worldly pleasures and break up with mediocrity and banality, to you who have discovered the illusion of vanity, who are ready to pay the price of Happiness and Truth, who have the will to persevere and overcome all the obstacles, to face all the challenges in order to arrive at the summit and quench your thirst at the pure Spring of endless life. "Pure Heart", I address myself, only to you.

I offer you the Fruit of over 40 years of study, of research and fatigue. This fruit was picked from the Tree of Life, a precious 'Gold purified in Fire' (Revelation 3,18). It has given me the Happiness I wish for you. If you succeed to taste it, you must know that you owe it to my spiritual family, above all my wife Marie-José and my spiritual children Beatrice, Philip and Mireille: because of them I can offer this Biblical Course to you.

You may have tried to read the Bible and may have been discouraged by some difficult points there in. Do not give up because, in order to understand the Bible according to the Spirit of God, as God wants you to understand it, you need a trustworthy guide. In the book of the Acts of the Apostles, the apostle Philip asked an Ethiopian who was reading a biblical extract from the prophet Isaiah: "Do you understand what you are reading?". The Ethiopian replied: "And how could I, unless I have someone to guide me?". So he urged Philip to get in and sit by his side and Philip explained the prophecy (Acts 8,30-31).

This Biblical Course is a guide you can trust; "urge it to sit close to you" as the Ethiopian urged Philip, and follow it step by step, a little everyday, systematically and without respite. You’ll end up by grasping Life and Knowledge.

The deceased Pope Pius XII said:
"The ignorance of the Holy Scriptures is a wound in the flank of the Church".

How true this is! Therefore, each time you understand an obscure point, this wound heals and the inner lungs of your soul start living and inhale the joy of knowing and understanding God a little better, gradually everyday. This knowledge will lead you to love, and love will stimulate you and push you to know more about your wonderful Creator. You will then want to look like Him, to be like Him, to have his amazing Spirit and way of thinking, instead of your own, which will then appear to you quite narrow minded. This is the 'Resurrection' and the 'New Birth' Jesus spoke about (John 3,5-7 and 5,25). The eyes of your heart will then open and you will see Life at its Source. "Happy are the pure in hearts, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5,8). To see God, is the perfect and true Happiness.

After the study of this course, with time, and if you are diligent in reading the Bible, this Holy Book will contain no secret for you and its Spirit will be within you, revealing to you directly, from within, the advice of our adorable Creator. Its purpose is to teach you to live permanently with Him and enjoy the warmth of His divine Company since now on earth.

Because, finally, the aim of the Bible is to communicate a Spirit, God’s Spirit, and this Spirit is God Himself within you. Knowing the Bible is not a goal in itself; it would be of no interest should it not end up in acquiring the Spirit of God and adopt His way of seeing, wanting and loving Life, the true One. We do not aim at clinging to the material life of this world with its deceiving false joys, but at the spiritual life belonging to the soul. Open your heart to the Eternal World which you are called to discover since now. This is the reason of your existence on earth, this is the great and splendid Biblical adventure that you are about to undertake. Make of this adventure your greatest ambition in this passing world where only remains forever the spiritual acquisitions.

Start by buying a good Bible: 'The New Jerusalem Bible" for example. Flick through it to be accustomed to it. In the beginning, you may feel somewhat lost. That’s normal, but later, after you finish this Biblical Course, you will see that the Bible and yourself have become unseparable friends for life.

Yes, unseparable friends for life. Because you must not think that you’ll discover everything at first sight, once and for all, since the first reading, and that you’ll never have to read again this Holy Book. The more you consult the Bible, the more it will reveal Itself to you. Its Spirit will speak to you from within, especially if you read it with love and enthusiasm. You should get used to consecrate- all your life through – at least ten good minutes per day to read biblical texts regularly, even after achieving this Biblical course.

Never feel satisfied by saying that you have read the Bible once or twice or many times as some people do, pretending they know it by heart and do not need to read it again. Such an attitude only demonstrates a misunderstanding of the Bible’s Spirit. With the Holy Scriptures, we must not calculate a number of readings but a continuous and daily contact with their texts, a kind of spiritual marriage with God’s Revelation. Don’t let one day pass without cleansing your heart by reading a text, however small, as you cleanse your face daily. Even today, after more than forty years of assiduous reading of the Bible, I still discover a subtlety here and a shrewdness there which help in understanding the deep real intention of the Biblical Writer. And this places me even closer to God.

In complement to this Biblical study, you may read 'A Look of Faith at the Coran' which is a summarized study of the Coran. You will thus notice that this Holy Book is a summary of the Bible since it presents itself as the translation of the Bible "in a clear arabic language destined to the Arabs of the Arabic Peninsula" in the seventh century A.D. in that period the Arabs were unable to read the Bible because it existed only in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, all languages the Arabs could neither read nor understand. The Holy Coran offers them the Biblical messages in Arabic.

Reading the Bible and the Coran will liberate you from the sectarian fanaticism in which
many bad believers perish. They content themselves with reading either the Bible or the Coran, thinking that they are different or opposed. This is because they ignore one of them. We must know both, remembering at all times that the Coran transmits the biblical message, confirms it and introduces the Gospel in another language, the Arabic, and to a specific people, the Arabs of Arabia.

I start by the Bible because it precedes the Coran chronologically. The evangelical message will teach you tolerance and will open your mind, if you are docile. This will allow you to read the Coran with objectivity, free from all prejudices. You will notice that those, among the believers, who discredit either the Bible or the Coran think that these books differ from one another or that they contradict each other. They are wrong. Go forth then with the resolution of reading those two Holy Books. You’ll understand that they transmit the same message in different languages and styles because they are addressed to different societies and mentalities.

Application and perseverance are the indispensable elements for your success; from them depends your spiritual and prophetical formation.

Now let’s go together to the "Biblical Prairie". Follow patiently this Biblical Course which is formed of 15 lessons. Apply yourself at reading the Biblical chapters whenever I refer to them.

What is the Bible? 4,000 years ago, 2,000 before Christ, the entire humanity was unaware of the existence of a single creative God. The man was polytheist and the societies had each their own mythology of multiple gods with different names controlled by a god, a supreme master, "Baal" for the Canaanites, "Jupiter" for the Romans, "Zeus" for the Greeks, "Ahura-Mazda" for Mazdaanites (current Iran) etc.

It was important that the unique Creator appears Himself, personally, to humanity to make Himself known to it. Abraham the Aramaic was the first man to whom God personally appeared about the year 2,000 before Jesus-Christ (Genesis 12,1-3). Had this revelation not occurred, the whole humanity would have sunk into total ignorance about the history of the creation and the identity of its Creator.

This divine revelation, made to Abraham, was for him and his entourage a total upheaval. This happened at a moment of history when monotheism was unsuspected and unacceptable, when polytheism had its immutable rules and its rigid and remunerative worships; therefore such a revelation was not welcomed by everyone. Indeed, the various mythological clergies survived thanks to the offerings presented to the gods, and the manufacturers of idols benefited extremely well from the lucrative trade of their products. Still today, in our society of the XXI century, the revelation of a single God disturbs more men than it delights them.

The Bible brings back the history of the dialogue established by God with Abraham, of the pact sealed between them and of the first monotheist society which resulted from it. This spiritually primitive society endeavoured to explain, according to little scientific knowledge of the time, how God, He alone, created the universe. Also, one wanted to explain the source of evil and the reasons of human misfortune. That was preserved in writing in the Bible.

The little knowledge of the biblical writers (scribes) obliged them to refer to the mythological accounts but by monothesing their contents. Thus, these are no longer "the gods" who one created the sky, the other the sun, such other the moon, the stars, the sea or the wind etc..., but it is the One and only single God who revealed Himself to Abraham, and He alone, by His absolute power, who created all things.

The first monotheist society deviated from the path traced by God (1 Samuel 8,5-20 / 11,14-15 / 12,19). He sent prophets to bring it back to the divine path (Jeremiah 7,22 / 8,8 / Amos 5,21-27 / Micah 6,6-8 / Hosea 8,1-4 / 9,15). These prophets announced that God will send a supreme prophet, the Messiah, to light up the whole humanity, not just the Jews, by the knowledge of God (Isaiah 42,1 / Romans 3,29), a knowledge retained jealously by the first
monotheist society (Acts 11,1-3).
This Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, who came to direct all the hearts thirsty for the truth towards the plenitude of light. Such is, in short, the biblical history perfectly incarnated in Jesus who says:

"Whoever listens to my word and believes, has passed from death to life." (John 5,24)
"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, let anyone who believes in me come and drink. From his heart shall flow streams of living water..." (John 7,37-39)
"I am the Way, I am Truth and Life..." (John 14,6)
"I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete." (John 15,11)
"Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, I will give you rest." (Matthew 11,28)

The Truth we seek, the Happiness we aspire to, we will neither find it in worships, in doctrines, in religious groups or esoteric research, nor in buildings of prayer, but in the meeting and the reception of the Person who has them and distributes them free to those who are thirsty for it: Jesus the Messiah (Revelation 21,6 / 22,17). Jesus is the synthesis of the whole Bible. Any biblical knowledge excluding him is useless because:

"The eternal Life is this: to know You, You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent", said Jesus (John 17,3)

What is the Koran? The Koran presents itself the biblical inspiration "in a clear Arabic language" (Koran XXVI; Poets,192-196). It was addressed to the Arab world through Muhammad the Prophet. More information can be found in the text 'A Look of faith at the Koran' of which here is an extract:

The trap, in which fall Christians and Moslems, is to consider that the religion of the Koran is opposed to that of the Bible. The Koran is not responsible for this mistake. On the contrary, it is presented in the form of a summary of the biblical message, inspired to Muhammad 'in an eloquent Arabic speech', addressed to the inhabitants of Arabia, because they did not have - as the people of the Bible did - any divine messengers to warn them. The Koran says:

"The Koran is a revelation of the Lord of the universe. The faithful Spirit has brought it down (from Heaven) into your heart (Muhammad), that you may give warning in eloquent Arabic speech. It (the Koran) was surely foretold in the Scriptures (the Bible) of the ancients (Jews and Christians)." (Koran XXVI; Poets,192-196)

It should be noted therefore that the Koranic Inspiration is already in the Bible which preceded the Koran. The Koran thus does not differ from the Bible from which it emanates. The only difference is that it was revealed 'in eloquent Arabic tongue' (Koran XII; Thunder,37):

"Thus we have revealed in Arabic a code of judgement".
"We revealed to you a Book (the Koran) in Arab language so that you inform the mother of the villages (Mecca) and her neighbourhoods." (Koran XLII; The De-liberation,7)
"Surely it (the Koran) is the truth from your Lord, so that you may forewarn a nation whom none has warned before you, and that they may be rightly guided." (Koran XXXII; Adoration,3)
1.4.3.2 The Bible: biblical course
   Please refer to our text: "The Biblical Course"

1.4.3.3 The Koran: Look of faith at the Koran
   Please refer to our text: "A Look of faith at the Koran"

1.4.4 FOURTH STAGE - HAPPINESS

   The whole work of research undertaken in this Spiritual Itinerary aimed at resulting in the
   interior and deep happiness, that of the soul conscious to possess the treasures of the eternal
   life. This happiness is the fruit of the life with God, what the Bible calls 'Emmanuel' meaning,
   as we have seen, 'God with us'.

   One cannot explain this stage: it is necessary to live it in order to understand it.
   You have received enough light to live the Emmanuel and to understand these biblical words:
   "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34,8).
   Meditate: Matthew 1,23 / John 14,21-23 and Hebrews 9,28 / John 17,21-24 / Revelation
   21,1-5 / Revelation 21,22-27.
   Read the text "The Universal Restoration".
2.1 First Lesson - The books of the Bible

The Bible is a collection of 73 books; it is thus a small library in just one book. This is why it is called "Bible", of the Greek "To Biblio" which means "the Book". This word comes from "Biblos", the antique Lebanese port where, for the first time, the manuscripts were gathered, no longer in scrolls, but in books. Thus "the Bible" means the Book. The Jews and the Christians are known in the Arab world as being "the people of the Book" (Ahl el Kitab), those who follow the Bible.

Of the 73 books contained in the Bible, 46 form the books of the Old Covenant (or Old Testament) and 27 those of the New Covenant. The Jews only recognize the books of the Old Alliance and refuse to consider it "old", believing that their alliance with God remains valid, in spite of their many treasons denounced by the prophets in the Bible and their refusal to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. The prophets, however, had declared this covenant broken eight centuries already before the arrival of Jesus (Isaiah 24,5 / Jeremiah 11,10 & 31,32), proclaiming that God will establish a "New Covenant" (Jeremiah 31,31), revealed in the books of this New Covenant, the Gospels (see Matthew 26,28 and Luke 22,20). The Christians believe in the 46 books of the Old Covenant (which that they consider exceeded) and in the 27 books of the New Covenant established by the martyrdom of Jesus.

The Bible is thus divided into two great parts: the books of the Old Covenant and those of the New Covenant. It is important to understand the books of the Old Covenant to realize the importance and the need for the New Covenant, new by its Spirit and the revelation of the true face of God.

The Old Testament

The 46 books of the Old Testament are divided into 3 groups of books:

1. **The Historical books:** They tell the story of the creation (the book of Genesis), then of Abraham and the Jews until approximately 130 BC, which means until the beginning of the Roman Empire in the Middle-East, particularly in Palestine (see 1 Maccabees 15,15-24). This group is composed of 21 books.

2. **The books of Wisdom:** These are books of wisdom and high morality. The style is often poetic. They contain councils and prayers spouting out spontaneously of a heart inspired by God to teach us how to address ourselves to the Creator. These books are 7.

3. **The Prophetic books:** Each one of these books speaks about the prophet of whom it bears the name and brings back his words and his testimony to us. They are 18 books.

The New Testament
The biblical course

Example of roll

The 27 books of the New Testament are divided into three groups:


2. 21 letters (known as 'epistles', of Latin 'epistola') sent by the Apostles to the first Christians.

3. The Book of the Revelation.

Each biblical book is divided into chapters and each chapter into verses, the same in all the Bibles and all the translations. This facilitates the references and the location of the texts;

Example: Genesis 12,3 means chapter 12, verse 3 of the book of the Genesis.

The first five historical books have a particular historical importance. They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Find them in your Bible. The Jews call them 'Ha Torah' (the Torah) which means in Hebrew 'the Law'. When the Gospels speak about the Law, they refer to these 5 books (John 1,45). The Christians call them "Pentateuch", of the Greek 'penta' which means five and 'tevki' which means 'scrolls', because the Bible was written formerly on leather scrolls which the reader unfolded progressively.

Today, thanks to printing, we are able to have a Bible in only one volume easy to transport. In the past, the books were written manually by specialised scribes. Certain biblical books such as for example the Books of Genesis and of Isaiah the prophet contained each several scrolls which were not easily transportable, and no one could possess all the Holy Scriptures. These were kept in the Temple of Jerusalem and certain synagogues where they were taught, read, consulted and discussed. Some books are very small and hardly fill a page of our modern volumes, but one took the habit of calling them "book" even if they are only one page long (as the book of the prophet Obadiah, the letter of Jude and the last 2 letters of John).

Make a diagram of the name of the biblical books to have the structure of the Bible before your eyes. That will help you find and distinguish the books of the New Testament from those of the Old Testament.

2.1.1 The authors and the duration of the writing

It took 1000 years to write the Bible, from the Genesis to the Revelation. Its drafting started towards the Xth century BC and finished about 95 years after J-C with the Gospel of St John and his Revelation. St John is the last biblical writer.

Having been written over a period of one thousand years, the Bible is the work of several authors whom one calls "the sacred (or holy) writers". They come from various social backgrounds: they are priests, kings, prophets, shepherds, Apostles of the Christ of which two were simple fishermen: Peter, who wrote 2 letters, and John, who wrote a Gospel, 3 letters and the
Book of Revelation, the last of the biblical books. Luke the evangelist was a doctor, a cultivated and educated man. Certain sacred writers are and will remain unknown, like the writers of the Genesis, the books of Samuel and the Kings, etc...

Before printing was discovered, the Bible was hand written by scribes devoted to this purpose. They were erudite in regards to the biblical texts and religious laws. It was against the scribes who condemned him that Jesus declared God’s wrath. Because they, who had written the Bible, knew about the prophetic texts which announced him; their refusal of his message, announced by the prophets, is thus unjustified and condemns them (Matthew 23).

Aside from the many biblical writers, there is only one Author who, along the centuries, inspired and supervised the biblical work in its entirety: God. It is the divine Spirit which pushed the whole of the human writers, spread out over the duration of approximately one thousand years, to put in writing all what they knew of God, his apparitions and his manifestations to those men chosen by Him in order to conclude his plan: to make Himself known to all men. These sacred writers sometimes were cultured like the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and the Apostles Matthew, Paul and Luke, and sometimes were just simple shepherds and fishermen like the prophet Amos and the Apostles Peter and John. This shows that God does not need the human culture to appear.

Thus there were several human authors, but the principal Author is God. During every century while the Bible was written, God took care of the achievement of his plan and of its writing to be revealed to men of all posterior times, to be revealed to you, today, as to those who will come after you until the end of humanity on earth. The Spirit of God was - proportionally - for the sacred writers what the muse is to the poets, all things considered.

We can note that the biblical writers expressed the divine Revelation with a precision and a fidelity which evolved with time and experience. There often was confusion between the Revelation of God and the personal desire of the writer, between what God intended and wanted one to understand and what was understood. One needs subtlety and discernment to seize the language of God. This requires time, experience and prayer. It is necessary to purify the heart and to rise for submission to God whose language is beyond ours which is too materialistic. Indeed, God said in the book of Isaiah: 'Your thoughts are not my thoughts... As much the sky is high above ground, as much my thoughts are high above your thoughts' (Isaiah 55,8-9).

The more the prophets were familiarised with the language of God, the better they seized the true meaning of his words, his true intentions. God allowed that this incomprehension of his Word shows through in the biblical text. Thus, after having spoken, for example, of the circumcision with Abraham and Moses, God explained it later by the prophet Jeremiah like a need for circumcision, which He intended purification of the heart and soul, not the foreskin (Jeremiah 9,25). Only love is able to purify the heart.

It is with Jesus that God expressed Himself best: Christ reports with precision the words and the real intentions of God. This is why He is called 'the Word of God’ by the Gospel (John 1,1) and the Quran (chapter 3, 'the Family of Imran',45. See the text 'A Look of faith at the Koran'). It is he, Jesus, especially who insisted on love (Matthew 19,19) and the love which purifies (Luke 7,47).

Jesus, the Word of God by excellence, is the synthesis of the entire biblical message. He is the Bible alive and acting within us; also it is necessary to succeed in introducing Jesus in us so that He acts in us and with us. It is in order to know and understand Jesus that we must study the Bible, the Old and the New Testament. Then we will know how to introduce the Spirit of Jesus that is the Spirit of God in our everyday life.
2.1.2 Oral traditions

Abraham appeared 2000 years BC. The scribes started writing the Bible approximately 1000 years later. But before the drafting of the Bible, how did the history of Abraham pass to the following generations? Orally: the first community of believers told the story from mouth to mouth, among families, the accounts of the ancestors, how God appeared to Abraham, then to his descendants to make them move away from the idols. During centuries, the stories passed from fathers to sons. Thus, the events remained alive in the spirits. However, passing orally from fathers to sons through the centuries, the same history was told differently concerning certain details of no importance. What the ones allotted, for example, to Abraham, others said it of his son Isaac.

This gave rise to several "oral traditions" which slightly differed from each other. Thus you will find twice the same history repeated, once allotted to Abraham (Genesis 12,10-20) and once to Isaac (Genesis 26,1-11). In the same way, there are two accounts of the creation in the Genesis: the first: Genesis 1,1 to Genesis 2,3 and the second: Genesis 2,4 to Genesis 2,25. You will note that the manner of creating differs in the two accounts, the man, for example, according to the first account, is created after the plants and the animals, but he is created before them in the second account. The difference between the two accounts is in the manner of creation, but it is always God who is the unique Creator. Such is the important message that the Bible wants to communicate to us, a message still disputed today by the atheists and the materialists who reject the whole divine revelation.

What are the reasons of these various oral traditions?
The most important are:

- The long time (many centuries) past between the event and its writing makes one forget to whom a precise fact happened: was it with Abraham and his wife (Genesis 20,1-18) or with Isaac and his wife (Genesis 26,1-11)? Certain oral traditions allotted it to Abraham and others to Isaac. The writers, later, not wanting to omit anything, reported the two accounts to satisfy everyone and link the ranks. One should not see there a historical precision.

- The multiplicity of the narrators.

- The evolution of the mentality of the scribes and believers.

Thus, there were several oral traditions of which the most important are:

- The "Elohistic" tradition where God, in the Hebrew original text, is called 'Elohim".

- The "Yahvistic" tradition, where God is called 'Yahveh".

- The 'Priestly' tradition, introduced by the priests and the Levites where the rigidity and the narrowness of their mentality are noted, like their attachment to the cult. The book of the Leviticus, concerning the Levites, is an example.

These oral traditions should not be an embarrassment to you; just take note, so that you have a better understanding of certain differences when you start reading the Bible.

These oral traditions also differed from the North to the South of Palestine, the inhabitants being influenced by mythologies of the neighbouring countries. Thus, some believed that creation was completed in six days, others thought differently, according to what they heard from their neighbours in the bordering countries. But, the Jews all agreed on an essential fact: only one God created everything, and it is this unique God who spoke to Abraham. This is the important revelation to safeguard: the form of creation is less than secondary.

It is this revelation of a unique God and creator which distinguished the Jews from the other people who surrounded them and who were, at that time, all polytheists and idolaters.
When, in the Xth century BC, the Jewish religious persons in charge, decided to put their History in writing, they included the various oral traditions to safeguard the unity of the Jewish community. These various oral traditions help us understand the Revelation in spirit, according to the intention of God, not according to the letter or according to human and political interpretations. You will understand that better when you study the Genesis.

2.1.3 The authenticity of the biblical text

For a few years, archaeological discoveries have called into question the historicity of the biblical accounts. According to two Israeli archeologists, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, authors of the book "The Bible Unearthed" they argue (translated from their book in french: "La Bible Dévoilée"): 'In fact, these accounts were knit together starting with the memories, from the details of old habits, from legends of the birth of the various people of the area'.

Even if names of persons and places quoted in the Bible do not have any archaeological proof, the fact remains that the biblical text was written by men inspired by God with the aim of raising their contemporaries spiritually. (*Published by 'The Free Press' A Division of Simon and Schuster, Inc New York, USA. 2001).

It is up to us to read these texts with understanding and to dig out the gold. The prophets themselves, in particular Jeremiah, a contemporary of the scribes who wrote the Torah, condemns "the lying pen of the scribes!" (Jeremiah 8,8)

How can we be sure that the biblical text we have in our hands today is the original text? Some claim that this text was falsified and that, consequently, one can no longer depend on the Bible.

There are three kinds of evidence of the authenticity of the current biblical text; there is, on the other hand, no proof of its falsification.

2.1.3.1 The archaeological evidence

Archaeology unearthed an incalculable number of texts of the Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments. No literary work of the Antiquity, even post-biblical, has been so accurately transmitted as the Bible, with the support of archaeological evidence. We have so many and so ancient biblical manuscripts, that the doubt about the authenticity of the biblical text is not allowed.

For the Old Testament The scrolls of "the Dead Sea"

The most important archaeological discovery is that of the scrolls known as 'The scrolls of Qumran' or of 'the Dead Sea', in Palestine. These leather scrolls on which a great part of the Old Testament has been written, were providentially discovered in the caves of the plateau of Qumran, near the Dead Sea, in 1947, by a Palestinian shepherd who was looking for his lost goat. He found it in one of the caves, stamping its foot on a certain place. After getting closer, he saw under its foot the lid of an earthenware jar which contained a leather scroll written in Hebrew. It was the beginning of the discovery of many scrolls, thus buried, of the various books of the Old Testament. They had been hidden under ground by a Jewish religious community, the "Essanians", who lived in Qumran and whose specific mission was the writing and the protection of the biblical texts. These discovered scrolls go back to 200 years BC.

It was the habit to keep buried the documents which one wanted to protect; this habit is mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah who asked his secretary: "Take these sealed deeds... and put them in an earthenware pot, so that they may be preserved for a long time." (Jeremiah 32,14)

The scrolls of the Dead Sea are currently at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, copies
of them in microfilms are in all the large museums of the world. The text of these scrolls, is identical to what we have today in our Bibles.

For the New Testament  The Rylands papyrus

The oldest manuscript known as "the Rylands papyrus", is a small fragment of papyrus of the year 125 AD after the name of the archaeologist who discovered it. It contains a text of the Gospel of St John 18,31. This reassures us on the authenticity of the text, considering that John died around the year 105 AD and that this papyrus goes back to about 20 years only years after his death.

Chester Beatty

Another more quantitatively important archaeological discovery is that of the papyri (plural of papyrus) of "Chester Beatty" dating from the third century AD. They contain a great part of the New Testament. They are preserved at the University of Michigan in the United States.

There are still three very old whole specimens of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament:

• The "Vaticanus" In Latin. It dates from the IVth century AD. It is at the museum of the Vatican, from where its name.

• The "Sinaiticus" In Greek. It also dates from the IVth century AD. It was found by a Russian prince at the end of the XIXth century in the Greek orthodox convent of St. Catherine in the Sinai, from where its name. It is in the British Museum.

• The "Alexandrinus" It dates from the Vth century AD and is in the British Museum.

The text of these three old Bibles is the same, and is identical to the one of our modern Bibles.

2.1.3.2  The logical evidences

• The multiplicity of the Christian rites is a guaranty of the authenticity of the biblical text, being the same one for all.
2.1 - First Lesson - The books of the Bible

- The texts of the Old Testament are the same ones for the Christians and the Jews.

- Certain Moslems and Jews claim that the Christians falsified the Bible. Their claims are based on an imposture: the alleged 'Gospel of Barnabe'. However, it is shown that this 'Gospel' was written by a Jew in the XVIth century who 'converted' to Christianity, and then to Islam. According to this 'Gospel', the Messiah is not Jesus, but Mohammed. This contradicts the Bible and the Quran which both recognise that Jesus is the true Messiah. Thus, no Christian and no Moslem can believe in the 'Gospel' of Barnabe without disavowing his faith. Furthermore, let us recall that the archaeological discoveries showed the authenticity of the current biblical text.

- All the biblical scientists recognize the authenticity of the biblical text. Among the Moslems, two big scientists: the late sheik Afghani and the late sheik Mohammed Abdo (former Mufti of Azhar of Cairo) deny categorically the falsification of the Bible.

2.1.3.3 2. A proof of faith

God, who revealed the biblical message, cannot allow its contents to be falsified and its prophecies lost, especially the ones concerning the Messiah.

2.1.4 The biblical languages

The Bible was originally written in two languages: In Hebrew for the Old Testament and in Greek for the New Testament (except the Gospel of Matthew which was written in Aramaic, because it is to the Jews that Matthew addressed his Gospel). The Old Testament was also written in Aramaic by the Jews who were exiled in Babylon (Iraq), in the VIth century BC, where they have learned this language.

The books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek, the international language of the time (see Acts 21,37), like English and French are nowadays.

2.1.4.1 The "Hebrew" Bible

One calls 'Hebrew Bible' the original text of the Old Testament in Hebrew. Thus, this Bible does not contain the books of the New Testament, considering the fact that the Jews do not believe in Jesus. It was kept in the Temple of Jerusalem and in the synagogues in the form of scrolls. The biblical translators refer to it as a sure base in their translations of the Old Testament.

2.1.4.2 The "Greek" Bible:

In the IIIrd century BC, the Jews of the Diaspora (those who lived outside of Palestine) did not speak Hebrew anymore and thus, could not read the Hebraic Bible. Therefore, those of Alexandria, in Egypt, asked the Jews of Palestine to send them biblical experts to translate to them 'The Torah, the Books (of Wisdom) and the Prophets' (that is how the Jews call the Bible) from Hebrew into Greek. They sent 70 biblical scholars to them. When they arrived in Alexandria, they translated all the biblical books from Hebrew into Greek, adding 5 other books that the Jews of Palestine read in the synagogues and the assemblies, however without acknowledging them as inspired books. Thus these five books were not part of the 'canonical' books, i.e. not recognized officially as inspired by God.

They are:

- For the Historical books: Judith and Tobit;
- For the Wisdom books: The Book of Wisdom and the Ecclesiasticus;
• For the Prophetic books: Baruch;

• Two chapters were still added to the book of Daniel: Daniel 13 and 14.

Later on, the two books of the Maccabees were also translated into Greek and added to the already translated precedents, changing to 7 the number of the books translated into Greek and added to the 39 books of the Hebraic Bible. This group of 7 books with the chapters 13 and 14 of Daniel are recognized as the deutero-canonical books, in which one is free to believe or not.

You will find in the second book of the Maccabees, the close links between the Jews of Palestine and their co-religionists of Egypt, and the invitation made to the latter to obtain the texts of the Bible: "To their brothers, the Jews living in Egypt, greetings (shalom) from their brothers, the Jews living in Jerusalem, etc... May He (God) open your hearts to his Law (Torah)... (2 Maccabees 1,1-4)... Nehemiah founded a library and made a collection of the (biblical) books dealing with the kings and the prophets, the writings of David... Similarly, Judas made a complete collection of the books (biblical books of the Old Testament) dispersed in the late war (deportation to Babylon), and these we still have. If you need any of them, send someone to fetch them.' (2 Maccabees 2,13-15). The interest carried by the Jews of Palestine to those of Egypt is due to the fact that the latter formed the richest and most powerful Jewish group of the Diaspora, like the Jews of America today.

The Greek translation of the Hebraic Bible is known under the name of "the Greek Bible" or "the Bible of the Seventy" because of the 70 Jewish scholars who translated it into Greek. It differs from the Hebraic Bible by the 7 "deutero-canonical" (non officially recognized) books which were added. This is the Greek Bible, that the Jews of the Diaspora, who did not understand Hebrew, consulted at the time of the Apostles, to verify the words of Paul (Acts 17,2 / 17,11).

The Jews refused at that time - and still do to recognize these 7 deutero-canonical books as inspired by God. This is why they are not to be found in the Hebrew Bible. The Protestants also reject these 7 books and do not introduce them into their Bible. On the other hand, the catholic and orthodox Bibles contain these books.

Thus, according to whether you find these 7 books or not, you will be able to recognize a Catholic Bible from a Protestant Bible. These books do not contain anything which differs, on the doctrinal level, between the various confessions. As for the 27 books of the New Testament, they exist entirely in all the Christian Bibles. It is only in the XVI century, after Luther (the founder of Protestantism), that the Protestants removed the seven deuteron-canonical books from their Bible.

The Hebrew Bible and the Greek Bible of the Seventy are used as a basis for all the biblical translations. When the books of the New Testament were written, they were added by the Christians to the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Seventy).

2.1.4.3 The "Latin" Bible (or "Vulgate")

In the IVth century AD, St Jerome translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, which became the international language at that time, and it remained for a long time a language employed in the religious and scientific worlds (medicine etc...). Jerome translated it into a popular version (vulgaris) so that the ordinary people could understand. This is why this Bible was known by the name of "the Vulgate", meaning "The Popular", accessible to the people. This Latin translation was used a lot and for a long time in the Western religious world, before the Bible was translated into all the languages of the world, since only about one hundred years. Today the Bible is translated into more than 2000 languages. Thus, the evangelic Message is actually spread in the whole world. This is a sign of the times predicted by Jesus (Matthew 24,14).
When a Bible mentions that it is translated from the original languages, it means from Hebrew and Greek, but not from the Latin which is already a translation from the original Hebrew and Greek. Before buying a Bible, ensure that it is translated from the original languages.

2.2 Lesson 2 - The first eleven chapters of the Genesis

Now you are going to begin reading the first of the historical books: the Genesis. It is also the first book of the 'Torah' or 'Pentateuch'. The Genesis is composed of 50 chapters, the first eleven chapters narrate Prehistory, what happened before Abraham, since the creation of the world: the creation of Adam and Eve, their revolt against God, up to the deluge with Noah. Those first eleven chapters form a distinct block from the rest of the Genesis and the biblical history in general. A lot was written about these first eleven chapters and many religious thinkers devoted books to them.

In the first eleven chapters, the sacred writers attempt to answer the questions concerning the supernatural, and life on earth: where does the universe come from? Why is life on earth so difficult? Why is there pain, sorrow and death? The answers: There is a unique creating God. He created man happy, but man disobeyed and moved away from his Creator; in doing so, he experienced unhappiness. It was then that God drew up a plan to save man from his madness.

Starting at chapter 12, the Genesis speaks about the religious history, with the advent of Abraham, who was the first between man to be called by God to establish with him a plan aiming at spreading God’s words in order to save from spiritual ignorance all those who believe in His words.

Begin by reading only chapters 1 and 2 of the Genesis and only then, continue reading this course. You will notice that Genesis reports two different stories of the creation. That is due to the different oral traditions.

2.2.1 The first story of the creation (Genesis 1,1 to 2,3)

You must have found in that story some 'non-scientific' points. You are right because the Bible is a spiritual book not a scientific treaty. What is needed is spiritual precision and it gives it by asserting that God is the unique creator of the universe. Whether He created in 6 days or more, is not important. The intention of the Bible is to reveal the existence of a unique Creator.

It took an extraordinary courage to dare and reveal the existence of a single God and Creator, 2000 years before Christ, in a polytheistic and idolatrous world. 1500 years after that revelation, in Greece, the land of philosophy and civilization, at that time, Socrates was condemned to death because he believed in a single God (called by Socrates 'The Prime Engine' because He gives the vital movement to everything). Still today, there are atheistic societies that forbid talking about God, in countries in the vanguard of scientific progress. There are still millions of polytheistic fetishists in the bushes of Africa and America. Whenever you think of all that, you can better appreciate the difficulties and dangers that our ancestors in faith have undergone three thousand years ago, when they began writing the Bible to reveal the existence of a single God.

In order to better understand that first story of the creation, you must know that its writers, had of God a very elementary knowledge and a false concept of the cosmos. They only knew about the existence of God but ignored that the earth is round and that it turns around the sun. They thought that God needed light to see clearly before creating. Therefore, He first created the light on the first day, and 'separated light from darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night... First day' (Genesis 1,4-5).

It was only in the XVIIth century that Galileo discovered, that the earth was a round, and
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Conception of the cosmos

Vision of the world in the ancient times

that it turned around the sun. Prior to that, men believed that it was flat, and that it floated on a huge expanse of water, stabilized by 7 columns that sunk into that water (1 Samuel 2,8 / Proverbs 9,1).

To explain the rain, they thought that there was water stocked up there in the sky, above the firmament. This water did not fall on the earth, because the Firmament was holding it back. They believed the firmament to be a solid vault, dividing "the waters under the vault from the waters above the vault" (Genesis 1,7).

This vault had windows and locks that God opened to let the rain fall. The only difference between what was said on that matter by believers and pagans, was that the latter thought that the gods had created the universe and that they opened the sky’s locks to let the rain fall.

The belief was that the sun, the moon and the stars were divinities. The Revelation explained that they were created by God. The believers thought that they were hung to the vault, to enlighten the earth, exactly as you hang a chandelier to the ceiling.

One should not ask the Bible to reveal that the earth is round, not flat, and that it is the earth that turns around the sun, not the contrary. The Bible has a precise aim: to reveal God to men. This is what the sacred writers tried to explain in accordance with their conception of the cosmos.

Knowing that, you can understand better now why Genesis 1,6 says that God created the Firmament in order "to divide the waters under the vault from the waters above". There is nothing scientific in that. The writer’s aim is to reveal the single God who created the whole universe and that the gods of mythology never created anything, being inexistents themselves. Therefore, there is not a god creator of the sun, another one of the sea, and a third one of the
moon, etc... Thus, polytheism has been swept by the knowledge of the unique Creator of the universe.

As some used to adore the sun and the moon, the writers of the Genesis reported their creation on the fourth day, in order to depreciate them, in the eyes of their worshipers. The book of Deuteronomy reveals, that even between the Jews, some of them used to adore the sun, the moon and the stars (Deuteronomy 17,2-3 / 2 Kings 23,5). Notice that the names of the sun and the moon are not even mentioned; instead, they are called "the two great lights...the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night..." Here again, it is scientifically wrong to say that the sun was created the fourth day, since science demonstrates that the sun existed millions of years before the earth. And how could the sun have been created the fourth day since, according to Genesis itself, there had been 3 evenings and 3 mornings before? Mornings without sun? The Genesis also says, that these two lights had been created "to divide light from darkness" (Genesis 1,18). Yet, the first day, God had already "divided light from darkness" (Genesis 1,4). One should therefore understand the spiritual intention of the writer: to reveal that God is the unique Creator and to abolish the idolatrous worship of the sun, the moon and the stars.

We reach here an important point: should the Bible be understood literally -according to the literal meaning of the text- or according to the "allegoric" or "spiritual" meaning of the text? Should one believe immutably, that God created in 6 days of 24 hours, that the sun was created the fourth day, neither before, nor after, or rather should one take in consideration the scientific level of that time? What counts for us, is the spiritual meaning: to discover what God wants to tell us through the partial knowledge, the literary form and the style of the biblical writers of that time.

A modern biblical writer would have written the stories of the creation differently, saying for instance: 'In the beginning, God created neutrons and protons, millions of years ago, evolving at a temperature of 100.000.000 degrees centigrade. These molecules condensed while cooling. Forming the "raw material" from which God made the cosmos. He first created the sun, a part of which tore off and cooled down to form the earth etc...". This way of presenting the creation does not change anything to the essence: anyway, it is God who created everything alone. That is what matters for the spiritual Knowledge.

As many, specially among navigators, used to worship the "great sea-monsters" (sharks, whales, crocodiles etc...), Genesis 1,21 puts them also, intentionally, among the animals created by God. Nowadays, targeting certain Asian people who worship the white cow, the biblical writer would have added that this animal is a creature of God; the readers would have concluded by themselves that the white cow is not at all divine and would have stopped worshiping it.

Notice that only man, among all creatures, was made in the image of God (Genesis 1,26). This "likeness" of man to his Creator is not physical but spiritual: man is also a spirit, he's not only made of flesh, blood and bones. God endowed man with a conscience, unlike animals, which only live at the level of instinct. It is a fall for mankind to only live bodily.

The elevation of man to the spiritual level enables him to 'dominate' the whole animal creation. Therefore, once God finished creating man, and only then, He saw that all He had made was indeed "very good", not only 'good', as for other creatures. Man is then, the ultimate goal of the creation of the universe (Genesis 1,31).

Have you noticed that in this story of creation, man is created both male and female, man and woman being created at the same time (Genesis 1,27)? In the contrary, in the second story, the woman was created after the man and was taken from his rib. There is another difference between the two stories: in the first one, the man is created on the sixth day, after all the other creatures; according to the second one, the man would have been created in the first place, then the animals, and last, the woman. This is one more example of the different oral traditions.

What is common to both narrations, is the intention of the writer, which is:
1. It is God who created the first human couple. The mode of creation is not important.

2. The man should respect the woman and deal with her as an equal, because:

- She was created at the same time as him (according to the first story) or from him, from his own rib, very near to his heart (according to the second story).
- The man was fashioned from the earth, but the woman, in a more sophisticated way: from the man’s body.

These texts aim to promote the woman, in times when she was depreciated. Therefore, one should not understand human creation to the letter, since we have there two different texts. Try to discover throughout these two different forms the moral lesson: God created both man and woman equal, to love and respect each other, because they were made for each other, complementary to each other. And, above all, because they are made in God’s image, God being love, respect and dignity.

God asks the first human couple to multiply and to fill the earth (Genesis 1,28). That is why, the man who owes so much to his parents, must not leave them, except to live with his wife, with whom he "becomes one flesh" (Genesis 2,24). This is the atmosphere of love that should prevail in the couple who want to keep the image of God. Read what Jesus says on this matter in Matthew 19,1-2, and also Paul’s advices to the couple in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 5,21-33). You will see later, how the first human couple will lose the image of God by disobeying Him. Our effort aims to reconquest our likeness to the divine Father. Such is the goal of the divine revelation.

The last point to be considered in this first story is God’s "rest" the seventh day (Genesis 2,2-3). God does not rest like humans, because He does not get tired like them. The mention of the rest on the seventh day is destined to men, for them to rest one day per week, instead of spending all their time worrying about life on earth and accumulating money. God invites men to devote one day per week, in order to stand back and think of the spiritual life (Exodus 35,1-3).

The purpose of these two last texts of Genesis and Exodus is to save man from materialism, as the majority of people only think of money. Some people understand them literally, believing that God really rested, and is still resting every Saturday, and that man should not do anything on that day. Such is the case of the Jews who interrupt every activity on Saturday, even the good ones (sports etc...) to the point of a nearly total paralysis (it is forbidden for the buses to run, for the planes to take off etc...). They were mad at Jesus, because he cured a man on a Saturday (the Sabbath); Jesus answered them, that, unlike what they thought, God worked continuously (John 5,16-18). In Israel, the religious Israelis "respect" Saturday to the extent that they do not walk more than one kilometer, do not take neither a taxi, nor a bus, nor a plane. The fundamentalist Jews got the airport to close on Saturday: they stoned the buses circulating on that day. However, when it comes to take the initiative of war on a Saturday, they never hesitate...! Jesus -predicting the disasters that would destroy Israel- advised the Jews in these ironic terms: "Pray that you will not have to make your escape on a Sabbath..." (Matthew 24,20), because one will then have to run far away, a distance that those who understand the Torah to the letter, do not allow themselves to run... Such is the danger of the literal interpretation: "The written letters kill, but the Spirit gives life" says Paul (2 Corinthians 3,6)

### 2.2.2 The second narration of the creation (Genesis 2,4-25)

I have already mentioned that in this narration, the woman had been created from the man’s rib; three other points should be considered:

1. The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
2. The names given by man to the animals,

3. The condition of the first human couple.

2.2.2.1 "The Tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2,17)

It stands in the middle of Paradise, it is not a botanical reality but a metaphor, being an action or an attitude that God judges bad, and that the man has to avoid, at the risk of suffering the consequences. Man has to have a certain behavior towards God: a filial and affectionate relation, simple and totally confident in his Creator. Notice that it is a tree "of knowledge" and not an apple as many might think. That reality is not of a vegetable nature but rather moral.

How should we understand the nature of that "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"? It is the fact, to appreciate by oneself, without any reference to God, what is good and what is evil, to feel free to judge good what the Creator does not recommend. We often hear people today, say: "Why is such a forbidden action bad?" They end concluding, in the name of liberty, that it is good...even if, for God, it is bad (drugs, homosexuality, pedophilia, pornography etc...)

That is why the prophet Isaiah had said: " Woe to those who call what is bad, good, and what is good, bad etc..." (Isaiah 5,20)

Some let themselves attract by the desire or the curiosity of knowing the evil, of experiencing it. It is useful to know the good and practice it, but always harmful to engage in evil. One must pray not to "be put to the test" of evil which knows how to become seductive by taking the aspect of good (Matthew 6,13). "Satan himself disguises himself as an angel of light" says St Paul (2 Corinthians 11,14).

The tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil represents then a temptation: the wish to liberate oneself from God, in order to judge like him, to be equal to him, and not having to give Him any account, nor having to ask Him any advice, to decide by oneself, "like an adult", to be independent from God. Yet, it is not in that spirit of conflict that one lives with God, but in a spirit of collaboration, a spirit of exchange between father (God) and son (man). We all need to be advised: professionally one consults those who have more experience; in order to obtain diplomas, one should have the humility to enter universities. Maturity cannot be reached without passing by childhood. Why, then, when it comes to God, the Master of Life, one thinks of taking one's "independence" to judge of the vital things, that are often so complex and delicate? That kind of independence is "a tree of the knowledge" of Evil which one should not touch without impunity. One should triumph from such a desire of false independence, and banish such arrogant ideas, if one wants to live well. Because too much thinking over a temptation -as Eve did in Genesis 3,6- leads to falling in the trap. Therefore let us accept to attend God’s school, if we want to learn what real life is. Let us be neither an agent nor a victim of Evil.

Such is the teaching of Genesis 2,17. Its aim is to maintain man in the invigorating mentality of God, the Holy Spirit.

2.2.2.2 The names of animals are given by men, not by God

Notice, indeed, that the Creator does not give the animals their names: "These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it" (Genesis 2,19). That is a way of expressing man’s freedom and a certain independence that makes him God’s collaborator, superior to the animal. Here appears an aspect of the collaboration between God and man in the administration of the world, an administration counseled by God who would have given men happiness, should they have respected it, since the beginning.
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To give a name is a significant and important act by which one establishes an affectionate and intimate bond with the person given a name, like the names given to tame animals that we keep in our houses, or, an act of a greater importance, like the name we give our children. In the case of John the Baptist and Jesus, and because they were sent by God, it is God Himself who imposed their name before their birth (Luke 1,13 and 1,31). Thus, He shows that they are His envoys. Even for us, it is still important to know a person’s name or that of a domestic animal. Everything has a name; was is nameless cannot be identified and has no value. That is why the writers of the Genesis did not give the sun and the moon a name when they were created (Genesis 1,14-19).

2.2.2.3 The state of the first couple in Paradise

It is about the state of mind, the psychological and spiritual condition of the first couple. According to the second narration, Adam was feeling alone without Eve: "Yahweh God said "it is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2,18). Nevertheless, among the animals, none could fill the emptiness in his heart: "But no helper suitable for the man was found for him" (Genesis 2,21). The man needed a person, a companion with whom he could dialog and who would be, like him, created to the image of God, endowed with intelligence and capable of love, to understand him. That is the only "helper suitable for him".

God decided, then, that man should be a human couple, complementary of one another: male and female. What a brilliant decision! God did the first "surgical operation" under anesthesia in the history of mankind: "Then, Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep, he took one of his ribs and closed the flesh up again forthwith...God fashioned the rib into a woman, and brought her to the man" (Genesis 2,22).

Have you noticed how the man exclaimed with enthusiasm, and cheerfully at the sight of the woman extracted from him: "This one at last (unlike the other times with the creation of animals) is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!" The man is evidently happy to find himself, face to face, with a being similar to him, a person of another sex, coming from within himself.

The man’s first reaction was to give a name to that charming person standing there, in front of him. He does not give her his own name, he knows she does not have one; he names her in reference to himself: "She is to be called Isha (Woman)’, because in Hebrew "man" is "Ish", and "Ish" names his feminine supplement from his own name: "Isha". In English also, the word "woman" comes from "man”. The name of the man was given, exclusively, to his human partner. She is, unlike the animals, the feminine reflection of his own face. He recognizes himself in her. The woman having been extracted from his own flesh, "a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2,24 / Matthew 19,3-6).

Thus, in this union with his wife, the man finds and completes himself by putting again in its place, and by himself, the extracted rib. That is why, God condemns, in the Gospel, those who at the end of times, forbid marriage (as certain monks do): "The Spirit (God) has explicitly said, that during the last times, some will desert the faith and pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines that come from devils... they forbid marriage..." (1 Timothy 4,1-3). This does not mean that marriage ought to be a moral obligation: some find in God the Spouse that their heart yearn for. That spiritual union with God is a divine call to all men; whether it is directly, with a freely chosen celibacy, or through marriage. In all cases, God should be the First Love; it is He who will then, orient believers towards celibacy or towards a matrimonial union. There is no absolute law with or against marriage. Every man to his own vocation, all vocations being equally saint, being the practical experience of the divine will. Happiness is nothing but the fruit of the accomplishment of God’s will.

What was the state of mind of the first couple in Paradise? Man and woman were overwhelmed by happiness, because God created them pure, innocent, without any stain: their
conscience was clear. From where, then, did evil come? Not a single bad idea was put in them by the Creator. How could it be possible, that God, who is the absolute good, put Evil in the soul and mind of the man created by Him? From God, only comes good. That is why, Ish and Isha were happy, without any worry of living or any psychological complex to erode them. In peace with God and between them, "they felt no shame before each other" (Genesis 2,25). They would look in each other’s eyes without having to blush because of any idea unworthy of their holy state, and they were able to look at God in the face’.

It is only after their rebellion against God, that man and woman will experience shame. That situation still prevails in the world, nowadays, because of the bad intentions and the unjust behaviors of men, along the centuries. One does not really look anybody in the face, any more, and the shade of Evil hangs in the majority of consciences. Very few are those who can resist the attraction of money, glory, power, or to look at a naked body without having unhealthy, unbalanced or repressed desires. But at the beginning of humanity, it was not like that: man and woman used to look at each other with a real, deep and pure love. They were immaculate, "naked" of any sin and covered by God’s Grace, living permanently with the Creator.

Since God created the man in the state of innocence, how did Evil enter the world? This is what Chapter 3 of the Genesis will reveal to us. Read it, before you continue this course, in order to better understand the explanation that will follow. But before that, be conscious of the joy that you have experienced while understanding what you have already learned. Did you feel the lungs of your soul expanding and breathing the oxygen of spiritual joy by discovering the truth on those biblical points that were obscure for you?

2.2.3 Man’s rebellion against God (Genesis 3)

With that symbolic story that you just read, the Genesis tells us how evil entered into the world: the man made the mistake to believe the devil, instead of listening to God’s advices. Here, the snake symbolizes the cunning devil. It is, then, the man himself who introduced evil in the world. He, himself, indeed, is responsible of that. He rather preferred to believe the devil and neglected God’s disinterested advice. Seduced by the misleading prospects of the enemy, man became Satan’s slave. He rapidly spread the harmful ideas and the diabolical desires within the hearts of the subsequent generations. Hence, the devil has had his agents, his offsprings on earth, to drive humanity apart from God. The whole story of salvation is about exorcizing man, by introducing again, within him, God’s thoughts, thus liberating him from the diabolical influence. Once man gets liberated from the devil, he gets to ask God passionately: "May your will be done..." and never again mine.

The devil got nearer to the woman and not to the man, because the latter having talked with God was more difficult to seduce. Be aware of the craftiness with which the diabolical snake approaches the woman. To make sure that he will not be pushed away by her, he initiates the dialogue, with malice, by asking a simple question, but in such a way to distort the divine advice: "Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?" That way of presenting the problem, already contained the germ of a revolt against God. Satan wanted to push the woman to rebellion by making her believe that she was not to eat from 'any of the trees’. Before that satanic intervention, the human couple was satisfied with their fate.

Then, the woman explains to the devil: 'We may eat the fruit of the trees. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said,'You must not eat it under pain of death' '. The devil knew that! But the dialogue was already initiated; that was what counted for him. That first dialogue was the first satanic triumph over humanity. Having attracted the attention of the mother of mankind, Satan could, hence, continue this ancient inner intimate dialogue with the entire human kind. He continued to talk boldly to the careless woman: "No! You will not die! In the contrary, if you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good from evil". The woman was seduced by the idea of being independent like
God, able to decide by herself freely what is good for her and what is not.

The worse is that the devil gave a false image of God, that of a dictator, jealous of his prerogatives, sparing with his privileges, and wanting to prevent the man from evolving by forbidding him to eat from the tree of knowledge. However, the contrary was true: God advises the man not to touch it, in order **not to die**, but be immortal like God, living happily forever. Because man’s death is due to false judgment of good and evil. In order to be 'like God', we should think 'like Him', and discriminate according to Him. This is the Holy Spirit that Jesus told us to ask from God (Luke 11,13). That Spirit gives us eternal life, and with Him, we become, like God, immortal.

What attitude should have had the woman in front of the devil’s advances? Indifference! It is the greatest of contempts. She should have been, at least, cautious, and ask the identity of her interlocutor: 'Who are you?' She who was made to the image of God, should have compared that image to the one who was speaking to her. That was the attitude of Mary, the holy Virgin of Nazareth, in front of the Angel Gabriel: 'She asked herself what the Angel’s greeting could mean'. (Luke 1,29) If 'Isha' would have asked herself what her malignant interlocutor’s words meant, she surely would have embarrassed the blasted viper. Evidently, the devil knew very well that God had not forbidden the man to eat of **any** of the trees in the garden: the woman also knew it; thus she should have shown more judgment to stagger the devil. Instead, she has been blinded by pride: to become like God. Nevertheless, it is 'like God' that God Himself wants to make us become. We only can achieve that **by** Him. Man wanted to achieve that, **without** Him. In that, lays his fault.

The woman yielded and dragged her husband in her fit of anger against God. After having 'eaten' the forbidden fruit, their eyes, both of them, opened widely, as the devil had told the woman, but only to notice how ridicule was the situation in which they had, willingly, put themselves. They were ashamed of their fault, realizing that they were contemplating no more, the vivifying face of God, but instead, the cynical face of their satanic seductor. Their eyes opened on that hopeless sight, realizing that they had been deceived. Jesus came to open again the eyes of his faithful on the vivifying Face of God: 'Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God'. (Matthew 5,8)

This experience was a schock for the first couple. Nothing was anymore the same, everything had changed

between God and them and between themselves. They dare no more either to look at Him, or to look Him in the face. They realized that their happiness has been due to the divine grace they had lost. Now they felt naked, deprived of the benefit of the divine beams. The man has wanted to experience the evil and he has known the bitterness. This bitter taste of the nothingness is due to God’s retreat from the soul resisting Him, leaving it in the solitude, in the grip of the sadness. Because God proposes Himself, but He never imposes Himself.

The devil succeeded in separating man from God. Thus, misfortune, sadness and shame were "the fruit" picked by the man "on the tree", that he was not supposed to touch. Those depressing feelings are the source of all human complexes; they generate all sorts of lack of balance: guilt, inferiority, false modesty etc... Man often tries to pick himself up, but he only falls in the opposite extreme: effrontery, pride, arrogance, libertinage, etc... The man is not able to stand up straight, without God.

The fall of the first human couple is known as "the original sin". Its consequences did not only limit themselves to the first parents, but also contaminated their descendants. All of us have inherited the vices from that original sin, just like the child bears the consequences of familiar or social lack of balance. Shame choked man and woman to such an extent that their body’s nudity became unbearable to them. The fig’s leaves they used as a loincloth, to dress themselves, are symbolic: to hide the spiritually committed misdemeanor by covering the body. Nevertheless the fault took place at the soul’s level. The Bible often uses the expression 'pull your skirts up' or 'stripped bare' to reveal the real intentions of the bad soul, to denounce
2.2 - Lesson 2 - The first eleven chapters of the Genesis

The man and his wife do not want to be seen by God in such a miserable state, that is why, they cover their body. For the first time, they are afraid to face Him. When God comes close to them, in their stained conscience, their soul’s eyes look away, like all the guilty people who feel uncovered. Adam and Eve run away when they hear God getting close, instead of running spontaneously towards Him. That escape from God has marked the entire human kind: man is afraid of God, he avoids his look and moves away from Him. Such is the legacy of the original sin.

CNote that neither the man nor the woman ask forgiveness. The man blames the woman, blaming God indirectly for having given her to him: "It was the woman you put with me; she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it". He seems to blame God for having given him a companion...who was his joy before. The woman, in turn, blames the devil. How marvelous would it have been if the man and his wife, together, would have apologized to the One they had just offended: "A confessed fault is half forgiven" as the saying goes. But man often prefers to vindicate himself and make someone else responsible for his faults.

Adam and Eve... are also us! How could the error be repaired? Who cares? When we make a mistake, we should apologize for it. How many are those who ask God forgiveness from the bottom of their heart, and not from the tip of their lips?

What was exactly the nature of the first human sin? Many commentators and interpreters tried to understand it. I do believe, like certain interpreters do, that it was a human attempt to usurp the divine sovereignty: to dethrone God, in order to reign in His place, to be self-sufficient and to decide about life’s issues without God, to choose by oneself what is good and what is evil, deciding alone, about what makes the man happy or unhappy. The man’s failure opened up his eyes: he realized that, without God, he could not be entirely happy. He was ashamed of that. Jesus came to give us God again, and to set us back in His invigorating company. That is why the prophets that announced Him, had called Him the "Emmanuel" which means in Hebrew 'God- with- us' (Isaiah 7,14 / Matthew 1,22). Jesus brings men back to God. There is no other way (John 14,6); the divine forgiveness is obtained by the faith in Jesus (1 John 2,12 / Colossians 2,13).

Some think that the original sin was sexual. This does not seem to be true, because God asked the first couple to multiply and to fill the earth (Genesis 1,28). Nevertheless, would that sin have taken the shape of a sexual act, then that act had been accomplished without God or in a spirit of defiance towards God, a spirit of a bare sensuality, down to the level of pure instinct and the unique pleasure of the flesh (as many do in the world of pornography) excluding the feelings of deep love and of the couple’s spiritual communion with God.

That would explain why, after the sin, God said to the woman: 'your yearning (sexual desire) will be for your husband...' (Genesis 3,16). After the fault, the heart will no longer be ruling over the relations between man and woman, but only lust: and from now on the man will 'dominate' the woman as we can notice in several societies and for so long. The harmony of the couple had been broken, giving place to an increasing imbalance not easy to overcome. We notice that lack of balance that leads to divorce, to polygamy, to adultery, and to such dramatic family situations in the whole world... Such is the fruit of the devil’s spirit introduced by man into the heart of mankind thru the original sin.

We should not believe that only our first parents are responsible for that dramatic fault: millions of men after them, even until nowadays, continue aggravating the situation, thus, proclaiming their solidarity with the first couple’s sin, without thinking to learn the lesson from the past. And still, men by the millions, resist God’s spirit, preferring, instead, their own, or that of the antique snake who misled the first couple.

The modern man, dazzled with the false science and inflated with pride, persists in thinking that he can do without God; he wants to judge according to his small brain of what is good for him and what is bad. The human kind has, thus, ended up at material pollution and nuclear
danger that threatens mankind’s own existence. The spiritual pollution is even more severe and is due to the fact that man neglects Heaven’s advices and only listens to hell’s suggestions. And when the man is ill, instead of questioning his attitude, he would blame God... though He had advised him not to do what made him sick and sad. Think of drugs and homosexuals who demonstrated against God, after having been affected with 'aids'...That is similar to the patient who refuses to take medicine prescribed by the doctor; then the illness gets worse and his anger brakes out at the doctor... instead of blaming himself.

Notice that God only cursed the devil, because the latter knew very well what he was doing. But the man and the woman were not fully conscious of the gravity and the consequences of their act. Therefore, God indicates a hope of future redemption, by announcing that the woman’s children will take their revenge and will triumph someday over the children of the devil. God says, indeed, to the snake-devil: 'accursed be you of all animals... I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel' (Genesis 3,15). That verse is the first announce of the coming of a human descent – the Messiah – who would save men from the psychological and spiritual jail in which the devils had thrown them. The woman and her descent who will bruise the devil’s head is the Virgin Mary and her Son Jesus, with all his own, all men of good will from the whole world.

In His infinite mercy, God gave man the opportunity to redeem himself, to put up his fault. This possibility is symbolized by the leather clothes with which the Creator covers man’s nudity. Adam and Eve wanted to cover their shame with 'fig leaves' (Genesis 3,7). That piece of clothing is not resistant. That is why God, as a good father, offered them "tunics of skin and clothed them", in order to express his compassion and encourage the man to search for a way out of his confusion. That allows those who love God to find again the path back to Him, knowing He is understanding, and that He shall help them to reshape themselves to His image, lost by sin (Romans 5,12-16 / Colossians 3,10). Because sin destroys in us the image of God. By the sin, Satan molded human kind to his hateful image. Jesus came to give man back the image of God.

After the fall, 'the man named his wife "Eve" because she was the mother of all those who live' (Genesis 3,20). This new name of Isha points out to a new situation: the woman does not anymore locate herself after the man, but after her great mission: giving life to mankind. Because Eve, in Hebrew, is 'Havva' meaning 'life'. Notice that man’s name Adam is not mentioned. Later on, the name Adam was given to him, in relation to his origin, because 'Adama' in Hebrew means 'earth', 'clay', 'mud', from which God shaped the man. From there comes his name "Adam", that could be translated 'Earthy', or 'Muddy', in relation to his original extraction or background. The name of Adam is mentioned for the first time in Genesis 4,25.

After the fall, God’s attitude towards man changes: He says with a point of irony about his creature: 'Now that the man has become like one of us in knowing good from evil...!' The man deserved that mocking remark. He also deserved to be moved away from Paradise, before committing one more stupid thing: "He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick from the tree of life too, and eat and live forever...!" (Genesis 3,22). That is one more well deserved and humiliating irony. Because man would like to live forever... like God... without having to appear before the Eternal Judge. Isn’t that the desire of so many people who look for the longevity drug...by the most ridiculous means: in certain societies, the interested clients pay a fortune for embalming their bodies and to keep them in special freezers, until the discovery of the "miracle" product which gives back life to the bodies; then, it would be injected in the bodies and the client would be "resurrected"... enchanted to come back to life, here below... Should those societies of "resurrection", themselves, be still alive...!

What does it mean for the man to be thrown out of Paradise? Is it being exiled from an earthly place? No! Because the Paradise in question is a psychological state of mind: happiness.
The man was fully happy before he decided to take care of himself, by his own means, to "liberate" himself from God. The Creator had given the man everything freely. Adam did not lack anything, neither on the spiritual and psychological levels- fulfilled as he was by his Creator- nor on the material level, being lavished with the abundance of the products of the earth. Life was without problems on all levels. What makes life difficult, and sometimes impossible to live, are the economic systems introduced by greedy men, a harmful way of life (expensive sophisticated social life, alcoholic beverages, cigars, cigarettes, gambling, casinos, expensive clothing, etc...). And yet, the earth keeps producing constantly and calmly to all. The goods are so abundant, that certain rich countries have more than enough, and the surplus is destroyed in order to maintain the prices high, instead of distributing them to starving developing countries. International trusts and consumption societies, did not make man happy: unemployment, inflation, unsatisfaction are all over the world. The biggest part of the world’s economy is devoted to arms of destruction... And the earth that God created goes on giving man the best it has... And men keep going on making the earth less and less suitable to live in, and becomes incapable of nourishing them, polluted as it is by harmful wastes (nuclear and others) with which they keep saturating it.

Man has always persisted in wanting to lead his own life as he wishes, without God. The result? The rich people have everything that money can buy, and yet they are not satisfied: because money can buy neither happiness nor a clean peaceful conscience. Despite the abundance in which they live, many rich people prefer suicide rather than life. That is because they live without God. Man’s "independence" made his life hard and unpleasant. That is why God had told the man: "the soil would be cursed because of you (by your fault). Painfully, would you get your food from it, as long as you live. By the sweat of your face, will you earn your food (due to your bad management)" (Genesis 3,17-19). Man always tends to reject God’s advice, preferring to listen to less efficient human counselors. And yet, God is that "Marvelous Counselor" of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks (Isaiah 9,5).

Thus, man has been banished from happiness by rejecting its Source by his own free will. Since then, he wanders in pursuit of a substitute to real happiness, thinking to have found it either in money or in pleasures and vain glory. The text of Genesis says that "God expelled him from the garden of Eden to till the soil" (Genesis 3,23). If God had expelled man, it was because the latter wanted to lead his own life, without God’s intervention; let him then wear himself out cultivating the soil, that soil which was ready to give him all his needs freely without getting tired (Read Matthew 6,24-34). But instead, man preferred to be swallowed up by materialism.

Thus, the original sin had two unfortunate consequences on the whole humanity.

1. The first, and more harmful, is of a psychological and spiritual nature:

Man’s spirit and soul fell completely into the body, becoming submitted to the flesh, insensitive to the spirit as if they were anaesthetized. The shock made them literally lose conscience. Man had lost his spiritual and psychological faculties, thus becoming fragile, incapable of orienting himself from within. That fall led to the wandering of the heart and intellect; anxiety settled down in the human soul. Poets, philosophers and intellectuals of all times, tried to understand, in vain, and to analyze the reasons of human anxiety. Only the Divine Revelation could enlighten us.

Man’s disobedience introduced Satan into the subconscious of humanity, as a whole. Satan obtained the right of stay and of intervention in man’s will and, henceforth, speaks in the man’s name, within his private psychological.. He disguises himself usurping man’s identity. Thus, when we say 'I' or 'I want'. We should detect who is expressing himself. Who is this "I" speaking within us? Who desires? God, Satan or ourselves? There lies the base of discernment and judgment. Jesus, the Christ comes and 'reconnects' us up to God and liberates us from satanic interferences. That is why Jesus tells his enemies: "You are from your father, the devil, and you prefer to do what your father wants" (John 8,44). They were not
conscious of it, but, nevertheless, quite willing. It is always beneficial to make sure that what we desire is in harmony with God’s will, with his plan for the liberation of humanity.

Having fallen completely in the body, man could only discover the life of the soul from the physical sensations, since reflexion and feeling were locked up in the body. From that moment on, man lives down to earth, unable to find again, by himself, the life of the soul, of which, he only feels, but a vague nostalgia.

In spite of that, God stretches His hand to man, through Jesus. He who holds that divine hand sees his soul rising up to its original destination. That return of the soul to life is called, by the Gospel, "The First Resurrection" (Revelation 20,5-6 / John 5,25-26).

2. The second consequence has a material and temporal nature:

Man’s life on earth, is made difficult by man’s own fault.

All the story of human salvation aims at getting the man out of that mess into which he deliberately threw himself. All the love and genius of God, his tender Creator, was needed, to get him out of his erratic behavior, through Jesus, His Envoy.

The moral of all this is that one should not exchange talks with temptation: one should neither discuss with the devil, nor should play with fire. Let us not do like Eve who took her time to look at and admire what was forbidden, finding it good when God had said that it would bring death. Let us believe God, even if the evil 'seems' good in our eyes. Let Eve’s fault help us to unmask death that comes to us with a seductive form. Let us be like Mary, that young girl with a pure heart, who deserved being the dignified Mother of the Messiah, the Savior of men. She never accepted to listen to the seductive voice of the satanic "snake", she just ignored it, only seeing and listening to God, only wanting to accomplish His own plan. That is why She is called the "New Eve", the new Mother of the living, meaning the believers, She whose children are crushing the devil’s head (Genesis 3,15).

I have explained, at length, the first three chapters of the Genesis, in order to instill in you a spirit that will enable you to understand the Bible according to God’s intention. Be careful not to understand literally the stories you have read on the creation and the fall. Look for the spiritual and deep meaning through the allegories, without being misled by the literal meaning that closes the horizon of research and understanding. Because neither was the world created in 6 days, nor the sun the fourth day; nor did a snake appear physically to Eve: that snake symbolizes the ideas inspired by the devil to man in a subtle and devious way, like a snake, in order to seduce without being recognized.

In addition, we can believe in the theory of evolution, without ceasing to believe in God. In such a case, God would have created in a progressive manner. There is no scientific foundation supporting those who pretend that evolution demonstrates the nonexistence of God: if there is evolution, then there is 'The One' who makes it evolve: God. It is He who must have "programmed" that evolution, the way an embryo develops, from the tiny germs, to the adult human size. Those who believe in the fixed theory (that is to say that God created man as he is, without evolving from an inferior animal stage) and the advocates of evolution, both, agree on the essential point in the Bible: God is the only Creator. Let science determine the mode of creation!...

Now, read chapter 4 in the Genesis, before continuing the course.

2.2.4 Cain and Abel: man kills his brother man (Genesis 4)

You have just read, in this fourth chapter, a symbolic story, that reveals how evil spread on earth, between man and his brother man, after having been committed by man against God, his "Father".

This story, as those preceding it, is allegoric and should not be understood literally, having not occurred exactly like that. Because, on earth, there was only -literally speaking- Adam, Eve and their two children; therefore, who could be that 'whoever’ by whom Cain feared to be
killed (Genesis 4,15)? There has been, then, generations, and the names of Cain and Abel are only symbolic: they do not have any historical reality. Everyday Cain kills Abel.

Why did God refuse Cain’s offering and agree Abel’s? We find, there, a teaching that the Bible wants to reveal to us. Many focus on the historical sequence of this story without trying to understand its morality.

In order to understand this text, we should read between the lines. Notice that Cain presented "some of the produce of the soil" ( ...no matter which...the bad ones, rather, to get rid of them...and to put an end to that heavy duty of having to offer something to God). Abel, instead, "brought the first-born of his flock (the best he had), and some of their fat as well (so precious to keep for cooking... but for Abel, nothing could be too good for God)". That means that Cain offered reluctantly, with meanness and under pressure, without love. Whereas Abel, instead, offered spontaneously the best, with all his heart. We can, then, understand God’s attitude. We often do the same, by refusing a present offered by ill-intentioned people.

To refuse somebody’s present, is to reject the person who is offering it. One should really have good reasons to act that way. In front of god’s refusal, Cain should have realized his own failures, out of consideration to The One to whom he wanted to offer his imperfect donations. He must have come to his senses, must have apologized, and then, redeemed himself, through willingly presenting a pleasing offering.

Through the prophet Malachi, God says to the Jewish priests: "You sniff disdainfully at me... you bring a stolen, lame or diseased animal, you bring that as an offering! Am I to accept this from you? Cursed be the rogue who has a male in his flock, but pays his vow by sacrificing a blemished animal to me!" (Malachi 1,13-14).

The prophet Amos told the Jews, on behalf of God: "Your oblations, I do not accept them, and I do not look at communion sacrifices" (Amos 5,22), then he adds, that the offering agreed by God is the practice of uprightness and justice (Amos 5,24). God refused those offerings because they were done with Cain’s spirit.

Anything that is given without love has no value in God’s eyes. Jesus had praised a poor woman who had only given a small piece of money in the poor’s trunk. He judged that she had given more than the rich, having given with all her heart and from her essentials not from the surplus (Luke 21,1-4). In the same spirit, Paul says that giving all your money to the poor without giving love, is useless (1 Corinthians 13,3).

Seeing himself pushed back, Cain takes it out on his brother, instead of repenting. He aggravates his situation by letting himself be overwhelmed with jealousy and envy, to the extent that he killed his only brother. And when God asked him about his brother, he answered with arrogance: "Am I my brother’s guardian?" Not only has he not been his guardian, he has been, instead, his executioner! That is why God cursed Cain, for his crime, for his unrepentance and his impertinence.

Cain’s curse is the second one mentioned in the Genesis. The first divine curse fell on the devil. Cain, thus, represents the devil’s descent and image on earth. That cursed descent shall be Satan’s instrument all the way through the centuries. The children of the Woman, the "New Eve", are assigned by God, to fight and to defeat that diabolic descent (Revelation 12,17).

What does the sign put by God on Cain, not to be killed, mean? It is symbolic and represents the violence by which that fratricide’s face is marked forever. His severe forehead, his tough face, and his nasty eyes, reflect the hatred fixed in the soul. It is not Cain, then, who should be afraid from "whoever", but, in the contrary, anyone would have to fear, from now on, that criminal, only from his appearance.

It is Cain and his kind who scare men, because if one Cain is killed, he will be revenged by "7" others like him. Cain, thrown out by God, hesitate to move away, pretexting that he would be killed. He wished to stay near God, to feel secure, without repenting and changing his life... while he would go on committing evil. God told him what means: "Go away from here: it is not you, criminal, who should fear others, it is you, instead, who frighten 7 others" meaning
The biblical course

a multitude (Genesis 4,15). The number 7 is symbolic: it designates the fullness; Jesus tells Peter to forgive 77 times 7 times those who repent sincerely, meaning an unlimited number of times (Matthew 18,21).

Cain, finally, "left Yahweh’s presence and settled in the land of Nod" (Genesis 4,16). That country is symbolic: Nod means 'wandering' in Hebrew, and symbolizes the soul's distress. Thus, it is not a geographical place, but a sad feeling, even worse than that of the original sin. Because for that kind of sin -which deserves God’s curse- there is no hope for the liberation of the soul: it is the sin against God’s Holy Spirit, for which forgiveness is not possible since there is no repentance (Luke 12,10 / 1 John 5,16-17).

With Cain and his kind, evil spread and worsened in the whole world, Cain’s sons becoming even worse than their fratricidal father... That is the meaning of Lamek’s story (Genesis 4,19-24). Read it again: Lamek threatens his 2 wives, Ada and Cilla, with the worse retaliation, thus showing his inflexible and brutish temper: he killed a man who had only wounded him, and a child because he had beaten him; because if Cain is avenged 7 times, Lamek is avenged 77 times more!" After Cain, violence increased on earth and his descendants are infinitely more violent than their fratricidal ancestor. Now you understand better the expression "to be avenged 7 times!" Remember that the symbolism of number 7, is fullness and adequacy, as when we say: "I have repeated that 100 times..."; what we mean to say, is that we have repeated such a subject a sufficient number of times in order to be understood.

God, willing to restore good on earth, gave Adam and Eve another son: "When Adam was a hundred and thirty years old, he fathered a son, in his likeness, after his image" (Genesis 5,1-3). That new son, is the ancestor of men who will have to fight the evil spread by Cain and his descendants.

Notice that this new son, called Seth, is after the image of Adam, not after the image of God, which had been distorted by Adam’s fault. Distorted image, but not completely and irremediably destroyed, as was the case of Cain and Lamek. The restoration of the divine image is therefore possible in Seth’s case and his kind. That spiritual "plastic surgery" aims to reshape the moral aspect of men according to God’s image. It has as a model Jesus’ radiant Face who gives us that of Mary, his blessed Mother, the prototype of the face agreed by God. In fact, Mary -unlike Eve- submitting Herself totally to the divine will, answered the angel Gabriel announcing to her Jesus’ birth: "I am the Lord’s servant, let it happen to me as you have said" (Luke 1,38). Let Mary help us to regain God’s image, in order to evolve towards human perfection whose climax is to resemble God.

Therefore, after Adam’s fault, men gave birth to their children according to their human distorted image, and not to the image of God which was perfect in Adam, before the fall. Such is the original sin's sad heritage: a divine image becoming blurred, barely recognizable, but which can be rehabilitated on certain conditions. Here lies the responsibility of the parents. What idea do they have of God? Do they have, at least, the concern to know God, to discover his real 'Name', his real Face, what He really is, in order to reveal Him to their progeny? Do they want to be good parents and help their children to evolve spiritually, or do they just stop them to their own distorted image? Such are the questions to ask ourselves in the program of deconditioning and awareness since the beginning of this Spiritual Itinerary. The prayer taught by Jesus: 'Father, may your Name be sanctified", takes all its importance and means: 'Father, may I get to know your real face in order to reflect it'.

Eve called her new son Seth (in Hebrew 'Shat' meaning 'Granted'). She called him Seth because God "granted her another son' to replace Abel. Seth is after Adam’s image, not God’s. Remember well his name because the biblical writers had him as Adam’s successor and the ancestor of "God’s sons" on earth, the lineage of 'the Woman' which will have to crush the satanic serpent’s head (Genesis 3,15).

Read chapter 5 of Genesis paying attention to the sentences that are repeated rhythmically and intentionally: 'Such and such (the name is said) fathered such and such (the name is
said) and (other) sons and daughters (whose names are not reported). There is an intention for that: those whose names are mentioned are considered as the ancestors of the Jews. Those who are not mentioned are the ancestors of other people. Remember that giving a name is to give a value, and to refrain from giving a name is to despise. The aim of that imaginary genealogy is to separate men in two categories: the elect ones are those who are given a name and the fallen are those who do not deserve to be given a name.

The writers of the Genesis (the scribes and the Jewish priests) used to think that only the Jews were 'at the image of God'. That genealogical tree had been invented by them in order to raise the Jews' dignity to the detriment of that of the Pagans (goims) of that time. Thus, it has no historical reality.

The Jews consider themselves as the only 'sons of God' on earth, the direct descendants of Seth and from his line of descent who have a name. They thus appear as the 'chosen people'. According to them, the 'other sons and daughters' from Seth’s descent, those who are not named, are not to the likeness of God, not being to the image of Seth and his named descent. That is why they are not considered by the fanatic Jews as men, but a degree less than men (the Jews) and a degree more than animals, half way between the Jew (who is a man) and the ape.

The spiritual interpretation of that genealogy is the following: Seth’s descent who are named and their descent represent all the righteous and good men from all races and nations; the other 'sons and daughters' not named represent the bad and homicide descent.

Two symbolic names are to be remembered in that fictitious genealogy: Enoch and his son Methuselah. Enoch because he did not die, but 'he was no more on earth), because God took him without letting him pass through physical death, due to his righteousness: "Enoch walked with God", Genesis tells us (Genesis 5,21-24). Notice Enoch’s age: 365 years old, the number of days within a solar year. Another right man had the same fate as Enoch and did not die: the prophet Elijah, who went to heaven alive. You will read his story later (2 Kings 2,11-13). Enoch and Elijah are two great figures one should know: they became the symbols of ardent and courageous faith. Their "kidnapping" to Heaven can be understood as a symbolic or a real fact; one should mainly remember the morality: the faithful believers do not die, as Jesus taught (John 8,51). As far as Methuselah is concerned, he is the one who, according to the Genesis, lived the longest on earth: 969 years.

That needs a comment on those men’s long life. Is it real or symbolic? Both at the same time. It is real - even though exaggerated - because, the more evil and materialism increase on earth, the more men suffer from various diseases and often die relatively young. Nowadays, as daily life requires from some people a stressful activity, it is usual, for instance, to see young people die struck by a heart attack. Cigarettes and a hyper activity shorten life. The tempestuous rhythm of modern life is against human nature. Our ancestors used to have a more relaxed rhythm of life. Moreover, 'they walked with God'. The lesson from the longevity of our ancestors who were bearing God’s image, is the following: we should walk with God if we want to live long. That’s why the sacred writers report that, after the increase of evil, God decided to shorten "man’s life on earth to only 120 years"!... (Genesis 6,3-5)

Read Genesis 6, and then continue reading the course.

2.2.5 Increase of evil and punishment with the flood (Genesis 6)

According to Genesis 6, evil increased on earth because the sons of God saw how beautiful were the daughters of men and married as many of them as they chose. "Who are these "sons of God" and these "daughters of men"? For the scribes and rabbis who wrote that text, only the Jews are "sons of God" (in Hebrew "beni Elohim"), from a divine race. That mentality was acquired with time passing; it’s due to the fact that, 4000 years ago, the Jews were the only ones to believe in the unique God while the rest of humanity were pagans,
polytheists and idolators. The Jews thought they will be for ever the only 'sons of God', as the Cananeans were 'sons of Baal', the Greek 'sons of Zeus' and the Egyptians 'sons of Râ'. Jesus turned the Jews upside down when he taught that all those who will believe in Him, from all races and nations, will become 'sons of God' (John 1,12).

The Jews' fault is to think they are the only ones worthy of God. They wanted to monopolize and appropriate Him. God was only their God and should not be owned by any other people. Thus, when Jesus' apostles wanted to teach the pagans, the Jews prevented them from that (1 Thessalonians 2,16). Paul rose up against them: 'Do you think God is the God only of the Jews, and not of gentiles too? Most certainly of gentiles too!' (Romans 3,29).

According to the scribes and rabbis, the Jews, being the sons of God and from a divine race, should not marry non-jews; they would demean themselves if they would marry the "daughters of man". The children born from such a wedding are not considered as Jews, because the Jews are only those born from a Jewish mother. The 'sons of God' should have married only the "daughters of God". They were not even supposed to go out with non-jews, by fear to be dragged by them to the cult of the idols (Numbers 25,1-2).

Mixed marriages were severely condemned (Deuteronomy 7,3-4 / 1 Kings 11,1-2 / Ezra 10,44 / Nehemiah 10,31). Yet there are many examples of such marriages mentioned in the Bible, even among the kings (King Salomon: 1 Kings 11,1-2 / King Achab: 1 Kings 16,31). The book of Ruth reports Ruth's story, a non-jew Moabite who married a Jew. When the latter died, she married another Jew, 'Boaz', and she is with the latter, among the ancestors of the Messiah (Matthew 1,5). This confuses the scribes' tight and fanatic mentality who invented stories from nothing, to justify their racism,... in the name of God.

Genesis 6,2 should not be understood literally; one should seek its spiritual meaning, which is: the "sons of God" are those who search for God, believers and men of good will, from the whole world. Jesus taught us that "all the peacemakers shall be recognized as children of God" (Matthew 5,9). That concerns all men, not only the Jews. Those "children of God" (men or women) should not let themselves be seduced by the body and physical beauty, but by the spirit of the person to marry. One should make sure that the husband or wife is a divine choice and shall be a help to climb towards God, and not an obstacle to the elevation of the soul. The goal of marriage should be the connection with God and not material or physical interests.

The expression 'son of man' or 'son of the man' was understood pejoratively and applied to non-jews. Jesus instead, and in order to oppose this chauvinistic spirit, applied that title to Himself (John 3,14), and also that of 'Unique Son of God' (John 3,18). He is that 'Son of the man' announced by the prophets (Daniel 7,13), the head of the human descendance of the woman who is to crush the infernal snake's head, but He is also the unique Son of God; and "to those who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God" (John 1,12). With this verse, the Gospel enlightens us on the spiritual meaning of Genesis 6,2, by considering all the true disciples of Jesus as children of God. In that sense, Paul says: 'simply by being Christ's, you are that progeny of Abraham" (Galatians 3,29). The carnal progeny has no value whatever in the eyes of God.

Seeing that man wishes to be carnal, instead of being spiritual, God withdraws -from such an unworthy creature- His humiliated Spirit. As a result, human life was shortened to 120 years. That means, one cannot live long without God. One should not understand those 120 years numerically, since there are godly people who do not live that long, and others, that live more without caring about God... The latter shall not taste the joys of Eternal Life. Such is the teaching of Genesis 6,3: to have a long life means to take part in eternal life.

About the 'Nephilim' (giant men), mentioned in Genesis 6,4, "these heroes of days gone by", they represent man before the propagation of evil on earth: it was men's dignity which was great. Those who came after God had withdrawn his Spirit from human kind, seem to be dwarfs compared to their ancestors.

The greatness of those giant ancestors was due to God's Spirit within them and who inspired
them, giving them a greatness of spirit. It was God’s Spirit within them that made of "these heroes of days gone by, men of renown", such as Seth, Enosh, Enoch and Methuselah etc.

Therefore, this text of Genesis, as many others, should not be understood literally; one should not think of a huge physical size, regarding those giants (the "Nephilim"). Neither, should we compare them to physical dwarfs, nor to the race of pygmies, who are also able to become children of God and spiritual giants. Indeed, Jesus came in order to give, once again, all his disciples, of all races, the Spirit of God who had abandoned an unworthy humanity (Genesis 6,3). Read John 14,16-17. This gift of the divine Spirit is granted to the authentic believers, not considering their body size.

2.2.6 The flood (Genesis 6,5 to 7,24)

Archeology has discovered, buried under the Atlantic, a continent which has been named 'Atlantis'. Under the waters of the Pacific, is buried another continent called "Mu". These two continents collapsed in the two oceans after a general cataclysm, which took place 25000 years ago. Traces of a very evolved civilization was discovered in both continents. This civilization had been exterminated. The survivors had transmitted the information to the following generations, and thus humanity had kept their memory.

In addition, archeology informs us also about that cataclysm: in certain pre-biblical Babylonian stories, is mentioned a flood which has destroyed humanity. Those stories had been written 2000 years B.C, therefore 1000 years before the Genesis was written. When the biblical writers wrote the story of the deluge, they only reported a story, already known centuries ago, and which had been reported by other people.

The Babylonians had written it in "Cuneiform" characters, which have the shape of nails, the Babylonian alphabet being composed of little stems, in the shape of nails, put together differently, for each letter of the alphabet.

There is an essential difference between the Babylonian and the biblical story: the Babylonian story says that "the Gods decided to destroy humanity because of its faults. Ea (or 'Enki', one of the Babylonian gods) informed Uta-Napishtim and made him build a boat etc. The biblical writers took up the story on their behalf and made it monotheistic, saying: "Yahweh decide to destroy humanity because of human wickedness". Uta-Napishtim’s name had been changed to that of Noah, in order to give it a Hebraic consonance.

We present a text -translated by us from French- from the book 'DELUGE ET ARCHE DE NOE' ("The Deluge and Noah’s arch") by André Parrot (Edition: "Cahiers d’archéologie biblique", 15 February 1955 p. 32). He explains how the biblical writers of the Genesis were inspired by stories existing elsewhere, they only had to make them monotheistic, by purifying them from their mythological and polytheistic content, and by giving the protagonists Hebraic names:

DELUGE AND NOAH’S ARCH

Thus, the deluge marked, without any contest, an extremely neat cut in History. Its memory had remained enduring in Mesopotamia, as well as in Palestine, where Jesus referred to it, during His last days' teaching (Matthew 24,37-39 / Luke 17,26-27).

In brief, we have at our disposal, in the biblical and Babylonian literature, a group of texts referring to a devastating cataclysm, from which a whole family managed to escape, thanks to an arch: Noah’s family in the Bible and Uta-Napishtim’s, Athrahassis’, Zinsudra’s, Xisuthro’s for the Babylonians. The connection between all these stories is unquestionable; it is obvious for the ones who are less informed. One could probably, do a synopsis, with some variance, but also with an impressive agreement on the basics. We point out some striking connections:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENESIS</th>
<th>CUNEIFORM TRADITION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh decides to destroy humanity because of man’s wickedness.</td>
<td>The gods decide to destroy humanity because of its faults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh informs Noah and lets him build a boat.</td>
<td>Ea (Enki) informs Uta-Napishtim (Ziasudra) and lets him build a boat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The boat shall be filled with animals, in order to preserve the race, all over the earth.</td>
<td>That boat shall be filled with animals and seeds from every life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flood takes place. Yahweh rubs out all the beings that were on the surface of the earth.</td>
<td>The flood takes place. All humanity goes back to mud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah realizes that the water is lowering by letting birds go (craw, dove).</td>
<td>Uta-Napishtim realizes the lowering of the water by letting birds go (dove, lark, craw).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah builds an altar and offers a sacrifice to Yahweh.</td>
<td>Uta-Napishtim offers a sacrifice to the gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh smelled the soothing smell.</td>
<td>The gods smelled the good smell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh stops cursing men (version J).</td>
<td>Enlil makes up with Uta-Napishtim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahweh blesses Noah and his sons (version P).</td>
<td>Enlil blesses Uta-Napishtim and his wife.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fragment from a tablet about the Gilgamesh epic
The text of the cuneiform tradition (Babylonian), is an excerpt of the famous epic "Gilgamesh", a legendary king who gave his name to the story spread in the Middle-East since the XXVIth century BC. The general theme of the story is the pursuit of immortality, whose secret is to conquer, in the bottom of the sea, a plant, which gives back youth (think of the tree of life of Genesis). Many nations translated that story into their language, we can find a sumarian version, and more recently Assyrian and Babylonian versions. The Assyrian version is the more complete and counts 326 lines, of which, almost 200 are dedicated to the flood.

After having exposed a brief parallelism between Genesis and the Babylonian version, André Parrot writes in conclusion:

"Which story is at the base of all the others? We should answer: the oldest, and the oldest is, evidently, the Babylonian story (and not that of Genesis). That frightens certain exegetes who offer a middle solution, likely to safeguard, in their eyes, the doctrine of inspiration: there might be a primitive tradition (not found) of which we have two versions, the sumero-babylonian on one side, the Israeli on the other. We confess, very frankly, that this theory satisfies us rather badly, and we prefer to consider that, in and with the biblical story of the flood, we have the Israeli version of a Mesopotamian tradition -the originals of which, on clay tablets, are in our possession- and which the biblical storytellers have rethought, at the light of monotheism. That tradition (oral) of the flood was brought, with many others, moreover, most of the traditions of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, by the patriarchs (Abraham-Isaac-Jacob) emigrants from the countries between the two rivers (the Tiger and the Euphrates where the Assyrian and Babylonian versions of the flood were well known) and coming to settle on the land of Canaan. The Israelis have never revealed that their ancestors had, at this period, worshiped 'other gods' (Joshua 24,2), thus, had shared beliefs, poles apart, from the Yahwist faith. This is why, we have in the chapters 6 and 8 of Genesis, the story of the deluge that the Mesopotamians had copied in cuneiform characters, long before the Yahwist authors (Jewish) and they had even thought of fixing it by written. Extraordinary fidelity of the oral tradition, which in Israel, had insured for a millennium, the preservation of that moving tradition".

André Parrot’s conclusions don’t undermine the 'inspiration doctrine’, as might fear those who are attached to the literal interpretation of the Bible. The biblical writer’s intention was to spread monotheism through the polytheistic stories of that period in the Middle-East. Their goal was to make sacred the human story, by laying it bare of any mention of the gods of mythology, revealing only the unique God: the God of Abraham.

I have explained, at length these chapters of Genesis, in order to give you the spirit with which, one should understand them. From now on, I am only going to point at the most important items:

**Genesis 9,12-17**: Speaks about the rainbow, as a sign of the Eternal Covenant, between God and men. Remember well that symbolism of the rainbow because you will find it again in the Book of Revelation (10,1), around the head of Christ’s envoy in the apocalyptic times; because it is him, this apocalyptic messenger, who will restore the true Eternal Covenant between God and men. That Covenant had already been reestablished by Jesus, but betrayed, later on, by the Christians. The apocalyptic envoy’s sacred mission is to restore it.

**Genesis 9 to 10**: These chapters present the 3 symbolic sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth. This genealogy does not have any historical foundation; it has been established by the scribes, with a racist aim, in favor of the Jews, like Seth’s in Genesis 5. Thus:
• Canaan, the ancestor of the Arabs, is cursed and relegated to the rank of "meanest slave", which means, he is the slave of both Shem (ancestor of the Jews) and Japheth (ancestor of the Westerners). Notice that the scribes hasten to curse Canaan, and not Shem, his guilty ancestor; it is the descendance that is mainly aimed at: Palestinians and Arabs in general (Genesis 10,14). That curse, according to the scribes and the rabbis, is valid for all times: neither Palestinians nor Arabs will ever be spared. They should be "the slaves of the slaves" forever, meant to serve Shem and his descent, the latter representing the "slaves" in the service of Shem’s descent. But Canaan is "the slave of slaves".

• No need to mention that Shem is blessed! It goes without saying; is he not the Hebrews’ ancestor?... It is "Shem's God who had been blessed by Noah. He is neither Japheth’s God nor, even less, Ham’s God. Shem "is the ancestor of all the sons of Eber" (Genesis 10,21). One should understand that verse, according to its Hebrew nuance (found in the Hebrew Bible, translated to French by the rabbis of France): "Shem, the father of all the race of Eber (the Hebrews)". The Israelites wrongly consider themselves as a race. According to them, the blessing of their ancestor Shem would be passed, exclusively, to every person of their "race", thus making them alone the 'children of God', who is uniquely the God of Shem and his descent: "the chosen people". The scribes thought that other nations could never get near to God. He is exclusively Shem’s God, the God of the Jews... Remember Paul’s remark: 'Do you think God is the God only of the Jews, and not of Gentiles too? Most certainly of Gentiles too" (Romans 3,29). Here, the universal dimension of Jesus and the New Testament’s teachings appear clearly.

• Japheth is put at broad, 'may he live in the tents of Shem and let Canaan be his slave' (Genesis 9,27): The French Rabbis’ Bible says: 'and let Canaan be their slave'.

This means that:

• The Jews (descendants of Shem) are the absolute masters of the world and of men.

• The Indo-European-Americans (descendants of Japheth) are their 'slaves'; they can 'live in the tents of Shem', therefore they may live together with the Jews, but without having the right to personal possessions: they do not live in tents of their own, but 'in Shem’s tents' (a nuance not to be underestimated!). That makes the Jews the undisputed owners of all material possessions.

• The Cananeans (the Arabs) are absolutely at the service of the two previous categories or races. That is why, they are "the meanest slaves", since they are the slaves of the "first" slaves, the descendants of Japheth, who are themselves the slaves of the "Semites".

The authors of that genealogical fable did not hesitate to show Noah –the only righteous man of that period, who deserved to escape from the flood– a drunk man who had lost his senses to the extent of stripping himself ridiculously: "He drank some of the wine, and while he was drunk, he lay uncovered, in his tent..." (Genesis 9,21)

Such ramblings have divided humanity in a hierarchy of three races, to the advantage of the Hebrew "race". That is why Paul tells us to be wary of 'Jewish myths' (Titus 1,14) and to "avoid foolish speculations, and those genealogies" (Titus 3,9), of which, many are very fond. The prophet Jeremiah has denounced "the lying pen of the scribes' for having introduced in the Bible, in the name of God, comments unrelated to God (Jeremiah 8,8); Jesus also revolted against the "hypocrite scribes and Pharisees" for having diverted the meaning of the divine Revelation in favor of their material advantages (Matthew 23 and Matthew 15,6-7).
Today, we are invited to exorcize the Old Testament of the Bible, emptying it from its racist content that had been introduced by the "lying pens of the scribes". On the other hand, there is nothing to exorcize in the New Testament, which is, in itself an exorcism. We are urged to be experts of the divine Word, believers who discriminate in the Bible between what is from God, and what comes from men. In order not to get mislaid, we have to be like the financial experts who recognize true coins from the false ones. This is not difficult when the Spirit of God guides us. Who knows God, knows how He thinks, what He has said in the Bible...and what He has never said.

To exorcize the Bible is a holy task!

Genesis 11: The "Tower of Babel" symbolizes man's pride. Men always seek to build higher in order to impress and dominate. "Eiffel Tower", "sky-scrapers" or "Pyramids" are, but in a different spirit, the actual replicas of the high towers, the "Ziggurat" that were once built in Babel.

God exposes man's vanity by men themselves. Men, who used to speak a unique language, meaning that they could understand each other, here they are now unable to understand each other, everyone speaking his own language, and seeking only each his own interest. That means that selfishness and pride have divided men, everyone wanting to possess all, and to be superior to the others; hence, conflicts. That is how we should understand the story of the Tower of Babel. Thus, it is not the fact of building high buildings that is reprehensible, but it is the spirit of vanity, with which it is done, that makes the action bad. Today, even those who speak the same language may not understand each other, when one wants to dominate the other.

The true disciples of Jesus, the Christ, have the Spirit of God, which unifies the children of God. They are those who understand each other, even though they speak different languages. Because the language of love is unique, and is understood at a glance, a gesture or a smile. At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles, they amazed the foreigners who understood them, everyone in his own language: "All these men (the Apostles) speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language?" (Acts 2,7). It is because the Spirit of Jesus was there to restore what human pride had destroyed. The Pentecost heals the wound of the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11 ends with a genealogy which aims at linking—by all means—Abraham to Shem. The aim of that genealogy is the following: to present the Jews as existing on earth, even before Abraham, to make believe that God, by choosing Abraham, chose a race, Shem’s race, the ancestor of "Eber" (Genesis 10,21 / 11,10-26), an imaginary character, supposed to be the ancestor of the Jews, the "chosen people". I explain, at the beginning of the third lesson, why, according to the Bible itself, it is false to believe that Abraham is from a "Jewish" descent.

Genesis 11,27-32 presents Abraham's family: Terah, his father, his two brothers: Nahor and Haran (who died and left his son Lot with Abraham) and Saraï, his wife, who was also his half-sister. They lived in "Ur", a big city at that time (in the south of Iraq), they then emigrated to Haran, in the North of Syria, where God appeared to Abram.

Here ends the study of the first 11 chapters of the Genesis.

2.3 Lesson 3 - From Abraham to Isaac (Genesis 12 to 24)

2.3.1 Abraham

Abraham came to earth twenty centuries B.C., 4,000 years ago. At that time, God was not known. Each country had its gods, of which one was higher than the other; polytheism and mythology were found everywhere, with gods changing names according to the country.
Idolatry reigned everywhere through the means of statues made of wood or stone representing the Assyrian, Babylonian, Canaanite gods, etc. The idols of Greek mythology still abounded 1500 years after Abraham. The idolatrous empires (Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman) opposed an absolute refusal to the nascent monotheism. They fought it savagely and persecuted the first believers. We find echo of this opposition to monotheism in the modern atheistic governments.

At the time of Abraham there were neither Jews nor Hebrews. As opposed to what certain people claim, Abraham is a Syrian from Haran and not a Hebrew. With a racist intention in mind, the scribes endeavoured to convince their co-religionists of a historical error by claiming that the Jews existed before Abraham as a Hebrew people. This people going down from one of the sons of Shem, Eber from which the name Hebrew derives. Some present these people as the "race" of Eber.

According to the writers of Genesis, the sons of Shem are: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud and Aram. It should be noted that the names of the sons of Shem are those of countries: Elam was found in southern Iran and its capital was Suse; Ashur was Assyria (current Iraq), Lud is probably in Palestine (the airport of Lod in Israel) and Aram is Syria. In other words, all these regions having belonged to the sons of Shem are the Hebrews’ property by heritage; they form the "Great Israel", an empire the Israelis aspire to today. These limits are found on the current Israeli currency.

The biblical scribes, seeking to justify their feeling of being the 'chosen people', introduce Abraham already as a Hebrew at the time of his call, being 'son of Eber' descendent of Arpachshad (Genesis 11,10-26), son of Shem. This 'Eber' would have given his name to the Hebrews (Genesis 11,14). All this genealogical build-up aims at introducing the Hebrews all together as chosen by God through Abraham. Thus, the whole world should understand that the Jews of all times and places form the only 'chosen people', the only race selected and placed by God above all the others.

This is why the scribes insert smoothly in Genesis 14,13: "Abram the Hebrew". This qualifier is slipped surreptitiously 'by the lying pen of the scribes!' (Jeremiah 8,8) in order to acquire racial and socio-political privileges. Moses, wanting to fight this fanatic tendency, reminds the Jews that their father Abraham "was a wandering Aramaic (Syrian)..." (Deuteronomy 26,5) and not a Hebrew. Reading Genesis is enough to be convinced of a Hebrew people existing before Abraham... History doesn’t either!

Therefore, God chose a man and not a people, a Syrian (Aramaic) and not a Hebrew. The Hebrews did not exist yet at the time.

God blesses Abraham then tells him: "All the clans on earth will bless themselves by you" (Genesis 12,3). The rabbis interpret this verse as follows: "The Jews of all nations on earth..."
will bless themselves by you”. This restrictive interpretation is not God’s intention.

God’s call was addressed to Abraham when he was 75 years old and his wife Sarah 65. At that time he was in Haran, north of Syria. God says to him: "Leave your country, your kinred... for a country which I shall show you; and I shall make you a great nation..." (Genesis 12,1-2). "A great nation", translate the rabbis, to give a political Israeli nuance, to the divine choice of Abraham.

Later, God changed the name of Abram into Abraham (Ab=father), "for, he tells him, I am making you father of many nations' (Genesis 17,5). Here appears the universal plan of God: it includes all men and is not at the exclusive profit of a particular group. The fanatic Jews see in these nations nothing but the Jews dispersed over the world to control it. These nations are the descendents of Japheth, the non-Jews 'from whom came the dispersal (of the non-Jews) to the islands of the nations, each with its own language, by clan and nation' (Genesis 10,1-5). The 'islands of the nations' represent the Mediterranean islands and countries as well as the non-Jewish world.

Jesus denounced the racism of the scribes and the Pharisees. His disciples understood that God had never chosen a 'people', but wanted to form a community of believers from whom the Messiah was to be born. This community had the task of preparing men, all men, to this great divine plan instead of keeping for itself this universal salvation. The Apostles understood that all those who believe in Jesus are sons of Abraham, this relation being spiritual, and not blood tied. St Paul says indeed: 'By being Christ’s, you are that progeny of Abraham' (Galatians 3,29). This blessed lineage is thus universal, including all nations and races as announced to Abraham.

Abraham was called 2000 years B.C.; so Christ is exactly between him and us, people of the 21st century. Some wonder why God waited so long before appearing to men. So many centuries had passed before Abraham! The answer is as follows: the original sin made man lose his spiritual and psychological powers. It was necessary to wait a long time in order for him to regain, through those years, a minimum of capacities making him suited to reflection. It was then that he reached a certain degree of intellectual maturity to understand that God is Spirit, that he is single, and that he should not be sought neither in material objects (the sun, etc...), nor in idols. Today still, many are unable to seize spiritual realities and the existence of a single God. Fetishism and the superstition still reign in so-called civilised societies. Polytheist tribes are still found in Africa, Asia, America and Australia. You will realise how difficult it is to reveal God to the men of our century: they must have a minimum spiritual interest and reach a certain moral maturity to accept God... or to refuse Him, preferring worldly interests even after having known Him.

A french writer, André Gide, after repenting himself from his homosexual disordres and having declared his love to God, tells Him:

"Pardon Seigneur! (Sorry Lord!) Yes, I know that I lie. The truth is that, this flesh that I hate, I love it still more than Yourself." (*André Gide par lui-même’, Ecrivains de toujours, Editeurs du Seuil. Claude Martin, 1963.)

Those who think this way are many.

Abraham was invited by God to leave his country Syria, his family and the house of his father. It was a must to move him away from him idolatrous and polytheist environment to isolate him from any spiritual contamination and from unfavourable attacks. God sent him to where no one knew of him in order to safeguard his plan and to guaranty his good development. Abraham was to be detached from the society who knew him, from the parents and friends who represented a danger to his new faith. It is the case of any person who starts discovering God and the spiritual life that causes oneself the animosity of materialistic people. Jesus had said: 'A person’s enemies will be the members of his own household’ (Matthew 10,36). Whoever
Mesopotamian and Middle Eastern sites of the Ancient times in relation to the patriarchs’ story.

hears God’s call and wants to be attracted by the spiritual life must know how to de-condition oneself, how to liberate one’s mentality from the bonds likely to block the interior enthusiasm. This is explained in the 'Preliminary' part of our study. It is necessary to have the courage to break with any person who prevents us from evolving, even with intimate members of the family. The Psalm (45,10) says to the believing soul: "Listen, my daughter, attend to my words and hear; forget your own nation and your ancestral home (de-condition yourself!), then the King (God) will fall in love with your beauty; he is your lord, bow down before him!" And Christ still says on this subject: 'No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me" (Matthew 10,37).

Here now are the most important points of this lesson:

2.3.2 God promises Abraham a lineage and a land (Genesis 12,6-7)

After asking Abraham to leave his country, Syria, God announces him that he will protect and reward him: 'Do not be afraid, Abram! I am your shield and shall give you a very great reward'. This declaration does not satisfy Abraham: ' Lord Yahweh, what use are your gifts, as I am going on my way childless?...' And to comfort him, God promises a lineage as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15,1-6).

To this promise, God adds that of giving him and his descendents a welcoming land in compensation of that which he had left: "I shall give this country to your progeny" (Genesis 12,7). The scribes overstep abruptly from the lineage claimed by Abraham to a non-claimed and non-specified land. A land not indicated until later: the land of Canaan, Palestine.

This geographical gift to the descendents of Abraham is the basis of the concept of a
"Promised Land" that the Hebrews, incorrectly throughout the centuries, allotted themselves exclusively. To rectify this false interpretation, it is necessary to understand -according to God’s intention- what this land is and who Abraham’s true descendants are.

The land God promises is not a geographical place; it is the symbol of a higher and eternal reality. It is regarding divine happiness, which Adam enjoyed before his expulsion from Paradise. This "Promised Land" symbolises God himself, Him only being able to fully satisfy thirsty souls for life and happiness; the Creator is the only stable and definite Fatherland. Forever!

St Paul confirms this fact of a spiritual Promised Land by saying: "It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants... By faith he sojournered in the Promised Land as though it were not his... He looked forward to the well-founded city, designed and built by God..." (Hebrews 11,8-10) This non-terrestrial City is God himself, "because, explains also Paul, there is no permanent city for us here; we are looking for the one which is yet to be" (Hebrews 13,14).

As for the descendants of Abraham, they are the disciples of Jesus. Paul announces this fact by saying: "By being Christ’s, you are that progeny of Abraham, the heirs (of the divine Land) named in the promise" (Galatians 3,29).

God invited Abraham to settle in Canaan and to live there in peace with the inhabitants of the country. The divine intention for this first monotheist community was to spread brotherly, peacefully and wisely around it the light of a single God. God’s aim was not to "drive out the local inhabitants before you..." as the scribes confess, unashamed, in the book of Numbers (Numbers 33,55). It is such verses that Jeremiah denounces as untrue (Jeremiah 8,8). God’s aim by calling Abraham was never political, nor nationalist, but spiritual and universal.

When the Jews penetrated Palestine after exiting Egypt with Moses in the 13th century B.C., they settled there and wanted to create an Israeli kingdom. God and the prophets condemned this politicization of Judaism.

Abraham’s role did not consist of establishing a nation 'like all nations', but of forming a monotheist community made up of all nations. This spiritual sacred mission was to reveal the single God and to prepare humanity to welcome the Messiah. The Jews deviated the universal plan of God by transforming Judaism into a political Zionism.

When the scribes wrote the Bible in the 10th century B.C., the Israeli kingdom was already founded. The writing of the Bible was thus performed in an already politicised Zionist spirit. The divine Revelation thus deviated when passing through the zionist mentality. The scribes, in fact, endeavoured to insert in the texts qualities and insinuations favourable to their zionist policy. The prophets did not fail to denounce this 'untrue' practise (Jeremiah 7,22 / 8,8).

Nowadays as in the past, unnameable crimes are still committed in order to create an Israeli State which rejects the teachings of Jesus, the universal Messiah. Eight centuries B.C., the prophets Micah and Isaiah had already denounced "the princes of the house of Israel who detest justice, who build Zion (Zionism) with blood and Jerusalem (capital of Israel) with iniquity!" (Micah 3,9-10) "Woe to who add house to house and join field to field until there is nowhere left and they are the sole inhabitants of the country" (Isaiah 5,8).

Thus, according to the prophets, Jewish nationalism can only be built on injustice.

In the 12th century B.C., Gideon had understood that. At the Jews’ request of proclaiming him king of Israel, he uncompromisingly refused: "I will not rule you, neither will my son. Yahweh shall rule you' (Judges 8,22-23). The prophet Samuel had also refused to yield at the request of the Israeli chiefs who asked him: "'give us a king to judge us, like the other nations. Samuel thought it was wrong of them...' The prophet tried to talk them out of it, "the people, however, refused to listen to Samuel. They said, 'No! We are determined to have a king, so that we can be like the nations' (1 Samuel 8,4-21). The people realised later on that they had seriously sinned by founding a kingdom and acknowledged to Samuel: 'To all our sins we have added this wrong of asking for a king' (1 Samuel 12,19).
At his turn, Jesus rejected such an earthly kingdom. This is why, when He realised that the Jewish nationalists dazzled by his miracles were about to come and take him by force and make him king (political), he fled back to the hills alone (John 6,15). In front of Pilate who asked him: "So, then you are a king!?", Jesus declared: "It is you who say that I am a king... my kingdom does not belong here" (John 18,36-37).

Consequently, Christians who admit to the Jews the right to consider Palestine as their promised land, show that they understand nothing of Jesus’ message. A Christian favourable to the creation of an Israeli state stops from being a witness of Jesus.

Finally, notice how the specified borders of this "promised" land vary in the Bible according to the ambitions and cravings of the various scribes throughout the centuries: in Genesis 15,18, they extend from the Nile to Euphrates, in Numbers 34,1-12, the Eastern border stops at the Jordan and the Dead Sea, quite far from Euphrates... In Joshua 1,4 it extends again to the Euphrates, but the western border shrinks down to the Sinai and does not dare to extend to the Nile. Had God had been the inspirer of the Israeli borders, these would not have been so whimsical. God does not contradict himself.

2.3.3 Melchizedek (Genesis 14,17-20)

It is very important to get to know Melchizedek because he symbolises the Messiah as Paul explains in Hebrews 7,1-3: 'Melchizedek, king of Salem... he has no father, mother or ancestry (that are known), and his life has no beginning or ending; he is like the Son of God (Jesus)...

Now read in row chapters 12 to 50 of the Genesis. You will find obscure points, unfamiliar to our mentality and to the habits of our 20th and 21rst centuries. Do not stop at them; continue your reading until the end. After that, by resuming this biblical course, you will have all the necessary explanations. Notice all along your reading how God had formed through Abraham a monotheistic society in the heart of the pagan nations of the time. Notice his spiritual, non-political role. God created this community from a Syrian man; He certainly did not choose a Hebrew people, being inexistent at the time.

Chapter 14 tells about Abraham’s war to save his nephew Lot. I had explained why the verse 13 mentions Abram "the Hebrew", a word slipped by the scribes to give the impression that the Hebrews existed since the beginning of the world. Always remember that the Ray of the divine Revelation passed by the deforming prism of the racist Zionist politics. In order to find this Ray in its purity and limpidity, it is necessary, as I already said, to exorcise the Bible of its politico-Zionist content, just as by fire gold is purified from mud, and wheat is separated from the chaff.

After Abraham’s victory, Melchizedek came to congratulate and bless him. Who is Melchizedek? He is unknown in History. Genesis only reveals his symbolic aspects; features that compare him to Jesus 'the Son of God', as explains it Paul (Hebrews 7,1-3). Genesis reveals that he is king and priest at the same time. He is the king of 'Salem' (Jerusalem) while being a priest of 'God Most High', an Aramaic expression meaning 'God the Almighty' or 'Supreme God', higher and larger in power than all the other gods of the middle-eastern mythology. Remark that it is this Supreme God who is the 'creator of heaven and earth' (Genesis 14,19). The God that Melchizedek adored is thus, without him knowing, the only God Creator whom we know, the same One that had appeared to Abraham, then to Moses and the One who was incarnated in His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus Melchizedek symbolises Christ who, like him, Priest and King at the same time. Jesus is a priest because he offered Himself in sacrifice to God - not through another priest - on the altar of the Cross in Jerusalem, Melchizedek’s city. Jesus is also spiritual king, sovereign of hearts whose reign is non-political and includes men of all races and languages. Jesus reins over his believers from the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21,2), symbolised by the terrestrial Jerusalem, the "Salem" of Melchizedek. It is from Jerusalem thus, that Melchizedek and Jesus
reign and offer their sacrifices. By introducing Melchizedek, king and priest of "Salem", God was pointing out to another King Priest who will come out 2000 years later from this same city: Jesus, who also offers Himself to the descendants of Abraham in the Eucharistic Bread and Wine daily to his own, as Melchizedek offered them symbolically to Abraham their ancestor.

Jesus is priest, but his priesthood is not like that of the pagans, limited to cutting throats of animals offered to God. Christ’s priesthood is similar to that of Melchizedek who "brought bread and wine" because "he was a priest of God Most High", explains Genesis 14,18. Jesus clarified the real meaning of the bread and the wine during his last Easter Supper with his Apostles: the bread is his torn Body and the wine is his blood poured on the cross (Matthew 26,26-29). Thus Jesus’ bread and wine make his sacrifice actually present. It is the sacrifice of the new sacerdotal order instituted by Him for the salvation of all believers. It reduces down to nothing the animal sacrifices prescribed by the Torah, but unable to soften God’s Heart: 'Bulls' blood and goats' blood are incapable of taking away sins", says Paul (Hebrews 10,4). That will become clear later.

As king and priest, Melchizedek blessed Abraham who is the holder of the divine Covenant: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High (El-Eliôn), creator of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14,19). Notice at the verse 14,22 that at his turn, Abraham swears in front of the king of Sodom by "YHVH, God Most High, creator of heaven and earth". He thus reveals that there is one God creator and that his name is not "El-Eliôn", an abstract and unknown "god" of mythology, but "YHVH" (word meaning 'The one who is"), unique God of the Revelation, who appeared himself to men through Abraham.

Melchizedek appears unexpectedly, as an event out of the context, halting the story of encounter between the king of Sodom and Abraham which continues at once afterwards. That too is symbolic: spirituality irrupts in our temporal life, it stops the course of the profane history to reveal itself to man, to attract his attention. Then the story of the king de Sodom takes back its course: he continues his discussion with Abraham. This means that man must retake life’s normal course after having met the spiritual one, but must endeavour never not to forget this spiritual world that revealed itself to mankind.

The astonishing thing in this story is that Abraham, holder of the divine Alliance, gives Melchizedek "the tenth of everything" (Genesis 14,20). It is also the latter who blesses Abraham: "Now think how great this man must have been, if the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the finest plunder... and he gave his blessing to the holder of the promises (Abraham)" said St Paul (Hebrews 7,4-7). The reason of Melchizedek’s dimension is that he foreshadows the Messiah’s priesthood. King David explained this foreshadowing in a Psalm (inspired canticle) 800 years later. He addresses himself to the Messiah to come in these terms: "You are a priest for ever of the order of Melchizedek" (Psalms 110,4).

Thus, Melchizedek foreshadows The Messiah, Jesus, because his priesthood represents that which God approves of, a worship 'in spirit and truth' as Jesus explains it (John 4,23), not a human priesthood with its traffic of money and ritual worship (church clothing, incense, ornaments, specific gestures, etc...). God does not approve such a theatrical priesthood: He intervened in human History to reveal to us that Melchizedek’s priesthood, as pagan as it were, was more to Him than the religious fake worships. This is why He revealed that His Messiah’s priesthood will not be in accordance to the order of Aaron - a Hebrew descending from Abraham, as you will later see - but according to an order unfamiliar with this blood-tied lineage. This was achieved with Jesus who, by his crucifixion, instituted another eternal priesthood rejected by the Jews. Jesus is a priest; He is even the High Priest of the new eternal priesthood, without being of the tribe of Levi, as Paul in his letter to the Hebrews explains it (chapters 5-7). According to the Jews, only the Levites descendents of Aaron can be priests and sacrifice animals (Numbers 18). Through Jesus, God turned upside down this human conception of priesthood by cancelling animal sacrifices, by means of the Cross of Jesus.
With the Book of Revelation (as you will see later), God turns upside down the ritual concept of Christian priesthood by instituting a new kind of priesthood. This one is formed by all those who believe in the one and only authentic interpretation of the Book of St John’s Revelation, an interpretation revealed by Jesus Himself on May 13, 1970 (see text "The Key of the Apocalypse").

Therefore, although Melchizedek’s appearance is short and is mentioned only once more in the Old Testament in the Psalm 110,4, allusion to this enigmatic person comprises a very valuable teaching. It allows courageous believers to liberate themselves from the traditional worship full of superstition and fanaticism. As a consequence they reach the highest degrees of spiritual union with God by a priesthood of the heart, according to "the order of Melchizedek", not according to an order of theatrical worship be it Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or else... Jesus had said: "True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; that is the kind of worshippers that the Father seeks. God is spirit, and those who worship must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4,23-24).

This is the lesson to be remembered from Melchizedek.

It would be good at this stage to read chapters 5-10 of the letter to the Hebrews. In it, St Paul comments splendidly on the role of Melchizedek and depicts the importance of the new Priesthood of Jesus for the salvation of humanity. This is the salvation promised to Adam and Eve.

2.3.4 The Alliance of the Halves (Genesis 15,7-17)

God promised Abraham, whose wife was sterile and old, a son and a land. This promised son, long waited for, did not arrive. Abraham, more than 80 years old, complained to God that a stranger would be his heir: "Lord Yahweh I am going on my way childless? Since you have given me no offspring, a member of my household will be my heir". But God says to him: "Such a one will not be your heir; no, your heir will be the issue of your own body". Abraham then asked to be reassured on the country he was to live in after leaving Harân: "How can I know that I shall possess it? " . At that time, he needed a concrete sign to believe in that miracle. He had understood the difficulty of his mission and pact with God and wanted His 'signature' at the bottom of the "contract" between them. God thus says to him: "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat, a three-year-old ram, etc..." Abraham "brought him all these, split the animals down the middle (after cutting their throats) and placed each half opposite the other" (Genesis 15,1-11).

To be able to understand this text, you should know that men at the time of Abraham were superstitious. Furthermore, it was a custom to perform a contract in the following way: an animal (or several animals, depending on the importance of the contract) was sacrificed to this end, then cut in two halves between which should pass the contractors. The passage between the two animal pieces meant that the pact was concluded and that the party who would break the contract’s clauses would suffer the fate of the animal (or animals) and would be torn up by the gods. This custom was even practised by the Jews long after Abraham; the prophet Jeremiah mentions it in the 6th century B.C., 1.500 years after Abraham. Jeremiah denounces the Hebrews’ infidelity using these terms: 'As for the people who have broken my covenant, who have not observed the terms of the covenant which they made before me, I shall treat them like the calf that people cut in two to pass between its pieces. The chief men of Judah and Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests and all the country people who have passed between the pieces of the calf, I shall hand them to their enemies" (Jeremiah 34,18-20).

To show that He will accomplish His promise made to Abraham, God, taking the shape 'of a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch' passed between the cut out pieces. The book of Genesis explains why "that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram" (Genesis 15,17-18). God had thus "signed" the contract with his chosen one. This vision was the tangible sign required by
2.3 - Lesson 3 - From Abraham to Isaac (Genesis 12 to 24)

2.3.5 Ishmael (Genesis 16)

Abraham and Sarah, being unaware of God’s absolute power, did not understand how God would give them a son, considering their old age and Sarah’s sterility. Miracles were not yet known.

At that time, a law by king Hammourabi stipulated that in case of sterility, a legitimate wife could have legitimate children by allowing her husband to sleep with her servant. The child born from this extra-marital relation was nevertheless considered that of the married couple, on condition that at birth the child should be received in the arms of the legitimate wife to indicate her full assent (today there are "surrogate mothers").

Sarah, whose faith seems to be less firm than that of her husband, knowing that she was sterile and that a son would not come from her, pushed Abraham towards Hagar, her Egyptian servant: 'Go to my slave-girl. Perhaps I shall get children through her. And Abram took Sarai’s advice' (Genesis 16,2). This act will take place again later with Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, who coupled with the two maidservants of his wives, Rachel (Genesis 30,1-6) and Lea (Genesis 30,9-13).

Ishmael was born from the union between Abraham and Hagar. Abraham was 86 years old at that time (Genesis 16,16). Notice that God did not hurry up to achieve his promise of giving Abraham a son from Sarah; it is His way of making man grow up to the divine size through patience.

In this way, Sarah took the initiative of having a son her way. But God had a plan of his own that He would not modify. The birth of Ishmael did not prevent Him from appearing once again to Abraham to reveal His miraculous plan to him: 'As regards your wife Sarai, you must not call her Sarai, but Sarah (meaning "the Rejoiced"). I shall bless her and moreover give you a son by her". That appeared too marvellous to the old man: 'Is a child to be born to a man one hundred years old, and will Sarah have a child at the age of ninety? May Ishmael live in your presence!' answered Abraham who "bowed to the ground, and he laughed" in front of Abraham.

...
such an incredible annunciation. But God insisted: "Yes, your wife Sarah will bear you a son whom you must name Isaac. And I shall maintain my covenant with him" (Genesis 17,15-19). That was the annunciation of history’s first miracle. The covenant meant that it was from Isaac’s lineage that the Messiah would come.

2.3.6 Isaac (Genesis 17 & 18)

Abraham had to wait a long time for this son announced during the alliance "of the halves". Indeed, Isaac was born fifteen years after this vision.

At the annunciation of his birth his father "laughed" as much as his mother (Genesis 17,17/18,12). This laughing incident is at the origin of the name of Isaac (Yitzhak) who means, "to laugh" in Hebrew, as in Arabic 'Yidhac': "God has given me cause to laugh! All who hear about this will laugh with me! Whoever would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children! Yet I have borne a son in his old age" comments joyfully the old man’s wife who was 90 years old at the birth of Isaac, and her husband 100 (Genesis 21,6-7). Only God could announce such a surprise to Abraham and accomplish it. For the old couple, there was indeed reason to laugh. We would have done the same. Many would laugh at the sight of a pregnant nonagenarian.

Isaac is important because he comes to concretize materially the sign requested by Abraham from God: this son is the achievement of the pact "of the halves". This sign, unexplainable by science of all times, is a frightening sign for men of all centuries. It consequently does not concern Abraham only: it puts us all in cause because the Alliance that Isaac was to perpetuate was through the Messiah; it had to come from the lineage of this son of Abraham, not of another, because God said: "For Ishmael too I grant you your request. I hereby bless him... But my covenant I shall maintain with Isaac" (Genesis 17,21).

This miracle strengthened Abraham’s faith; it must also strengthen ours. It is this purpose that God intended.

The plan of salvation announced to Adam and Eve is thus achieved with Abraham. It must appear as a divine initiative and intervention, an irrefutable proof of the existence and absolute power of God, and of a divine plan that men must respect and follow. Men of good will only will see and understand.

You may have noticed God’s patience: it is only 13 years after the birth of Ishmael that the Creator indicated his plan to Abraham who did not think of having other sons anymore, neither did his wife. They were sufficed with Ishmael. But God had his plan and, to lead it to good term, he had to put human prospects upside down. Such is his Wisdom. Creatures must unceasingly learn how to adapt to the will of the Creator; they will discover God’s profound wisdom by yielding to his holy will without resistance, and they will never regret abandoning themselves to Him.

With Isaac, God showed his Absolute power. He thus prepared humanity to another, even more wonderful miracle, that of the Messiah’s birth 2,000 years after Abraham: Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary by direct divine action, even without the intervention of a man: "The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin... Mary... and said to her: You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son... He will be called Son of the Most High. The Holy Spirit will come upon you... And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God..." (Luke 1,26-38).

Isaac’s miraculous birth comes therefore to prepare men to welcome later the Messiah’s even more miraculous one. They are therefore unjustifiable all those who do not believe in Jesus’ miraculous birth.
2.3.7 Circumcision (Genesis 17,9-14)

Circumcision is a pre-biblical custom; it existed before Abraham, often practiced by Pagans for various reasons. In a war, the losers were subject to "the humiliation" of circumcision. The Bible itself reports this fact: king Saul requires of David 'one hundred Philistine foreskins, in vengeance on the king's enemies' (1 Samuel 18,25). This practice thus does not signify an alliance with God, even if the scribes of the Old Covenant present it like as such (Genesis 17,11).

Since Antiquity, circumcision was practiced throughout the world. Today still, certain tribes of Australia, Africa and America regard it as a sign of virility: a man refuses to give his daughter in marriage to an uncircumcised. Some perform this operation even to girls (ablation of the clitoris).

Seeing that the Pagans circumcised themselves for their gods, Abraham thought that he had, for a stronger reason, to subject himself to this operation for the only real God. But with time, the prophets understood the symbolic significance of this action and Moses required already that the heart be circumcised (Deuteronomy 10,16). Jeremy also insists on the purification of the soul by the circumcision of the heart (Jeremiah 4,4). This great prophet keeps on inviting believers to the introspection and 'cleansing' of the conscience, denouncing the illusion and superficiality of the foreskin's circumcision, and stressing that it is even being practiced by the Pagans: 'Look, the days are coming, Yahweh declares, when I shall punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh: Egypt, Judah, Edom... For all those nations, and the whole house of Israel too, are uncircumcised at heart' (Jeremiah 9,24-25). Note that Judah (the Jews) is put at the same level as the Pagan of the time (Egypt, Edom) in spite of circumcision, and that this habit was already practiced outside the borders of Palestine.

It is necessary to compare circumcision to the modern worships inspired by paganism: church vestments, incensement, kneeling, etc... All these worships are only illusions, a superficial religiosity incapable of pleasing God and useless in helping one's spiritual evolution. They are material obstacles to the true rising of the soul. We can say the same for baptism by water; it is only a symbol. The only valid worship is that of knowledge and love, the worship of God in 'spirit and truth' as mentioned already (John 4,23-24).

With the Gospel, we definitely overstep the physical concept of circumcision to its spiritual concept which makes this habit null: "To be circumcised is of no importance, and to be uncircumcised is of no importance; what is important is the keeping of God's commandments", says Paul (1 Corinthians 7,19). And also: "In Christ Jesus it is not being circumcised or being uncircumcised that can affect anything - only faith working through love" (Galatians 5,6), 'In him (Jesus) you have been circumcised, with a circumcision performed, not by human hand, but by the complete stripping of your natural self. This is circumcision according to Christ', adds Paul (Colossians 2,11).

"Their reverence of me is worthless", says the Lord of the Pharisees and the scribes in spite of their circumcision (Matthew 15,9). Like most of the prophets, Isaiah also denounced these worships: 'The Lord then said: Because this people approaches me only in words, honours me only with lip-service while their hearts are far from, and reverence for me, as far as they are concerned, is nothing but human commandment, a lessons memorised ' (Isaiah 29,13). We are astonished that even today, so-called 'disciples' of Jesus insist on adoring according to worships and rites denounced by Jesus and the prophets: "Hypocrites! How rightly Isaiah prophesied about you when he said: This people honours me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me. Their reverence of me is worthless; the lessons they teach are nothing but human commandments", again repeats Jesus (Matthew 15,7-9).
**2.3.8 Revelation of the divine Trinity (Genesis 18)**

Chapter 18 repeats the announcement made by God to Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac, but this time with Sarah's presence. In the first story it is Abraham who "laughed" (Genesis 17,17), but in the second, it was Sarah who, "listening at the entrance of the tent behind Abraham"... she who "had ceased to have her monthly periods... laughed to herself, thinking, 'now that I am past the age of childbearing, and my husband is an old man, is pleasure to come my way again?'" (Genesis 18,11-12)

One recognises the two stories at the repetition of the mention that Isaac will be born "at this time next year" (Genesis 17,21/18,14). There are here two oral traditions, the second one wanting to be respectful of the Patriarch's dignity: it is not him who laughed and doubted, but Sarah whose faith was weaker than that of her husband considered irreproachable. The first story is told according to the *elohist* tradition: "God (*Elohim*) said to Abraham..." (Genesis 17,9-22), and the second according to the *yahwist* tradition: "Yahweh appeared to him at the Oak of Mamre..." (Genesis 18,1-14).

God, who sees the hearts, seizes Sarah's interior laughter and asks her why she had laughed, not to overpower her, but to make her realize his Absolute power. Sensing she had been discovered, she got afraid and denied saying: "I did not laugh". But God, good and understanding, said again paternally: "Oh yes, you did laugh", He did not consider the intimidated attitude of his "small" creature as a lie (Genesis 18,15).

The most important point in this second story is the revelation of the Divine Trinity. Indeed, God appeared to Abraham in the figure of Three Persons: "He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him" (Genesis 18,2).

The conversation between God and Abraham is in itself revealing: the Patriarch addresses himself to these three Persons in singular at times and in plural at others. He seems unable to understand if he must address himself to one person or three: "My lord, if I find favour with you... Let me have a little water brought, and you can wash your feet... They replied: "Do as you say" (Genesis 18,2-5). It is God-Trinity who irrupts in the world of men and appears 2000 years before Christ without being seized by human intelligence still opaque.

Read chapter 18 attentively while thinking of it. What do you think of the three persons that appeared to Abraham? Why does the dialogue vary between singular and plural? Give your explanations.

Meditate on the way the story is reported: all is said simply, freshly and without false modesty, especially on Sarah's behalf. Abraham hastens to accommodate his host with a spontaneous enthusiasm and offers him the best of his herd (contrary to Cain's avarice). And Sarah, withered from aging, she who "had ceased to have her monthly periods", wonders with her hidden laughter: "Now that I am old, is pleasure to come my way again"... with a husband who is 'an old man'!

These features reveal to us Abraham's aspect: A simple man, straight and complete, with a generous heart, spontaneous and sufficiently flexible to let himself be modelled by God. This explains why God chose him. Do not forget that the divine choice fell on this man, a Syrian, and never on a Hebrew "people" whose heart is toughened and is rebellious to God as the prophets reveal (Isaiah 1,2-4 / Jeremiah 7,25-28 etc).

**2.3.9 Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19)**

After announcing Isaac's birth, God revealed to Abraham his determination to strike down Sodom and Gomorrah because of their perversities. These two cities located south of the Dead Sea were famous for their vices, particularly homosexuality, from which comes the expression 'sodomy'. God decided to punish them, as he had done before, at the time of Noah, to a dissolute civilisation. That was to be taken as a lesson to future generations and serve as an example of the punishment that is to fall down on the impious world at the end of times (Luke 64
Lot and his wife were invited to leave Sodom with their two daughters because they had not let themselves be contaminated by the sodomites. The vice of this people was clearly homosexuality (Genesis 19,4-11). It is recommended to Lot’s family not to look back while leaving (Genesis 19,17), i.e. to leave this past without regret, without letting their hearts at one’s possessions, houses, etc; but to look towards the future, trusting in God. Lot’s wife did not take into consideration this divine recommendation and was transformed into "a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19,26).

We must understand the symbolic meaning of this story: One should never hesitate to give up a life without God. Those who wish to rise spiritually higher must liberate themselves from the superficial mundane attractions to leap towards the spiritual life without looking behind and without maintaining nostalgia for passed pleasures: "Once the hand is laid on the plough (spiritual life), no one who looks behind is fit for the kingdom of God", said Jesus (Luke 9,62).

**2.3.10 Isaac’s birth and the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21)**

After Isaac’s birth, 'Sarah watched the son that Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. 'Drive away that slave-girl and her son,’ she said to Abraham, 'this slave-girl’s son is not to share the inheritance with my son Isaac' (Genesis 21,9-10). Sarah thus disavows Ishmael as her son and rejects him, exiling him with his mother... after being herself the instigator of the union of her husband with Hagar.

Sarah’s attitude 'greatly distressed Abraham, because the slave-girl’s child was too his son', but God said to him: "Do not distress yourself on account of the boy and your slave-girl. Do whatever Sarah says, for Isaac is the one through whom your name will be carried on” (Genesis 21,9-12).

God allowed this female jealousy. He granted the expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael, not to discredit them and approve Sarah, as the rabbis interpret it, but to achieve his Messianic plan through Isaac. It was necessary that peace reigned in the family without quarrels. This is why God asked Abraham not to sadden himself because of this moving away. God confirmed his blessing already given to Ishmael (Genesis 17,20), recalling that from "the slave-girl’s son I shall also make him into a great nation, for he too is your child" (Genesis 21,13).

This divine blessing contradicts the fanatic view of many Jews and so-called Christians’ behaviour regarding Ishmael and the Arabs in general under pretext that their ancestor Ishmael was "driven out" by Abraham. It is not in this racist sense that Ishmael’s distancing is presented by the Genesis which considers him also of Abraham’s lineage. After the expulsion of Hagar and her son, an Angel appeared to them to support and comfort the distraught mother: "Do not be afraid, for God has heard the boy’s cry in his plight. I shall make him into a great nation. Then God opened Hagar’s eyes and she saw a well, so she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy..." (Genesis 21,14-21).

God never gave Ishmael up, but his Messianic plan was to be achieved through Isaac.

**2.3.11 The sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22)**

Pagans of the time had custom of offering their children in sacrifice to the idols. This was even practised by some Jewish kings after Abraham and has been condemned by the prophets (Jeremiah 7,31). Abraham, under a conscience crisis, wanted to offer his son in sacrifice to God as the Pagans offered their children to their gods, thinking he would honour God this way. But God intervened on time to prevent him from doing so, and to explain to him that He is not like the pagan 'gods' who required human sacrifices. God sent an Angel to tell him: "Do not raise your hand against the boy, do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not
Canaan places and people mentioned in the patriarchs’ story
refused me your own beloved son'. Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram... and offered it as a
burnt offering in the place of his son' (Genesis 22).

Later on, God explained through the prophets that the only sacrifices pleasant for him were
repentance, justice and love. Micah the prophet exclaimed: 'With what shall I enter Yahweh’s
presence...? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrongdoing, the child of my own body for my
sin...? You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only this, to
do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6,6-8)

With the coming of Jesus, a new light was given to us. Not only does God not require from
men their children in sacrifice, but it is Him, God, who offers to all the humanity his Only
son in sacrifice for the salvation of all those who believe in Him: 'For this is how God loved
the world: He gave his Only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but
may have eternal life', said Jesus (John 3,16); and also: 'No one can have greater love than
to lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends, if you do what I command you' (John
15,13-14). Through his interference in human history, God changed wisely and pedagogically
man’s mentality concerning sacrifices and, with the Advent of Jesus, the upheaval was entire.
The dictator gods of mythology yielded the place to the only Creator who revealed Himself
good, compassionate and merciful.

2.3.12 Isaac’s marriage (Genesis 24)

Abraham wanted a wife for his son Isaac from 'his native land and his own kinsfolk' (Genesis
24,1-4). He thus sent his servant to Syria, "Aram naharaim", i.e. "Syria of the rivers" (in the
north of the Tiger and the Euphrates), where is situated the syrian city of Harân, the town he
had left (Genesis 24,10-15). It is from there that the servant brought back Rebekah as a wife for
Isaac. She is no other than the granddaughter of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother
(Genesis 11,27-29). She is thus Isaac’s paternal cousin. It is also from there that Rebekah will
later want a wife for her son Jacob (Genesis 27,46-28,5). This demonstrates the Syrian
origin of Abraham’s family.

Reflection

God tranquillised Abraham by blessing Ishmael. He also announced to him that Ishmael
'will be the father of 12 Princes' (Genesis 17,20) whose names are mentioned in Genesis 25,12-
16. This number is symbolic and must be compared to the 12 tribes of Israel (see further on the
12 sons of Jacob in Genesis 35,22-26). The 12 "noble" descendents of Ishmael are precious in
the eyes of God, and thus worthy of consideration. As all men of good faith, they are entitled
to the same spiritual heritage as Isaac’s descendents of good faith.

A writer favourable to Hagar and Ishmael would have written: 'Sarah, after having Isaac,
abandoned Ishmael who felt this disaffection. She ended up by moving him away, forgetting
that she had ardently wished him then adopted him. Finally, she even jealousy refused him the
legitimate right to inherit like Isaac, his brother'. Sarah’s attitude 'greatly distressed Abraham'
(Genesis 21,9-11). Thereafter, fanatics have adopted Sarah’s chauvinistic mentality, instead of
following Abraham’s kindness and justice.

2.4 Lesson 4 - History of Isaac and Jacob (Genesis 25 to
50)

It is necessary to have already read these chapters before continuing this lesson; otherwise
you will not profit much from it. Five important points are to be raised:
2.4.1 The two sons of Isaac: Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25,19-)

Rebekah (Rivca), like Sarah her mother-in-law, was Syrian. Genesis 25,20 insists on the revelation of this "Aramaean" origin of Isaac’s wife: "Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramaen of Paddan-Aram, and sister of Laban the Aramaen" (Genesis 25,20).

Rebekah, like Sarah, was sterile: "Isaac prayed to Yahweh for his wife, on behalf of his wife for she was sterile. Yahweh heard his prayer and his wife Rebekah conceivedt" (Genesis 25,21). She carried twins: Esau and Jacob. The first to be born was regarded as the elder one, and the habit wanted that this one is privileged and inherits paternal dignity. According to the human tradition, it thus returned to Esau, the elder one, to inherit the spiritual mission of Abraham and Isaac, the Messiah having to come from his line, not from that of his twin brother, Jacob.

But God is not submitted to human habits and considerations whether familial or tribal, as it is the case here. They are too often racist and are dictated by unjust prejudices. He thus established his Covenant with Jacob, not with Esau, however the elder one. This 'Covenant' meant that the Messiah was to come from the line of Jacob.

Indeed, when Rebekah went "to consult God", He answered her: "There are two nations in your womb... and the elder will serve the younger" (Genesis 25,23). This is a total upheaval of the mentality of the time and ancient traditions. The reason -strictly human- of the passage of the right of primogeniture to Jacob is that Rebekah "preferred Jacob" because he was "a quiet man and remained under the tents", near his mother (Genesis 25,27-28). She thus plotted to conceal the right of seniority to give it to her preferred son. By trick she obtained that her husband blesses Jacob instead of Esau, yet "Isaac preferred Esau, for he had a taste for wild game (cooked by Esau), but Rebekah preferred Jacob" (Genesis 25,28). It was believed, at that time, that the blessing given was effective and irrevocable, not being able to pass to another, whether it is deserved or not (Genesis 27,1-45). It should be noted that "this consultation of God' was practised by men or women who claimed to hold this capacity of clairvoyance". Today still, much claim to hold such a capacity. The Bible reveals that the Jews usually practised this habit and many of them still do so: Exodus 33,7 / 1 Samuel 14,41 etc...

The attitude of Rebecca and Jacob in this case is not an example of high morality. The prophets, later on, condemned the trick of Jacob: Jeremy presents it like example of deception: "Let each be on gard against his friend; do not trust a brother, for every brother aims to supplant (like Jacob)... " (Jeremiah 9,3-4). 'Yahweh has a case against Judah, he will punish Jacob as his conduct merits... In the very womb he overreached his brother...', also said Hosea (Hosea 12,3-4).

But the scribes, wanting to justify Jacob and his mother, presented the story of the dish of lenses at the detriment of Esau. He returned famished and 'exhausted' from work to the countryside; he told his brother who had prepared a good soup of lenses: "Give me a mouthful (he was so hungry) of that red stuff there (colour of the lenses); I am exhausted.' But Jacob, famished of the right of seniority, seized the occasion immediately and misused it to take possession of this right from his brother: 'First give me your oath; he gave him his oath and sold his birthright to Jacob". Esau, not taking seriously this covetousness of his brother, agreed. 'That was all Esau cared about his birthright", cynically comment the scribes (Genesis 25,29-34).

This story has, however, the merit to shake us: it invites us, if we are attentive, to revolt in front of injustice. Notice that Isaac, indeed, tells his son Esau: "...you will serve your brother. But when you free yourself, you will shake his yoke off your neck" (Genesis 27,40). It is necessary to be released from the yoke of the unfruitful religious traditions.

Another moral lesson from this story: one must prefer the spiritual life rather than the material one; we should not "sell our right of seniority", which is our right to the Eternal life, for a good of a temporal nature. It is this teaching which Jesus gives us by refusing, at the
devil’s request, to transform the stones into bread, in spite of the fact that Jesus was hungry, because, as he had answered the devil: "Men do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4,4. See also Deuteronomy 8,3). Men should be hungry and thirsty for the divine directives. If there is to choose between a material interest and spiritual one, it is the latter to choose and the first to sacrifice, without hesitating and turning back like the wife of Lot did...

God promised Adam and Eve a descent which will crush the head of the devil. This Saviour is the Messiah, Jesus. The Messianic plan of God began with Abraham, passed to Isaac and continued with Jacob.

After having started with Abraham and being transmitted to Isaac, the descent promised by God to Adam and Eve to crush head of their tempter, the devil, passed to Jacob, the third Patriarch. The story of the soup of lenses comes to explain why this descent did not pass by Esau, Jacob’s elder son. But this human explanation does not reveal God’s true intention.

### 2.4.2 Two wives of Jacob (Genesis 28 & 29)

Esau married two hittite, and not aramaen, women. This greatly disappointed his parents (Genesis 26,34-35) and put them against him. Rebecca, who feared similar marriages for Jacob, intervened with her husband and gave an ordre to Jacob: "You are not to marry any of the Canaanite women! Go off to Paddan-Aram (in AramSyria), the home of Bethuel your mother’s father, and there choose a wife for yourself from the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother" (Genesis 28,1-2). Notice that Isaac calls invokes upon Jacob and his descent "the blessing of Abraham". In the divine intention, this blessing means that the Messiah comes from this descent, not from that of Esau. The scribes give this blessing a geographical interpretation, namely that Palestine belongs to the descent of Jacob (the Jews), not to that of Esau (the Arabs). This arises from the following verse: '....so that one day you may own the country where you are now living as a stranger, which God gave to Abraham' (Genesis 28,3-4).

On his way to Syria, Jacob had a dream: God appeared to him at the top of a scale from the ground to the Sky to announce to him that his Covenant with Abraham would continue with him (Genesis 28,12-16). Jesus evoked this dream of the ladder, adapting it to his person and revealing by there that, from now on, he was the holder of the divine Covenant, the successor and the heir to the true promises made by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (John 1,51). He is this ladder which stands from earth to Heaven and allows all those who believe in him to ascend to Heaven.

Notice that the belief in one single God did not develop without difficulty. Personal experiences and options were needed. Jacob was not convinced enough just by the words of his father. He hesitated to believe in God and his faith was conditional: "If God remains with me... if he gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, and if I come back home safe to my father’s home, then Yahweh (only then) shall be my God..." (Genesis 28,20-22).

The story of Jacob’s marriages begins in chapter 29,15. The frenetic race between Lea and Rachel to have children appears strange to us. It is necessary to read these facts considering the mentality of the time: the regard of the husband for his wife was according to the number of children because the offspring was regarded as a sign of the divine blessing.

This unrestrained race for procreation between the two wives -to which the maidservants Zilpah (of Leah) and Bilhah (of Rachel) were put at contribution- gave Jacob 12 boys and a girl. These 12 sons of Jacob are the ancestors founders of the 12 tribes of Israel, the first monotheistic community called to reveal to the world, with kindness, the single Creator. The prophets denounced the disloyalty and the bad management of this first group of believers.

Being enriched, Jacob wanted to be independent of Labban, his father-in-law. He thus flees towards his native land, Canaan. Notice that, in the precipitation of the voyage, Rachel insisted to carry with her the idols of the gods whom she still worshipped in spite of her marriage
with Jacob (Genesis 31,34). Thus note again that the belief in the one and only single God grew gradually and with time in the hearts of the ancestors. We should not be astonished because, even today, 4,000 years after Abraham, we find a great numbre of Jews, Christians and Moslems who do not believe in God... or who believe in Him badly, with an unrenewed, fanatic, fundamentalist or fetishistic mentality.

2.4.3 The "wrestling" of Jacob against God (Genesis 32,24-33)

Jacob, on his return to Canaan, had another divine manifestation: 'Someone wrestled with him until daybreak'. This 'someone' was God himself in human form, like the three 'men' who had previously appeared to Abraham (Genesis 18).

The 'wrestling' between God and Jacob is symbolic: God wants to mold Jacob, to shape him according to his divine Holy Spirit, but this man (as so many others) resisted and fought against God, his Creator. Because Jacob resisted against Him, God gave him the name of 'Israel', which means "to fight against God", which he had done in fact! (Genesis 32,29).

By analysing this fact, one concludes that Jacob wanted unconsciously to be equal to God, to look at Him, face to face, like an equal rival. This is why his behaviour was condemned by the prophets. Indeed, Hosea said: 'Yahweh has a case against Judah, He will punish Jacob as his conduct merits...in the very womb he overreached his brother, in maturity he wrestled against God,...and beat Him", concludes Hosea ironically (Hosea 12,3-4). It is by violence and personal interest, not by love and justice, that Jacob wanted to steal God’s blessing, exactly as he had done to subtilise from his father the blessing he intended for Esau.

After this incident, God gave Jacob another name: 'No longer are you to be called Jacob, but Israel ("Isra" means to fight against, and 'El' means God) since you have shown your strength against God and men and have prevailed (he had 'fought' against his brother Esau, a man, and stole his right of seniority)'. God told him ironically (Genesis 32,29). This same resistance applies to the scribes and the pharisees who always resisted against God and his prophets who, before Jesus and the Apostles, did not fail to denounce the refractory attitude of the religious chiefs towards God (see Isaiah 1,2-3 / Micah 1,5 / Jeremiah 2,20 / Matthew 2,3 / 1 Thessalonians 2,14-16). We must discern, in the "triumph" of Jacob in his fight against God, the same divine irony addressed to Adam after his fall (Genesis 3,22).

Nevertheless, the biblical scribes claim that God "blessed him (Jacob) there" (Genesis 32,30). There is an obvious contradiction in this "blessing" with the words of the prophets referred to above: it is an overload added by the "lying pen" of the scribes (Jeremiah 8,8). The scribes thus justify their own resistance to God by presenting it like acceptable, even 'blessed' by God. This is why God, by the prophet Isaiah, tells the Israeli community: 'Your first ancestor (Jacob-Israel) sinned, your interpreters (religious scribes and other chiefs which interpreted the biblical texts) revolted against me. That is why I deposit the chief men of my sanctuary, why I put Jacob under the curse of destruction and subjected Israel to insult" (Isaiah 43,27-28). Thus, from where does this alleged blessing of Jacob come from? It comes from the interpreters and scribes, also revolted against God, like Jacob who, because of his resistance against God, was named Israel. This name passed to his descendents, heirs to the same resistance.

Today still, this fight against God is symbolised by the State of Israel. The Zionists continue, by politicising Judaism, the fight of Jacob against God and men:

Against God by the refusal to admit that the mission of Judaism is essentially and only spiritual and universal, not political and reserved to the Jews alone. This refusal of God’s plan is evident by their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.

Against men by the unjust and violent occupation of a ground -Palestine- which does not belong to them, while still pretending to be the "elected people".

Many so-called believers from all religions deserve to be called 'Israel' because, while asking God: 'Your will be done...'; they stubbornly impose their own will against God and...
2.4.4 The 12 sons of Jacob: 12 tribes of Israel (Genesis 35,22-26)

Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter from his two wives and their two maidservants. Lea had 6 sons and one daughter:

- **Ruben** (the elder one): He slept with Bilhah (maidservant of Rachel: Genesis 35,22) and, because of that, did not obtain a blessing of his father (Genesis 49,3-4).

- **Simeon and Levi**: they committed a racist and treacherous crime (Genesis 34,25-31) which attracted on them the curse of their father (Genesis 49,5-7). Moses and Aaron his brother are from this cursed tribe of Levi, chosen by Moses to be the single sacerdotal tribe, i.e. the tribe which gives the priests to sacrifice the animals (Numbers 3,45).

- **Judah**: from his tribe comes the Messiah (not of the tribe of the elder son, Ruben). This is why Jacob rents Judah (Genesis 49,8-12).

- **Issachar and Zebulun**.

- **Dinah**, finally is Jacob’s only daughter.

Rachel had 2 sons:

- **Joseph**: His half-brothers were jealous of him and sold him. He became very powerful in Egypt where he accommodated all his family.

- **Benjamin**: the last-born child of Jacob, the "benjamin".

Bilhah (maidservant of Rachel) had 2 sons:

- **Dan**

- **Naphtali**.

Zilpah (maidservant of Leah) had 2 sons:

- **Gad**

- **Asher**.

Chapter 49 of the Genesis brings back the prophecies of Jacob concerning each one of his children. The most important is that of Judah because from it comes the Messiah, called "the Lion of Juda" because this prophecy qualifies Judah "young lion" (Genesis 49,9). The Book of Revelation (Apocalypse) allots this messianic title to Jesus (Revelation 5,5).

The tribe of Judah held the messianic role in the Jewish history. It gave the kings who ruled in Judea, David and his dynasty, from which came the Messiah. Genesis 38 indicates the descent of the Messiah from Judah and Tamar from a none matrimonial union. Mt 1,3 indicates this genealogy. It is Judah who had revolted against his brothers following the sale of Joseph. He had left his family and married a none jewish canaanite woman. He had intervened with his brothers to save Joseph’s life (Genesis 37,26). Because of this noble attitude he deserved the praises of his father (Genesis 49,9) and deserves it to be the ancestor of the Messiah.

According to the prophecy of Jacob relating to Judah (Genesis 49,9-12), the Messiah was to abolish the royalty in Israel, not to consolidate it as the Jews, and the Apostles themselves thought (Acts 1,6). The prophecy says in fact: 'The sceptre will not pass from Judah, nor
The biblical course

the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute be brought him (the Messiah), and the peoples render him obedience." (Genesis 49,10). The sceptre, symbol of the royalty, will thus remain until the arrival of the Messiah who must seize the crown to proclaim the universal and spiritual reign, according to God, not a politico-military zionist one according to men.

The reason of the destruction of the Israeli kingdom -we shall see that later- is that it had been established by the Jews against God’s will. But if the Messiah comes to destroy the temporal royalty of an Israeli State, it is to instaure his spiritual and universal Kingdom according to prophetic words Jacob addressed to his son Judah: "The sceptre will not pass from Judah... until tribute be brought him (the Messiah) and the peoples render him obedience." (Genesis 49,10). The royalty will thus cease in Israel, but after the arrival of the Messiah who will proclaim spiritual King of all the nations. In fact, after Jesus, the political Kingdom ceased in Israel when Titus invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. Consequently, the spiritual and universal Kingdom of the Messiah, Jesus, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah", was definitively established. To him belongs the "Sceptre" forever.

The tribe of Judah ("Yehudah" in Hebrew) gave its name to the Jews ("Yehudim" in Hebrew, and "Yahoud" in Arabic). The English translation of the two words ("Yehudah" becoming "Judah" and "Yehudim" becoming "Jewish") does not reveal, like in Hebrew and Arabic, this relation between the tribe of Judah and the Jews (Yehouda and Yehoudim). The words "Jew" and "Judaism" are derived from the name of this tribe which, because of its Messianic quality, had a great importance in all the community. The Jews claimed themselves after its name, becoming the "Yehudim", to present themselves as the people of the Messiah due to come from the tribe of "Yehudah"; just as they had adopted the name of Israel to mean that they are the descendants of Jacob, named "Israel".

The disciples of Jesus are called "Christians" because they believe that He is the "Christ". Thus, the Messiah, is the centre of both communities and their point of reference. In Him, they are defined and find their identity. He is the beating Heart of both the Old and the New the Covenants (Testaments).

Thus, Judaism and Christianity refer to the Messiah: Judaism being in waiting of his Advent and Christianity proclaiming this Advent in the person of Jesus. Is thus a 'Christian' whoever recognizes Jesus as the announced Christ. Thus we should not expect another Messiah as the Jews of today still do.

The Jewish community, in the past, had the mission of spreading the knowledge of God and the future advent of the Messiah. The Christian community, on the other hand, testifies to the achievement of the Messianic prophecies by Jesus, presenting him as the one and only awaited Messiah, and that none should expect another one (Matthew 11,2-3).

Thus, these 12 sons of Jacob had no political mission. Their mission was essentially spiritual and consisted in revealing the one and only God, and announcing the future advent of the Messiah from their community and in favour of the whole world. Therefore, these 12 tribes are not only the spiritual ancestors of the Jews, but of all those who believe that Jesus is really the one and only Christ of God.

It should be known that the word 'Messiah' derives from Hebrew "Meshiah" which means "Ointed", the one who receives the unction of God. The word 'Christ' derives from the Greek "Christos" which also means "The Ointed", the selected one of God. It is by unction that the kings were enthroned. Now the Messiah is the King of the two worlds and his unction comes directly from God.

2.4.5 The 12 tribes in Egypt (Genesis 37 to 50)

With the story of Joseph we saw how the "sons of Israel" ended up in Egypt around 1700 B.C. They remained four centuries there, growing in number. The account of the Covenant "of the halves" between God and Abraham "had prophesied" this event (Genesis 15,13-15). We
should remember that this story was written about 1,000 years B.C. The stay in Egypt and the exit from this country had thus already taken place. The scribes added this *prophecy* later.

This stay in Egypt strongly marked the Israeli community which, with time, had forgotten God and had been contaminated by idolatric practices of the Egyptian idolatry. This exposed the Messianic plan of God to failure.

In order to pursue his plan successfully, God charged Moses to get the Jews out of Egypt four centuries after their entry. The book of the Exodus, that we will see in the fifth lesson, tells the history of this exit. With Jacob, only 70 Jews had taken refuge in Egypt (Genesis 46,27); with Moses, 400 years later, 600,000 Jews left their country. This was the Exodus (Exodus 12,37).

Remember the two dreams of Joseph when he was 17 years old: that of the sheaves of his brothers which bowed to his sheaf, and that of the sun, the moon and the eleven stars which did the same in front of him (Genesis 37,2-11). Let us retain also the two dreams of the Pharaoh: that of the cows and that of the ears of grain (Genesis 41,1-7). God often speaks to men in dreams and reveals Himself to them in that manner.

The Creator announces the same message in two different forms: first to Joseph then to the Pharaoh. God thus often speaks by dreams. But it is also necessary to be careful: there may also be satanic sources in our dreams. It is thus necessary to discern the source and *to interpret well* the meaning of the messages thus received, making sure they are from God. We should pray to understand them well, and consequently act wisely. God often used this method in the Bible, and particularly in the book of John’s Revelation, where the same message is announced in repeated visions, but in various forms, like the dreams of Joseph and of the Pharaoh. The prophet Joel informs us, on behalf of God, that God appears to his elected ones in dreams and visions: 'After that, I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old people will have dreams, and your young people see visions...'

(Joel 3,1).

The Genesis ends up with the Jews in Egypt, Jacob having been buried in Canaan (Palestine) in the current city of Hebron (in Arabic "El Khalil"), where Abraham and Isaac are also buried (Genesis 50,12-13). This place is, today, a mosque which the Jews would like to recover.

Before dying, Joseph warned his brothers that "God will surely remember you kindly and take you out of this country to the country which he promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". He recommends them to carry his bones with them (Genesis 50,24-25). This is what Moses when he left Egypt with the Jews (Exodus 13,19).

The expression 'God will visit you' (or 'remember you') is to be retained. It often returns in the Bible. God 'visits' by an envoy, a prophet, to communicate a message, or by happy or unhappy events to reward or punish. This expression means that God is the cause of these earthquake, mighty din, hurricane...", prophesied Isaïe against the irreligious Jerusalem (Isaiah 29,6 / also see Jeremiah 29,10 / Amos 3,2 / Luke 7,16 and 19,44). God visits you and solicits you by the biblical study...

**2.4.6 Questionnaire of recapitulation**

1. Did you make your "déconditionning" and your "awakening"?

2. Why do you study the Bible and not another holy book?

3. Are you sure that the biblical text that you study is authentic? Why?

4. Do you feel joy studying the Bible? What do you feel?

5. Explain the accounts of creation and the oral traditions.

6. What means 'God created man in the Image of Himself'? Are you like this Image?
7. How do you imagine the state of the man in the Paradise before the fall? And afterwards?

8. How do you understand the sin of Adam and Eve?

9. Explain Genesis 3,15. What relationship with Abraham?

10. God approved the offering of Abel, not that of Cain. Why?

11. Who was the successor of Abel?

12. What did you understand from the flood and the descendents of Noah?

13. What do you know about epic of Gilgamesh?


15. What was the aim of God’s plan with Abraham?

16. Which of the two concepts is right: "chosen people" or "formed community"? Why?

17. Sarah expelled Hagar and Ishmael. Comment.

18. Are circumcision and water baptism divine requirements for the salvation of the soul?

19. What did you understand about Melchizedek?

20. What did you understand of Sodom and Gomorrah?

21. Lot’s wife was transformed into salt statue. Comment.

22. The 12 tribes of Israel. Explain.

23. Comment on the dreams of Joseph and the Pharaoh.

24. Who is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”? Why this name?

25. State the Messianic line from Abraham to Judah.

26. Why do the Jews want to recover the Mosque of Hebron and that of Omar in Jerusalem? (The mosque of Hebron is built on the place where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are buried. The mosque of Omar, in Jerusalem, is built on the supposed place where Abraham was on the point of offering Isaac in sacrifice. Solomon built there the 1st Temple destroyed in 586 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar, then again in 70 A.D by Titus. In the VIIth century A.D. the Caliph Omar Ibn-el-Khattab built a mosque -still there- on this same site).

2.5 Lesson 5 - The book of Exodus

Before reading my explanations, it would be preferable that you read all the book of Exodus to get accustomed to its contents. Then reconsider the following points:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching of the Old Testament</th>
<th>Historic facts</th>
<th>Chronological indications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrance of Jacob and Joseph (Anachronistic mention of the “Land of Ramesses”)</td>
<td>MERUSERRE YAKOUB HER</td>
<td>Around mid XVIIth century B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birth of Moses contemporary to the construction of Pi-Ramesses</td>
<td>In the list of the last king of Hyksos (Avaris)</td>
<td>About the beginning of the XIIIth century B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses in the Land of Madian (death of the king of Egypt)</td>
<td>Beginning of the construction of Pi-Ramesses under Sethi 1st</td>
<td>About 1235-1224 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The descendants of Jacob-Israel enslaved in Egypt</td>
<td>Death of Ramses II after reigning 67 years. Advent of Mineptah</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXODUS</td>
<td>Israel’s stèle the Vth year of Mineptah</td>
<td>Last quarter of the XIIIth century B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Death of Mineptah</td>
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<td></td>
<td>End of the XIXth dynasty</td>
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The XVIth century B.C. is Jacob’s and Joseph’s century. The biblical mention of 430 years between the entry in Egypt and the Exodus correspond approximately to the Hyksos sovereignty and the end of XIXth dynasty. The XIIIth century B.C. is Moses’ century correspond perfectly with history.

The duration of certain kingdoms are well known, but their place in time is relatively imprecise.

Extract from the French book “Moïse et Pharaon” Dr Maurice Bucaille

Drawing of the book 'Moses and Pharaoh' by Dr. M. Bucaille
2.5.1 The long stay of the Jews in Egypt

This long stay of four centuries of the Jews made them forget the monotheism and they worshiped the Egyptian gods. In the desert, at the time of their return towards Palestine, we see them adoring again the calf 'Apis', one of the Egyptian gods of the time (Exodus 32). This shows at which point they had moved away from the plan of God with Abraham. This plan aimed at sending the Messiah to the world by the descendants of Abraham.

It was thus necessary that God isolates this Jewish community contaminated by idolatry by getting the Jews out of Egypt, just like He had isolated Abraham 700 years before by getting him out of Haran towards Canaan, more in the South, to safeguard his still embryonic faith against the surrounding paganism (Genesis 12,1-5). You must know that the word "Israelite" refers to the Jewish religion, at the spiritual community, but "Israeli", on the other hand, refers to Jewish nationalism, the Hebrew State, and refers to a political identity never desired by God.

The Israelite community, of Syrian origin, represent the social matrix which will give rise to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, who came thirteen centuries later. The advent of the Messiah is the only reason of its creation and its importance.

2.5.2 Moses’ vocation

Getting the Jews out of Egypt was not a small venture: it was first necessary to convince the Jews themselves of its moral importance. Moses was chosen by God for this purpose and, since his birth, he had been directed to conclude this vocation, having grown in Pharaoh’s palace.

Moses is from the tribe of Lévi (Exodus 2,1). His name in Hebrew is 'Moshe' and means "Saved-from-water" ('Mo': water and 'she': saved). The daughter of the Pharaoh "treated him like a son" (Exodus 2,10) and it thus he grew in the palace, impregnated of the worship of the pharaonic religion. For this reason Jews and Moslems hold this woman in high esteem.

When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3,1-15), this latter did not recognize the God of his ancestors, neither did he know how to present Him to the Jews who also had forgotten Him. This new divine manifestation to Moses was indispensable to carry on the plan established with Abraham.

Believing that God had a name like the gods of mythology, Moses asked God what was his name. God answered, in Hebrew, that his Name is 'YHWH', meaning 'The One and Only who is', 'The One Being’ par excellence, contrary to the gods of mythology who 'are not’ divinities because they do not exist. God asks Moses to present Him to the Jews as 'Yahweh' which means 'I Am”. In Hebrew this name is written in 4 letters (YHWH) and thus is known as the 'Tetragram' (4 letters). It is often registered above certain Jewish religious buildings (synagogues). "This is my Name for all times, and thus I am to be invoked for all generations to come’ said the Creator (Exodus 3,15). One should not stop at the literal resonance of this Name, as certain Jews do, but to its deep spiritual significance: I AM, unfortunately neglected by the believers.

Jesus taught us to address ourselves to God like sons to their Father and to ask Him: "Father, may your Name be held holy" ("Hallowed be Thy Name") (Matthew 6,9) i.e. purified.
He did not speak about the name Yahweh, an articulated word, but about the Being of God, what He really is. Thus, Christ’s intention is not to sanctify God who is already perfect, but to purify the knowledge which we have of Him, the idea that men have of Him. God is not as He is presented by the majority of the various religious representatives who have of Him a false idea and give an erroneous image of His Being. Many refuse to believe in Him because of that and a great number of atheists reject this false image rather than God Himself. Should they get to know God as He really is, these atheists would become better believers than the various clergies who profane the name of the Creator by doing what is evil under the holy name of God. The prophets denounced this profanation as well as those who, by their injustices, disfigure the holy Name of God and distort his Image:

"You will stop profaning my Holy Name with your offerings and your foul idols..." (Ezekiel 20,39)

"They have profaned my Holy Name among the nations where they have gone, so hat people say of them: 'these are the people of Yahweh... But I have been concerned about my holy Name, which the house of Israel has profaned... I will sanctify my Great Name which was profaned among the nations, which you profaned among them.' (Ezekiel 36,20-23 / Romans 2,24)

"...they sold the upright for money... they crushed the heads of the weak into the dust and deviate the road of the humble... son and father sleep with the same girl thus profaning my Holy Name." (Amos 2,6-7)

"... my Name is great among the nations... But you have profaned it..." (Malachi 1,12)

God sanctified his holy Name by the real image that He gave us of Himself in the Person of his Messiah who said: "And eternal life is this, to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17,3). Jesus sanctified the name of God, revealing It to us as It is: Love, Kindness and Simplicity. God is a loving Father for those who approach Him by Jesus who declared in front of his Apostles: 'I have made your Name known to them and I will continue to make it known" (John 17,26) insofar, however, as they purify their souls. May the holy Name of God in us all be sanctified. Amen.

Even today this Holy Name is profaned everywhere and the Christians disfigure, in their turn, the blessed names of God and his Messiah.

Notice that Moses married a madianite, not a jewish woman. This is why the Jews do not regard his two sons as Jews (Exodus 2,16-22 and 18,6). In fact, the rabbis recognize as Jewish only those whose mother is Jewish. This is why the book of the Numbers reports that "Miryam, as well as Aaron, spoke against Moses because of the kushite woman (madianite) whom he had taken. Because he had married a kushite woman" (Numbers 12,1). Still note that the father-in-law of Moses is called 'Reuel' (Exodus 2,18) and elsewhere 'Jethro' (Exodus 3,1 / 4,18). This is due to the various oral traditions.

Moses was in Madian, having fled out of Egypt after having killed an Egyptian to defend a Jew (Exodus 2,11-15). He thus knew that he was Jewish himself, the Pharaoh’s daughter had informed therefore. She had discovered his Jewish identity because of the circumcision (Exodus 2,6).

Notice that Moses, intimidated by his mission, and having difficulty in speaking, asked God to associate to him Aaron his brother, better speaker (Exodus 4,10-17). Many prophets hesitated to assume the difficult mission that God entrusted to them (Jeremiah 1,6-7).

On their way back to Egypt, Moses took along with him his wife and her son on an donkey. During a halt, Moses had a crisis of conscience because his son had not been circumcised. The writer, believing in the importance of circumcision, interprets this crisis as a meeting with God
who wanted to kill Moses because of his uncircumcised son. Zipporah, Moses’ wife, who was not Jewish, was unaware of this foreign practice in the country of Madian and did not understand the crisis of her husband. Seizing his insistence, she circumcised her son herself with a sharp flint and, in an irritated gesture against Moses, "touched his feet (sex) with the cut off foreskin of her son and said: You are my blood-bridegroom!" (Exodus 4,24-26). We can compare this unjustifiable crisis of Moses with that which Abraham had had when he wanted to offer Isaac in sacrifice to God.

If the Name of God were sanctified in them, neither would Abraham have thought of offering his son in sacrifice, nor would have Moses thought of circumcising his own. It is important to understand God in order not to complicate worship by heavy and useless acts and rites He does not wish.

This fact circumcision is probably the cause of separation between the couple because, after this incident, Moses is alone in Egypt, without his wife and her two sons. He met them later, after leaving Egypt, when his father-in-law went to meet him with his two sons: 'Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, then took back Zipporah, Moses’ wife, whom Moses had sent home..." (Exodus 18,1-6). Note well that Moses 'went out to greet his father-in-law, bowed low to him and kissed him... (Exodus 18,7)'. It is not said in the account that Moses hastened to embrace his wife and his two sons who were however present. This indifference is meant by the Jewish narrators to depreciate the wife and the two sons who are not considered Jews.

Note that Jethro recognizes that God 'is greater than all the other gods... and offered a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God' (Exodus 18,11-12). But he had not understood that He is the only God. After this sacrifice, 'Aaron and all the elders of Israel came and ate with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God" (Exodus 18,12). It is thus enough to believe in God to be in his presence and in his affectionate company. The Jews should always have acted like Moses with Jethro: to make God and his wonders be known to those who did not know Him, by behaving in a spirit of fraternity and friendship.

2.5.3 The 10 plagues of Egypt

One should not see in these plagues historical realities. Through these fabulations we can conceive the power of God who triumphs over the evil. Note that the Egyptian wizards managed to imitate some of the wonders achieved by Moses, but it was always the latter who finally triumphed. God is almighty and always has the upper hand against the devil. It is, indeed, the snake of Moses which swallowed up those of the magicians: in spite of that, "Pharaoh remained obstinate and, as Yahweh had foretold, refused to listen to Moses and Aaron" comment the scribes (Exodus 7,12-13). The magicians could reproduce, with their magic spells, the miracle of frogs, but could not stop the plague caused by themselves and the Pharaoh had to resort to Moses who managed to put an end to it by praying (Exodus 8,1-11). With the plague of the mosquitoes, Moses filled the country with these insects and "all the dust of the ground changed into mosquitoes throughout the whole of Egypt" (picturesque manner to describe the intensity of this wound). The Egyptian wizards were unable to compete with the envoy of God and recognized that 'the Finger of God is there' in front of the power which exceeded them (Exodus 8,12-15). Finally, when God strikes the Egyptians by an epidemic of ulcers, the magicians themselves are reached by it and could not appear before the Pharaoh (Exodus 9,8-12). In spite of that, the Pharaoh remained imperturbable and refused to let the Jews leave the country, contrary to his promise. The text says: 'Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh' (Exodus 9,12): it is an erroneous way to explain the stubbornness of the Pharaoh because God does not harden the heart of anybody, but in this time, the believers thought that God was the instigator of all our decisions. This is wrong! God respects our freedom and this is why He judges us. Otherwise He would be unjust.

Retain from this imaginary story that the daemons have the capacity to make wonders on
earthground to mislead men. But the true believers are able to foil the satanic magic spells. The devil is 'God's monkey' but his imitations always end up by being discovered when one can distinguish the true light of God, and when one can resist with faith and unshakeable strength to see the end of the power of evil.

2.5.4 The Passover

In Hebrew, Passover is 'Pessah', and in Arabic 'Fesseh'. It is an annual Jewish festival celebrated in spring. It coincides sometimes with the Christian Easter.

Jewish Pessah, which means 'passage', 'to take the step', commemorates the exit of the Jews of Egypt after the 'passage' of the angel of death who struck the first-born Egyptians, followed by the 'passage' of the Jewish community through the Red Sea, fleeing the army of the Pharaoh.

The Torah requires of the Jews to celebrate an annual meal to commemorate this feast of the passage from the country of slavery to the "promised land". This meal consists of a lamb with bitter grasses. It is the supper of Passover which the Jews name the "Seder": "...You must eat it hurriedly: it is a Passover (passage) in Yahweh's honour. This day must be commemorated by you..." (Exodus 12,11-14). The Jews commemorate this Passover each year by a family seder. They share the Easter lamb and the wine with formulas of blessings.

Jesus was recognized as the new Easter Lamb by John the Baptist: "Here is the lamb of God", he said (John 1,36). It is thus necessary to forget the lamb of Passover of Egypt for another 'Lamb' and another new Easter. Jesus is the Messiah sent by God to lead us out of the spiritual death and to make us "pass" to the Eternal Life. He is the Easter for all those who believe in him and remain faithful. This is why, the eve of being delivered to the cross, and by eating the Seder with his disciples, he offered himself, not the lamb, as the efficient spiritual Food for the forgiveness of sins and the eternal life: "Take it and eat, this is my body (my flesh or my meat, not that of the traditional lamb)... Drink from this all of you, for this is my blood..." (Matthew 26,26-28): "There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" also said John the Baptist (John 1,29). Jesus had also said: "I am the living bread which has come down from Heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever. And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world..." (John 6,51-58). The christian seder, or the 'Meal of the Lord' (1 Corinthians 11,20) makes us pass from this perishable world to the Other, and this as of now on earth. Our Vehicle is the Christ living in the Eucharist. It is to help us to sublime our life that Jesus asks us to repeat this act while saying: "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22,19).

Notice that the Jews, at the time of their exit of Egypt, 'stripped' the Egyptians of their jewels (Exodus 12,35)... These subtilised jewels were used for the construction of golden Calf adored by them (Exodus 32,1-6). This dispossession of the good of others often returns in the Bible (Numbers 33,50-56).

2.5.5 The Jewish priesthood

Before Moses, the concept of priesthood was unknown in the Jewish community. God had never spoken about it to Abraham. During centuries after him, the first monotheistic community had no priests, the believers offered themselves their sacrifices. The priesthood was founded after the stay of the Jews in Egypt and was inspired and copied from the Egyptian mythology. One should not forget that Moses grew in the Pharaoh’s palace, influenced by the Egyptian worship of which he had well known the priests. He wanted to institute a Jewish priesthood similar to the Egyptian one. This consisted in offering, to the gods and to the idols, animals in sacrifice. Only priests were entitled to this worship after a strict formation. This
Moses and Pharaoh
inspired Moses, but instead of presenting the sacrifices to the idols, he made an obligation to offer them to God.

At the beginning, there was no sacerdotal institution, nor even sacrifices since Abraham addressed himself to God simply, without recurring to a special worship (Genesis 18,22-33).

When Jewish priesthood was instituted, 'all the first-born among the Israelites' were to be devoted priest (Exodus 13,1-2). But later, Moses consecrated the Levites exclusively to the service of the worship 'in the place of all the first-born ones of the children of Israel'. The first-born ones of the other tribes were repurchased by their parents; the money of this 'ransom was given to Aaron and his sons, at Yahweh’s bidding, as Yahweh had ordered Moses (?!)' (Numbers 3,44-51). It should not be forgotten that Moses and Aaron are from the tribe of Levi, a tribe privileged by them, not by God. It is to it that returned all this money... under pretext of a divine order. I do not think that God is for something in this cult and this priesthood copied on the Egyptian mythology. Because God had announced the advent of single priesthood that He approved, namely that of the Messiah, Jesus, and according to the order of Melchizedek, not of Levi (Psalms 110 (109),4). See on this subject what Paul in his letter says to the Hebrews (Hebrews 5,1 to 7,19).

The priesthood according to Jesus takes its full rise at the apocalyptic time. With the revelation of the message of the Book of Revelation, Jesus institutes a new priesthood in favour of all those who believe in its contents: 'You are worthy to take the book and to break its seals... because you bought people for God, at the price of your blood, of every race... you made them a line of kings and priests for God to rule the world' (Revelation 5,9-10). It is thus by the opening of the Book of Revelation that Jesus makes his new priests liberated from the old sacerdotal conceptions.

2.5.6 The canticle of Moses (Exodus 15)

After the crossing of the Red Sea, the Jews 'sang this song in Yahweh’s honour' – a song of joy and of gratitude because 'He has thrown into the sea horse and rider' of the Egyptian army (Exodus 15,1-21). It is the well-known canticle of Moses in the Jewish community. It is sung while dancing at the time of the Israeli victories, like had formerly made Myriam, sister of Moses (Exodus 15,20-21).

Chapter 15 of the Book of Revelation mentions this 'hymn of Moses' as well as the 'hymn of the Lamb'. This last hymn will be launched by the disciples of Jesus, those of the end of times, after their triumph upon the apocalyptic Beast, the enemy of Christ, the Antichrist. This victory corresponds to the passing through the Red Sea, being a glorious crossing through the difficulties caused by the enemies of Jesus. They will start, then, their canticle of triumph, the canticle of the Lamb. This is why John saw 'like a sea of crystal (a symbolic spiritual sea and not the Red Sea anymore) mixed with fire (the fire of the test) and those who had fought against the Beast and won...They were singing the hymn of Moses and the hymn of the Lamb' (Revelation 15,2-3).

2.5.7 The manna (Exodus 16)

The Israelis were hungry in the desert. God gave them to eat manna by miracle, recommending to suffice themselves with a daily quantity and not to put aside for tomorrow. This is a lesson meaning that we should entrust God completely, being satisfied with our daily bread without worrying about the following day, like Jesus taught it (Matthew 6,11 / 6,25-34).

The episode of the manna was taken again by Jesus in the Gospel where he presents himself as the heavenly manna, the true bread of God that nourishes the soul: "It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven... I am the bread of life from heaven..." (John 6,32-51).

A new manna is reserved for the apocalyptic times (Revelation 2,17). It is a 'hidden'
manna, a mystical one of which the apocalyptic disciples of the end of time will be nourished: the Eucharist in family, at home (Revelation 3,20 / 12,6 / 12,14).

2.5.8 The Law of Moses (Exodus 20-31)

The law of Moses (Torah) is divided into two parts:

1. the 10 commandments (or Decalogue)
2. the law of works or practice of the worship (circumcision, pure and impure food, etc...).

2.5.8.1 The Decalogue

The majority of these commandments existed already and appear in the law of king Hammurabi (You will not kill, will not steal, etc...). What is new, are the first 3 commandments concerning the unique God: "You shall have no other gods to rival Me...etc.' The Decalogue will be always valid and Jesus summarised it in the word "love", because the one who loves does not kill, does not steal and does not insult. Meditate well the words of the Christ in Matthew 22,36-40, and of Paul in Romans 13,8-10: "... all the other commandments are summed up in the single phrase: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love can cause no harm to your neighbour". Likewise, St Augustin had said: 'Love, then do what you want', knowing well that the person who really loves does not offend in any manner. One does not recommend to a loving mother not to harm her children... That goes without saying.

2.5.8.2 The law of "practices"

The mosaic law prescribes cultuel practices such as the circumcision, the Sabbath, pure and impure food, animal sacrifices etc... It is a law which is not only outdated, but that has never been inspired by the Creator, as the prophet Jeremiah already revealed it. He cynically begins by saying in God’s Name: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat all the meat!! For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders, about burnt offerings or sacrifices" (Jeremiah 7,22).

All these practices were therefore invented by the priests and the scribes for their material advantages. Scribes and priests added, along the centuries, more than 600 practices to respect under penalty of sin. Apart the circumcision etc..., putting the lights on, combing oneself, going more than one kilometer etc... since Friday evening after sunset is a sin. To touch a woman having her periods or an object which she would have touched makes one impure etc... all that is considered impure and requires a purification which the priest must operate... naturally by being payed!! It is again Jeremiah who denounced 'the lying pen of the scribes' (Jeremiah 8,8).

Isaiah had also declared that the worship practiced by the Jews was vain, being not of divine but of human inspiration: "Because this people approaches me only in words... while their hearts are far from Me; and reverence for me, as far as they are concerned, is nothing but human commandments, a lesson memorised" (Isaiah 29,13). Jesus, basing himself on the words of this great prophet, condemns the tradition practiced by the Pharisees and the scribes and calls them hypocrites: "Hypocrites! How rightly Isaiah prophesied about you when he said: this people honours me only with lips, while their hearts are far from me.Their reverence of me is worthless; the lessons they teach are nothing but human commandments" (Matthew 15,7-9).

These vain precepts are those prescribed by the Torah, the mosaic law. This useless and heavy worship is a counterfeit of the Word of God. Isaiah on this subject explains by saying: "The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, that they might go and fall backwards and be broken and snared and taken.' (Isaiah 28,13). Jesus also denounced the scribes and the Pharisees because 'they tie up heavy burdens
Ark of the Covenant and the Candelabrum (Exodus 25)

In the desert, Moses had a tent built as a sanctuary for the prayer. Remember especially the Ark of the Covenant and the Candelabrum with 7 branches. The first was a portable case which contained the two stones of the 10 commandments, the second is a candlestick with seven branches, symbol of the divine light. The figure seven is to be retained because it symbolises plenitude, the full clearness by the divine light.

The Ark of the Covenant had a great part in the Jewish history. It was lost after the destruction of the Temple, as well as the candelabrum. The Arch is currently actively sought by the Jewish archaeologists. However Jeremiah had predicted that at the Messianic time 'no one will ever again say: 'the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh! It will not enter their minds, they will not remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made' (Jeremiah 3,16). The disappearance of this Ark is a sign indicating that the Messianic time is quite accomplished with Jesus. It is, indeed, after him, in 70 A.D. that the Romans destroyed the Temple and the Arch disappeared since then.

2.5.10 The golden calf (Exodus 32)

The Jews, impatient into the desert which they crossed with sufferings and deprivations, rejected the unique God for whom they had given up their comfort in Egypt. Discouraged and revolted, they made up for themselves a visible god-idol, a golden calf which evokes Apis, the god they adored in Egypt in the shape of a calf. Instead of moving them away from it, Aaron agreed to it, he the priest! This provoked the anger of Moses who, in his fury, broke the 2 tables of the 10 commandments.

In our spiritual itinerary, we also have to pass by tops and bottoms. Let us be wary of tiredness and lassitude in our spiritual desert. Because some believers abandon their faith and finally make a false image of God, an image which is appropriate to them and satisfy their
materialistic inclinations which move them away from God. Patience matures and purifies us.

2.5.11 Questionnaire

1. What did you understand from the name of God: Yahweh?

2. What difference is there between the miracles of Moses and those of the Egyptian magicians?

3. What Passover?

4. What is stable in the Law of Moses?

5. The Ark of the Covenant and the Candelabrum.

6. What do you think of the sacrifices of animals offered to God?

7. What do you think of the sacerdotal clothes prescribed by 'God' (Exodus 28)?

8. What do you think of the rites of dedication of the priests (Exodus 29)?

Reflection

The Exodus says that the Jews, in Egypt, at the time of Moses, had become "numerous and extremely powerful and that eventually the whole land was full of them" (Exodus 1:7). They owed Joseph, their ancestor, this power, being himself high placed and 'powerful to the extreme'. He had placed his brothers as well as other Jews in high positions in the State since their entry in Egypt. With time, becoming numerous and powerful, they wanted to control the whole country, whence Pharaoh's opposition.

2.6 Lesson 6 - Leviticus - Numbers - Deuteronomy

With this lesson we finish the last three books of the Torah, or Pentateuch, also called the "Law" by the Jews. The book of the Exodus brought back the history of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. These last three books of the Law stop right before their entry in Palestine with the death of Moses.

2.6.1 Leviticus

This book is indigestible and obsolete. It should however be known to acquire a good biblical formation, but without stopping at the strange rites which are prescribed therein. They are all well outdated today. Read this book without delaying, then take again the reading of the course.

The Leviticus was written by the scribes and Levite priests, from whom its name derives. It stops the account of the events of the Exodus by presenting all the rites prescribed by the priests in their interest. To give weight to these rites, the priests ascribed them to God. According to them, it is He who asked Moses and Aaron to apply these rituals of sacrifice (Leviticus 1-7), the ceremonial of investiture of the priests and the material advantages returning to them (Leviticus 8-10), the rules relating the pure and the impure, etc...

To grasp the meaning of Leviticus, we must keep in mind that the scribe and priests wrote it to safeguard their material interests and their spiritual and psychological hegemony on the Jewish community. This attitude is noted today in all the clergies who monopolise, in the name of God, 'the spiritual economy' and psychological hegemony.

Chapters 1-7 flaunt the variety of the products offered "to God", that is to say, to the priests. We can distinguish:
Sinai Peninsula and the main places mentioned in the Exodus
The sacrifices of animals are to be offered either in holocaust (the victim is completely consumed by fire, nothing left to the priest), or for the sin (the priests take parts of the victim for themselves), or in praises or communion to make a vow (the flesh of the victim is taken by the sacrificer priest of course...and the fat is burnt offered to God...).

The oblation consists in offering a handful of the products of the soil to God, but the remainder *will revert to Aaron and his sons, an especially holy portion of the food burnt for Yahweh* (Leviticus 2,1-3). One distinguishes among the offerings the "holy things", and the "very holy things" which purify all those who touch them (Exodus 29,37).

I already reported that the prophet Jeremiah had denounced these fraudulent practises as not being prescribed by God, but by the scribes (Jeremiah 7,22 / 8,22). Other prophets also announced their uselessness (Hosea 6,6 / Amos 5,21-24). Psalms 51,16-17 quotes: "Sacrifice gives You no pleasure... A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit (by the repentance), a broken contrite heart, You never scorn". And Jesus still points out that God had said 'Mercy is what pleases Me, not sacrifice (of animals)' (Matthew 12,7).

Chapters 8-10 speak about the rites of investiture of the priests. These ancient and ridiculous ceremonials are inspired by paganism (especially Egyptian paganism) and they are impregnated with superstitious gestures. They have nothing of divine. In fact, the clothing of a priest is interior and, in our apocalyptic era, we are all called to be priests by faith and compassion...without theatrical rites of investiture (Revelation 1,6 / 5,9-10).

Chapters 11-27 explain in meticulous details various recommendations regarding the cult. Among these, we find what, according to the scribes and priests Levites, is pure or impure, and warnings against the violation of the Sabbath (Leviticus 19,2 / 19,30 / 26,2). This had already been prescribed in Exodus 20,8-11 / 35,1-3. The believers were overloaded by quantity of precepts allotted wrongfully to God. All these laws have no anctifying or salutary powers. On the contrary, as the prophets had revealed it initially, then Jesus and his Apostles after them, they are a dangerous obstacle to the spiritual evolution. They make stumble those who practise them: "Precepts over precepts, precepts over precepts, rule over rule, so that when they walk they will fall over backwards and so be broken, trapped and taken captive" under the weight of such laws, Isaiah said (Isaiah 28,13). Jesus also warned against the scribes and the clergy who "tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders..." (Matthew 23,4).

"Listen, and understand. What goes into the mouth does not make anyone unclean" Jesus had still taught; and that had shocked the Jews (Matthew 15,10-12).

The warning against the violation of the Sabbath is solemnly repeated in the books of the Law. In the event of infringement, the punishment is the stoning to death (Exodus 35,1-3). The book of Numbers reports the case of a man who dared to collect wood one Saturday. He was simply stoned (Numbers 15,32-36). The Gospel reveals that the Jews flew into a fury against the Apostles who had gathered ears of corn on a Saturday (Matthew 12,1-8). Jesus was even persecuted because He healed a man one Sabbath (John 5,16-18). For the fanatics, that represented a work, therefore Jesus deserved the death penalty. They were irritated even more against Jesus when they heard Him saying that He was "Master of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12,8) and that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2,27).

Moses could not give of God the right image. By the murders he committed in the name of Yahweh, he disfigured the true Face of the Creator. Thereafter, scribes and priests tarnished even more the divine Visage. They did not understand His Spirit.

To know God is to understand God. Only Jesus revealed us the true Face of the Father. By Him only we reach the penetration of the divine Spirit completely opposed to the spirit of the Law (Torah).

God is the Father of all races. He opens His arms to all men pure in hearts, not only to the Jews. This is why John wrote: "the Law was given through Moses, grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, it is the Only son, who is closer to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (John 1,17-18). Moses thus neither saw nor
understood God. Otherwise he would not have prescribed murders on His Behalf. The Law he
prescribed was not inspired by God.

Was it really Moses who, on behalf of God, wrote all these laws or was it rather the scribes
and the priests? Surely Moses wrote or prescribed a small part, the greatest part having been
added by the scribes and the priests Levites for their own advantage...in the Name of God.
And the two parts are enormous, and terribly serious. And the consequences are heavy along
the centuries, until our days...

The book of the Acts of the Apostles describes the bitter fights carried out by the Apostles
to show the vanity of the Law. Paul, in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians, explains
that salvation is obtained by the faith in Jesus, not by practicing such prescriptions, the Law
being ineffective and being nothing but dead words useless for the Eternal Life (Read Romans
3,28-30 / Galatians 3,10-24 / Ephesians 2,14-16 / Hebrews 10,10).

The book of Leviticus contains certain lessons of current value, that belong to the hidden
gold in the books of the Old Testament.

2.6.1.1 Spiritism

This harmful practise is a human attempt to contact the Afterlife by different material
means. It was condemned: "You will not practise divination or magic (Leviticus 19,26)... If
anyone has recourse to the spirits of the dead or to magicians, to prostitute himself by following
them, I shall set my face against him and outlaw him from his people (Leviticus 20,6)... Any
man or woman of yours who is a necromancer or magician will be put to death" (Leviticus
20,27). This shows that spiritism was practised since long time ago as testified further in the
Bible, in the history of king Saul with the necromancer who conjured for him Samuel (1 Samuel
28).

Spread throughout the world still today, spiritism mislays a great number. The biblical
explicit condemn of this practise will remain always valid, because one conjures good spirits
(angles, saints), but in fact malignant spirits arise, spirits or souls attached to the earth. God
does not intervene, because those who practice it, generally, have no thirst for spiritual matters
nor do they have the major genuine desire to seek the divine Truth in order to submit themselves
to it. They seek answers of temporal, emotional or economic nature. Or still they ask questions
concerning the intimacies of others just for curiosity. That is why God and his saints never
interfere, and even allow bad spirits to intervene in these meetings. St Peter said "Keep sober
and alert, because your enemy the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone
to devour" (1 Peter 5,8).

On the contrary, it happens that God Himself takes the initiative to contact people of His
choice, whom He sees thirsty for Light and Truth. He reveals Himself to those who sincerely
wish to know and love Him, ready to give up everything to follow Him. In these cases, the
result is always salutary, because the intervention comes from God, not from the man and only
for reasons of spiritual, not material, interest. This celestial contact takes place either by God
Himself, or through one of His envoys (angels or saints).

God or His envoys appear in dreams, visions (Joel 3,1-2), or even in the state of total
awakening: apparitions of Christ resurrected to her Apostles (Luke 24) and of the Virgin Mary
in Lourdes, La Salette and Fatima.

The Bible is rich of divine interventions, dreams, visions and of apparitions. The celestial
message can be communicated either in a symbolic or in a clear way.

In dreams (during the sleep): dreams of Joseph (Genesis 37,5 etc...), of the cupbearer and
the baker (Genesis 40,5 etc...), of the Pharaoh (Genesis 41,1 etc...), of Nebuchadnezzar
(Daniel 2,1 etc...), of Daniel (Daniel 7,1 etc...), of Joseph, the husband of Mary (Matthew 1,20
/ 2,13-22), of the wife of Pilate (Matthew 27,19).

In visions (during the sleep or in the state of semi-consciousness): Abraham (Genesis 15,1),
The biblical course

Samuel (1 Samuel 3), the centurion and Peter (Acts 10), John for the Revelation, visions of Isaiah (Isaiah 6) etc...

In apparitions (in the state of awakening): Abraham (Genesis 18), Zechariah (Luke 1,11), the Virgin Mary (Luke 1,26), the Apostles (Luke 24 / John 20 / John 21 / Acts 1,3-9), Paul (Acts 9), etc...

In addition, the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima etc... are biblical signs of the end of time announced by Jesus: "There will be great signs from heaven" (Luke 21,11), 'a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman...' (Revelation 12,1 etc...).

Meditation inspired from the book of Job: To rectify someone, 'God speaks first in one way, and then in another...in dreams and in night-visions...to turn him from what he is doing and to put an end to his pride. And thus he preserves his soul from the abyss...' (Job 33,14-18). Such are the reasons for which God contacts men.

Likewise, Jesus promised to show Himself to those who love him: ' Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and reveal myself to him... Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him' (John 14,21-23).

Therefor, since God wants to show Himself to us, why we do not put ourselves in the conditions He requires? Why do some people insist on calling doubtful spirits, when the Holy Spirit asks us to call Him? Why go to unreliable people, when the Master calls you?

If the invocation of the spirits is condemned, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is recommended. It is necessary to contact God for supernatural reasons. This divine-human bond is an intrinsic need in the human nature, a thirst that some have choked, replacing it with the spiritism which is only a dangerous phoney, a 'counterfeit money' that the advised souls recognise easily and don't want to exchange with the celestial treasure, that is the manifestation of God and His Messiah, Jesus, within us.

We can contact our pious dead by meditation and prayer. We can have recourse to them in order to obtain their support in the daily spiritual combat. The souls of the saints and the spirits of the angels burn with the desire to contact us and to support us spiritually. Saint Theresa of Lisieux said: 'I will spend my time in Heaven doing good on the earth'. We should therefore be docile and receptive to the celestial solicitations and appeals to us. This is the opposite of spiritism. Let us believe in the power of intercession of the celestial souls and in their complicity.

2.6.1.2 Homosexuality

It is explicitly condemned. This shows that this sexual deviation is ancient as it can be noted in the history of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18,20 / 19,25).

'You will not have intercourse with a man as you would with a woman. This is a hateful thing' (Leviticus 18,22).

'The man who has intercourse with a man in the same way as with a woman they have done a hateful thing together...' (Leviticus 20,13).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul resumes this condemnation, applying it also to the sexual intercourse between women: '...that is why God abandoned them in their inmost cravings to filthy practises of dishonouring their own bodies. Their women have exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural practises; and the men, in a similar fashion, too...' (Romans 1,24-32).

In the XX century, that is ours, some movements of support of homosexuality have risen, claiming, in the name of freedom (?), that these practises would be allowed as natural and normal. Yet nature feels reluctant and rejects them as opposite to its vital and evolutionary rush towards sublimation. With Paul we recall that these 'degrading passions are unnatural practises' (Romans 1,26). We cannot consider natural what is against nature, because with Isaiah, we proclaim: 'Woe to those who call what is bad good, and what is good bad, who
substitute darkness for light and light for darkness" (Isaiah 5,20).

In the name of the Creator, in the name of real and responsible freedom, in the name of nature and of its width, we blame those who support an alleged natural right, even moral, of homosexuality. Certain "religious" known as Christians have even "wedded" homosexual couples, forgetting that the Bible denounces and condemns these practices and "those who not only do it, but even applaud others who do the same" (Romans 1,32).

2.6.1.3 The incest

This sexual deviation, in all its forms, is known since ancient times. The 'Oedipus complex' is not a prerogative of modern times as Leviticus testifies: "You will not have intercourse with your father or your mother. She is your mother you will not have intercourse with her' (Leviticus 18,7).

The paternal incest is not explicitly mentioned. But this moral decay, so often present in the families with the psychological destruction it implies, is indirectly and implicitly denounced, since it is ordered: "None of you will approach a woman who is closely related to him, to have intercourse with her. I am Yahweh" (Leviticus 18,6). If it is necessary to move away from the 'closely related', even more so from one’s own daughter, especially as it is still clarified that 'you will not have intercourse with your son’s or your daughter’s daughter; for their sexual privacy is your own" (Leviticus 18,10).

The fraternal incest, other insidious practise which secretly strikes millions of victims, is condemned: "You will not have intercourse with your sister, whether she is your father’s or your mother’s daughter (half-sister)" (Leviticus 18,9). Similar deviations have all been condemned by Leviticus, because of their practise within the Jewish community, as the history of Amnon and his half-sister Tamar testifies (2 Samuel 13), and that of Reuben with the concubine of his father Jacob (Genesis 35,22).

The fraternal incest extends to the brother’s wife: 'You will not have intercourse with your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s sexual prerogative' (Leviticus 18,16). Supported by this strong highly moral principle, John the Baptist condemned king Herod (Matthew 14,3-4).

2.6.1.4 Human sacrifices

This pagan worship was largely practised within the Jewish community however monotheist: 'The people of Judah have done what displeases me, Yahweh declares...they have built the high place of Topheth in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, to burn their sons and daughters (to Baal): a thing I never ordered, that had never entered my thoughts ' (Jeremiah 7,30-31 / 19,5 / 32,34).

The human sacrifices are explicitly mentioned in 1 Kings 16,34: 'it was in his times that Hiel of Bethel rebuilds Jericho. Laying its foundation cost him his eldest son Abiram (sacrificing him) and erecting its gates cost him his youngest son Segub'. King Ahaz himself made his son "pass through the fire of sacrifice" to entreat the fate (2 Kings 16,3).

It is in such a climate of paganism that the priests Levites prescribed in Leviticus: "You will not allow any of your children to be sacrificed (passing through fire) to Molek..." (Leviticus 18,21). 'Anyone, be he Israelite or alien resident in Israel (the Palestinians were regarded as foreigners), who gives any of his children to Molek, will be put to death..." (Leviticus 20,1-5).

We note with regret, that the Jews were contaminated by the pagan habits instead of clarifying the others with the faith in the unique God.

2.6.1.5 Impediments to the Jewish priesthood

The physical defects were and are still an impediment to the Levite priesthood: 'None of your descendants, for all time, may come forward to offer the food of his God if he has any infirmity...be he blind or lame, disfigured or deformed, or with an injured foot or arm etc...
He will not go near the curtain or approach the altar, since he has an infirmity and must not profane my holy things..." (Leviticus 21,16-24)

The Mosaic law confuses between body infirmity and moral stain. The handicapped people do not to soil the objects of worship. The impure man is the sinner. But if the sinner repents himself, he is purified by the divine grace. The grace is more powerful than the stain and, according to the word of Paul: "However much sin increased, grace was always greater" (Romans 5,20).

The physical impediments to the Levite priesthood were adopted by the Christian churches who refused to ordain priests physically handicapped people of healthy spirit. Furthermore, they deny to priests the right to marriage. By doing this, they regard the matrimonial union as a stain. On the contrary the marriage is a sacrament which purifies the soul.

The impediment to the priests' marriage falls under a divine judgement revealed by St Paul in 1 Timothy 4,1-3. The female sex is still, in itself, an obstacle to the Levite priesthood. The clergymen are attached to these human precepts, but they do not hesitate, alas, to ordain priests men of deformed psychology, of doubtful morality, people cut off from love, without heart nor human compassion. The words of Jesus formerly addressed to the Pharisees are applicable today to the Christian clergies of all denominations whose worships are as useless as those of their predecessors, the Levites (see Matthew 15,1-20).

The Apocalyptic priesthood fortunately disregards all these Judeo-Christian considerations. Christ Himself, alive among us (Emmanuel), chose us like the first fruits of His new sacerdotal people. All those who "open the door to share a meal with Him" (Revelation 3,20) belong to his sacerdotal people. The physically handicapped persons can take part to it, if they want, thus forming the living Apocalyptic Temple invisible to men. This divine Temple is deprived of infirmities and of spiritual taints, because 'nothing unclean may come into it: none who does what is loathsome or false, but only those who are listed in the Lamb's book of life' (Revelation 21,27). In this Book are registered all those who will have recognised and fought the apocalyptic Beast (Revelation 13,18 / 13,8 / 20,12).

In the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus said to His servants: 'The wedding is ready; but as those who were invited proved to be unworthy, go to the main crossroads and invite everyone you can find to come to the wedding' (Matthew 22,7-10). In this end of time, the servants of Jesus (who we are) realised-with bitterness and sadness how- much unworthy the alleged ecclesiastical priests are. We, Pioneers of the Apocalyptic Alliance, were gathered at the road's starting point. We were at the crossroads leading to the supernatural life, in search of a way out. The hand of God seized us there, for a new birth. Pioneers of a new way, we started the construction of the 'new Heaven and the new Earth' seen by Peter (2 Peter 3,13) and John (Revelation 21.1). With us, Jesus involves "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" according to the world (Luke 14,21) to confuse those who rejected these 'disabled persons' from their human priesthood ineffective for the safety of the soul. As signs of our new departure towards the building of the new divine society on earth, women, as well as the 'disabled persons' also take part in the Priesthood of Jesus, conscious of the fact that "there can be neither male nor female in the Kingdom of God" (Galatians 3,28).

According to the Mosaic law, Jesus, not belonging to the tribe of Levi, is not considered a priest (Hebrews 8,4). On the other hand, according to the divine Spirit, He is "the Supreme High Priest" of the New Covenant (Hebrews 4,14 to 5,10 / 9,11 etc...). In the same way, even you, men and women, Apostles and priests of the Apocalyptic Alliance, are not recognised priests of God either by the synagogue or by the Churches. According to the divine Spirit, you are indeed the 'Kingdom of priests' funded by Jesus "for His God and Father", who is also our Father (Revelation 1,5-6).

The Apocalyptic Priesthood knows only one impediment: the stain of the soul by the bad faith (Revelation 21,27). The body infirmity is not an obstacle.

Happy and holy are those who take part to the first resurrection! They will be 'priests
of God and of Christ" (Revelation 20,6). The logical conclusion of our faith is that we are these priests. Our faith in the apocalyptic message is the witness and the guarantee of our participation to the First Resurrection and, consequently, to the priesthood of God and of His Christ Jesus. A witness and a guarantee are still found in these words of Paul: "You have been buried with him by your baptism; by which, too, you have been raised up (First Resurrection) with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and uncircumcised in body: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us everyone of our sins..." (Colossians 2,12-13). "In all truth I tell you, the hour is coming –indeed it is already there- when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live" (John 5,25). We heard this divine voice a first time in the Gospel to reveal to us the face of Christ, and a second time in the Book of Revelation to reveal us the face of the Antichrist. And we believed in both voices! And our faith turned us, at once, from dead to living priests, as Lazarus come out from his tomb at the voice of the Son of man (John 11). The vivifying divine lightning struck us to raise us from the dead and, on the spot, we came back to life: "because the coming of the Son of man will be like lightning striking in the east and flashing into the West" (Matthew 24,27). This flash 'which strikes in the East and flashes into the West' is launched by "the Angel rising where the sun rises" (Revelation 7,2).

We are priests to prepare this return of Jesus by announcing it...first of all to ourselves and by welcoming His 'Return' within us. He launches us from the crossroads towards where He destines us "to extract souls from perdition", saving what can be still saved of this poor wretched humanity.

"Be like people waiting for their Master to return from the wedding feast, ready to open the door as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed those servants whom the Master finds awake when he comes. In truth I tell you, he will do up his belt, sit them down at table and wait on them " (Luke 12,36-37). We confirm these words of Jesus by adding: "Blessed those who opened the door to him with promptly, with love and simplicity, without complicating things with useless rites in these apocalyptic times of the XX century. For it is He, Jesus Himself, who asks us to sit near Him, around his Table" (Revelation 3,20). The book of Revelation thus confirms what Luke’s Gospel had already announced. Everything turns around the apocalyptic priesthood; its high spiritual level cannot be compared to the materialistic Levite and ecclesiastical priesthood. They are both so far from God’s intention and from the hearts of the true believers who already share the Spiritual Supper in the intimacy, without theatrical worship, with the divine Bridegroom.

We are priests, but our priesthood is hidden to the world because, said Paul, "the life you have is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3,3), and with Christ in us. Because "the Star of the morning" already rose, radiant, in our hearts heated by his divine glare which, like "the flash", brought back to life our wounded souls (1 Peter 1,19 / Revelation 2,28 and 22,16).

2.6.1.6 Justice

The Leviticus did not neglect the principles of social justice. However, it is a quite relative justice and aims at privileging the Jews to the detriment of others, placing them above all the other nations. The Divine Justice, on the other hand, puts all men, all nations, all races on the same level.

It is true that it is written that: "You will not exploit your fellow... You will not keep back the labourer’s wage until next morning" (Leviticus 19,13). The point is: Who is considered as a "fellow" by the scribes? That’s the whole point!

According to the Leviticus, the Jew must have a special regard towards his fellow, who is a Jew like him. The other inhabitants of the country (Palestinians) being considered 'foreigners' or citizens of second class, as it is the case -still today- in Israel: "You will not go about slandering your own family, nor will you put your neighbour’s (Jewish) life in jeopardy. You
will not harbour hatred for your brother (Jewish)... You will not exact vengeance on, or bear any sort of grudge against, the members of your race, but will love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19,16-18). This 'fellow one' is the Jew; the none-Jewish (Palestinians and other 'goyims') are considered strangers not to be loved.

There is however only one verse in favour of the foreigner: 'If you have resident aliens in your country, you will not molest them. You will treat resident aliens as though they were native-born and love them as yourself...' (Leviticus 19,33-34). It is necessary to underline that the foreigner in question is no other than the original inhabitant of the country, expropriated by the Jewish colonists.

The Jewish prophets rose against the chauvinism of their co-religious. They denounced unjustified vexations against the foreigner, proclaiming that true justice was "do not exploit or ill-treat the stranger, the orphan, the widow..." (Jeremiah 22,3). Ezekiel even says: "The people of the country have taken to extortion and banditry..., and ill-treated the settler in a way that is unjustifiable" (Ezekiel 22,29). That still applies to modern Israelis who deprive the Palestinians of their elementary rights.

Jesus himself rose against the Israeli injustices: 'You have heard how it was said: You will love your neighbour (Jew) and hate your enemy (all the none-Jews; precept mentioned in the talmudic tradition, not in the Bible). But I say this to you: Love your enemies (Palestinians and other none-Jewish people), and pray for those who persecute you (nowadays called 'terrorists'. Love them because they are right, not you!...). For if you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even the tax collectors do as much? And if you save your greetings for your brothers (Jews), are you doing anything exceptional? Do not even the gentiles do as much?" (Matthew 5, 43-47). Christ addresses his words to all the fanatic crowds, but not to His disciples: 'But I say this to you who are listening: Love your enemies... etc... (Luke 6,27). In fact, those who were listening to Him, were nationalist Jews eager to proclaim Him the political king of Israel (see John 6,15). They did not understand His 'pacifism' towards the foreigners, those who were not Jewish living in Palestine.

The justice taught by Jesus is found in His sermon on the mountain (Matthew 5 - Matthew 7). It invites to overcome the discriminatory conception of the scribes: "If your uprightness does not surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5,20). Jesus binds indissolubly justice and love for the 'fellow' neighbour to all none Jewish people without distinction of race, color or creed (Luke 10,27). Jesus gives us an example of who, according to God, is the 'fellow', not in the person of a Levite, nor a Jewish priest, nor a Jew, but in a Samaritan, considered an enemy by the Jews (Luke 10,29-37). He knew well, of course, that "Jews do not associate with Samaritans", explained St John (John 4,9). By this parable, Jesus confuses and condemns the Jewish chauvinism and tries to rectify what, in the name of the mosaic Law, the scribes and the Pharisees had distorted: 'Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish, but to complete them' (Matthew 5,17). This completion takes place by opening one's heart to all men of goodwill, whether they are foreigners or not to one's people, and rejecting all men of bad will, even if they belong to one's people.

### 2.6.1.7 To be your God

After four centuries in Egypt, the Jews forgot the One who had appeared to Abraham. Surrounded by the Pharaonic idols and worships, they turned to idolatry. The Messianic plan of God was thus in danger. So, God led the Jews out of Egypt in order to bring them back to Him: "I who brought you out of Egypt, to be your God, I Yahweh" (Leviticus 22,33 / 25,38).

The Jews selfishly interpreted the expression "your God", as an exclusive possession of God. They believed to be privileged, adulated and to be the only ones chosen by Him. Jealous
of this possession, they wanted God just for them. He must not also be the God of other peoples. The divine intention was, instead, to tear the Jews from the idols in order to continue His Messianic plan.

They had received the knowledge of an unique God. They had the mission to let other peoples know Him by revealing the divine plan of sending the Messiah. Instead, after leaving Egypt, they thought to be the only ones called by God. The Messiah came to rectify this deviation, teaching that many will come to God from the four corners of the world, but that the Jews, because of their fanaticism and misbelief in Him, will be rejected by the One who made them leave Egypt: "And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the kingdom (of Israel) will be thrown out into the darkness outside" (Matthew 8,11-12).

Jesus, the Messiah, revealed this upsetting fact to His disciples, asking them to proclaim it in their turn. That’s why Peter, after the resurrection of Christ, proclaimed in front of the Jews: "...God, who can read everyone’s heart...giving the Holy Spirit to them (the none Jews) just as he had to us. God made no distinction between them and us" (Acts 15,7-9). "Do you think God is the God only of the Jews, and not of gentiles too? Most certainly of gentiles too..." Paul also revealed (Romans 3,29).

God let the Jews out of Egypt not for the glory of Israel, but in order to be able to send the Messiah who will let the whole world know Him. The prophet Ezekiel exclaimed: "The Lord Yahweh says this: I am acting not for your sake, House of Israel, but for the sake of my holy Name, which you have profaned" (Ezekiel 36,22). God also proclaimed by Isaiah: "Listen to this, House of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel...who invoke the God of Israel, though not in good faith or uprightness... I knew how treacherous you were; you have been called a rebel since the womb. For the sake of my Name, I shall defer my anger, for the sake of my honour I shall be patient with you, rather than destroy you... For My sake and My sake only shall I act, for why should my Name be profaned? I will not yield my glory to another" (Isaiah 48,1-11).

If the Jews had remained in Egypt, they would have continued to practise the Egyptian worships and would have forgotten God completely. The universal plan of God, began with Abraham, would not have been achieved to arrive to us. The Messiah could have been sent only through a community that knew God and His Messianic plan. Without this community, the prophecies concerning the Messiah could have never been revealed since there would have been no prophets to whom God could entrust them. A base was needed, even imperfect, to receive the Messiah. God watched over His plan and let the Jewish community out of Egypt. His plan was fulfilled in the Messiah Jesus, not in the Israeli people or State.

The Messiah has already come, 2000 years ago. He has addressed Himself -and He is still addressing Himself today- to the whole world: 'Jesus stood and cried out: Let anyone (Jews and others) who is thirsty come to me and drink...He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive' (John 7,37-39). All those, who are sincerely searching for the Truth, who are at the 'crossroads' of the spiritual life, will discover Jesus and receive this divine Spirit. By receiving it, they come to life again and become sons of God (John 1,12). This is the first resurrection (John 5,25 / Revelation 20,6), the return of the soul to Life. It is a marvellous experience that is known only by those who try it. We owe to the exit of the Jews from Egypt in the XIII century BC our faith in God and in Christ. God let them out of Egypt to be the God of all believers, to be our God and our Father... as well as the Father of all the Jews who believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

We must be quite conscious of the existing intimate link between the "Exit" from Egypt and us. The Exodus with Moses is not a simple passage from a country to another, but it is the symbol of the change from a state of mind to another, the exit from ignorance to knowledge of God. This knowledge gives life again to our souls by the rediscovery of the eternal life: 'Eternal life is this: to know You, the only true God...' (John 17,3).
To institute the Eucharist, Jesus chose the feast of the Jewish Easter, which celebrates the 'Exit' of Egypt (Matthew 26,17). This Bread of eternal Life tears our souls from death: "Anyone who does eat my Flesh and drink my Blood has eternal life (in Him)... he lives in Me and I live in that person... he will live forever", Jesus said (John 6,51-58).

Without the exit of Egypt, the plan of God would have failed: we would have had neither the Messiah, nor the Bible, nor the Gospel, nor the Book of Revelation. We would have been unaware of the "first resurrection" which is Heaven found on earth. This is the true Promised Land, not the geographical Palestine, as believe those who have their hearts attached to the matter and to the earth.

With Abraham was accomplished the first step towards the first resurrection. The following step was the exit of Egypt. Then there was the call launched by Jesus, inviting the believers of the whole world to join Him. With the Book of Revelation this promise becomes a living reality, a royal priesthood. We owe our apocalyptic priesthood to the divine initiative to pull the Jews out of Egypt, thus saving us from the spiritual ignorance and from the death of the soul. How to thank Him? By Jesus!

Without this exit of Egypt, what would we be? Worshippers or priests of the gods Ra, Baal, Jupiter, Zeus, Diane or Astarte...!

Reflection
Do you think we are saved by the faith in Jesus or by the practise of the mosaic Law (circumcision, Sabbath, clean and unclean etc...)?
Do you think that the sacrifice of animals and their offering in holocausts can reconcile the sinner with God?

According to the answers to these questions, one is disciple or enemy of Jesus.

2.6.2 Numbers
This book begins with a census of the Jews in order to define their 'number ', whence its name. One should not linger over these figures. Initially, only the Levites were not registered (Numbers 1,48) to be enrolled to the service of the 'Dwelling of Testimony'. This Dwelling is the Tent of Meeting where the sacrifices were offered in testimony to the unique God. "Aaron and his sons", and no other, "will carry out their priestly duty. But any unauthorised person who comes near must be put to death" (Numbers 3,10); they made Yahweh say that to safeguard the material rights of the priests, the sons of Aaron...

It is necessary to read this book quickly, then to return to the biblical course where the most important points to remember are revealed and explained.

The story of the walk of the Jews in the desert reported here was put in writing approximately three centuries later. As already explained, the scribe-priests highlighted the indisputable role of the worship and of the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants. The community spent forty years in the desert, a sufficient time to organise a worship around the "Dwelling of the Testimony", considered as their Temple. Inside it was the Ark of the Covenant which contained the two stones of the ten commands. It meant the Presence of God, whence its importance (Numbers 10,33-35). It preceded the march of this people as certain modern religious processions are preceded by religious symbols.

The Levites had a role of service in the worship, but priesthood was reserved to Aaron and his sons. This privilege is often repeated in the Torah and the Numbers with insistence. In Numbers 3,1-4 Aaron and his sons are designated as unique priests in the exclusive Levite tribe, excluding from priesthood all the other tribes. The remainder of the tribe of Levi has only one task to carry out in the worship, that to serve Aaron and his sons: "Muster the tribe of Levi and put it at the disposal of the priest Aaron: they must be at his service etc... (Numbers 3,6 etc...). In exchange, "as heritage I give the Levites all the tithes collected in Israel in return for their service" (Numbers 18,21). This is a considerable sum of money. However, the tithe of
this tithe had to return to Yahweh (Numbers 18,26), i.e. to fill the pockets of the Aaron the priest since, the scribes specify, what is offered to God is to be given to the priest: "Thus you too will set a portion aside for Yahweh out of all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. You will give what you have set aside for Yahweh to the priest Aaron", requiring moreover that "out of all these things, you will set aside the best, the sacred portion..." (Numbers 18,28-29). The first products of the harvest represented the best share.

The scribes wrote these texts ten centuries after Aaron; they were themselves priests, descendents of Aaron. They wanted to safeguard their privileges, they hastened to include verses in their favour, ascribing them to God: "Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: Speak to the Israelites and say: When you have entered the country to which I am bringing you, you will set a portion aside for Yahweh (i.e. for the priests) when you eat that country’s bread...You will set one cake aside as the first fruits of your dough. For all future generations you will set a portion of your dough aside for Yahweh" (Numbers 15,17-21). By doing this, the scribe-priests perpetuate their 'divine rights' over the descendents of the community.

Let us not believe that God asks to found a priesthood of exploitation of the best of others; again we can see in this point "the lying pen of the scribes" (Jeremiah 8,8). The christian clergies and moslem chiefs fell in the same economic abyss. In the Book of Revelation, God invites His followers to receive "freely" the flood of graces which He pours on those who believe (Revelation 21,6 / 22,17). "You received without charge, give without charge", Jesus recommended (Matthew 10,8 / Luke 9,2).

2.6.2.1 The putting to death of two sons of Aaron

The book of the Numbers laconically reports about the death in the Sinai of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, the first and the second born. The death of these two brothers is ascribed to Yahweh. Indeed, it was a dead sentence: "Nadab and Abihu died in Yahweh’s presence, in the desert of the Sinai, when they offered unauthorised fire before Yahweh" (Numbers 3,4). The Leviticus is more explicit: "Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu each took his censer... and presented unauthorised fire before Yahweh... At this a flame leapt out from Yahweh’s presence and swallowed them up and they perished before Yahweh" (Leviticus 10,1-2).

These two men, Levites and priests, died the day of their sacerdotal nomination (Numbers 8,13). The fire which devoured them is no other than the armed arm of Moses and his band. What was their crime? They wanted to offer to Yahweh, in their burning censer containing incense, a fire considered irregular, not as prescribed by Moses. Did they want to make the offer in the place of Aaron? In same way, they had excited the fatal anger of their uncle Moses, who, decreed their putting to dead by 'order of Yahweh', according to his habit. Moses was also irritated later against the two other brothers for a dispute of food: "Why did you not eat this victim for sin in the holy place?... Since its blood was not taken inside the sanctuary, you should have eaten its meat there, as I ordered you". Moses calmed down only after the explanatory and timorous intervention of Aaron (Leviticus 10,16-20).

The death of his two sons left Aaron terrorised in front of Moses. At the explanations given by his brother "Aaron remained dumb" paralysed by fear because of such an unexpected violence. The shock caused by the execution by surprise of his two sons priests, the very day of a merry ceremony, chilled Aaron and his two other sons. Moses, seeing the anguish seizing his brother and his two nephews, tranquillisés them: "Do not disorder your hair or tear your clothes; or you may incur death (like the two others)... To avoid incurring death do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting" (Leviticus 10,1-7). This happened outside the tent, where there was a popular riot, carried out by Moses, against all those who did not yield to the rigorous requirements of the worship that he required. Aaron and his two surviving sons were likely to be lynched.

If a flame had devoured Nadab and Abihu, it would have reduced in ashes their sacerdotal
tunics. However, "they came and carried them away, still in their tunics, out of the camp, as Moses had said" (Leviticus 10,5). Actually, the fatal flame can only be the armed anger of Moses. Believing to be charged by Yahweh to organise a worship, he does not tergiversate, imposing a "regular" cult by the force of the sword. Let us not forget that Moses was a violent man, able to kill. Hadn’t he already killed an Egyptian before fleeing from Egypt? (Exodus 2,11-15). Did he not personally order the Jewish chiefs: "Each of you will put to death those of his people who have committed themselves to the Baal of Peor...Thus the plague which had struck the Israelites was arrested. In the plague twenty-four thousand of them had died" (Numbers 25,1-9). Nowadays, politicians are condemned, in the name of the humans rights, for lesser crimes! In addition, the expression "a flame leapt out to devour..." is clarified in Numbers 21,28: 'For fire has burst from Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon, devouring Ar of Moab". This 'fire' is no other than the battle in which Sihon, the king of the Moabites perished (Numbers 21,21-30).

However, the scribes have presented Moses like "extremely humble, the humblest man on earth" (Numbers 12,3). This humility is only by comparison with the externe violence. If such is the legal case of "the humblest of the men", what would have been that of the more violent one? What would be the degree of softness and humility of Jesus of Nazareth? He was right to say about John the Baptist: 'Of all the children born to women, there has never been anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11,11). The violence of Moses places him very far compared to John.

2.6.2.2 Revolt of Miriam and Aaron against Moses

'Miriam and Aaron criticised Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married...They said: 'Is Moses the only one through whom Yahweh has spoken? Has he not spoken through us too?!..." (Numbers 12,1-3). The irritation of Miriam and Aaron against their brother cannot be explained only by the marriage with a none Jewish woman. They claim to be also interlocutors of God. And this claim is legitimate. It should be understood that Moses has assumed the exclusive right to speak with God and to listen to Him. From this point of view, it was necessary to accomplish all that Moses requested and the way he asked. Otherwise there was the putting to death decreed by God. Thus, in the name of Yahweh, an atmosphere of terror had been established. This is why, taken by fear, Aaron does not know how to hide from Moses, begging his pity for himself and his two remaining sons (Numbers 12,4-15).

2.6.2.3 The Rebellion of Korah

The irascibility of Moses is still noticed in the revolt of the clan of a Levite, Korah. The excessive material privileges granted by Moses (not by God) to his brother Aaron and to his nephews created much discontent as they did not represent God’s will, but a human lucre. The Levites themselves felt frustrated because they had to give to Aaron and his sons "the best portion" of the tithes they took. Also the other tribes felt negatively the effect of this abuse, made under the cover of God’s name. From that the revolt of Korah, the Levite of noble birth, to whom two princes of the house of Ruben, Eliab and Abiram and much of others had associated. Revolted by the devouring appetite of the priests, 'they rebelled against Moses with two hundred and fifty Israelites, who were leaders of the community... (who thus represented all the community). They banded together against Moses and Aaron and said to them: "You take too much on yourselves! The whole community, all its members, are consecrated, and Yahweh lives among them. Why set yourselves higher than Yahweh’s community?" (Numbers 16,1-3). They were right!

In front of this revolt, Moses chose to dialogue separately with Korah initially, then with Dathan and Abiram. They refused with contempt to present themselves to Moses, causing his "rage" (Numbers 16,12-15). Moses reproached Korah not to be satisfied with the privileges of
the Levites, and to "want to be priests as well" (Numbers 16,8-10).

The scribes pretendet that the ground opened miraculously to swallow the revolted and that a "fire then shot out from Yahweh and consumed the two hundred and fifty men offering incense" who accompanied them (Numbers 16,28-35). This "fire" is the same one that had already killed Aaron's two sons: they were killed by Moses and his men.

Why did the scribes bring back similar stories? It is because, writing three centuries later and being themselves priests, descendents of Aaron, they were jealously keen on their pre-rogatives. They had reported these events as "they are a reminder to the Israelites that no unauthorised person, no one not of Aaron's line, may approach and offer incense before Yahweh, on pain of suffering the fate of Korah and his party, as Yahweh had said through Moses' (Numbers 17,5).

I do not believe in the historical reality of this history. I do not believe that the ground opened to swallow Korah and "his band" to which I belong spiritually. Because I believe, like Korah, that "the priests have taken too much on themselves! The whole community, all its members, are consecrated", that Our celestial Father is in the middle of us, that we live the Emmanuel and that we may all practise the apocalyptic priesthood desired by God and His Messiah, Jesus.

The truth is that Moses and his armed band wanted the death of Korah and his men. The "ground which opened" to swallow these latter and the "flame" which had consumed both sons of Aaron were only the bloody swords of Moses' mafia. This provoked the reaction of the community against Moses and Aaron after this butchery: "On the following day, the whole community of Israelites were muttering against Moses and Aaron, and saying: "You are responsible for killing Yahweh's people..." (Numbers 17,6)

One must be mentally weak to believe indistinctly in all that the scribe-priests in the historical books of the Old testament wrote. The prophets showed this mental deficiency while saying on behalf of God: "Israel does not know, my people do not understand...etc..." (Isaiah 1,3). And Jeremiah: "This is because my people are stupid, they do not know me, they are slow-witted children, they have no understanding, they are clever enough at doing wrong, but do not know how to do right" (Jeremiah 4,22).

These serious faults of the Jewish 'priests' deformed the true Face of God, making it un-recognisable by men. The knowledge of the true divine character would have been impossible without Jesus. If the Jews, as the prophets revealed, were unable to know God, on the other hand, Jesus was quite conscious to have really known Him: "Father, Upright One, the world has not known you, but I have known you", Jesus had said, adding: 'I have made your Name known to them and will continue to make it known" (John 17,25-26). Jesus had revealed the true Face of God, His true "Name".

If we have well understood this essential point of the spiritual life, the principal concern will be to pray, like Jesus taught us, so that in us "the name of God is sanctified", that is to say that we know God and that we make Him known as He really is, not as some present Him. Because the eternal life is to know God: "Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17,3). This is why the first prayer taught by Jesus was as follows: 'Father... your Name be sanctified". Our mission is to sanctify this holy, this marvellous Name of Our divine Creator and Father.

2.6.2.4 Some other important points

Gift of the Spirit (Numbers 11) Seeing the bewilderment of the Israelites in the desert, Moses got discouraged. He thought that his mission was too heavy. He then addressed to God: 'Why do you treat your servant so badly? In what respect I have failed to win your favour, for you to lay the burden of all these people on me?" (Numbers 11,10-11). The Lord asked him to
choose 70 among the elderly of Israel and some scribes to whom He will give His Spirit, to help him in his task. After having gathered them, "When the Spirit came on them they prophesied - but only once" (Numbers 11,24-25). Why didn’t they prophesy again? Probably because Moses decided later to be the only one to prophesy, that is to say the only one to control in the name of God. To prophesy mean to speak in the name of God, being his spokesman, to reveal the divine opinion about the events. That can not be done without a direct assistance of God. This is why God gives His Spirit to the ones He chooses for a mission.

It should be noted that two men, Eldad and Medad, prophesied independently of the 70 joined together around Moses. Joshua, the servant of Moses, wanted to prevent them, but Moses retained him saying: 'If only all Yahweh’s people were prophets, and Yahweh had given them his spirit" (Numbers 11,26-29). This did not prevent Moses from being angry against Aaron and Korah for saying that God had spoken to them. The attitude of Joshua is similar to that of John in the Gospel: "John said to him: 'Master, we saw someone who is not of us driving out devils in your name, and because he was not one of us we tried to stop him’...But Jesus said: 'You must not stop him; no one who works a miracle in my name could soon afterwards speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9,38-40). This example of the gift of the Spirit apart from a traditional framework illustrates the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is of everyone who is born of the Spirit" (John 3,8).

The Spirit of God often spoke to Moses. This is undeniable! But it is true that Moses often take personal decisions believing them to be inspired by God. Furthermore, to distinguish in the books of the Old Testament, between what is inspired by God and what comes from Moses, it is necessary to have recourse to the lights that Jesus has given us in the Gospel.

Joshua  The first mention of Joshua is in Exodus 17,9: "Moses said to Joshua, 'pick some men and tomorrow morning go out and engage Amalek". He was the only one to go up with Moses on the mount Sinai (Exodus 24,13). He served him faithfully, being attached to the worship and the Tent (Exodus 33,11). The book of Numbers mentions him for the first time when he wanted to prevent the two men, Eldad and Medad from prophesying (Numbers 11,26-29). This fact reveals his great jealousy for Moses. He belonged to the twelve men sent by Moses to explore the Country of Canaan: He is that 'Hoshea, son of Nun, from the tribe of Ephraim" (Numbers 13,8), whose name Moses changed into Joshua (Numbers 13,16). Moses designated him as his successor (Numbers 27,15-23). The book of Joshua, the first book after the Pentateuch (the 5 first Books of the Bible), bears his name and reports how he introduced the Jews in Canaan.

Reconnaissance mission in Canaan  Moses sent twelve spies in Canaan, one from each tribe to explore the ground and to probe the population in order to invade the country. Joshua was one of them. They started from Kadesh, a name to remember. On return from their expedition after forty days, the spies reported that the country of Canaan was civilised and strengthened: 'It does indeed flow with milk and honey; here is what it produces" (Numbers 13,27). They had brought back with them samples of grapes, pomegranates and figs. The bunches of grapes were so big that "two men hat to carry them away on a pole..." (Numbers 13,23). There was a major disadvantage: "At the same time its inhabitants are a powerful people; the towns are fortified and very big..." (Numbers 13,28). That had frightened the ten spies, who advised to give up the invasion: "We cannot attack these people; they are stronger than we are...all the people we saw there were of enormous size... we felt like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them" (Numbers 13,31-33). Only Joshua and Caleb had opposite opinions.

The people submitted to the opinion of the majority of the spies (Numbers 14,1-4) and prepared, in spite of the encouragements of Joshua and Caleb, to stone Moses and his clan:
'The whole community was talking of stoning them' (Numbers 14,10). On the contrary, Moses ended up by putting them to death: "The men whom Moses had sent to reconnoitre the country and who, on their return, had incited the whole community of Israel to mutter about him by disparaging it, these men who had disparaged the country were all struck dead before Yahweh...only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were left alive' (Numbers 14,36-38).

Palestine has thus never been a desert as some claim. Since millennia, it did not cease to be civilised and planted of all kinds of fruit trees. Claiming to transform the 'Palestinian desert' into the 'Israeli garden' is a lie that seduces only the ignorants.

In front of the power of the Canaanites, only Joshua and Caleb wanted to enter the country. Later even the Israelites decided to enter there, but it was too late, God being no more with them: "The Amalekites and Canaanites defeated them and harried them all the way to Hormah" (Numbers 14,45). The moral of this story: one should never hesitate to act when it is the hour of God, and one should always abstain from undertaking an action, even if seemingly good, when it is accomplished without God. This is why Moses had advised to give up the project (Numbers 14,41-42). According to the scribes, they were defeated because 'neither the Arch of the Covenant of Yahweh nor Moses left the camp with them' (Numbers 14,44).

Being unable to enter through Kadesh, by the most direct road, the Israelites had to go round the territory of Edom. The King of Edom, fearing to let pass such a great number, refused them the passage (Numbers 20,14-21). They thus gave up this short cut and went down towards the south, then turned up to the north towards Moab, an immense, difficult and dangerous way that took 38 years to cross it. Many did not enter Palestine, even Moses and Aaron did not see it (Numbers 14,29-38).

Various precepts about the worship

The report of the stay in Kadesh is stopped by a series of precepts pertaining to worship. They are described in chapters 15-19. I point out the most important:

**Sabbath**

Any work is forbidden on Sabbath. A man collected wood during the Sabbath and that was regarded as a violation of the 'divine' law of the Sabbath. The man was put to death 'as Yahweh had ordered Moses' (Numbers 15,36). Such a rigid attitude does not correspond to the Spirit of God. Compare that with the attitude of Jesus in front of the Pharisees who criticised the Apostles to have torn off ears of corn on Saturday (Matthew 12,1-8).

**The tassels**

Moses claims that God requires 'for all generations to come, to put tassels on the hems of their clothes and work a violet thread into the tassel at the hem..." (Numbers 15,37). These ridiculous 'religious' fashions were followed by the Christians, in particular in the Catholic Church (cardinals and bishops). Jesus condemns these habits about clothing (Matthew 23,5) and insists on faith and simplicity, not on clothing.

**The red heifer**

According to a disposition of the Law prescribed by Yahweh, ashes of a red heifer mixed with water by the priests, is able to purify (Numbers 19,1-10). Ashes 'will be kept for the ritual use of the Israelite community for making water for purification; it is a sacrifice for sin (Numbers 19,9). Once again a pagan rite which passes, with its superstitions, into the Jewish worship. The moral purification by water is a practise known in the ancient religions. Its correspondent nowadays are the 'blessed water' for the Christians, the ablutions for the Moslems, the river of Gange for Hindus etc...

It is clear that this 'purification' is illusory, being material and soiled by sorcery and pagan superstition. Think of the religious importance given to the 'white' cow in India (the colour of the cow differs, but not the spirit of the worship). The difference is that the scribes ascribed
this worship to...Yahweh! The real reason is that it suits the priests, because one paid a lot to be purified by a 'red' cow, not easy to find. Lately some Jews announced with joy that the Messianic time is near, because they have found in Spain a red heifer which, finally, corresponds to the requirements of the 'Torah'!

To know about the spiritual purification through repentance, a new evolutionary stage was needed. Jesus, at the price of His sacrifice, teaches us to purify ourselves by the sacrifice of our evil thoughts and the request for forgiveness, not by an illusory external worship. It is God who forgives and purifies the repented heart.

The water drawn from the rock

As water and food ran out, once again the community revolted against Moses. They regretted to have left Egypt for a deserted place (Numbers 20,1-5). God thus said to Moses: "Take the Branch (that of Aaron, supposed to have flowered instead of that of Korah at the time of the revolt of the latter against Moses: Numbers 17,21-26), and call the community together, you and your brother Aaron. Then, in full view of them, order this rock to release its water... Moses and Aaron then called the assembly together in front of the rock... Moses then raised his hand and struck the rock twice with the branch; water gushed out in abundance, and the community and their livestock drank" (Numbers 20,6-11). The place of this gathering is disputed as we will see further: was this around a rock or a well?

After this miracle, God was irritated against Moses and Aaron: "Because you did not believe that I could assert my holiness before the Israelites' eyes (to manifest my Almightiness), you will not lead this assembly into the country which I am giving them" (Numbers 20,11-12). Indeed, it was Joshua to lead them into Palestine (Numbers 27,12-22). What was Moses' and Aaron's fault? Why this divine wrath against them? It is not easy to understand such a reaction by God after a miracle. Moses struck the rock twice. Should he have struck it only once, with confidence, not a second time after having hesitated. Shouldn't he, to whom God had spoken, have acted with conviction and force knowing that God 'could assert His holiness' in front of all?

The answer is in the place where the gathering for drinking water was to be held: was this really around a rock as the scribes claim in Numbers 20,1-13 to make believe in the miracle? This place is contradicted in Numbers 21,16-18 revealing that the gathering was done around a well:

'...from there they went to Beer (name of a place meaning "a well")...being the well in connection with which Yahweh had said to Moses: 'Call the people together and I will give them water'. Then it was that Israel sang this song: Spring up, well! Sing out for the well, sunk by the princes' (Numbers 21,16-18). In Hebrew, as in Arabic, the word "beer" means "a well". This place thus draws its name from the well which is there.

Thus, "the gathering" for drinking was done not around a rock, but quite simply around a well. In addition, by drinking the water of the well, Moses did not respect his commitment "not to drink the water of the wells" of the areas which the community would have crossed (Numbers 20,17 / 21,22).

The reason for the anger of God against Moses and Aaron wouldn't it rather be their extreme violence and the institution of an intransigent worship, copied on paganism, never prescribed by God. And this being done in His name!

Death of Aaron (Numbers 20,14-21)

We saw that Edomites prevented the Jews from crossing their territory. Thus they had to take the long and painful road southward. Aaron died on the way on the mountain "Hor". His son Eleazar succeeded to him as high priest.

The bronze snake (Numbers 21,4-9)

Built up at the request of God, this bronze snake was hung horizontally on a vertical pole, thus forming a cross. Those bitten by snakes in the desert, who would have looked at this bronze snake with faith, would have been physically healed, forgiven to have revolted against
God.

This cross prefigures another more important one, whose power of healing is of a spiritual, not a material, an eternal not a temporal level. The cross formed by the bronze snake on the vertical pole announces the crucifixion of Christ and the healing of those who believe in Him. Jesus took this story, ascribing to His crucifixion the same vivifying values, this time on the hearts. The bronze snake in cross symbolised His passion: "As Moses lifted up the (bronze) snake in the desert, so must the Son of man (Christ) be lifted up (on the cross) so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him", Jesus had said (John 3,14).

This bronze snake was venerated by the Jews for a long time, so much so that they even adored it. This is why, 600 years later, king Hezekiah destroyed it (2 Kings 18,4).

The rite of "Urim and Tummim" (Numbers 27,21; see also Exodus 28,30)

Urim and Tummim were two stones or two dices which the high priest carried to consult God about a problem; the priest threw the Urim and Tummim and, according to the position after their fall or the inscriptions which they carried, the high priest interpreted 'yes' or 'no' the divine answer to the question. It is a bad system to consult God that often gives disastrous results.

Yahweh’s food destined to the priests

Chapter 28 repeats some rules of the mosaic law. Concerning sacrifices, 'God' said to the people: 'Take care to bring me my offering, my sustenance in the form of food burnt...' (Numbers 28,1-2). All this food 'offered to Yahweh' came laid on the tables of the priests and the Levites who wrote these texts (read 1 Samuel 2,12-17). It was thus convenient for the priests, for the scribes and for the Levites to have the greatest number of sacrifices to be offered to... Yahweh...a food they consumed themselves..., in the name of Yahweh!

2.6.2.5 Balaam and his prophecies on the Messiah (Numbers 22-24)

The most important text in the Numbers is that of the prophecies of Balaam on the Messiah, a none Jewish soothsayer.

To enter Palestine, the Israelites had to pass by the country of Moab (the current Jordan). Balak, the Moabite king, wanted to prevent them with force. He called upon Balaam, a wizard of the area. He asked him to cast a bad fate to the Israelis, to curse them so that he could overcome them easily: 'The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian set out (towards Balaam) taking fees for the divination with them (for the curse against the Jews)' (Numbers 22,7).

God prevented Balaam from cursing them: "There is no omen whatever against Jacob, no augury at all against Israel' (Numbers 23,23). Why? Because, Balaam the soothsayer explained 'A hero arises from their stock, he reigns over countless people... (Numbers 24,7)... I see him - but not in the present. I perceive him – but not close at hand: a Star is emerging from Jacob,
The biblical course

...a sceptre is rising from Israel..." (Numbers 24,17)

The only reason why these people were then protected by God was that the Messiah will come from them. He is this "Hero" who comes from their descent and this "Star" that Balaam sees not in the present "not close at hand". Indeed, Jesus will come 13 centuries later. He is "the Star of the morning" as names Him the Revelation (Revelation 2,28 / 22,16). It is clear here that the only vocation of the Jews was the arrival of the Messiah. Today, after the Advent of this Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, any Jew who denies Him cannot claim anymore a divine blessing, neither does any man who turns his back on this Star-Hero.

Balaam is a figure to be remembered because, unable to curse the Jews, he pushed them to the prostitutes of Moab in order to arise the divine anger against them (Numbers 25,1-3). Notice that the Moabite and Madianite women are both accused by the Jews (Numbers 25,6-16), but Balaam was the first responsible in this case of Shittim. This is why the Israelites killed him later (Numbers 31,8). The Book of Revelation also mentions Balaam comparing the irreligious people of the end of time with this "Balaam who taught Balak to set a trap for the Israelites so that they committed adultery", thus deserving the divine anger (Revelation 2,14). These irreligious people are the subjects of the apocalyptic "Beast", whose subjects corrupt the disciples of Christ to move them away from God, as Balaam did (read the book 'Protocols of Wise of Sion').

2.6.2.6 Borders of Israel

The book of the Numbers ends with the Israelites at the doors of Palestine, in the East of the Jordan at the Nebo Mount in front of the Palestinian town of Jericho (Ariha). Moses died there (Deuteronomy 34,1-5).

According to the scribes, the borders given to the Jews - again by God - , start from the Sinai to the town of Hamat, in the North of Syria (34,8), and stop in the East at the Jordan river and the Dead Sea (34,12).

These borders are imaginary and don't depend on God, but on the changeable ambitions of the Israeli scribes who, according to their more or less voracious appetites, sometimes place the borders from the Sinai to the Jordan, as it is the case here, sometimes from the Nile to the Euphrates, as indicated in Joshua 1,3-4. If God had fixed the borders to the Israelites, they would not have varied from one scribe to another, they would have been stable, well defined and - above all - historically permanent.

The modern Israelites are not very satisfied with the country that 'God' gave them, described by Moses as being the country where 'runs milk and honey' (Exodus 3,8 / Numbers 13,27). Formerly, in the desert, the Jews already regretted "good fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onion and garlic" which they ate 'free' in Egypt (Numbers 11,5-6). In 1977, the late Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir said: "Israel will never forgive to Moses his improvidence: he led the Jews out of Egypt and struck the rock to refresh them: but he made them walk during 40 years in the desert to establish them in the only area deprived of oil".

2.6.3 Deuteronomy

2.6.3.1 Meaning of the word: Deuteronomy

This word comes from the Greek 'deftero' which means 'again', 'once more' or 'a second time', and 'noma' which means 'law'. Deuteronomy thus means 'Second Law' or 'the Law a second time'. This book is so named, because it is a recapitulation of the four preceding books of the Law. It is a collection, a summary or a synthesis of the Torah.
2.6.3.2 When and by whom was it written?

The Deuteronomy was written eight centuries BC, approximately 200 years after the four books which precede it, and at least 400 years after the entry of the Jews in Palestine. It was written by a group of scribes and priests in order to gather, in just one volume, the main part of Moses’ teachings. They added to it what they would have wanted him to prescribe in their favour. To give more weight to the precepts therein, the authors make Moses himself speak. The successive speeches constitute his moral will. Apart from the laws and the ordinances, the Deuteronomy contains the accounts of the principal events which took place in the desert.

The drafting of the book was made after the institution of the Israeli Kingdom. Its goal is to avoid in the future the faults already made in the past: "If, having reached the country given by Yahweh your God and having taken possession of it and, while living there, you think: 'I should like to appoint a king to rule me like all the surrounding nations',... Nor must he (this king) keep on acquiring more and more wives (like David and Solomon had already done).... Nor must he acquire vast quantities of silver and gold. Once seated on his royal throne, and for his own use, he must write a copy of this Law (Deuteronomy) on a scroll, at the dictation of the levitical priests...he must read it every day of his life..." (Deuteronomy 17,14-20). Note the importance of the priests in the biblical drafting. This text has to be compared to that of 1 Samuel 8,5-19 where the Jews, when there was no kingdom eleven centuries BC, had asked Samuel for a king: 'Give us a king to judge us like the other nations'. Elsewhere, in 1 Kings 10,14-18 and 1 Kings 11,1-8, we find mentioned the gold, the horses and the numerous women of Solomon. The Deuteronomy aims at avoiding the recurrence of similar abuses in the future. An entire volume has been written to remind everyone, especially the kings, their duties towards God: 'Hence, grasp this today and meditate on it carefully: Yahweh is the true God, in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other. Keep his laws and commandments as I give them to you today...’ (Deuteronomy 4,39-40).

The Deuteronomy was neglected a long time after its drafting. It was found hidden and neglected in the Temple under king Josiah in 622 BC. This is 'the Book of the Law found in the Temple of Yahweh' (2 Kings 22,8) and the 'book of Moses', which Nehemiah 13,1-3 refers to.

To give more weight to their words, the scribes Levites endeavoured – manifestly- to give the impression that Moses himself had written and entrusted it to the Levites: "When Moses had completely finished writing the words of this Law in a book, he gave this command to the Levites...: 'Take the book of this Law... etc...!' (Deuteronomy 31,24-26).

The text of the Deuteronomy demonstrates that its author was not Moses. He cannot be the author of the final chapter which deals with his death and his burial (Deuteronomy 34). He would not have written: "These are the words which Moses addressed..." (Deuteronomy 1,1), but: "These are the words which I addressed...", nor "Moses then set aside three towns in the east" (Deuteronomy 4,41), but "I then set aside three towns...". All indicates that the priests and the scribes committed themselves busily to write the Deuteronomy under the monarchical regime in Israel, before the Babylonian invasion of 586 BC. Andre Chouraqui, author of the French Bible which bears his name, in his introduction to Deuteronomy recognises that 'indices prevent from seeing in this book the work of the great Legislator (Moses)'.

Now it is necessary to read the entire Deuteronomy, then to return to the explanation of the important points in the continuation of the biblical course.

2.6.3.3 Dispossession

The duty to dispossess the nations often returns in the Deuteronomy. The Jews were pushed by Moses, not by God, to drive the occupants out of Canaan and to seize their goods in the name of God who is: "Dispossessing for you nations who were larger and stronger than you, to make way for you and to give you their country as your heritage" (Deuteronomy 4,38).
"Listen, Israel; here today you are about to cross the Jordan, to go and dispossess nations greater and stronger than yourself" (Deuteronomy 9,1).

"When Yahweh has brought you into the country which He swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He would give you, with great and prosperous cities you have not build, with houses full of good things you have not provided, with the wells you have not dug, with the vineyards and olive trees you have not planted, and then, when you have eaten as much as you want, be careful you don’t forget Yahweh" (Deuteronomy 6,10-12).

One is impressed by the number of times the order to dispossess and to ransack the other nations is repeated... in the name of God! In only one verse, this duty of dispossession is repeated twice: "When Yahweh your God has annihilated the nations confronting you, whom you are going to dispossess, and when you have dispossessed them and make your home in their country..." (Deuteronomy 12,29).

But to dispossess was not enough: "When you advance on a town to attack it, first offer it peace-terms (!!). If it accepts these and opens its gates to you, all the people inside will owe you forced labour and work for you (!!). But if it refuses peace and gives battle, you must besiege it. Yahweh your God having handed it over to you, you will put the whole male population to the sword. But the women, children, livestock, and whatever the town contains by way of spoil, you may take for yourselves as booty. You will feed on the spoils of the enemies... But as regards the towns of those peoples whom Yahweh your God is giving you as your heritage, you must not spare the life of any living thing" (Deuteronomy 20,10-16). Dispossession, vandalism and crimes in the name of God. The list of the texts to compare is very long. This is what profanes the holy Name of God.

However the Ten Commands contain three clear precepts: "You shall not kill. You shall not steal. You shall not set your heart on your neighbour’s house. You shall not set your heart on your neighbour’s spouse, or servant, man or woman, or ox, or donkey, or any of your neighbour’s possession" (Exodus 20,13-17). To avoid these commands, the scribes and the priests have subtly interpreted the meaning of the word "neighbour". For the Jews, the neighbour is the Jew. These commands were valid only among Jews themselves. The goyims were the enemies whom He has recommended to spoil, even to kill. That did not prevent Moses from ordering the putting to death of his own nephews and of a great number of Jews. The Samaritans themselves were regarded as enemies. The Pharisees, to insult Jesus, treated him like a Samaritan: "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and possessed by a devil?" (John 8,48). "Jews, of course, do not associate with Samaritans", John wrote (John 4,9).

Jesus corrected the interpretation of these commands by designating a Samaritan, a traditional enemy of the Jews, as an example of love for the neighbour (Luke 10,29-37). Furthermore Jesus praised a Roman Centurion, a Pagan, but blamed the Jews: "When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those (Jews) following him, 'In truth I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this. And I tell you that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of Heaven; but the children of the kingdom (of Israel, the Zionist Jews) will be thrown out into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth' (Matthew 8,10-13). That is why Jesus has invited the Jews to love their enemies and to stop reserving their salvation only to their brothers: 'Love your enemies... For if you love those (Jews like you) who love you, what reward will you get?' (Matthew 5,42-48).

This insistence on the dispossession and on the homicide clarifies, without any doubt, the reason for which Jesus told those who denied him: "You are from your father, the devil, and you prefer to do what your father wants. He was a murderer from the start" (John 8,44). These orders given by Moses have attracted the divine anger against him. After having led the Jews out of Egypt, he wanted to possess the nations from the Sinai to Lebanon and beyond. He admitted before the community "to have pleaded with Yahweh: My Lord Yahweh,... may I not go across and see this fine country on the other side of the Jordan, that fine upland country
and the Lebanon? But, because of you", he reproached the people, 'Yahweh was angry with me and would not listen: 'Enough!', he said, 'Do not mention this subject again!' (Deuteronomy 3,23). The sharp anger of God was not due to the people, as Moses thought. The Lord aimed at limiting Moses’ great appetite of possession (Deuteronomy 4,21).

While criticising Moses’ behaviour, should we take into account certain extenuating circumstances: the mentality and the habits of the time, the difficulty of the mission, the hardness of the people...?!

2.6.3.4 Overloads

Moses has confessed that God has added nothing to the words of the ten Commandments: "These were the words Yahweh spoke to you when you were all assembled on the mountain... He added nothing, but wrote them on two tables of stone which he gave to me" (Deuteronomy 5,22). Moses also prescribed: "You must add nothing to what I command you, and take nothing from it" (Deuteronomy 4,2). However, a lot of ritual and worship have been added in favour of the material well-being of the priests. Where do they come from? From "the lying pen" of the scribes (Jeremiah 8,8). Today we are able to detect these impurities and to exorcise the Torah thanks to the words of Jesus.

2.6.3.5 The "small remainder"

In Deuteronomy 4,25-31, Moses has prophesied the spiritual treason of the Jews: "Only a small number of you will remain" (Deuteronomy 4,27). After a long time, there is only a "small number", a 'small remainder", who remains faithful to God and to His Messiah, who succeeds in the test of the faith. Indeed, only a small minority of the Jewish community has recognised Jesus as the announced Messiah, and only a small minority recognises the Antichrist today: 'Somebody said to him: 'Sir, will there be only a few saved?' He said to them: 'Many will try to enter and will not succeed' (Luke 13,23-24). Jesus also said on this subject: 'Then you will be handed over to be tortured and put to death...And many will fall away; people will betray one another... love in most people will grow cold; but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved' (Matthew 24,9-13). Jesus still asked: "But when the Son of man comes, will he find any faith on earth?" (Luke 18,8). He will only find it in the hearts of a very small remainder who will inflame the world with the divine love.

2.6.3.6 The "nation" of Israel

Deuteronomy 4,34 presents Israel like a nation chosen by God: ' Has it ever been known before that any god took action himself to bring one nation out of another one... all of which things Yahweh your God has done for you before your eyes in Egypt". There are two errors in this declaration: it is false to claim that God chose a nation; the divine choice has been fixed on a man, Abraham. It is still false to say to the Jews: "...all things that for you Yahweh has done". We have seen that God had acted to achieve His Messianic plan in favour of all men, not exclusively for the glory of the Jewish community.

2.6.3.7 Circumcision of the heart

We find in Deuteronomy an evolution of the comprehension of the circumcision according to the spirit, not according to the letter. For the first time, it is a matter of the circumcision of the heart in Deuteronomy 10,16: "Circumcise your heart then and be obstinate no longer’. The prophet Jeremiah few centuries later stresses again on this spiritual circumcision by saying: 'Circumcise yourselves for Yahweh, apply circumcision to your hearts' (Jeremiah 4,4).

In spite of that, still nowadays, some people insist on the physical circumcision of the prepuce. This practise has been the cause of great dissensions among the first Apostles of
Jesus: "Then some men came down from Judaea and taught the brothers, 'Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be saved" (Acts 15,1). The true circumcision is that of the heart, as Paul points out: 'The real Jew is the one who is inwardly a Jew, and real circumcision is in the heart, a thing not of the letter but of the spirit" (Romans 2,29).

### 2.6.3.8 Choice between blessing and curse

To the Israelites blessings had been offered if they would have been faithful, and curses if they would have been unfaithful: "Today, look, I am offering you a blessing and a curse..." (Deuteronomy 11,26-30). The blessing has been placed on the Garizim mount, in Samaria, and the curse has been placed opposite on the Ebal mount (Deuteronomy 11,29). The Garizim mount, being the place of the blessings, has been selected as sanctuary and place of worship by the Samaritans. It is in the same place still today. The Jews, instead, practised their worship in the Temple of Jerusalem (read the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan in John 4,20-24: The worship God agrees is in "spirit and truth" said Jesus).

### 2.6.3.9 Moses announces the Messiah

The most important subject in this book is Moses' announcement of the Prophet-Messiah: "From among yourselves, from among your own brothers, Yahweh your God will raise up a prophet like me; you will listen to him'. Moses added: 'Then Yahweh said to me, 'What they have said is well said. From their own brothers I shall raise up a prophet like yourself, I shall put my words into his mouth and he will tell them everything I command him. Anyone who refuses to listen to my words, spoken by him in my name, will have to render an account to me' (Deuteronomy 18,15-19).

It is necessary to remember this important Messianic prophecy to which Jesus refers: "...it was about me that he (Moses) was writing" (John 5,46). In the same way, the Apostles themselves referred to this verse: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote..." (John 1,45). When the Pharisees asked John the baptist if he were "the Prophet", they were referring to this prophecy of Moses (John 1,45).

To note that the announced prophet is "similar" to Moses, as great as him. When Jesus came, He proved to be even greater than Moses as Paul reveals it: "He (Jesus) deserves a greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house is more honoured than the house itself" (Hebrews 3,3).

The Messiah announced by Moses comes for the salvation of all those who believe in Him, Jews or not-Jews, and for the judgement of all those who refuse Him (Deuteronomy 18,19). Jesus proclaimed: 'No one who believes in me will be judged, but whoever does not believe is judged already, because that person does not believe in the Name of God's only Son' (John 3,18).

'Look, today I am offering you life and prosperity, death and disaster' God said in Deuteronomy 30,15. Life is found near the Messiah, Jesus. Death is on the side of the Zionist State opposed to the Spirit of God and His Messiah. "No one can be the slave of two master" (Matthew 6,24).

### 2.6.3.10 Abraham the Syrian.

The scribes introduced Abraham as a Hebrew: "A survivor came to tell Abraham the Hebrew..." (Genesis 14,13). Their intention was to make believe that the Hebraic "race" pre-existed the election of Abraham who belonged to it. Thus, by choosing Abraham, all Hebrews are elected in him. Such is their logic, not that of God, nor ours.

That is why Moses asked his community: "In the presence of Yahweh your God, you will
then pronounce these words: 'My father was a wandering Aramaean, who went down to Egypt..." (Deuteronomy 26,5). Moses thus recalled to the Jews that their father, Abraham is not of a Hebraic origin but of an Aramaic (i.e Syrian) origin. At the time of Abraham there were no Hebrews. This specification of Moses confuses and denounces the Zionist racism.

2.6.3.11 Conditioned divine promise

The faithfulness of the Jews to God was the main and essential condition to possess the Promised Land: '

2.6.3.12 Death of Moses

The death of Moses and Aaron outside Palestine is the punishment announced by God (Numbers 20,12). The death of the great legislator outside 'the Promised Land' means that the practise of the mosaic Law is unable to introduce into the Kingdom of God, since his founder himself could not penetrate in the Promised Land, symbol of Heaven.

Reflection

The Bible is a gold mine. Like all the gold mines, it contains some impurities mixed with the Treasure it contains. It is necessary to be able to detect these impurities and to separate them from the essential message of the Bible.

The impurities are the precepts and the abominable worships ascribed to God. Those who have prescribed them have profaned "the Holy Name’. These reluctant actions are mentioned abundantly and uniquely in the Old Testament. They have been denounced by the prophets, by Jesus and his Apostles.

In the Old Testament, the gold is the Revelation of the unique God, the fall of man (Adam) and its cause, the divine determination to save humanity, the call of Abraham, the formation of the first monotheistic community, the announcement of the Messiah’s advent by the prophets etc...

In the New Testament, everything is gold. The time has come to purify the biblical gold
in the crucible of the apocalyptic message where Jesus Christ says: "I warn you, buy from me gold that has been tested in the fire to make you truly rich..." (Revelation 3,18). To purify gold, we must recognise it and separate it from the impurities. One needs to ask for the divine grace and the biblical experience.

2.6.4 Questionnaire

1. Draw a chart of the area including Egypt, the Sinai, the Dead Sea, the Jordan, the Tiberias Lake then trace the route of the Israelites in the desert of the Sinai. Locate Madian, Kadesh, Edom, Hor, Shittim, Moab, Nebo, Jericho, the Garizim mount.

2. In Deuteronomy 33,8-11 Moses blesses the tribe of Levi. How do you understand this blessing by comparing it with the curse that Jacob proclaimed on Levi (Genesis 49,5-7)?

3. Why was Balaam killed by the Jews (Numbers 31,1-12) and what is he the symbol of?

4. What happened at Kadesh (Numbers 13)?

5. What happened at Shittim (Numbers 25,1)?

6. Moses and Aaron did not deserve to enter Palestine? What was their guilt?

7. What are Urim and Tummim?

8. Do you think that God has literally inspired all the points of the mosaic law? How do you interpret the verses of Jeremiah 7,22 and 8,8?

9. Was Abraham Hebrew?

10. Did God want to form a nation with Abraham or to give an universal message?

11. Circumcision of the prepuse or of the heart? Baptism of the body by water or of the heart by biblical knowledge and faith? Are circumcision and Baptism sanctifying or are they only symbols to be overcome?

12. What is the Promised Land? Whom was it promised to?

13. Is the Covenant between God and the Jewish community still valid? Why?

2.7 Lesson 7 - Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel 1 & 2

Understanding of the 5 books of the Torah, in the critical spirit followed until here, forms a sure and realistic basis to approach the remainder of the books of the Old Testament. Read the books of Joshua and Judges carefully, then return to the explanations below:

2.7.1 The book of Joshua

This book brings back the history of the entry of the Jews to Palestine, with Joshua as a leader, around 1200 B.C. The departure took place from Shittim (Joshua 3,1). The borders of the country to be occupied are quickly defined: from the desert (the Sinai, with the Nile as Western limit) to the Euphrates (Joshua 1,4), Lebanon being entirely absorbed. The door of the Israeli Knesset bears this quote: "Your field, Israel, extends from the Nile to the Euphrates". This is why the Israeli flag is represented by a white background on which is laid the 6-branched star (of David), between two blue bands referring to the Nile and Euphrates. Refer to the sixth lesson of the biblical course, at the end of the book of the Numbers: borders of Israel.
The Arch crosses the Jordan like, leading the way as a sign of God’s presence within the Israeli community (becoming an invading army).

The circumcision had been neglected: on order of Joshua, it was revived 'again... with flint knives' (Joshua 5,2-9).

Jericho’s takeover: do not understand this fact literally. Notice that the city was taken the 7th day, after the 7th turn, the number 7 being that of plenitude (6,14-16). 'The ram’s horn sounds' (Joshua 6,4-5 / 6,16) is a ritual habit practised until today by the Jews at the Wailing Wall. Joshua curses Jericho and says that the one who will rebuild it shall have to offer his sons in sacrifice to the idols (Joshua 6,26-27). The first book of the Kings that was written later with the book of Joshua, reports that Hiel of Béthel rebuilt this city by offering his two sons in sacrifice (1 Kings 16,34). This 'prophecy', among others, was told later in the intention of granting it historical veracity.

The trumpet (Jos 6,16) acquired a prophetic and spiritual meaning after its use in the liturgical cult (similar to the bells). It announces that God will speak or act, and that the people shall listen carefully: 'All you who inhabit the world... when the ram’s horn is sounded, you will hear! For this is what Yahweh has told me...' (Isaiah 18,3-4). At the end of times, Jesus sends his disciples with a "sounding trumpet", as a last warning (Matthew 24,31). This trumpet is symbolic: it announces the opening of the book of Revelation (Revelation 8,2 / 10,2) and invites those "who have ears to listen to what the Spirit has to reveal" to them again (Revelation 3,22).

[Trumpet]
An animal horn used like a trumpet
The rams horns are more modest

The role of the priests, highlighted by the priest-scribes who wrote this text later, is made essential in the takeover of the city. The collapse of the walls of Jericho is a tale without a historical basis and is part of the many "Jewish myths" against which Paul warned us (Titus 1,13-14). Notice also that the recommendation made to the community, that no one, while entering the city, shall not "moved by greed, take all the silver and all the gold, everything made of bronze or iron, consecrated to Yahweh and put in his treasury", i.e. in the pious pocket of the priests (Joshua 6,17-19). The scribes took delight in writing that the combatants "enforced the curse of destruction on everyone in the city: men and women, young and old, including the oxen, the sheep and the donkeys, slaughtering them all" (Joshua 6,21). This recalls the massacres of Deir Yassine, Kfar Kassem, etc... in Palestine, due to the establishment of the State of Israel (1948) and also that Sabra - Chatila, Cana, etc..., in Lebanon, as a result of the Zionist expansionist plan.

The stopping of the sun in Gibeon (Joshua 10,12) is also a tale that should be poetically understood since the moon also was 'stopped' by Joshua.

The distribution of the conquered land: an area was designated for each tribe, except for that of Levi because 'Yahweh, God of Israel, was his heritage' (Joshua 13,14). This non-geographical share of the Levites shows that the 'Promised Land' is a spiritual reality, that is non-geographical, just as Jesus and his Apostles explained it later (Luke 17,21 / Hebrews 13,14). It is by drawing lots that the tribes divided the country (Joshua 14,2).

The Sanctuary of Shiloh: the first worship centre was set up in Shiloh, in the northern part of the country (Joshua 18,1). It became the place of pilgrimage (1 Samuel 1,3). The Arch was found there before being transferred to the Temple of Jerusalem later on.

Joshua dies (Joshua 24,29) without appointing a successor, which caused a difficulty in managing the community. From here on, a series of "Judges" will decide the military and political fate of the Jews. It is the story of those 'judges' that is found in 'The book Judges' following that of Joshua.

The bones of Joseph, who died in Egypt, were transferred and buried in Shechem (Nablius: where the well of Jacob is located). His tomb still lies there today (Joshua 24,32).
Note: The Jews chose to penetrate Palestine by sword and blood. They could have however settled there peacefully, acting as good neighbours with the inhabitants who were there already. By doing that, they would have spread the knowledge of God, by friendly day-to-day deeds, as God wanted it.

2.7.2 The book of Judges

After Joshua, the Jews succumbed to idolatry, "they deserted Yahweh to serve Baal and Astartes, forsook Yahweh to serve Baal and Astartes... But even to their judges they refused to listen. They prostituted themselves to other gods" (Judges 2,13-17). Note that those who "plundered" the Jews did nothing but take back their goods despoiled by the Jews.

Thus, the Israeli history is a follow-up of treason to God and aggression against men. One is astonished by what the scribes made say to Balaam who refused to curse the Jews: "I have perceived no evil in Jacob" (Numbers 23,21), for this evil was denounced by Moses at the adoration of the golden calf and at so many other infidelities. The only good issued from this community was the Messiah, Jesus. All that happened to the sons of Jacob is interpreted to the favour of the Jewish scribes and priests. For example: God lets non-Jewish nations survive only to instruct the Israelites' descendants, to teach them art from the war..." (Judges 3,1-2). What a strange quarrelsome mentality that sees in God an exterminating warrior of any non-Jew. It is necessary to read such verses with a critical and objective spirit to be able to distinguish what is of God and what results from the racist mentality of the scribes. The preservation of the non-Jews among the Jews should have been understood differently: God, Father of all people, is placing the Jews among the nations (not the nations among the Jews) so that they remain among them peacefully, not aggressively, revealing to them wisely the existence of God. However, on the contrary, they let themselves go towards idolatry after having known the One and Only Creator (Judges 3,4-6).

After Joshua, a dozen of judges succeeded over a period of a hundred years. The judge ('Suffet' in Hebrew) should not be understood as the one who gives justice at a court; he is the one who guides and advises the community after having, most often, consulted God (Judges 4,4-6). He judges what is best to do. The judge is a prophet, he helps the people govern themselves, he settles for a decision when one should be made, he leads the combat: Ehud judges by fighting against Moab and killing its king, Eglon; Deborah judges by combating the Canaanites and killing Sisera, their chief; Gideon judges by carrying out wars against Midian. Deborah is the only woman among the judges, a kind of Jeanne d’Arc. The judges are thus people of confidence who defend the Jews. The most known - without being the most important - is Samson.

2.7.2.1 Gideon

A fact to be noticed: it is with Gideon, that the Israelites had tried, for the first time, to establish a kingdom in order to become a nation and to turn from Israelites – a community whose mission is spiritual – to Israelis, a political entity. They asked Gideon to be their king and to initiate a royal dynasty, having his son succeed him; but he refused, understanding that the only King is God, and that the Israelites' mission is not political: 'I will not rule you, neither will my son. Yahweh shall rule you". He required, however, that 'each of you give me one ring out of his booty" (Judges 8,22-24). His son Abimelech desired the throne after him and tried to establish a kingdom that lasted 3 years only. He had put to death all his 70 brothers to reign, but was overthrown later by the notables in Shechem who had helped him massacre his brothers (Judges 9). A hundred years later, a second attempt will take place with Samuel and will lead to the establishment of an Israeli kingdom with Saul as a first king (1 Samuel 8). That was the Hebrews’ original sin, as we shall examine in the first book of Samuel (1 Samuel...
Main sites in relation with the narration of the conquest of Canaan
2.7.2.2 Jephthah

Judge Jephthah, son of a prostitute (Judges 11,1), fought the Ammonites and made a wish to Yahweh: "If you deliver the Ammonites into my grasp, the first thing to come out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from fighting the Ammonites shall belong to Yahweh, and I shall sacrifice it as a burnt offering" (Judges 11,30-31). It was his own daughter that he had to sacrifice (Judges 11,34-40). These human sacrifices were a pagan habit prohibited by God, but, nevertheless, practised by the Jews condemned by Him (Jeremiah 7,30-31). Moses had prescribed the sacrifice of animals, not because God wanted them, but in an aim at preventing the Jews from offering them to the idols and to avoid human sacrifices. But that served for nothing: the Israelis committed both abominations.

2.7.2.3 Samson

The story of Samson is full of exaggerations that should not be taken to the letter. His fights against the lion (Judges 14,6), then against the Palestinians with "a jaw of a donkey" are obvious tales (Judges 15,9-17), the purpose of which is to give this sturdy man an image of the invincible Hebrew, a kind "of Hercules" of that time. A mature spirit does not believe in it.

2.7.2.4 The crime of the Danites

Remember the bloody story of the Danites (chapters 17 & 18). This crime was committed after the consultation of God! The Danites asked the priest: "Then consult God... so that we know whether the journey we are on will lead to success". The priest answered: Go in peace; Yahweh is watching over your journey" (Judges 18,5-6). Notice that the "god" called upon by the Levite priest was no other than a statue. Consulted through the domestic images (the Teraphim: Urim and Purim, sort of dice) this "god" blessed the criminal expedition of the Danites! This "god" was the creation of Micah, who, raging against the Danites who had stolen it from him, shouts: "You have taken away my god, which I have had made...!" (Judges 18,24). This god manufactured by Micah permitted the Danites to cut the throats of "a peaceful and trusting people..." (Judges 18,10 / 18,27-28). It is by such sorcery practices that the priests consulted God and soiled His Holy Name.

Many people manufacture themselves a god reflecting their image instead of transforming themselves to the image of the only true God, an image that so many men lose by their own hands.

Another reluctant crime was committed by the Benjaminites at Gibeah (chapters 19 & 20). It had harmful consequences within the community and developed in an incomprehensible way (Judges 19,1 / 21,25). The prophet Hosea will not forget to mention this unimaginable crime (Hosea 9,9 / 10,9).

Remarks:

Wanting to justify the establishment of an Israeli kingdom, the scribes explained the social disorder of their community by the fact that, "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges 18,1 / 19,1). They end the book of Judges insisting on this fact: In those days there was no king in Israel and everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 21,25). However, the establishment of the kingdom did not solve these problems; it did not improve the social condition and the kingdom ends up being divided into two: one in the North and another in the South. The kings were often incapable of governing and the prophets did not fail to condemn them and denounced the fact of instituting royalty in Israel (Hosea 8,4).

These macabre biblical stories reported in the Old Testament invite us to meditate a saying by a contemporary philosopher: "God writes straight on curved lines". In spite of the incapacity
of the Jews, He was able to complete His Messianic plan. The Messiah was to come from the Jews (John 4,2), "like a root in arid ground" (Isaiah 53,2). This infertile ground is the Israeli environment from which Jesus emerged, being as says Saint Paul, this Messiah who removes the Mosaic veil which prevents the believers from perceiving the Divine Light: 'Indeed, until this very day, the same veil remains over reading the Old Testament: it is not lifted, for only in Christ is it done away with. As it is, to this day, whenever Moses is read, their hearts are covered with a veil, and this veil will not be taken away till they turn to the Lord' (2 Corinthians 3,14-16)...by recognizing that Jesus is the Messiah.

2.7.3 The book of Ruth

Read with interest this edifying historical book, noting that Ruth is Moabite and not Jewish. The importance of this story that took place during the time of the Judges, is that Ruth -who is non Jewish- is one of the Messiah’s ancestors, being the granddaughter of king David from which the Messiah descends. In fact, she gave birth to "Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David" (Ruth 4,17 / see also Matthew 1,3-5 & Luke 3,31-32).

This fact contradicts the Jewish principle that says: 'Only the children of Jews are Jewish'. David and the Messiah himself have as an ancestor a non-Jewish woman: Ruth.

It would have been appreciated if the historical books of the Bible were all written with the same spirit as that of Ruth, where neither violence nor racism are found. Naomi, the Jewish mother-in-law, is admirable regarding her love and tenderness for Ruth, a non Jewish. It is Naomi who pushed Ruth into marrying Boaz. The harmonious relation between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is exemplary. It is such a behaviour that God requested from the Jews. Naomi deserves to be an ancestor of the Messiah; it is this open and affectionate spirit that Jesus came to give to the world. That is the Holy Spirit, which is completely opposed to the chauvinistic spirit found in several parts of the Torah.

2.7.4 The first book of Samuel

The two books of Samuel and the two books of Kings form together a historical body of approximately 550 years, spreading out from the year 1100 B.C. to the year 580 B.C. These four books recount the story of the establishment of the kingdom, its division in two kingdoms (north: 'Israel' and south: 'Judea') and the fall of those two kingdoms, which led to the deportation of the Israelis into Babylonia.

N.B: some Bibles call the two books of Samuel "First and Second books of Kings", and those of Kings 'Third and Fourth books of Kings', without mentioning Samuel as a title. This is due to the fact that all four books speak of the Israeli kings.

Read the first book of Samuel before carrying on with the explanations below.

2.7.4.1 The sanctuary of Shiloh

The Arch was found in Shiloh. The Palestinians destroyed it and took the Arch (1 Samuel 4,11). The scribes claim that the Palestinians were afraid of it (1 Samuel 4,7). But David was afraid of it too later (2 Samuel 6,9-10). These facts reveal the ancient superstitious conceptions regarding everything related to divinity. God was frightening and everything concerning Him was untouchable and to be feared of.

2.7.4.2 The Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2,1-10)

Joyfully, Hannah improvises a poem to God who liberated her from the ‘shame’ of sterility. She was able to lift her head up in front of Peninnah, her husband’s other very fertile wife, who despised her. Hannah avenges herself by giving birth to Samuel, a son with ethics and a great destiny: "My Heart exults in Yahweh... The bow of the mighty has been broken... The barren
woman bears sevenfold (*Samuel’s worthiness in the eyes of God makes him worth 7 children*) but the mother of many (*Peninnah*) is left desolate* (1 Samuel 2,4-5). That song, inspired the Virgin Mary while she was pregnant of the Messiah: "My soul exults the Lord..." (Luke 1,44-55). A historical error is to be noted in the song of Hannah: "...he endows his King with power" (1 Samuel 2,10). There was not yet a king in Israel, which shows that the scribes later added royalist and nationalist subtleties to the song.

2.7.4.3 The establishment of the kingdom

The most important point in the first book of Samuel is the institution of a monarchy with Saul as a first king (1030-1010 B.C.). The text says: "Samuel thought that it was wrong of them *to ask for a human king*, and that it also displeased God who considered Himself "rejected" by the Jews *not wishing Him to reign over them anymore" (1 Samuel 8,6-7). One of the factors that nourished the desire of creating a kingdom was the immorality of the sons of Samuel (1 Samuel 8,5), and that of the sons of Eli the priest (1 Samuel 2,12-25).

The transformation of the Jewish community into an Israeli nation was denounced by the prophets: "They have set up kings, but without my consent, and appointed princes, but without my knowledge", said God to the prophet Hosea (Hosea 8,4), and then declared angrily to the people: *In my anger I gave you a king and in my wrath I have taken him away* (Hosea 13,11). Indeed, the monarchy was ended in Israel after the Assyrian-Babylonian invasion, then the Roman invasion, as we shall see further on.

After requiring a king, Samuel asked the people to *understand what a very wicked thing you have done, in Yahweh’s eyes, by asking for a king*. The Israelis recognised their fault and told Samuel: *To all our sins we have added this wrong of asking for a king* (1 Samuel 12,17-19)... however without giving up their king.

The Israelis required a king with an aim of war and violence, not of peace: "We are determined to have a king, so that we can be like the other nations, with our king to rule us and lead us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8,19-20). Gideon had understood that the only King was God (Judges 8,23). Jesus also refused to establish an Israeli kingdom (John 6,15) and declared that his Kingdom does not belong to this political world (John 18,36). "Yahweh your God is your King", insisted Samuel still (1 Samuel 12,12).

2.7.4.4 The rupture between Samuel and Saul

Saul took the initiative of offering sacrifice at Gilgal at the place of Samuel. By doing this, he claimed a religious right that did not belong to him and replaced Samuel who, at his turn, drew him aside at once. *Your sovereignty will not last; Yahweh has discovered a man after his own heart (David) and designated him as leader of his own people* (1 Samuel 13,8-15).

2.7.4.5 David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17-18)

The young David killed Goliath of Gath, a Palestinian giant (1 Samuel 17,1-51). This was worth a solid friendship to him (that of Jonathan, son of Saul) and a wild animosity (that of Saul): "Jonathan felt an instant affection for David; Jonathan loved him like his very self" (1 Samuel 18,1). On the other hand, Saul was filled of jealousy: * 'They have given David the tens of thousands but me only the thousands; what more can he have, except the throne?' And Saul watched David jealously from that day onwards'. As of the following day, he tried to kill him twice, but David escaped (1 Samuel 18,6-11).

What is historical authenticity in this story? Is it really David who killed Goliath? Yet, we read in 2 Samuel 21,19 that it is Elhanan who killed him: "Again, war with the Philistines broke out at Gob, and Elhanan son of Jair, of Bethlehem, killed Goliath of Gath..." Thus, David’s feats would be simple epics aiming at giving a heroic image to the king of Israel, for this story
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is about the same Goliath of Gath, "the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam" (1 Samuel 17,7 / 2 Samuel 21,19).

Jonathan's love for David lasted until his death, as well as the hatred of Saul, who sought to kill David all through his life. Several of the psalms of David were anthems of confidence in God and recognition for saving him from the hand of Saul (Psalms 18 / 52 / 54 / 57 / 59 / 63...).

2.7.4.6 David's refuge by Achish

The scribes report twice, in two different ways, the escape of David far from Saul and his refuge by Achish, the Palestinian king of Gath, Goliath's region. In the first story (1 Samuel 21,11-15) the king accommodates David but 'Achish's servants said to him, 'is not this David, the king of the country? Was it not of him that they sang as they danced: Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands? David pondered on these words and became very frightened of Achish... he played the madman and, when they held him, he feigned lunacy... David left there and took refuge in the Cave of Adullam'. Note that "all those in distress, all those in debt... gathered round him and he became their leader'. Then David went to the king of Moab to whom he entrusted his father and mother (1 Samuel 21,11 - 22,4).

According to the second story (1 Samuel 27,1 - 29,11), David sought refuge by Achish who welcomed him and granted him the town of Ziklag where he remained one year and four months. The scribes conclude: 'This is why Ziklag has been the property of the kings of Judah to the present day' (1 Samuel 27,6). Thus, it was enough for a Jew to live in a place for Israel to seize it permanently: 'Every place you tread with the soles of your feet I shall give you, as I declared to Moses that I would', tell us the scribes... on behalf of God! (Joshua 1,3).

The two kings' good accommodation of David shows that the Jews could have lived in peace in Palestine!

2.7.4.7 Spiritualism (1 Samuel 28,3-25)

Samuel's soul showed up when Saul called him up, but only to reprimand him, by announcing his death and that of his sons. Spiritualism, or the evocation of spirits, is possible, but was condemned by God (Leviticus 19,31 / Deuteronomy 18,10-11). Most of the times, it is bad spirits who show up to mislay those who are devoted to it. In spite of that, necromancy (or spiritualism) was practised by the Jews, including their kings (2 Kings 21,6). Unfortunately nowadays, resorting to it takes place all over the world.

After having introduced Saul, the first book of Samuel ends by his death.

2.7.5 The second book of Samuel

This book reports David's reign and ends little before his death. Read it entirety then return to the points noted below.

2.7.5.1 David king

After Saul's death, David was chosen by "the house of Judah to be their king" (2 Samuel 2,7). The house of Judah, formed by the members of the tribe bearing the same name, occupied the southern part of Palestine, from Jerusalem in the North to Hebron (El Khaliil) in the South, where the tombs of the Patriarchs are found. However the tribes of the Northern part, called "Israel", refused David and chose one of their own, Ishbaal son of Saul, as king of Israel (2 Samuel 2,8-10). The name Ishbaal means "Man of Baal" (Ish = man in Hebrew). This name given by Saul to his son reveals his attachment to idolatry.

This tension between "Judah" and "Israel" will last until the downfall of the two kingdoms. The hatred between the two kings leads David to reign as of Hebron, in the South, far from
his enemies (2 Samuel 2,11). 'So the war was dragged on between the House of Saul and the House of David, but David grew steadily stronger and the House of Saul steadily weaker' (2 Samuel 3,1). We find an example of 'very hard' battles between the two kingdoms in 2 Samuel 2,8-32.

Abner, the military chief of Israel, broke up with his king Ishbaal for the sake of a woman. He imposed David as king on the people, from North to South of the territory (2 Samuel 3,6-21). After the assassination of Abner and Ishbaal, 'All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said '... you are to be leader... and they anointed David as king of Israel' (2 Samuel 5,1-3), after being king of Judah.

A strange verse reveals that 'David’s sons were priests' (2 Samuel 8,18). However priesthood, according to the law of Moses, was reserved to the Levites descendants of Aaron (Numbers 17,5 / 18,7). David, belonging to the tribe of Judah, did not have right to it. By making themselves priests, the sons of David, deserved death: '... any unauthorised person who comes near must be put to death' (Numbers 3,10). Saul provoked Samuel’s anger having dared to offer a sacrifice (1 Samuel 13,7-15). Korah and his party were exterminated having claimed priesthood, although they were Levites themselves (Numbers 17,5). Thus the sons of David usurped a function owed to the Levites, causing anger, especially to the two Levite priests, Zadok and Abiathar, who already presided the sacerdotal functions (2 Samuel 8,17). By exceeding the restricted legal concept of Moses’ priesthood, this fact prepares for the universal priesthood established by Jesus (see Matthew 12,1-8 / 1 Corinthians 3,16-17 / Revelation 1,6 / 5,9-10 / 20,6).

2.7.5.2 David occupies Jerusalem

In the year 1000 B.C., David seized Jerusalem and called it "City of David" (2 Samuel 5,6-9). Jerusalem, After Hebron, became the capital and the place of residence of the king. 'David was thirty years old when he became king (Jesus’ age when he began his mission: Luke 3,23), and he reigned for forty years: in Hebron for seven years and in Jerusalem for thirty-three years' (2 Samuel 5,4-5) He constructed a palace made out of cedar wood (2 Samuel 5,11). The city became thus the capital of the Kingdom.

2.7.5.3 The Arch

The Arch was carried to Jerusalem which, after being the capital will become the religious centre and the place of pilgrimage. After having built a palace, David wished to build a temple to place the Arch in. This gave the occasion to the prophet Nathan to proclaim the important Messianic prophecy of 2 Samuel 7,1-17. Read it once more before continuing the course.

2.7.5.4 Nathan’s Messianic Prophecy (2 Samuel 7,1-17)

This prophecy is the most important fact in this book. David had told prophet Nathan of his intention to build a temple to shelter the Arch. Nathan approves it spontaneously, 'but that night, the word of Yahweh came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David, 'Yahweh says this: Are you to build me a temple for me to live in? I never lived in a house... And when your days are over... I shall appoint your heir, your own son to succeed you and I shall make his sovereignty secure. He will build a temple for my Name and I shall make his royal throne secure forever. I shall be a father to him and he a son to me". Thus God refuses and rejects the idea of the temple that David proposed to build Him, and announces that one of His descendants will build the Temple according to God.

Explanation of the prophecy:

The Temple

God does not want David to build him a house of stone and concrete: "I have never lived
in a house", says God (2 Samuel 7,6). It is rather Yahweh who 'will make him a dynasty' (2 Samuel 7,11). Because, according to God, the Temple, his Residence, is not a material building: God lives in the heart of true believers. "Anyone who loves me" had said Jesus, "my Father will love him and we shall come to him, and make a home in him" (John 14,23). Paul also tells us: 'Do you not realise that you are a temple of God? ' (1 Corinthians 3,16), and Peter adds: "You may be living stones making a spiritual house..." (1 Peter 2,5). This is why, in the Book of Revelation, John does not see any sort of Temple (Church, Mosque or Pagoda...) in the 'Celestial Jerusalem' that represents the believers of the end of times. John goes on explaining: 'The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Jesus the Messiah) were themselves the Temple' (Revelation 21,22). Those who build material buildings for God understand nothing of Nathan’s prophecy and of Jesus’ teachings and that of His Apostles.

The Messiah

A descendant of David, known from now on by the title 'Son of David', will build this Temple wanted by God. This descendant is the Messiah and this Temple is spiritual, not material. The Jews interpreted this prophecy in a wrong way thinking that Solomon, son of David and his successor to the throne, had the task of building a material temple in Jerusalem. Divine intervention thus gives us insights not only onto the true meaning of the temple, but also on the Messiah coming a thousand years after the declaration of this beautiful prophecy by Nathan.

The Messiah is 'the lineage", the descendant, issued from David’s "womb' (2 Samuel 7,12). Starting from this prophecy, the Messiah became known as 'Son of David", 'Son of Jesse' (Jesse being David’s father). He is also "Son of God" since God said: 'I shall be a father to him and he a son to me'. The Jews thought it was about Solomon, David’s son and successor (see 1 Chronicles 22,1-19 especially verses 8-10). This is why Solomon wanted to build at any cost a temple made of cedar wood and gold in which he placed the Arch of the Covenant. But the prophecy aimed further than the immediate son of David. It indicated Jesus who came 1000 years later. He spoke of the destruction of the material temple built by Solomon and his successors, presenting his "Body", i.e. Himself as a permanent Temple for believers (John 2,19-22 / Revelation 21,22).

Thus Nathan’s prophecy aimed further in time and higher in spirit than the human vision: it was neither about Solomon nor of a material building. This was only understood after the achievement of Nathan’s prophecy, ten centuries later, when the angel Gabriel appeared to the gentle Virgin of Nazareth to say: "You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son... He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David" (Luke 1,26-37). Read this text carefully and compare it with Nathan’s prophecy.

Why is Jesus "the Son of the Most High", "His Only son" as John says (John 3,16)?

The answer is found in the dialogue between Mary and angel Gabriel (Luke 1,34-35):

Mary: 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?'

Gabriel: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you... And so the child will be called Son of God'.

Jesus gave us a new light regarding his filiation. He is much more than 'Son of David', his lineage could not be referred to a man great as he can be, because he comes from a higher origin, directly from God of whom He is the incarnation. Jesus asked this question while discussing with the Pharisees: 'What is your opinion about the Christ? Whose son is he?' 'David’s’ they answered. Jesus went again: 'Then how is it that David, moved by the Spirit, calls him Lord, where he says: 'The Lord (God) declared to my Lord (the Messiah), take your seat at my right hand...' (Psalm 110,1)? If David calls him Lord, how then can he be his son? No one was able to answer him' (Matthew 22,42-45). The divine nature of Jesus overshadows his human lineage. No one could imagine such origin. It goes back to Eternity and not to time. The prophet Micah, eight centuries before Jesus, speaking under inspiration, revealed Jesus’ divine
origin when saying: "His origins go back to the distant past, to the days of Eternity" *(Ha Azal, in Hebrew means 'Eternity' not 'old times' as often badly translated)* (Micah 5,1).

Jesus is thus Son of God because no man can claim, in justice and truth, to be his physical father. It is by God’s direct intervention that Jesus was conceived in Mary’s womb. This is why only God is his Father: "...the Power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow and so the child will be holy and called Son of God, for nothing is impossible to God" (Luke 1,35-37).

Like most Messianic prophecies, that of Nathan was understood only after its achievement. Remember thus as principle that a prophecy is understood only when it takes place in time. Those who do not understand the prophecies are those who refuse to interpret them according to God, wanting them to be accomplished according to them. The Jews’ mistake was also refusing Jesus because He did not correspond with their nationalist and military aspirations. "My thoughts are not your thoughts and your ways are not my ways", the Lord said to them (Isaiah 55,8-9).

Remember from Nathan’s marvellous prophecy that no one should build a material house for God. It is God who builds an eternal Residence to all believers (2 Samuel 7,11), to gather His chosen ones in a spiritual Temple of Perpetual Happiness. Jesus already built this Eternal Temple: Himself... with his followers.

### 2.7.5.5 David’s serious sin

The chapters 11 and 12 count David’s double crime: adultery with Bathsheba, and the premeditated and odious assassination of her husband Uriah the Hittite. David is reprimanded by Nathan and repents himself. He composed the Psalm 51 (50) to ask forgiveness from God: "Have mercy on me, O God, in your faithful love, in your great tenderness... purify me from my sin".

### 2.7.5.6 Amnon and Tamar

Amnon is David’s eldest son. He fell in love with his niece Tamar, daughter of Absalom, David’s third son (2 Samuel 3,2-3). By trick, he rape her, then humiliated her by throwing her out. His brother Absalom had him killed, then ran off far away from David (2 Samuel 13 & 14).

### 2.7.5.7 Absalom assumes the kingdom of David

The chapters 15 to 19,5 tell us about Absalom’s plots to dethrone his father. He seized the throne temporarily and abused David’s concubines.

### 2.7.5.8 Strong tensions between Israel and Judah

The sharp tensions between the North (Israel) and the South (Judah) appeared when David returned to the throne. The two areas fought over the king (2 Samuel 19,41-20,2). The revolt of Sheba, a Benjaminite (from the North), prepared the scission between the two parts of the kingdom which will take place forty years later (towards 931 B.C.). Sheba’s outrage against David will be picked up again by Israel’s rebellious against Judah: 'What share have we in David? Away to your tents Israel! Now look after your own house, David" (1 Kings 12,16).

The Jews’ establishment of a kingdom did not solve anything; it even worsened the situation between them and envenomed their relation with the neighbouring people. The kings made serious errors, abuses even. Samuel’s warnings against them were justified by their behaviour that will go from evil to worse, as the books of Kings reveal it. Samuel’s words addressed to the community in 1 Samuel 8,10-18 were fulfilled: "... When that day comes, you will cry aloud
2.7.5.9 The census of the people (2 Samuel 24,1-9)

David’s census of the people is regarded as an impiety, because it meant putting confidence in oneself rather than in God, who is able to increase the population by looking over its wellbeing. The mentality of the time related any initiative to God. It is thus Him who provoked David against the Israelis and pushed him to count them. But the first book of Chronicles, written five centuries later, rectifies while specifying: "Satan took his stand against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel" (1 Chronicles 21,1). Was it then God or Satan who had inspired David? Or wasn’t it a simple desire of David who hoped to see the number of the fighters of Judah higher than that of Israel, his enemy? However this census disappointed the king: "David’s heart misgave him for having taken a census of the people" (2 Samuel 24,10). Why? Because the number of the fighters of Israel exceeded that of the fighters of Judah at David’s service: 800,000 against 500,000 according to 2 Samuel 24,29, however 1,100,000 against 470,000 only according to 1 Chronicles 21,5 which adds still: 'Joab had found the king’s command so distasteful that he did not include Levi and Benjamin" (1 Chronicles 21,6). Something to make the king’s heart tremble in front of too many enemies... without counting the quarrelsome tribes of Levi and Benjamin...not included in the census!

Which of the two censuses are we to believe? Where is the historical truth? Did God inspire those two different texts? That is another example requiring a critical spirit and a proper judgement. This text written after David’s disappointment, interprets the census as a curse.

This episode enables us to understand better why all the decisions made by Moses and others were considered, often mistakenly, as coming from God. It took time and especially the Light of Jesus-Christ to distinguish what was really inspired by God in the Scriptures. We understand why Jesus had said to those who rejected him: "You are from your father, the devil, and you prefer to do what your father wants" (John 8,44). This means that the refusal to recognise Jesus as the Messiah is never inspired by God, but by the devil (meditate 1 Corinthians 12,3).

2.8 Lesson 8 - 1 & 2 Kings - 1 & 2 Chronicles - Ezra - Nehemiah - Tobit - Judith - Esther - 1 & 2 Maccabees

2.8.1 The first book of the Kings

Read this book entirely then the points I refer you too:

Solomon king: David chose Solomon as successor before dying, thus putting an end to the intrigues concerning the succession to the throne. The royalty returned to Adonias, the eldest (1 Kings 2,15-22).

Joab takes refuge at the Temple and seizes the horns of the altar; nevertheless, he was killed on Solomon’s order for taking side with Adonias (1 Kings 2,28-34). The corners of the altar of the sacrifices were in the shape of horns so that the animals’ blood, shed in sacrifice, would run through (Exodus 27,2). Those who used to take refuge at the Temple, and seized the horns of the altar, could not be captured and killed on the spot (attitude of Adonias 1 Kings 1,50-53). This custom was practiced for a long time among the Christians, especially in Europe, where criminals, sometimes, used to find refuge in the churches without risking being caught by the police for as long as they were in there.

Construction of the Temple: 480 years after the exit of Egypt (about 960 B.C), Solomon
The biblical course

Altar

The Solomon's Temple

built the Temple made out of Cedar wood and gold. The Arch (1 Kings 6 to 8) was transferred therein. This Temple of Solomon, is known as the 'First Temple' of Jerusalem. It was destroyed about 400 years later by Nebuchadnezzar (in 586 B.C. see 2 Kings 25) The "Second Temple" will be built in 515 B.C.

The two columns of the Temple: at the entry of the Temple, Solomon made two columns: "Yakin" ('absolute knowledge', like in Arabic 'yaqin' which also means this), and 'Boaz' ('Strength'; perhaps similar to Arabic 'foulaz' which means 'steel') (1 Kings 7.21). I emphasize this fact because it is important in the "mysticism" of certain esoteric brotherhoods such as the Freemasonry and the Rosicrucians who have a cult for the "Gnosis", which means "Knowledge", refering to the name of one of the 2 columns, symbol of the Temple the Jews want to build in Jerusalem.

The Queen of Sheba (Ethiopia: 1 Kings 10.1-13): the visit of this queen is important because Jesus referred to her later while speaking to the Jews who refused to believe in Him. He told them: "On Judment Day, the Queen of the South (who is not Jewish, the Queen of Ethiopia, South of Palestine, in Africa) will appear to condemn this generation (of Jews) because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and there is here (among you) greater more than Solomon (and you refuse to listen to Him)" (Matthew 12,42).

666 gold talents: (1 Kings 10,14): "The weight of gold received annually by Salomon
amounted to six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold". Thus, this figure represents Solomon’s empire in all its power and splendor. The modern Jews dream about establishing such a kingdom. Solomon is their example and the ideal of the Zionist Messiah they are waiting for in order to widen their borders from the Nile to the Euphrates. This Zionist danger is a threat for the whole humanity. Therefore, in the Book of Revelation by St John, this number was prophesied as the symbol of the 'Beast' whose "human number is 666", referring to the weight of the gold King Solomon received yearly in his vaults (Revelation 13,18).

Disloyalty of Solomon: Solomon loved God... but loved also 'a lot of foreign women', 1000 all together... who "diverted his heart towards other gods. He did what displeases Yahweh... and Yahweh was irritated against Solomon and told him: 'I shall tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants... I shall leave your son one tribe (Judah)...' (1 Kings 11,1-13). This predicted the schism, the split between Israel and Judah announced by God.

Jeroboam, a northerner at the service of Solomon, revolts because of the taxes required by Solomon from the northerners (1 Kings 12,4). The prophet Ahiyya announces to Jeroboam that he will be a king on 10 tribes, but that God, as He Himself had announced it to Solomon, will leave only one tribe to the dynasty of David, 'so that my servant David', said God, 'may always have a lamp in my presence in Jerusalem' (1 Kings 11,29-36). This 'Lamp' was to be used for the arrival of the Messiah of the line of David. This is the reason why the kingdom of Judea will be governed by a stable dynasty until the Babylonian invasion, while the kingdom of the North will be marked by revolts, a king dethroning another by assassination, without a permanent dynasty.

The schism (1 Kings 12): The separation between the two parties is the sign of failure of the attempt to establish an Israeli kingdom. It took place around 930 B.C, only 100 years after it had started with Saul.

Roboam, son of Solomon, was crowned king at Sichem, in the North. Then, the northern tribes told him: 'Your father laid a cruel yoke on us; if you will lighten your father’s cruel slavery, that heavy yoke he imposed on us, we are willing to serve you.' (1 Kings 12,1-4). Roboam answered foolishly: 'My father made your yoke heavy, I shall make it heavier still" (1 Kings 12,14). This was not 'an intervention of Yahweh' explain the scribes, but rather a 'non intervention', an abandonment, God having given up Roboam to his madness since God never wished an Israeli kingdom. The reaction of the Israelis was immediate: it is the schism: "What share have we in David... etc" (1 Kings 12,16). 'And Israel remained in rebellion against the House of Judah from that day to this" (1 Kings 12,19). This text was therefore written by scribes after the schism.

The tribes of the North took the name of Israel because, being most numerous, they represented the Patriarch Jacob, father of the 12 tribes, called 'Israel' by God (Genesis 32,29). Judah kept its name because the Messiah emanates from it. The founders of the current State of Israel, created in 1948, hesitated between the names of Israel and that of Judah. They ended up choosing 'Israel', a famous biblical name.

The schism had a political aspect and another religious one:

The political schism resulted in the fact that the Israelis chose Jeroboam for king of the North, whereas the Judeans kept Roboam as king of the South. The religious schism was the consequence of the political split: 'Jeroboam thought to himself: '...If this people continue to go up to the Temple of Yahweh in Jerusalem (in the South) to offer sacrifices, the people’s heart will return back again to their lord Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they will put me to death...' So he made two golden calves and told the people: "You have been going up to Jerusalem long enough. Here is your God Israel, who brought you out of Egypt"... He set up shrines on the high places and appointed priests from ordinary families who were not of levitical descent and himself went up to the altar to burn the sacrifice for the golden calves...' (1 Kings 12,26-33). Thus, Jeroboam became the example of impiety. He reigned from 931-910 B.C.

The result of the request of a king to Samuel (1 Samuel 8) was that there were two kingdoms
and two sanctuaries. One after the other they will be both destroyed, kingdoms and sanctuaries: those of the North in 721 B.C., 210 years after Jeroboam, and those of the South in 586 B.C., 140 years later. The kingdom of the South, will have lasted only 450 years approximately.

The Kings of the North and of the South were both infidels, making 'what is displeasing to Yahweh' according to the biblical expression (1 Kings 16,30).

2.8.1.1 The prophet Elijah

The worst of Israel's kings, in the North, was Ahab. He took for wife a Sidonian, Jezebel, and adored her god Baal, an idol (1 Kings 16,29-33). The prophet Elijah suddenly appears to prophesize against him. Elijah himself is from the north, from Tishbe. To note that Elijah prophesies a dryness as a punishment: "Neither dew nor rain" (1 Kings 17,1). This lasted three years and six months: one year, two years and a half year (1 Kings 18,1 / also see James 5,17). This period is often represented by the expression 'a time, two times and half a time'. It became symbolic and, to punish the irreligious people of the end of time, the two apocalyptic witnesses will also be able, but in another manner, to do like Elijah did, "to lock up (symbolically) the sky so that it does not rain as long as they are prophesying" (Revelation 11,6). Therefore, the spirit of Elijah, appears at the end of times... but few will understand how.

Notice that God appeared to Elijah gently, by "the noise of a light breeze, neither in the hurricane, nor in the earthquake" (1 Kings 19,9-12).

Elijah had to flee to Sarepta, in Lebanon (current Sarafand) to a non-Jewish woman (1 Kings 17,7-24). Jesus presents this fact like an example to follow, meaning that it is not necessary to be a Jew to please God and to protect his prophets. "When they (the Jews) heard this, every one in the synagogue was enraged" against Jesus (Luke 4,25-30). Elijah chose Elisha, son of Shaphat, for successor (1 Kings 19,19-21).

The vineyard of Naboth (1 Kings 21,1-29) Keep this story in mind. It demonstrates the cruelty of Ahab and Jezebel and concretizes the warnings of Samuel, formerly, against the kings (1 Samuel 8,10-20). The misfortune announced by God upon the house of Ahab will be carried out later by the massacre of the whole family (2 Kings 9,6-10).

The prophet Micaiah The history of this prophet is worthy of interest. We distinguish here between the false prophets and the true prophets: 400 so-called 'prophets' - all false ones - agree to announce to the two Jewish kings the triumph. Only one, Micaiah, objects against them all. The true prophet is so often alone against all the false ones. Admire the ironic attitude of Micaiah: "Go ahead! Success is sure...", when he knew well that the king will fail (1 Kings 22,15). The king understood the irony since he replied: 'How often must I put you on oath to tell me nothing but the truth in the Name of Yahweh?'. Then, Micaiah spoke out again frankly: 'I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep without a shepherd...' (1 Kings 22,17). Men want to know the truth, but if it is not appropriate for them, they refuse it at their own cost...

In the past, there were in Palestine prophetic Jewish institutes that taught how to become prophets, like the Christian seminaries teach how to become priests. But true prophets do not need these schools and are chosen by God outside of these human institutes, as it was the case of all the biblical prophets.

Compare the arrogance of the false prophet Sedecias who dared to strike Micaiah, with the resigned attitude of this latter. One recognizes the false prophets by their arrogance, "every tree can be told by its own fruit" says Jesus (Luke 6,43-45). The attitude of Micaiah (1 Kings 22,24-25) is like that of Jesus towards the servant of the great priest who had slapped him (John 18,22-23).
Main sites of the monarchical time
A true prophet does not need to consult God with Urim and Tummim as the Levites priests used to do. Fortunately, this habit does not officially exist any more. Only unbalanced ones practice it. When God chooses a prophet, He appears to him. To consult the Lord, one does not need to draw with "heads or tales" or use the Jewish "Urim-Tummim" to obtain God’s good council. God, good Father as He is, always answers his true believers who can seize His language in their hearts (read Matthew 7,7-11 / 1 John 3,21-22). Also compare the attitude of the false prophets who, to consult God, abandon themselves "to a state of ecstasy" (kinds of incantations and euphoric gestures which make them be delirious: see 1 Samuel 10,5), with the sobriety of Micaiah who did not need all this scenery to contact God and reveal that the Syrians would triumph over the Jews.

This Micaiah, from the North, is not the Micah, a Judean from the south, and whose book is among the prophetic books, and lived 150 years later.

In 1 Kings, two historical points are to be retained:

- The construction (useless) of the first Temple by Solomon,
- The schism due to the tension between Jews. This means the bankruptcy of the Israeli royalty as predicted by God and his prophets.

2.8.2 The second book of the Kings

This book is important from the historical point of view; it tells the main event which marked the history of the Israeli 'nation': the deportation to Assyria and Babylon. It is the realization of the threat of Moses warning the Jews that, in case of infidelity, they "will be torn off from the country where they will enter and make their own" (Deuteronomy 28,62-63). The prophets whom you will meet in the prophetic books (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc) had also predicted this event as a punishment.

Read this book with great attention, without stressing on remembering the names of all the kings you will meet. Then read my explanations.

2.8.2.1 Elijah is taken up to Heaven

Elijah is the second biblical character who escapes physical death. The first was Enoch (Genesis 5,24). Therefore, we will never find on earth a tomb of Elijah (2 Kings 2,11-18).

Elisha succeeds Elijah spiritually. Note with what strength and contempt he speaks to Jehoram, the Israeli king of the North, and his desire to consult God on the sound of the soft music of the lyre (2 Kings 3,14-15). No Urim-Tummim nor deliria. The music raises the soul when it is harmonious. The satanic plan applied by the agents of the "Beast of the Revelation", in this end of the times, aims at moving believers away from God by an excited, cacophonous music, of which the noisy satanic rhythms literally destroy the human soul. David, also, praised God with the sound of music; all his psalms are spiritual anthems praising the Lord.

Elishah, like Elijah, made miracles: miraculous production of oil (2 Kings 4,1-7), resurrection of a dead child (2 Kings 4,33-37): notice the number 7 symbol of perfection. The cure of the Syrian officer (2 Kings 5,14) is reported by Jesus to confuse the racist Jews (Luke 4,27). Also note number 7 (2 Kings 5,10). This washing in the Jordan symbolizes the baptism.

An important fact of bilocation: Elishah, being far away, is nevertheless present: he saw his servant, Gehazi, swindling Naaman’s money (2 Kings 5,20-27).

Finally, here is an important point about Elijah to understand what Jesus said about him. God spoke to the prophet Malachi: "Look, I shall send you the prophet Elijah before the great and awesome Day of Yahweh comes. He will reconcile parents to their children and children to their parents" (Malachi 3,23-24). The Jews expected to see Elijah coming in person before the advent of the Messiah. However, the Apostles saw Elijah appearing with Moses after the
arrival of Jesus and they were astonished. Jesus explained to them that this prophecy was
about John the Baptist (Matthew 17,1-13). In fact, when Gabriel announced to Zechariah the
birth of John, he said to him, referring to Malachi’s prophecy: "With the spirit and power of
Elijah he (John the Baptist) will go before him (Jesus) to reconcile fathers to their children...
preparing for the Lord a people fit for him" (Luke 1,17). Thus, it was not about Elijah himself
the prophet Malachi spoke about, but that he will precede the Messiah with "the spirit" of
Elijah, this same spirit which, before, 'had rested on Elishah' (2 Kings 2,15). Elijah appeared
during the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17) to confirm that the prophecy of Malachi had
been completed with John the Baptist (see Matthew 11,10). Compare the strength of Elijah
against Ahab and Jezebel with that of John the Baptist against Herod and Herodiad (Matthew
14,3-4). It is the same spirit which speaks with force and prophesies with courage against the
great and the powerful unjust leaders of this world. This spirit of testimony against irreligious
people reappears in the Book of Revelation of John at the end of times of Jesus Christ’s enemies
(Revelation 10,11).

With Elijah and Elishah we are around the year 850 B.C. We will move on to chapter 17 of
2K, making a 120 year jump to see the two deportations: the first, the one of the North: Israel
(to Assyria) by the Assyrians in 721 B.C., followed by that of the South: Judah (to Babylon)
by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

2.8.2.2 Deportation of the North (2 Kings chapters 17 to 19)

In 721 B.C. (date to be retained) Sargon II 'The king of Assyria invaded the whole country
(Israel) and, coming to Samaria, laid siege to it... he captured Samaria and deported the
Israelites to Assyria... This happened because the Israelites had sinned against Yahweh...
They cast themselves metal idols, the two golden calves... They caused their sons and daughters to
pass through the fire of sacrifice (holocaust for the idols)..." (2 Kings 17,5-17).

Not only the Israelites were deported, but in their place Sargon "brought people from Baby-
lon... and settled them in the towns of Samaria" (2 Kings 17,24). This presence of strangers
from abroad will be the cause of increasing dissension between the Jews of Judea and the Samar-
itans who, since then, were despised by the southern Judeans who never considered them as
authentic Jews. When Jesus, eight centuries after this deportation, asked a Samaritan woman
to drink, she answered: 'You are a Jew! How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, to drink?'
The Gospel explains that "the Jews, indeed, do not have relations with the Samaritans" (John
4,7-9).

The prophet Isaiah (a Judean) is contemporary of this deportation. Sennacherib, the son
and the successor of Sargon, "advanced on all the fortified towns of Judea and captured them" (2
Kings 18,13). Even Jerusalem was threatened (2 Kings 18,17) and Hezekiah, the king of Judea,
asked for Egypt’s help (2 Kings 18,21-24). In front of the persistent threats, Hezekiah asked
the advice of the prophet Isaiah who reassured him (2 Kings 19,1-7) by his prophecy against
Sennacherib, the scornful (2 Kings 19,20-31). He declared that he 'will not enter Jerusalem" (2
Kings 19,32-34). However, it will be Babylon - 150 years later -which will invade Judea, as had
prophesied Isaiah to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20,12-19). This is the first mention of the Babylonian
empire succeeding to the Assyrian empire after destroying it in the battle of Carchemish in 609
B.C. (mentioned in 2 Chronicles 35,20).

This prophet Isaiah is the one whose book is found among the prophetic books in the Bible.
In his book, we find the words of curse he had pronounced against the Judeans, but that the
scribes of 2 Kings did not want to relate, reporting only what flatters the Judeans. Isaiah had
announced the deportation of the South because of the many crimes of the Judeans: 'Disaster,
sinful nation, people weighed down with guilt, race of wrong-doers, perverted children!... Your
country a desolation, your towns burnt down, your soil, foreigners lay it waste before your eyes,
a desolation like devastation by foreigners" (Isaiah 1,4-7). This meant the Babylonian invasion
Chronology of the Biblical Kings (2 Kings 14 to 25)

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already predicted by Isaiah to Hezekiah (2 Kings 20,12-19).

All the prophets mentioned in the prophetic books of the Bible existed as from this period and until approximately 350 years later, including the invasion of the South (Judea) by the Babylonians, of which the contemporary prophet is Jeremiah who also had prophesied it.

2.8.2.3 Deportation of the South (2 Kings 24,10 - 25,21)

King Josiah made religious reforms to avoid the punishment. He made repairs to the Temple and withdrew from it the statues of Baal (2 Kings 22,3-7). Notice that within the Temple there was the "sacred pole (phallus)" as well as the sacred prostitutes (2 Kings 23,4-7). Idolatry and sacrifices of children were also practiced (2 Kings 23,8-14). The religious reforms of Josiah extended to the Temple of Samaria, the old kingdom of the North (2 Kings 23,15).

Despite all the reforms of Josiah, he lost the battle and was killed by the army of the Pharaoh Neko in Megiddo (609 B.C.). The prophets Zephaniah, Nahum and Habakkuk are contemporary of this period. In order to understand their books, you must place them in their time be informed about the events they prophesied.

The battle of Megiddo (2 Kings 23,29-30), reported so briefly by the scribes (obviously complexed and obstructed by the defeat of this king, pious as he was...), must be retained and well understood. The war had burst between the weak Assyria and powerful Babylonia which attacked it. Egypt wanted to help the Assyrians. Josiah tried to prevent the Pharaoh from helping the Assyrians. He wanted their defeat, because they were occupying the North of the country (Samaria) and presented a danger to the Judeans. He did not think that the Babylonians were to be feared. He was mistaken. Josiah and the Israelis believed they had capacity to overcome the army of the Pharaoh, God being with them because of Josiah’s religious reforms. But it was not the case. The defeat of Megiddo demoralized the Judeans and Jeremiah composed a lamentation on this subject. This battle is better described in 2 Chronicles 35,25. Weakened, Judea will become an easy prey to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar.

In 586 B.C, the Babylonians entered into Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple (the 1st Temple built by Solomon). The most important Judeans were deported with the 2 columns of the Temple (2 Kings 25,11-16), 135 years after the deportation of the Israelis to Assyria, as predicted by Isaiah (2 Kings 20,16-18 / Isaiah 5,13/ Isaiah 39,1-8).

Jeremiah prophesied that this exile was to last 70 years: this famous prophecy is to be retained (2 Chronicles 36,21 / Jeremiah 25,11). To note that the deportation took place in two stages: a first deportation in 598 B.C. (2 Kings 24,10-16), followed by a second, eleven years later (2 Kings 25,1-21). The Temple was destroyed at the time of the second deportation (587 - 586 B.C).

2.8.3 The Books of the Chronicles

These two books were written after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile which lasted 70 years, as prophesied by Jeremiah. Back in Palestine, the scribes wrote a summary of all the history which preceded this return from Adam to the edict by Cyrus, the king of Persia, who destroyed the Babylonian empire. Cyrus allowed all the exiled populations to return to their own countries. These exiled were not only the Jews, but also other peoples of the area deported by Nabuchadnezzar. Each group could return to its land of origin and rebuild its temple. This historical summary is contained in the two books of the "Chronicles", a word which means "historical succession of the events".

Thus, you will find in 1 & 2 Chronicles the essence of what was told. Read until chapter
33 of the second book. The 3 final chapters (2 Chronicles 34 / 35 / 36) deserve to be read carefully. Keep in mind what follows:

### 2.8.3.1 The prophetess Hulda

She announced the destruction of Judah in spite of Josiah’s reforms. But, because this king was pious, he will die before this disaster: Thus, "you will not see the great disaster that I am going to bring on this place and on the people who live in it" (2 Chronicles 34,22-28 / 2 Kings 22,14-20).

### 2.8.3.2 Megiddo and Karkemish

2 Chronicles 35,19-25 tells us about these battles with more details than 2 Kings 23,29-30 which only speaks very briefly about Megiddo, revealing nothing about Karkemish, probably because this battle had not yet taken place (it happened in 605 B.C., 4 years after Megiddo) or because the writer had not seized its importance for the Jews.

On the other hand, the writer (or writers) of the books of Chronicles had time to reflect until the return from exile, and to establish the link between the events which had happened. This is why the battle of Karkemish is mentioned in 2 Chronicles. It is important, because it puts an end to the Assyrian empire and confirms the Babylonian empire by the triumph of Nabuchadnezzar on Neko in 605 B.C. It was the Assyrians’ last chance. They lost it in spite of the assistance that the Egyptian army of the Pharaoh Neko had brought to them.

For a better understanding, I must speak about another battle which preceded Karkemish, the battle of Niniveh in 612 B.C. Niniveh was the capital of Assyria on the east bank of the Tiger river. It had been invaded and destroyed by the Babylonian king Nabopolassar, father of Nabuchadnezzar, in 612 B.C. The Assyrian king Assourbanipal had died, leaving his country weakened. The Assyrians recurred to Egypt, asking for help to free their land and reconquer Niniveh. They were organized with Neko’s army at Karkemish, but were overcome definitively by the Babylonians in 605 B.C., 7 years after the fall of Niniveh.

The prophet Nahum is contemporary of these events and had announced the fall of Niniveh. His book is devoted to this defeat of the Assyrians whom he did not like for having invaded Samaria and were threatening Judea: 'From you (Assyria) has emerged someone plotting evil against Yahweh' (Nahum 1,11). Nahum, on behalf of God, announces: "Disaster to the city of blood (Niniveh), packed throughout with lies, where plundering has no end' (Nahum 3,1)... "The destroyer (Nabuchadnezzar) has advanced on you" (Nahum 2,2).

The Jews hoped a lot of good for them after the fall of Niniveh. On the contrary, it was the drama of Megiddo. The prophet Habakkuk hoped to see the delivery of Judea and was delighted with the idea to see the fall of the Assyrians under the "blows" of the Chaldaeans (Babylonians): "......For I am doing something in your own days which you will not believe...For look, I am stirring up the Chaldaeans, that fierce and fiery nation who march miles across country to seize the homes of others (of the Assyrians)" (Habakkuk 1,5-10). However, Habakkuk did not suspect that Chaldaeans were also to seize Judea and to destroy the Temple of Jerusalem. The prophet Zephaniah was also delighted by the destruction of Niniveh and announced that God "will raise his hand against the north and bring Assyria down in ruins, He will make Nineveh a waste, as dry as a desert..." (Zephaniah 2,13). This, in fact, happened in 612 B.C.

It is necessary to retain these 4 battles in order to understand the prophets later on:

- **612: Niniveh**: First defeat of the Assyrians. Neko then decided to help them.
- **609: Megiddo**: Josiah tries to prevent Neko, but he was vanquished and killed.
- **605: Karkemish**: Defeat of the Assyrians and Neko. End of the Assyrian empire.
2.8 - Lesson 8 - 1 & 2 Kings - 1 & 2 Chronicles - Ezra - Nehemiah - Tobit - Judith - Esther - 1 & 2 Maccabees

The 4 battles to be remembered

- **586: Jerusalem**: The Babylonians invade Jerusalem and destroy the Temple.

70 years of exile announced by Jeremiah: Retain this prophecy (2 Chronicles 36,21) which will be useful to understand the prophecies of Daniel (Daniel 9,1-2 and 9,24).

The edict of Cyrus (2 Chronicles 36,22-23) is to be retained. It is by this edict that begins the book of Ezra (Ezra 1,1-4). This book, with that of Nehemiah and of the Chronicles, was written after the return of exile to tell the history of the return of the Jews from Babylon, of the rebuilding of the Temple (Ezra) and the wall which surrounded the town of Jerusalem (Nehemiah).

**2.8.4 The book of Ezra**

This book relates the stages and difficulties of rebuilding the Temple "on its old site, despite their fear of the people of the country (Palestinians and Samaritans)" (Ezra 3,3). Read it and return to my explanations.

The edict of Cyrus, king of Persia (Iran), inaugurates the book (Ezra 1,1-4). This edict may be compared to the recent promise of Balfour, the British Foreign Minister who, in 1917, promised a homeland for the Jews in Palestine without, however, allowing the rebuilding of the third Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The second Temple was rebuilt towards 515 B.C, with Ezra, and was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Ezra 2,2) both of them figure on the list of the Zionists who returned from exile; some Jews preferred to remain in Babylon. Zerubbabel is the son of Shealtiel, of the royal family, and heir to the throne of David, hence his importance. Matthew mentions him in his Gospel as an ancestor of the Messiah (Matthew 1,12). Joshua was a priest. Both, Zerubbabel and Joshua, encouraged the rebuilding of the Temple. This is why these two persons are important and have a spiritual symbolic value being two witnesses of the rebuilding of the second Temple of Jerusalem.

The Samaritans wanted to contribute in restorating the Temple, but, being from the North, they were not considered Jews by the Judeans and were regarded rather as "enemies of Judah and Benjamin", the two tribes of the South (Ezra 4,1-3). Therefore, their assistance was rejected.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah, whose writings are among the prophetic books, are of this time (Ezra 5,1). They stressed on the necessity of rebuilding the Temple. You can already
read the small book of Haggai. It is made of only two chapters. Then, you will be in the
environment to understand it. Read also chapter 4 of Zechariah in which he reveals his vision
of the two olive-trees, identifying them to Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the builders of the second
Temple. The prophetic Book of St John’s Revelation takes this vision again to reveal that these
two "olive-trees" are the two apocalyptic witnesses whose mission is to build up the spiritual
Temple at the end of times (Revelation 11,3-4). The material Temple, as we all know, never
interested the Lord who dwells in the hearts of his disciples (1 Corinthians 6,19).

The second Temple, more modest than the first one which was of cedar wood and gold,
disappointed "many of the older priests...who had seen (the splendor of) the first Temple (of
Solomon destroyed before their eyes by Nabuchadnezzar), wept very loudly when the (poor)
foundations of this one were laid before their eyes. But many others shouted aloud for joy..." at
the sight of this sanctuary. (Ezra 3,12). It was finished in 515 B.C.

This second Temple, neglected during centuries and profaned (see 1 Maccabees 1,41-47),
was enlarged and embellished by king Herod. It took 46 years of work to achieve it. It is this
Temple Jesus knew and of which He had prophesied the destruction (John 2,13-21 / Matthew
24,1-2)

*Racism of Ezra*: Notice the zionist mentality revealed by Ezra 9,12. Ezra requires of the
Jews not "to worry about the peace of the people of the country (the Palestinians) nor of their
happiness etc...". Compare that with the lesson that Jesus gave the Jews: "Love your enemies
(the non-Jews considered always as enemies by the Jews)... Treat others as you would like
people treat you..." (Luke 6,27-35).

The saved "Remnant": (Ezra 9,8). This topic of the 'small remnant" of Jews saved after
the fall of the Israeli kingdom is common in the biblical-prophetic language. God strikes the
whole Jewish people, but a remnant remains to continue the spiritual mission of the Israelites
(Isaiah 4,3 / 10,20-22 / Romans 9,27). The ultimate purpose of this human remnant, its sacred
mission, is the reception of the Messiah at the time of his Advent. It is a small number indeed,
a small remainder which followed and supported Jesus. The great number persecuted Him.

2.8.5  The book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah is a notable of the Jewish families which did not return from exile. He was in
Susa (South of Iran) and had access to the king, being in charge of the royal wines (Nehemiah
2,1). The story occurs in 445 B.C, more than sixty years after the return from exile and the
edict of Cyrus. The second Temple was already built, but the lamentable situation of the Jews
in Palestine and the bad state of the wall of Jerusalem "all in breaches and its doors burnt"
(after the passage of Nabuchadnezzar), saddened Nehemiah who decided to help "the saved
(small) remainder of the captivity" (Nehemiah 1,1-4) and to rebuild the Wall (Nehemiah 2,7-8).

This book tells us about the history of the return of Nehemiah to Palestine, with the support
of the Persian king Artaxerxes, with the aim of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Read it.

2.8.6  The Books of Toby, Judith and Esther

These books inform us about certain personal facts during the exile. They are easy to read.
Toby and Judith are not found in the Hebrew Bible.

2.8.7  The First and Second books of the Maccabees

The two books of the Maccabees report partially the most important historical events –
biblically important - of the two empires which followed the Persian Empire, namely the Greek
Empire and the Roman Empire.

You know the history of the Israeli community under the three empires: Assyrian (de-
portation of North), Babylonian (deportation of the South and destruction of the temple of
Jerusalem) and Persian (return from exile and reconstruction of the second Temple). The last news was given to us by the book of Nehemiah with the rebuilding of the enclosing walls of Jerusalem about the year 445-450 B.C. The books of the Maccabees give us information on the events which took place in Palestine and in the Middle East as from the year 175 B.C, until the year 135 B.C, a period of approximately 40 years. The Bible leaves us without news of what occurred between 450 B.C and 175 B.C, a period of approximately 275 years.

These two books are not found in the Hebrew Bible. They both tell approximately the same events, the 2 Maccabees is almost a repetition of 1 Maccabees, and brings back the history of the resistance of the Jews to the Greek empire, under the leadership of the family of Judah Maccabee, whence the name of the two books. The main Greek king was Antiochus Epiphanes, whose name you must remember.

Read the two books of Maccabees then my explanations.

2.8.7.1 1 Maccabees

*Alexander the Great*: The book starts by mentioning Alexander the Great, son of Philip who 'beat Darius, king of the Persians and Medes and became king in his place' (1 Maccabees 1,1). This victory of Alexander over "Darius king of the Persians and Medes", in the battle of Abeles (Iraq) in 331 B.C, put an end to the Persian-Medes empire which will have lasted approximately 200 years. With Alexander started the Greek empire.

*Antiochus Epiphanes*: He is from the successors of Alexander, "a root of sin: Antiochus Epiphane... He became king the year 137 of the royalty of the Greeks", which corresponds to the year 175 B.C (1 Maccabees 1,10). He wanted to spread the Greek culture among the Jews and "a number of the (jewish) people eagerly approached the king, who authorised them to practise the gentiles’observance. So they built a gymnasium... leaving their sons uncircumcised... etc' (1 Maccabees 1,13-15). A great number of Jews adopted the Greek way of life (1 Maccabees 1,43-52).

"The Abomination of desolation": Antiochus Epiphanes profaned the Temple and placed "the Abomination of desolation" - the statue of Zeus - therein (1 Maccabees 1,54). Daniel the prophet had foreseen this "Abomination" approximately 400 years before, prophesying that 'on the wing of the Temple will be placed the Abomination of desolation" (Daniel 9,27 / Matthew 24,15). At the time of the Maccabees, the Jews believed that this Abomination was the Zeus idol in the Temple. But, speaking about the end of time, Jesus mentioned this prophecy of Daniel, letting us understand that it had not been achieved under Antiochus Epiphane, but that it will be accomplished at the end of times, when the subjects of the Antichrist will occupy Jerusalem and mislead many disciples of Jesus (Matthew 24,15). Towards the end of the lifetime of Antiochus Epiphanie, the Jews destroyed this 'Abomination" (1 Maccabees 6,6-7).

*King Alexander Balas*, a Pagan, instituted Jonathan as Great priest of the Jews. This latter accepted! However, he should have refused to be instituted by a Pagan who ignored God. This is how was practiced the "religious" cult... (1 Maccabees 10,15-21).

*Alliance of the Jews with the Romans* (1 Maccabees 8,1-31 / 12,1-23 / 14,16-24 / 15,15-21). It is the beginning of the Roman empire which will be growing. It is the habit of the Zionists to be allies with a powerful nation so that they can be established in Palestine as an Israeli nation. During the XXth century, they first allied with England, then with the United States of America for the same purpose.

2.8.7.2 2 Maccabees

The 2 Maccabees is not the continuation of the first. It speaks about the same events contained in the first, but stops at the defeat of Nikanor. This represents about only fifteen years of history, the contents of the chapters 1 to 7 of the first book of the Maccabees in which no mention is made of the Romans.
Remember the five empires which followed each other:

1. Assyrian,
2. Babylonian,
3. Persian - Medes,
4. Greek,
5. Roman.

By knowing them, you will understand the prophecies better, such as for example, that of Daniel announcing to Nabuchodonosor, the Babylonian king, that the Messiah was to appear three empires after his own Babylonian one (Daniel 2, 36-45). This is the Roman Empire under which Jesus effectively was born.
2.8.8 Recommendation

We recommend the book "THE BIBLE UNEARTHED", the new revelations of Archaeology by the 2 Israeli archaeologists: Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, 2001. Originally published by 'The Free Pess', A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc. (New York, USA). These two archaeologists scientifically show the non historical base of the alleged size of the Israeli and Judean kingdoms, as well as of the Temple of Jerusalem.

2.9 Lesson 9 - The 7 Books of Wisdom

2.9.1 The book of Job

First read my explanations, then the book of Job.

Formerly, and until this day, many believe that wealth, good health and children are due to God’s blessing and that the opposite results from the curse of God on the sinner. Any misfortune is interpreted as a divine punishment or curse.

However, Job is a righteous man and good believer, rich, healthy and wealthy, blessed with numerous children. Suddenly, in an avalanche of misfortunes, he lost his goods and his children, but without revolting against God: 'Naked I came from my mother’s womb, naked I shall return again. Yahweh gave, Yahweh has taken back! Blessed be the name of Yahweh!' In all this misfortune, Job did not sin and did not reproach God" (Job 1,20-22).

These misfortunes are not due, as it was thought, to Job’s sins, but to the devil who wanted to strike him in order to move him away from God by cursing Him. This is the great teaching of this book: God allows Satan to test persons who are righteous and faithful to God in order to confuse the devils who did not persevere in the disinterested love of God. It is like a man confident and sure of the love of his faithful wife, who allows an intriguer to court her in order to confuse him by her evident faithfulness.

Indeed, the Bible says that the devil asks for God’s authorisation to test Job, concluding: "I warrant you, he will curse you to your face! –Very well! Yahweh said to Satan, all he has is in your power. But keep your hands off his person” (Job 1,11-12). (The word 'Satan' means 'enemy', the devil being the enemy of mankind).

Job, having been admirably faithful after the test, God said to Satan: "... (Job is) a sound and honest man who fears God and shuns evil... He persists in his integrity still; you achieved nothing by provoking me to ruin him”; Satan counterattacked replying: "but stretch out your hand and lay a finger on his bone and flesh; I warrant you that he will curse you to your face!’ Very well! Yahweh answered Satan, 'he is in your power. But spare his life” (Job 2,3-6).

The devil then struck Job "with malignant ulcers from the sole of his foot to the top of his head” (Job 2,7). His wife pushed him to curse God, but Job put her back in her place: 'That is how a fool of a woman talks! If we take happiness from God’s hand, must we not take sorrow too? And in all this misfortune Job uttered no sinful word' (Job 2,9-10).

Thus, Job triumphed in the tests even in his flesh.

Three friends of Job visit him in his misfortune in order to speak to him and invite him to recognize that he sinned since he deserved all these misfortunes. Their remarks are reported poetically. Each one, in his turn, tries to convince him to be a sinner since he deserved these punishments. Their tone is often ironic, even sarcastic and malicious. This only increased the sorrow of Job, as you will note it by reading the text. But Job was also smart and ironic in his answers and could reposition his interlocutors and confirm his innocence: "To one so weak what a great help you are, for the arm that is powerless, what a rescuer!! What excellent advice you give the unlearned...!”, replied Job ironically to one of the three men, adding: 'For whom are these words of yours intended, and whence comes that wit you are now displaying? (To imply that it is not the spirit of God)... Far from admitting that you are right (acknowledging that I
have sinned), I shall maintain my integrity to my dying day. Such was the constant attitude of Job (Job 26,1 - 27,5).

To one of these three friends who came to confuse Job by claiming to know the secrets of God and the reasons of his acting against him, God answers: "I burn with anger against you and your two friends, for not having spoken correctly about me as my servant Job" (Job 42,7). "And Yahweh restored Job's condition... and gave him double what he had before..." (Job 42,10-17)

Read this book by understanding its morality: God allows the just man to be tested. This aims at changing the minds of some believers whose mentality is similar to Job's friends. This story especially aims at preparing believers to understand the sufferings of the Messiah, Jesus, who was yet to come, the Just by excellence, who did not suffer for his sins, but because of the sins and multiple crimes of others who may be saved by believing in Him.

2.9.2 The book of Psalms

At this stage, it is not necessary to read the whole book. I will present to you some psalms, to which you will be able to refer to, as I present them to you.

This book is a collection of the most important psalms. A psalm is a biblical prayer sung on a musical instrument. The Christians call theirs 'canticles' or 'hymns' addressed to God, to Christ or to the Blessed Virgin.

The majority of the psalms were composed by David on various occasions. Their authors are often mentioned: "Psalm 3: Psalm of David. When he was fleeing from his son Absalom", etc... Certain psalms are of Solomon, (Psalm 72), of Asaph, (Psalms 73-83), of sons of Korah, (Psalm 84)... etc the authors of certain psalms are unknown.

There are, altogether, 150 psalms. The Greek Bible divides psalm 9 into two psalms, 9 and 10. This complicates somewhat the numeration starting from the psalm 11 which thus becomes numbered 11 (10), the (10) being the numeration in the Hebrew Bible. On the contrary, psalm 147 joins together two psalms 146 and 147. Thus, you will always find 150 psalms in all the Bibles.

A word now on the main psalms: the most important are the Messianic ones, i.e. those which speak about the Messiah to come. These are particularly the ones that I will present to you.

2.9.2.1 Psalm 2

This psalm presents the Messiah consacred king by God who also considers him as his son: "The kings of the earth take up position, princes plot together against Yahweh and His Anointed (the Messiah, 'Anointed' with divine perfume by God, as the kings of the earth were anointed by perfumed oil when being sacred): 'He who is enthroned in the heavens laughs, Yahweh makes a mockery of them, then in his anger rebukes them, in his rage he strikes them with terror. 'I Myself have anointed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.' I will proclaim the decree of Yahweh: He said to me (it is the Messiah who speaks by anticipation): "You are my son, today I have fathered you. Ask Me and I shall give you the nations as your birthright..."

The author of this Messianic psalm is unknown. The Messiah is announced therein as king of all nations, a universal kingdom given to him by God "as heritage". The devil tempted Jesus, promising to give him the political empire over the world (Matthew 4,8-10). Jesus refused because his Kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18,36). The power promised in this psalm to the Messiah must be spiritually understood, not politically as the devil presented it to Jesus.

Most of the Jews also wanted (and still want) to understand the royalty of the Messiah politically. This is why they resisted (and still resist) Jesus. They persecuted him and his apostles for not wanting an Israeli state. St Peter applies this psalm to Jesus and denounces "Herod and Pontius Pilate with the pagan nations and the peoples of Israel" to be this conspiracy..."
fomented by "the kings of the earth (who) take up position against the Lord and his Anointed (the Messiah, Jesus)", a conspiracy prophesied by this psalm (Acts 4,25-28).

The royalty of the Messiah cannot be political since God said: "I Myself have anointed my King on my holy Mountain". Therefore, the royalty in Israel, as we saw in 1 Samuel 8, was not wanted by God: it was even condemned by Him. It is indeed the spiritual kingdom that was meant in this psalm and which was established by Jesus, the Christ-King chosen by God to be the spiritual Sovereign of the whole world despite all those who resist him.

2.9.2.2 Psalm 22

The Messiah is described therein suffering, dying, but finally resurrecting. Jesus, on the cross, pronounced the beginning of this Messianic psalm to apply its prophecy to Himself and to confuse the Jews who saw in his crucifixion a sign of curse from God. The psalm starts with the same words pronounced by Jesus in hebrew: "Eli (My God)! Eli (My God)! Lema sabachthani (Why did you abandon me)?" (Matthew 27,46). Some do not understand the deep reasons for which Jesus pronounced these words; they interpret badly by believing that Jesus felt abandoned by God. The enemies of Jesus go very far by saying that, on the cross, Jesus understood that God cursed him by abandoning him. The Jews who crucified him thought that he was calling the prophet Eli for help (Matthew 27,49). The truth is that this last clamour of Jesus is prophetic; these last words are a light for those who want to see a prophetic accomplishment. Because they are the exact words of the psalm 22 to which Jesus, even dying, refers us to in order to confirm our faith in him. David, in this psalm, already saw the Messiah dying surrounded by enemies. Here is a short extract:

"My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?... A pack of dogs surrounds me, a gang of villains closing in on me, they perforate my hands and my feet and lay me down in the dust of death... They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing... (Psalm 22,17-19)... The whole wide world will remember and return to Yahweh (Psalm 22,28)... And my soul will live for Him (these words indicate the resurrection of Jesus), my race will serve Him... Such is His work " (Psalm 22,30-31).

This psalm cannot apply to David, its inspired author, who did not die surrounded by enemies, the hands and feet perforated.

This prophetic psalm is similar to chapter 53 of Isaiah which also predicts the sufferings, the death and the resurrection of the Messiah.

2.9.2.3 Psalm 110

This psalm introduces the Messiah to come as king and priest at the same time:

"Yahweh will stretch out from Zion the sceptre of your power (Psalm 110,2)... Yahweh has sworn an oath he will never retract: you are a priest for ever of the order of Melchizedek " (Psalm 110,4).

Neither the royalty of the Messiah nor his priesthood appeared as ever imagined or practised by the Jews. The Messianic royalty is not according to the political dynasty of David (which, moreover, was abolished with Nabuchadnezzar), and the messianic priesthood is absolutely not similar to that of Levi’s since it was prophesied 'according to the order of Melchisedech", not according to the order of Levi. This means a radical change of the Jewish cult, as Paul explains it in chapters 5 to 7 of his letter to the Hebrews. Jesus, by his sacrifice, put an end to the jewish sacrifices, priesthood and kingdom.

With the prophetic Book of Revalation of St John a new apocalyptic era opens for all the true and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. They will form "a kingdom of priests" (Revelation 1,6), as God wanted from the start (Exodus 19,6), but without being understood by men. A sacerdotal heart is one capable of compassion, who shares the sufferings of the innocent unjustly persecuted by the unjust, a person who can come to the defence of the poor wrongfully accused,
a person who can testify for justice and truth by denouncing the wrongdoers, and, in our time, by denouncing the Antichrist, the Beast of the Revelation (Revelation 13,18), even at the price of one’s own life. This, in our time, is the sacerdotal sacrifice approved by God.

The rest of the psalms are various songs of praise to God, of recourse to his absolute power against an unjust enemy, or of recognition and thanksgiving for having been saved and protected by His divine power. One gets to know the psalms by praying them with faith according to the Holy Spirit which is in Jesus, and not for a materialistic interest or according to a Zionist or political mentality.

2.9.3 The book of the Proverbs

It contains proverbs of high morality which should be read from time to time to deepen one’s spiritual life and to excite oneself in the search of wisdom: "Wisdom calls aloud in the streets... (Proverbs 1,20)... You simple people, how much longer will you cling to your simple ways? How much longer will mockers revel in their mocking and fools go on hating knowledge? (Proverbs 1,22)... My child, if you take my words to heart... you will discover the knowledge of God" (Proverbs 2,1-5).

Read it quickly the first time to get acquainted with it. Then return to it unceasingly to increase your knowledge and acquire its spirit and wisdom.

2.9.4 The book of Ecclesiastes

It is the collection of the comments of 'Qoheleth', which in Hebrew, means "the reader", the one who reads in the assembly. Ecclesiastes comes from the Greek "ecclesia" which means "assembly". They are thus the wise words said by a preacher in religious assemblies. The essential of its teaching is that all is repeated on earth. The one who lives exclusively for this earth will only find monotony. One should conclude that men must search for the Eternal life, the only life that can satisfy mankind: "Vanity of vanities, Qoheleth says, vanity of vanities, all is vanity! What profit has a man for all his labour which he takes under the sun" (Qoheleth 1,2). All that one does of strictly materialistic character has no other interest but for the time of our life "under the sun". All this is not worth the pains that one does to oneself: "If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable", said Paul (1 Corinthians 15,19).

2.9.5 The Song of Songs

This is a tender dialogue of love between the Bridgroom (God) and his bride (the elected ones).

A striking point: the wife does not come from Israel, but from Lebanon: "Come from Lebanon, my promised bride, come from Lebanon, come on your way" (Song of Songs 4,8). Lebanon is often seen as the place from which Gods’ elected ones arise. Ezekiel announces the triumph of the Cedar (symbol of Lebanon) on the Zion Mountain: 'I', said God, "From the top of the tall cedar tree, from the highest branch, I shall take a shoot and plant it on the highest mountain in Israel, it will put out braches and bear fruit... I, Yahweh, have spoken, and I will do it" (Ezekiel 17,22-24). It is, indeed, from Lebanon that God opened the book of Revelation of St John to explain it to the whole world and to bear many fruits.

The topic of the Bridegroom-Bride is taken again by the Book of Revelation. The Bride calls the Bridgroom: "Come!... Amen; come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22,17-20). You will understand all that later when studying the Book of Revelation.
2.9.6 The book of Wisdom

It is a book which urges us to search for and find the knowledge of God whose Wisdom is not like that of men: 'For if the upright man is God’s son, God will help him,... Let us test him with cruelty and with torture... Let us condemn him to a shameful death, since God will rescue him. This is the way they reason, but they are misled. They do not know the hidden things of God' (Wisdom 2,18-22). These are the words said by the Jews regarding Jesus-Christ on the cross (Matthew 27,41-43). To speak like this, is not wisdom, but madness!

This book invites us to understand God’s Wisdom and not to be modelled according to the false wisdom of men.

2.9.7 The Ecclesiasticus / Ben Sira

It was written by Ben Sira. It is the book of the Assembly (ecclesia in Greek), and not of the reader -who reads or speaks- in the assembly, as it is the case in the book of Ecclesiastes. It is thus a book which is read as it is in the assemblies, at the synagogue for example. It was not included in the Hebrew Bible, but was read, nevertheless, in the synagogues formerly because of its high morality. Like the other books of wisdom, it invites us to approach God, to seek to know Him, to understand Him, despite all the difficulties, arming oneself with patience during the various tribulations. Because this knowledge is worth all the sorrows we carry to reach it:

‘All wisdom comes from the Lord (Sirach 1,1)... If you desire Wisdom, keep the commandments, the Lord will bestow it on you (Sirach 1,26)... My child, if you aspire to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for an ordeal (Sirach 2,1)... Whatever happens to you, accept it, and in the uncertainties of your humble state, be patient, since gold is tested in the fire and the chosen in the furnace of humiliation (Sirach 2,4-5)’.

You have now contacted all the books of Wisdom. They are worth reading over and over again. Every day of your life you may read some parts to nourish your soul and elevate it. I did nothing but share with you the general outlines, now it is your personal effort which will make you collect the spiritual fruits of a ripe Wisdom as long as you apply yourself to it, during your whole lifetime, to get to know God and his Messiah: 'And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent,' said Jesus (John 17,3).

For the moment, be content with this first reading you made of the books of Wisdom. Now, pursue the study of the biblical course with the prophetic books.

2.10 Lesson 10 - The four big prophetic books

2.10.1 Introduction

Now you have certain knowledge about the historical framework of the people formed by God to welcome the Messiah, Jesus. You are able thus to understand the prophets. Without this knowledge, no one can seize the insinuations of these men sent by God in order to rectify the continual deviations of the Israelis, deviations to which all of us are exposed. This makes the prophets’ sayings valid to men of all times, if however we are able to translate and adapt them to the historical context of various times.

The study of the prophetic books gives a complementary aspect to the historical books. They reveal the spiritual meaning of events, the true intentions - often hidden - of God. It is necessary to know how to read between the lines in order to understand the prophets and seize their smooth insinuations. Living in a Zionist politicised milieu, they often had insurmountable difficulties to express the spiritual anti-Zionist thoughts of God. They were most of the time persecuted and rejected, considered as traitors to the 'fatherland' and to the kingdom; a fatherland and a kingdom never wanted by God. They were not considered...
prophets until after death, after having been persecuted while alive (read what Jesus said about the subject in Matthew 23,29-39).

The prophet is a spokesman of God. The latter appears to the prophet urging him to reveal his opinion, advice or judgements on events and attitudes of men, particularly those responsible (kings, priests). They are invited, under penalty of divine punishment, to yield to the divine thoughts and requirements. Mostly, it was a matter of giving up a Zionist mentality (a morbid attachment to the exclusive possession of the Palestinian land and the Israeli empire). Jeremiah, for example, was persecuted, as you will see, for having told the Jews to subject themselves to Nebuchadnezzar and for announcing the destruction of the Temple.

The essence of the prophetic message swivels around two points:

1. The deportation as punishment for infidelity,
2. The future sending of a saviour (the Messiah) whom the Jews mistook as a political military leader.

The prophetic books are writings of the sayings and actions of the prophets who existed just before, during and shortly after the deportation. They thus prophesied the exile, lived it and announced the return of the exiled (70 years after the exile) and the rebuilding of the Temple (the second one).

This fact of the deportation has ravaged deeply the Israeli soul. The Jews were on the lookout for a solution to their political tragedy, seeking the "liberation of Israel" (according to the prophetic expression). During centuries, the hope of liberation revolved around the person of the Messiah impatiently awaited for. But this Messiah was to liberate the soul from the sin, not the Jews from certain political situations.

Before reading a prophet, he must be placed in his historical context: did he exist before, during or after the Assyrian invasion of the North (Israel: 721 B.C.), the fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.), the battles of Megiddo, of Carchemish, the Babylonian invasion of the South (Judea), the return from exile, the rebuilding of the Temple (515 B.C.)? These historical periods accompany the prophetic books. Keep them in mind.

The prophets concerned in these books are to be distinguished from the other prophets, as Elijah and Elisha, or also the group of the prophets mentioned in 1S 10,5-6. We have of the latter no written collections. We know of them only what is reported in the historical books.

The prophets we are about to see (regarded as 'writers' prophets) existed over a period of approximately 300 years (750 to 450 B.C.). They are generally divided into two groups:

1. 4 'Big' prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.
2. 12 'Small' prophets.

The first ones are known as 'Big' because of their books being bigger than the 'Small' books of the other 12 and not because of a spiritual dignity (compare Isaiah’s 66 chapters to Joel’s 4 chapters and Obadiah’ single chapter).

Along with the 4 big prophets, I will include while studying Jeremiah, the book of "Lamentations" of Jeremiah and the prophet "Baruch" whose small book follows that of Jeremiah, having been the disciple and secretary of this latter. The book of Baruch is not found in the Hebrew Bible.

Certain Bibles (like the Bible of Jerusalem) add useful introductions to the historical books. They help in knowing the time during which lived the prophet and in understanding him better. It would be good, later, for you to get to know well one or two prophets. I suggest Jeremiah who is very close to us psychologically, and to Jesus spiritually.

We begin the 4 big prophets with Isaiah. As with all prophetic books, read them only after my explanations.
2.10.2 Isaiah

Isaiah is a senior royal official. He largely influenced the events of his time. He was born around 765 B.C. In the year 740, at the age of 25, he had a vision in which God entrusted him the difficult and courageous mission of announcing Israel’s ruin, followed later by that of Judah, as a punishment to the multiple infidelities of the Jews.

In chapter 6, Isaiah tells his vision in which God asks: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" And Isaiah answers without hesitating, courageously: "Here am I, send me". It was certainly necessary, to have a strong character to accept the painful and dangerous mission of denouncing kings and powerful persons belonging to the royal court. Jeremiah, like Moses, started by declining the divine offer (Jeremiah 1,6). It is not a light and pleasant load to reprimand powerful persons, even on behalf of God; it is never done without unbearable persecutions. Isaiah’s courage is admirable.

Read already this chapter 6; in it, God announces the deportation to the Jews: "Towns are in ruin and deserted, houses untenanted... Yahweh has driven the people away and the country is totally abandoned" and will remain only one "stock, a holy seed"; this stock is the "small remainder" about which I spoke and that God saves to pursue his Messianic plan.

More than once, Isaiah predicted the exile: "My people is in exile, for want of perception' (Isaiah 5,13), but a remainder will stay to continue the mission: "Those who are left in Zion and remain in Jerusalem will be called holy" (Isaiah 4,3). This theme of a "small remainder" was initially revealed by the prophet Amos who had great spiritual influence on Isaiah (Amos 3,11-12 / 5,15). Amos preceded Isaiah by little. He was old and had already prophesied for almost 40 years when Isaiah began his mission.

Other than the deportation, Isaiah’s most important prophecies concern the Messiah. I point out the most important ones

2.10.2.1 "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7,14)

Isaiah declares to king Ahaz who wanted a son: "The Lord will give you a sign: the young woman ("almah" in Hebrew, meaning the young virgin) is with child and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel". This name means: 'God with us'. This is a 'sign' that God will give on his behalf (Isaiah 7,14).

To understand this prophecy, you should know the historical context in which it was proclaimed. Go back to chapter 2 Kings 16. It is a prophecy addressed to king Ahaz. At this time, Pekah (known as "son of Remaliah" in Isaiah 7,9) was king of Israel and Razon king of Syria (Aram: Isaiah 7,1). The king of Assyria (Tiglath-Pileser, called "Pul": 2 Kings 15,19) threatened all the area. Razon and Pekah wanted to engage Ahaz with them against Pul, but he refused. He offered his only son, heir to the throne, in sacrifice to the idols (2 Kings 16,3) to ward off fate. He therefore did not have a heir anymore and the dynastic succession was threatened.

Razon and Pekah decided to invade Judea to dethrone Ahaz and place another king on Judea’s throne ("the son Tabeel" - see Isaiah 7,6) who would ally with them against Pul (Isaiah 7,1-2). Ahaz was afraid: ' His heart and his people’s hearts shook like forest trees..." (Isaiah 7,2) But God sent Isaiah towards Ahaz to tranquillise him by assuring that 'these two smouldering sticks of firewood' (Isaiah 7,4), Razon and Pekah, will not succeed in their venture against Judea because 'the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Razon'. The head of Ephraim (in the North) is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah (Pekah)' (Isaiah 7,8-9), which implies that the capital of Judea is Jerusalem and the chief of Jerusalem is Ahaz. God seizes also the occasion to reveal the near crushing of Samaria: "Another sixty-five years and Ephraim will cease to be a people" (Isaiah 7,8) It is the announcement of the northern Assyrian invasion (Samaria).

Ahaz is overwhelmed by the events and the loss of his only son whom he had himself
sacrificed. But the prophecies had predicted that the 'Son of David', the awaited Messiah, would be installed on David's throne forever. Isaiah too confirmed that: 'A shoot (the Messiah) will spring from the descendants of Jesse (David's father)... On him will rest the Spirit of Yahweh...' (Isaiah 11,1-2) There is thus nothing to fear regarding the throne because the 'Lord will give you a sign: the 'almah' is with child and will give birth to a son: Immanuel' (Isaiah 7,14). The pregnancy of the young queen was a divine sign given to Ahaz for two reasons:

- Ahaz did not know that his wife was pregnant
- He did not know that the child was a boy. This son is not given by God to please Ahaz who had shown to be more impious than other kings, but to achieve God’s Messianic intentions of God.

King Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz. He was reforming and 'did what Yahweh regards as right' by abolishing the idols and even destroyed Moses’ bronze serpent (2 Kings 18,1-4). But he was not this 'Immanuel' who was to join Judea and Israel together, the one who would return the exiled Jews from Assyria that they may 'together pillage the people of the East...' and establish together the illusive Zionist empire by plundering... (Isaiah 11,10-16).

Eight centuries later the prophecy about Immanuel was accomplished. It this then that it was understood by those who have eyes to see and an intelligence able to understand God’s intentions. Matthew reveals that it is with Jesus that this prophecy was accomplished:

'Now all this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: 'Look! The Virgin (Almah) is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel' * (Matthew 1,22-23).

God wanted his Messiah to be born from the Virgin Mary, the "Almah" by excellence, about whom Isaiah spoke. Therefore, it is only with its achievement that a prophecy is generally understood. It is thus necessary to be aware and attentive, flexible and well disposed to understand God’s intentions, without insisting on our point of views - as did the Jews who refused Jesus - but on those of God.

It is important to retain from the name 'Immanuel' that it is symbolic since it means 'God with us' as Matthew explains it. Hence, the Messiah was not necessarily to bare that name, as many Jews had understood, but that he is 'God with us', God living among us corporally, on earth. This fact is confirmed by other symbolic names that Isaiah gives to the Messiah: "This is the name he has been given, 'Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace'" (Isaiah 9,5). These names reveal the divine identity of the Messiah. Indeed God said through Ezekiel: 'I myself shall take care of my flock...' (Ezekiel 34,11).

Isaiah unconsciously felt the need for the divine incarnation; addressing himself to God, he exclaimed: 'Oh, that you would teat the heavens open and come down' (Isaiah 63,19).

2.10.2.2 The Messiah is Galilean

Isaiah saw 'a great light' on the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, tribes of northern Palestine, in Galilee, where Jesus lived (Isaiah 8,23-9,6). Being on the border with Lebanon, which was pagan at that time, this area’s inhabitants were scorned by the Jews who considered them soiled by their pagan neighbours: 'From Nazareth (in Galilee)? Can anything good come from that place?' said Nathanael to Philip (John 1,45-46). And the Pharisees, seeing that Nicodemus was defending Jesus, said to him: "Study the matter, and see for yourself: prophets do not arise in Galilee" (John 7,52).

If the Pharisees themselves had well studied the prophecies, they would have understood that, contrary to what they thought, the Messiah, the most important of all prophets, was to emerge precisely from Galilee. Isaiah said indeed:

'As the past humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali (Galilee), so the future will glorify the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, the territory of the nations (the pagans). The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on the inhabitants of a country
(Galilee) in shadow dark as death, light (the Messiah) has blazed forth... For a son has been born for us, a son has been given to us (Immanuel, the Son of the Almah-Virgin), and dominion has been laid on his shoulders; and this is the name he has been given: "Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace"..." (Isaiah 8,23 - 9,5)

In his gospel, Matthew refers to this prophecy of Isaiah (Matthew 4,12-16).

Humiliated by the Assyrian invader, Galilee was then, in fact, glorified by Jesus who lived and worked in Nazareth (Zebulun) and preached in Capernaum (Naphtali).

2.10.2.3 The Messiah will be persecuted and put to death by the Jews.

Isaiah had predicted that the Messiah would be rejected by his people and that he will be subject to atrocious suffering and delivered to death. But Isaiah also foretold the Messiah’s resurrection since "after the ordeal he has endured, he will see the light and be content. By his sufferings, the upright one, my servant (the Messiah is the 'Servant' of God) will justify many by taking their guilt on himself" (Isaiah 53,11). The light that this faithful servant will see is that of resurrection after death.

I report the principal verses of Isaiah’s chapter 53 which speaks about this good Servant by explaining them in italic between brackets:

"Who has given credence to what we have heard? (Isaiah 53,1: who would have believed that the long awaited Messiah will be a poor and rejected anti-Zionist)... 'He had no form or charm to attract us, no beauty to win our hearts (Isaiah 53,2: He comes from a poor and modest society, neither pompous clothes nor human glory)... He was despised, the lowest of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering... for whom we (the Jews, his own people!) had no regard. Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing... while we (Jews) thought of him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God; whereas he was being wounded (crucifixion) for our rebellions... Which of his contemporaries was concerned at his having been cut off from the land of living, at his having been struck dead for his people’s rebellion? If he gives his life as a sin offering, he will see his offspring... After the ordeal he has endured, he will see the light (Resurrection)'.

Read this chapter now. No one had written more beautifully and more truthfully, even after the Advent of Jesus who achieved all these prophecies. While walking with the disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24,25-27) Jesus told them: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?" He explained to them the passages throughout the Scriptures that were about himself". Chapter 53 of Isaiah (as well as the psalm 22) were among his explanations. One wonders how certain Jews still do not understand! The answer is that they are blinded by the Zionist mentality: greed for power and possession.

2.10.2.4 The "consolation" of Israel

The last 26 chapters of Isaiah are intended to comfort the Jews by announcing them salvation. This salvation was misinterpreted as the return to Palestine and the 'national Jewish' restoration. But God was referring to the spiritual salvation brought by Jesus for all men. This fact is, however, rejected by most Jews. These chapters are known as 'the Book of consolation' because they begin as follows: "Console my people, console them, speak to the heart of Jerusalem and cry to her that her period of service is ended, that her guilt has been atoned for (by the future sending of the Messiah)... A voice cries, 'Prepare in the desert a way for Yahweh...'" (Isaiah 40,1-4). These verses were applied by the Gospel to John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for the Messiah in this desert of sleeping souls (Matthew 3,3).

Some think that these chapters of consolation were not written by Isaiah himself but by his disciples after the return from exile.

We ignore the end of Isaiah. According to a Jewish tradition, he would have been put to death, sawn into two, under king Manasseh who 'shed innocent blood in such great quantity
that he flooded Jerusalem... besides doing what is displeasing to Yahweh..." (2 Kings 21,16).

### 2.10.3 Jeremiah - Lamentations - Baruch

#### 2.10.3.1 Jeremiah

Jeremiah is of a sacerdotal family established near Jerusalem, in Anathoth (Jeremiah 1,1). He prophesied in Jerusalem starting from Josiah’s 13th year (626 B.C.) "until the eleventh year of Zedekiah" (Jeremiah 1,3), which is the year of the deportation (2 Kings 25,2). He thus personally lived the tragedy of the deportation since its preparation and had predicted it.

The fall of Nineveh (612 B.C.) and the reforms of Josiah gave a hope of salvation, but despair surprised the Jews with the dramatic defeat of Megiddo (609 B.C.) and the sudden emergence of Babylonian threats.

Jeremiah was the son of the high priest Hilkiah (Jeremiah 1,1). He was called by God when he was still a very young man: 'The word of Yahweh came to me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you... I appointed you as prophet to the nations (Isaiah 41,1). I then said, 'Ah, ah, ah, Lord Yahweh; you see, I do not know how to speak: I am only a child!' (Jeremiah 1,5-6). But, in spite of his adolescence, God insisted: 'Do not say: 'I am only a child... for I am with you to rescue you... I put my words into your mouth... I have set you on the nations and the kingdoms, to uproot and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant' (Jeremiah 1,6-10). Before building, God must destroy what men built without his consent.

Note that Jeremiah is chosen as prophet of the nations, not only of the Jews; he is thus universal: 'on the nations and the kingdoms'. He must 'destroy and overthrow' to be able to 'build and plant' later. His mission is similar to the prophet of the book of Revelation.
who must 'prophesy against many different nations and countries and languages and kings' (Revelation 10,11).

Jeremiah has the difficult mission of announcing the Babylonian invasion from the North, the destruction of Solomon’s Temple and the deportation, followed by the return after 70 years of exile: 'From the North disaster will come boiling over on all who live in the country... (Jeremiah 1,14)... I shall bring on you an enduring nation... it will devour your sons and daughters... and demolish your fortified towns' (Jeremiah 5,13-17). Because thus speaks Yahweh: 'When the seventy years granted to Babylon are over, I shall intervene on your behalf and fulfil my favourable promise to you by bringing you back to this place' (Jeremiah 29,4-10).

On the other hand, the false prophets contradicted Jeremiah: 'No evil will overtake us, we shall not see sword or famine...' (Jeremiah 5,12). This was giving false hopes to the people who preferred listening to the priests and the so-called prophets who prophesied peace and security, rather than to Jeremiah who prophesied the bitter truth. God continuously intervened asking Jeremiah to proclaim: 'Horrible, disgusting things are happening in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests exploit the people. And my people love it! But when the ned comes what will you do?' (Jeremiah 5,30-31).

God unceasingly reprimanded the laymen and religious chiefs, and Jeremiah always transmitted the message with courage: 'The priests never asked, 'Where is Yahweh? Those skilled in the Law did not know me, (they wrongly interpreted the words of God, understanding them in a political spirit, a spirit condemned by God). The shepherds (kings) too rebelled against me (doing "what displeases to Yahweh") and the prophets (who claim being prophets) prophesied by Baal' (Jeremiah 2,8).

Jeremiah also denounced the bad Jewish interpreters, scribes and priests, because they make God say in the Torah what He does not want to say. This is why he qualifies the scribes’ pen as 'the lying pen' that changed the Torah into lies at the service of their interests (Jeremiah 8,8), prescribing animal sacrifices and worships that God never demanded: 'For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, I said nothing to them, gave them no orders, about burnt offerings or sacrifices. My one command to them was this: Listen to my Voice... (Jeremiah 7,22-23)... How can you say, 'We are wise, since we have Yahweh’s Law?’ Look how it has been falsified by the lying pen of the scribes!' (Jeremiah 8,8).

It should be noted that, Jeremiah, being of a sacerdotal family and son of the high priest Hilkiah, was well placed to know that the scribes had handled the text of the Torah in their interest with their 'lying pen' (Jeremiah 8,8). It is this same Hilkiah, his father, who had found the text of the Torah in the Temple (2 Kings 22,28). He must have told his son, Jeremiah, about it; who thus learnt that the scribes and priests had modified the texts to their convenience. Jesus did not fail to denounce the 'hypocrite scribes and Pharisees' (Matthew 23).

As Jesus proclaimed against the second Temple, Jeremiah prophesied the destruction of the first Temple: 'Do you look at this temple that bears my name as a den of bandits?... I shall treat this Temple just as I treated Shiloh' (Jeremiah 7,11-14), (Shiloh is the city where was found the first sanctuary that was destroyed by the Philistines, the Palestinians of the time: 1 Samuel 4,17-18).

The Israelis did not want to believe Jeremiah even after Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion and deportation. Indeed, he had predicted that the exile would be long: 70 years (Jeremiah 25,11). Hananiah the prophet contradicts him: "Yahweh Sabaoth says this: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon! In exactly two years’ time I shall bring back all the vessels of the Temple of Yahweh... and all the exiles of Judah who have gone to Babylon..." (Jeremiah 28,1-4). Therefore, Jeremiah sent a letter to the exiled recommending to organize themselves in Babylon, to "build houses, settle down... marry and have sons and daughters... work for the good of the city to which I have exiled you; pray to Yahweh on its behalf. For Yahweh says this: 'When the seventy years granted to Babylon are over... I will bring you back to this place' (Jeremiah 29,4-10). It was absurd for many Jews to pray for the Babylonians, their
enemies. They saw in Jeremiah a traitor and persecuted him. Compare with Jesus who asked the Jews "to love and to pray for their enemies" (Luke 6,27).

We recognize the real prophet from the false one when the prophecies are accomplished. Jeremiah, as all the authentic prophets, knew that God spoke to him and had sent him. The false prophets are guilty because they use God’s Name wrongfully. This is why Jeremiah warned against these liars who claim to speak on behalf of God: 'Do not be deceived by the prophets... do not listen to the dreams you have, since they prophesy lies to you in my name... I have not sent them, Yahweh declares' (Jeremiah 29,8-9).

Jeremiah’s firm attitude caused his persecution: Pashhur, the Temple’s chief of police, 'struck the prophet Jeremiah and then put him in the stocks' (Jeremiah 20,1-2).

Increasing animosity almost demoralised the prophet: "I heard so many disparaging me... All those who were on good terms with me watched for my downfall... A curse on the day when I was born! " (Jeremiah 20,10-15). God revealed to him that even his family had lined up against him: 'For even your brothers and your own family will betray you. They will pursue you in full cry. Put no faith in them when they speak you fair!' (Jeremiah 12,6).

The mission of Jeremiah weighed heavy on his shoulders: "A disaster for me, mother, that you bore me to be a man of strife and dissension for the whole country" (Jeremiah 15,10). Discouraged, he almost abandoned his heavy load: 'For me, Yahweh’s word has been the cause of insult and derision all day long. I would say to myself: 'I will not think about Him, I will not speak in His name any more' (Jeremiah 20,8-9). And Jeremiah stayed silent. But God does not abandon his prophets, He burns them by His love at their deepest selves, insisting and obtaining from them the testimony He wants. Jeremiah acknowledges that his silence was like a fire burning his heart: "... but then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart... I am weary of holding it in, indeed, I cannot' (Jeremiah 20,9). The prophet ends up yielding to the love of God, a powerful seducing love, he takes his mission back by love of God and says: "You have seduced me, Yahweh, and I have let myself be seduced, you have overpowered me: you were the stronger" (Jeremiah 20,7). This beautiful attitude of deep love contrasts that of Jacob, 'Israel', who claimed defeating God! (Genesis 32,25-33). The greatness of a man, his greatest victory, is to let himself be defeated by God.

The interior and intense suffering purified Jeremiah’s heart. "Seduced" by God, he assumed his mission until the end. Fortunately for us, because he prophesied the 'New Covenant' which Jesus was to establish: 'Look, the days are Advent, Yahweh declares, when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, **but not like the covenant** I made with their ancestors... a covenant which **they** broke. This is the covenant I shall make with the house of Israel... I shall plant my law, writing it on their hearts..." (Jeremiah 31,31-34). Read this text and contemplate it well, comparing it with the words of Jesus: "The kingdom of God is **within you**" (Luke 17,21). It is at the price of his sacrifice that Jesus founded this New Covenant: "This cup', had he said to his Apostles, 'is the **New Covenant** in my blood poured out for you". (Luke 22,20).

Note well that Jeremiah, speaking about this new Covenant, does not mention a "promised land", but an interior life, God writing his words in the **hearts** of believers and "there will be no further need for everyone to teach neighbour or brother, saying, 'Learn to know Yahweh!' No, they will all know me, from the least to the greatest... " (Jeremiah 31,34). This means that the believers will not have to insist anymore on those who do not believe in order to spread the knowledge of God, this knowledge being already widespread all over the world, as is the case today. The who thirst for it will find it, those who do not wish it will neglect it: 'Let the sinner continue sinning, and the unclean continue to be unclean; let the upright continue in his uprightness, and those who are holy to be holy' says the Book of Revelation (Revelation 22,11). Each is free to choose between the momentary temporal pleasures and the permanent joys of Eternity.

God asked Jeremiah to write his prophecies and send them to king Jehoiakim. So Jeremiah
"summoned Baruch son of Neriah, who at his dictation wrote down on the scroll all the words Yahweh had spoken to him" (Jeremiah 36,1-4). The king remained incredulous and burnt the scroll (Jeremiah 36,23). Jeremiah had to dictate his prophecies a second time to Baruch "with many similar words in addition" (Jeremiah 36,32). It is of this same Baruch that we will speak further on.

Jeremiah had advised the Jews not to resist Nebuchadnezzar's troops, but instead to surrender or leave Jerusalem: "Anyone who stays in this city will die by sword, by famine, or by plague; but anyone who leaves it and surrenders to the Chaldaeans (Babylonians) now besieging you will live; he will escape with his life" (Jeremiah 21,8-9). Some high ranked personalities were against him for having spoken this way (Jeremiah 38,1-3) and wanted to kill him. They insisted on king Zedekiah: "You must have this man put to death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city, and all the people too, by talking like this. King Zedekiah answered: 'He is in your hands...'. They therefore seized Jeremiah and threw him in the storage-well... and into the mud Jeremiah sank" (Jeremiah 38,4-6). Read this chapter 38 and the one that follows to know how the king saved the prophet from an unquestionably horrible death, and how Nebuchadnezzar then took him out of prison, treating him better than supposedly pious Jews had done.

The dramatic situation lived by the Jews raised the hope of messianic salvation. Jeremiah proclaimed deliverance through the future Advent of the Messiah. But this Messiah is still conceived as a political king who "will restore" the nation (Jeremiah 30,18). According to God however, restoration is spiritual; it was started by Jesus to be completed at the end of times, with the final downfall of the current State of Israel (Acts 3,21). You will find in Jeremiah 23,5-6 and Jeremiah 30,8-9 two messianic prophecies.

Jeremiah was taken along by force to Egypt by a group of Israelis who fled the country in spite of God's insistent orders given through Jeremiah, prescribing them to stay in Jerusalem. We do nothing of Jeremiah after that. It is probable that his days were in Egypt. Read chapters 42 and 43 who speak about this event, prophesying the Babylonian invasion against Egypt, and then continue your reading of the book of Jeremiah.

It should be noted that Jeremiah was of a sacerdotal family. His father 'Hilkiah' was the high priest who found the 'Book of the Law' (Torah) in the Temple. It is on this book's basis that king Josiah undertook religious reforms. The scribes and priests added to this book's text clauses appropriate to them. Jeremiah, being the son of the high priest, was informed of it and revealed this infamy in Jeremiah 7,22 and 8,8. It is up to us to discover the scribes' interest and hypocrisy!!

### 2.10.3.2 The book of the Lamentations

These lamentations, or "moanings", were written after Jerusalem's ruin and the fire of the Temple. Perhaps has Jeremiah written certain verses, but there are probably more than one author. All of them cry and make funeral lines to express their mourning after Jerusalem's defeat. Read it with this spirit: "How deserted she sits, the city once thronged with people! Once the greatest of nations, she is now like a widow. Once the princess of states, she is now put to forced labour." (Lamentations 1,1) See 2 Chronicles 35, 25 in relation to the lamentation composed by Jeremiah after king Josiah's death in Megiddo.

### 2.10.3.3 Appendix to the study of Jeremiah

The 5 kings of the time of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1,2)
(2 Kings 22 to 26 and 2 Chronicles 34 to 36)

1. **Josiah 640-609 B.C.** (Great religious reforms + Book of the Law found)

   In 609, Necho came up to help the Assyrians against the Babylonians; Josiah tried to prevent the junction between the Egyptians and the Assyrians. He wanted the final ruin of Assyria...
The biblical course

The Prophet Jeremiah

History
640 Josiah
630 The prophet Zephaniah
627 vocation of Jeremiah

622 discovery of the Book of the Law (2 Kings 22-23, 25)
religious reforms
612 The prophet Nahum
609 Meggido
609 Jehoahaz (Eliakim 3 months)
Return of Paganism

609 Jehoiakim
prophecy of the 70 years exile (Jr 25)
Jehoiakim vassal during 3 years (2 Kings 24, 1)
600 revolt of Jehoiakim
The prophet Habakkuk

598 Jehoiachin (3 months)
1st DEPORTATION
597 Zedekiah
The prophet Ezekiel
589/588 revolt of Zedekiah
siege of Jerusalem

586 taking of Jerusalem
2nd DEPORTATION
586 Godoliah

Life of Jeremiah
Ch. 1 (vocation of Jeremiah)
Ch. 2-6 (before reforms of Josiah)

Ch. 30-31 (Book of Consolation, New Covenant 31, 31)
Ch. 36 (roll torn)

Ch. 11 (broken covenant)
Ch. 7-9 (against the Temple)
Ch. 26 (arrest of Jeremiah)
Ch. 14-15 (drought - rejection of Judah)
Ch. 19-20 (broken jug and Pashur, Jeremiah enclosed)
Ch. 25 (prophecy of the 70 years)

Ch. 27-28 (take the yoke of Babylon and the false prophet Hananiah)
Ch. 29 (letter to the exiles)
Ch. 21-22 (response to Zedekiah about the siege of Jerusalem)
Ch. 34 (fate of Zedekiah)
Ch. 37-38 (interruption of the siege 588, Jeremiah in the tank)
Ch. 32-33 (resumption of the siege, promises of restoration)
Ch. 39-40.6 (Jeremiah history until the fall of Jerusalem)

The prophet Jeremiah
that still occupied a part of northern Israel. Its defeat thus gave advantage to the kingdom of Judah. But Necho killed Josiah at Megiddo in 609 B.C., and carried his way to Carchemish where Nebuchadnezzar overcame him in 605 B.C. (2 Kings 23,29 and 2 Chronicles 35,20-25). That put an end to the Assyrian empire.

2. Jehoahaz 609 B.C.

He remained three months on the throne after Josiah’s death. After Assyria’s defeat at Carchemish, Necho, on his way back to Egypt, seized Syria and Palestine. He dethroned Jehoahaz and took him along as a prisoner to Egypt. He established his brother Jehoiakim as king in his place, imposing a tribute on Judea (2 Kings 23,31-35 and 2 Chronicles 36,1-4). Jeremiah refers bitterly to Jehoahaz’ exile to Egypt: "Do not weep for the dead king (Josiah). Weep rather for the one (Jehoahaz) who is exiled (to Egypt), since he will never come back, will never see his native land again... but will die in the place to which he has been taken captive..." (Jeremiah 22,10-12).

3. Jehoiakim 609-598 B.C.

Jehoiakim, during his fourth year of reign (605 B.C.), therefore 4 years after Carchemish, noticing Nebuchadnezzar’s strength, subjected himself to him. He felt safe, away from the Pharaoh’s anger. Happy to feel secure, Jehoiakim wanted to kill Jeremiah after hearing him predict misfortune against his country. He tore the scroll that Jeremiah asked Baruch to write. He gave order to arrest both of them. But, Ahikam son from Shaphan, protected Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26,24). Shaphan was close to the royal court, under Josiah’s reign, and had helped the king with the reforms (2 Kings 22,3-12). As Jeremiah was of a sacerdotal family, Shaphan knew him well, which explains his assistance to the prophet (Jeremiah 26,24). Shaphan is also the grandfather of Gedaliah, son of Ahikam (2 Kings 25,22), who also helped Jeremiah (Jeremiah 40,5-6). (Shaphan, father of Ahikam, father of Gedaliah, are all Jeremiah’s friends and protectors).

4. Jehoiachin 598 B.C.

First deportation includes the king along with all his royal court and all people of good condition (2 Kings 24,15). Nebuchadnezzar establishes as king in his place Zedekiah, his uncle (2 Kings 24,17 and 2 Chronicles 36,9-10).

5. Zedekiah 598-586 B.C.

Zedekiah revolted against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24,20). This latter therefore took over Jerusalem thus (2 Kings 25,2). Wanting to escape, Nebuchadnezzar arrests, deports and judges him. The Babylonians entered Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple and deported the rest of the Judeans, leaving the peasants to cultivate the land. They established Gedaliah as governor (2 Kings 25 and 2 Chronicles 36,11-21).

2.10.3.4 Baruch

The book of Baruch is missing in the Hebrew Bible. It was written by Baruch in Babylon after the deportation: "This is the text of the book written in Babylon by Baruch" (Baruch 1,1). The exiled assemblies read it "to Jeconiah, king of Judah (exiled), and to all people who had come to hear the reading, to the nobles... to all who lived in Babylon" (Baruch 1,3-4). One notices in this book the great impression that Jeremiah’s message had made; an impression that lasted a very long time in the Jewish conscience (2 Maccabees 2,1-7 & 15,14 / Matthew 16,14). Baruch himself has interest only because he repeats and reminds the blazing words of his professor, words rejected by the Jews: "You have sent down your anger and your fury on us, as you threatened through your servants the prophets when they said, 'Bend your necks and serve the king of Babylon'... But we would not listen to your voice and serve the king of Babylon" (Baruch 2,20-24).

Baruch reminds of the New Covenant predicted by Jeremiah to encourage the exiled: "But in the country of their exile, they will come to themselves and acknowledge that I am the
Lord their God... Then I shall bring them back to the country which I promised on oath to their ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... And I shall make an everlasting covenant with them... And never again shall I drive my people Israel out of the country which I have given them' (Baruch 2,30-35). This "country" is Eternal Life, a heavenly and not geographical entity.

The eternal Covenant in question is the one already proclaimed by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31,31) and achieved by Jesus. Notice that Baruch had already seized the spiritual interior dimension of this covenant: 'They will come to themselves'. But he still believed in the promised land as a geographical reality, "the country promised to Abraham...", and predicted the return to this land (Palestine) prophesying that God "never again shall drive my people Israel out of the country given to them" (Baruch 2,35). However, the Jews were once again exiled by Titus in the year 70 A.D. and were scattered in the whole world. It is clear thus that God aimed at a non-geographical, psychological and spiritual stability, taking place in the soul of believers, "within themselves".

Baruch considers the Jews as 'the widow’s cherished sons' (Baruch 4,16), because Israel, who is punished by God, is compared to a sad and abandoned widow. This topic of "the widow" is often evoked in the esoteric assemblies (Freemasonry, Rosicrucian brotherhood) and refers to Israel.

Retain the expression 'put on the sackcloth' (Baruch 4,20) which means being in mourning because of dramatic situations. You will see it again in the Book of Revelation related to the two witnesses of God persecuted by the Beast’s men (Revelation 11,3).

Baruch ends up his book with an optimistic tone by pointing out the return from the exile: "Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress... See your children reassembled from west and east..." (Baruch 5,1-9). The copy of Jeremiah’s letter to the exiled ends the book.

Thus, Baruch is a revision of Jeremiah, a testimony in his favour.

### 2.10.4 Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel is a priest exiled since the first Judaean deportation to Babylon (2 Kings 24,10-17): "It was the fifth year of exile for king Jehoiachin (593-592 B.C.), the word of Yahweh was addressed to the priest Ezekiel son of Buzi in Chaldaea" (Ezekiel 1,1-3). The Temple of Solomon had not yet been destroyed when his mission began. Ezekiel is thus a contemporary of Jeremiah. During exile, Ezekiel had visions concerning the second deportation and the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, which occurred few years later (in 586 B.C.). God asked him to prophesy against the unsubdued Israelis, to announce this punishment against them: "Mountains of Israel... I am going to summon the sword against you... I shall fling your butchered inhabitants down..." (Ezekiel 6, 1-7), however keeping a remainder to pursue the divine Messianic plan: "But I shall spare some of you to escape the sword... and your survivors will remember me" (Ezekiel 6,8-10).

Ezekiel’s most important visions and prophecies are:

(Read them progressively after my explanations)

#### 2.10.4.1 The end of Israel

Notice that Ezekiel prophesied "the end" of Israel: "the Lord Yahweh says this to the land of Israel: Finished! The end is Advent for the four corners of the country... The end is Advent, it is on the move towards you... I shall show neither pity nor mercy...' says the Lord (Ezekiel 7,1-9).

With Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., it was the first end of Israel. Jesus too had spoken about the 'end' of Israel (Matthew 24,3-14). This took place in 70 A.D., when Titus burnt the second Temple. Most Israelis had escaped in diaspora. It was Israel’s second end. During the apocalyptic times we live in, Israel will know a third and ultimate end (Matthew 24,14). This ‘Beast’ of John’s Revelation chapter 13 is "never to be seen again" (Revelation 18,21).
It is of this third and last end of Israel that Jesus speaks in the Gospels:

"This good news of the Kingdom will be proclaimed to the whole world... And then the end will come" (Matthew 24,14).

The Gospel is already proclaimed in the whole world. Israel’s end of ends is very close.

2.10.4.2 Vision of the 4 living creatures (Ezekiel 1,4-28)

"I looked; a stormy wind blew from the north... and in the middle what seemed to be four living creatures (Ezekiel 1,5). They had human hands on all four sides corresponding to their four faces and four wings (Ezekiel 1,8)... All four had a human face... a lion’s... a bull’s... an eagle’s... (Ezekiel 1,10) Beyond the solid surface above their heads, there was... a throne. High above on the form of a throne was a form with the appearance of a human being... The sight was like the glory of Yahweh" (Ezekiel 1,26-28).

As with the messianic prophecies, this great vision was misunderstood in its time. It is a prophecy on the four Gospels introducing Jesus the Messiah. God announces the Babylonian punishment that falls down on northern Israel like a stormy wind. Because God’s judgement falls down, as a storm, unexpectedly. "Stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour", recommends Jesus in order not to be surprised like the foolish virgins (Matthew 24,42 / 25,1-13). In this same vision, God reveals his plan of salvation through Jesus for the whole humanity: the 4 living creatures represent the 4 writers of the 4 Gospels. Their wings are symbol of their spiritual elevation; the hands under the wings indicate that they are writers, having written the 4 Gospels with their hands. The 'solid surface' is the Heavens; the 'Throne' is God’s seat to judge men by the Gospels. At the highest of the Throne, is the Messiah, who is both man and God, having "the appearance of a human being", and "the sight like the glory of Yahweh" (Ezekiel 1,26).

We are able to understand today that, in this vision, God announced the Messiah as being his own human incarnation; this Messiah having to be God Himself who will incarnate to save the believers and judge the non-believers: 'The Word became flesh' says John in his Gospel, "we saw his glory, the glory that he has from the Father" (John 1,1-14). We are able to understand today, after the Messiah-God’s incarnation, that this divine glory seen by Ezekiel was fully in Jesus of Nazareth in his plenitude.

The four living creatures have 'a human form. Each had four faces; each had four wings... They touched one another with their wings". The human form indicates that they are men. Their faces are turned towards the four directions, because their Message is intended for the four corners of the earth. Their wings touch one another because they are united by the same Message, that of the Messiah.

"And each one moved straight forward; they went where the spirit urged them, they did not turn as they moved' (Ezekiel 1,12), because they are driven by the same spirit, that of God who is righteous. They deliver their Message as "the sower who went out to sow" (Matthew 13,4), without looking behind. "They do not turn as they move", insists Ezekiel, because "once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9,62).

"Between these living creatures were what looked like blazing coals, like torches" (Ezekiel 1,13). These blazing coals and torches are the hearts of Apostles and believers who, like blazing coals, are burning of love for God and his Messiah and who, as torches, light this darkened world by their glare.

"The fire gave a brilliant light, and lightning flashed from the fire, and the living creatures kept disappearing and reappearing like flashes of lightning' (Ezekiel 1,13-14). Jesus said: 'The Advent of the Son of man will be like lightning striking in east and flashing far into the west' (Matthew 24,27).

The Gospel and the Message of the book of Revelation are widespread through the whole
earth, via Internet. It is spread in a wink, like the flash of lightning which leaves from the east to the west. And this, by the Apostles of the End of Times, small coals with burning hearts of love for the Messiah and his holy Mother.

In his book of Revelation, John also sees these 4 living creatures, always "in the middle of the throne and around it' (Revelation 4,6), because being on the Throne, they take part of the Judgement by their Gospels. 'Anyone who proves victorious I will allow to share my throne, just as I have myself overcome and have taken my seat with my Father on his throne' says Jesus (Revelation 3,21). Had he not said to his Apostles: "When the Son of man is seated in his throne of glory, you yourselves will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matthew 19,28)? Ezekiel by this vision announces the first Advent of the Messiah, and John’s Revelation announces his second Advent at the end of times, after the final end of the current State of Israel.

2.10.4.3 Vision of the eaten scroll (Ezekiel 3,1-15)

"Eat this scroll... So I ate it, and it tasted sweet as honey... He then said, 'Son of man, go to the House of Israel and tell what I have said... Do not be afraid of them, for they are a tribe of rebels... whether they listen or not'".

Ezekiel is invited "to eat" the book of his prophecy i.e. to assume his mission against the Israelis: "You are not being sent to a nation that speaks a difficult foreign language; you are being sent to the House of Israel. Not to big nations", said God to his prophet (Ezekiel 3,5-6). Ezekiel’s mission – at his time – was limited to the "house of Israel", it was thus specific and did not extend to "big nations".

The Book of Revelation repeats this image of the 'eaten' scroll. At the end of times, when Israel reappears, God’s prophets are once "again" invited "to eat a scroll" and to testify, not only against Israel, as was the case for Ezekiel, but also "against many different nations and countries and languages and kings" who support it in its injustice: 'Take that open scroll... eat it... I ate it (the book) and it tasted sweet as honey, but when I had eaten it my stomach turned sour. Then I was told: 'You are to prophesy again, this time against many different nations and countries and languages and kings'" (Revelation 10,8-11). To be noted that the sourness of the book of Revelation’s prophesy is non-existent in that of Ezekiel, being more painful because it is universal, running up against more obstacles: Ezekiel’s prophecy was addressed only to the Jews to inform them of Christ’s first Advent. However that of the Book of Revelation, harder to carry, is intended to men of the whole world to warn them and prepare them to Jesus’ Return at the time of his near second Advent: 'Look, he is Advent... everyone will see him, even those who pierced him (the Jews), and all the races of the earth will mourn over him' (Revelation 1,7).

2.10.4.4 The New Covenant (Ezekiel 11,19-20 & 36,25-27)

Here also the prophecy of the New Covenant insists on the heart and the spirit, and not on the possession of a geographical land: "I shall give them a single heart and I shall put a new spirit in them". It is the Holy Spirit that Jesus speaks of (Luke 11,13), the one that his true subjects receive (John 14,15-26 / 16,7-15).

2.10.4.5 Ezekiel’s widowhood and mourning (Ezekiel 24,15-27)

God announces to Ezekiel the death of his wife, "the delight of his eyes" (Ezekiel 24,16), asking him not to carry mourning of her: 'You are not to lament... Groan in silence, do not go into mourning for the dead' (Ezekiel 24,16-17).

This mourning was meant to symbolize the destruction of the Temple, which was to the Jews "the delight of their eyes" (Ezekiel 24,21). Only after the Temple’s destruction would
Ezekiel’s mission begin; with the accomplishment of his prophecy he will be listened to better. Then God will allow him to speak and untie his tongue: 'You will no longer be dumb' (Ezekiel 24,27), after silencing him because of the Jews’ impiousness: "You will be dumb, and no longer able to reprove them; for they are a tribe of rebels" (Ezekiel 3,26).

The Revelation’s prophecy has also known a long period of silence: "Keep the words of the seven thunders secret and do not write them down" (Revelation 10,4). This period - which lasted 20 centuries - was followed by the time of the message’s frank and open proclamation: 'Do not keep the prophecies in this book a secret, because the Time (of the Return of Christ) is close' (Revelation 22,10). In the Book of Revelation, the period of silence was due to the fact that the apocalyptic prophecies were not yet accomplished to be understood.

### 2.10.4.6 The resurrection (Ezekiel 37,1-28)

Ezekiel sees in vision 'dried bones' taking body again and returning to life: "I am now going to open your graves; I shall raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel" (Ezekiel 37,12). Some interpret this resurrection as the return to life of the current Israeli State. It is wrong. This State will be destroyed forever.

The resurrection in question is that of the soul, of its return to the spiritual life about which Jesus spoke (John 5,24-27). It is reserved for his faithful disciples. This is what the Book of Revelation calls 'the First Resurrection' (Revelation 20,6). It differs from the last resurrection at the end of times, called "Second Resurrection", when the body will also be revived and renewed (John 5,28-29).

### 2.10.4.7 Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38-39)

These names symbolize the pagans of the time. The elected, the "people of God", will triumph over them. The book of Revelation explains that Gog and Magog of the 20th century are no other than the Israelis 'who came swarming over the entire country (Palestine)' (Revelation 20,7-9). The book of Revelation throws a divine light that helps us understanding God’s intention in Ezekiel’s prophecy.

### 2.10.4.8 Vision of the rebuilt Temple (Ezekiel 40-48)

About fifteen years after the Temple’s ruin, 'in the 25th year of our captivity' (Ezekiel 40,1), Ezekiel had a vision of its rebuilding. He sees 'a man, whose appearance was like brass. He had a flax cord and a measuring rod in his hand (to measure the Temple)... He measured the thickness of this construction..." (Ezekiel 40,3-5)

It is of course about the spiritual Temple, since God tells Ezekiel: "No alien, uncircumcised in heart, may enter my sanctuary" (the scribes readily add: "and body") (Ezekiel 44,6-9). The book of Revelation speaks also about the construction of the spiritual Temple at the end of times, a Temple also measured to admit exclusively the true believers (Revelation 11,1). This eternal Temple is no other than God and Jesus-Christ (Revelation 21,22), "Nothing unclean may come into it: no one who does what is loathsome or false" (Revelation 21,27). This is the true dimension of the Temple of God that the Jews could not understand.

Ezekiel’s new Temple is the one described in the book of Revelation. It is spiritual. Compare "the water" of life that spreads out of the Temple’s sanctuary seen by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 47,12), with the "river of life" of the book of Revelation (Revelation 22,1-2). The Temple seen by Ezekiel is spiritual, this is a simple deduction owing to the fact that its measurements and its form do not correspond to the Temple built by Ezra after the return from exile. No river of life went out of that Temple’s sanctuary.
Nebuchadnezzar had taken Daniel along in exile probably at the time of the first deportation of Judah (2 Kings 24). He belonged to the Jewish nobility: "From the Israelites, the king ordered... to bring a certain number of boys of royal or noble descent... suitable for service at the royal court... Among them were the Judeans Daniel..." (Daniel 1,3-6). The prophet was only a young child when he left Palestine. "Daniel remained there (in exile) until the first year of king Cyrus" (Daniel 1,20).

Daniel became an important person in the court after having been the only one to reveal to the king his dream and its interpretation (like Joseph with the Pharaoh). Read chapter 2 then resume this course.

The statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar represents 4 empires that follow each other historically: Babylonian, Mede-Persian, Greek and Roman. It was during the fourth of those empires - the Roman - that the Messiah had been announced, He is that "stone which broke away, untouched by any hand, and struck the statue... Then, iron and clay, bronze, silver and gold, all broke into pieces... the wind blew them away, leaving not a trace behind. And the stone grew into a great mountain, filling the whole world" (Daniel 2,34). The 4 empires are explained by Daniel (Daniel 2,36-43). "In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom (that of Christ, whose Kingdom is not of this world: John 18,36) which will never be destroyed" (Daniel 2,44). Jesus came - in the days of those kings - under the Roman empire. His Kingdom still exists and will exist forever in the heart of his faithfuls.

The Roman empire passed; what do certain Jews still await to understand?!

Apart from Nebuchadnezzar’s visions, Daniel, himself, had visions to warn him about the historical evolutions concerning the 4 empires. You will notice that all these visions disturbed and tired the prophet (Daniel 7,28 / 8,27). The divine messages are often heavy to carry.

Here are Daniel’s most important visions:

2.10.5.1 Chapter 7: Vision of the 4 "Animals"

The four "Animals" represent the 4 pagan empires that precede the arrival of Christ. This vision is similar to that of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue (Daniel 2). During the fourth empire will come the Messiah: it is Him "the Old one (because His origins go back to the distant past, to the days of eternity: Micah 5,1) took His seat on the Throne" in order to judge (Daniel 7,9). The judgment is announced by the fact that "the books were open" (Daniel 7,10). This expression is mentioned again in the book of Revelation (Revelation 10,2 / 20,12). These open books are those of the Old Testament. They are "open" to show, by the prophecies therein, that Jesus is really the Messiah.

Thus, those who do not recognize that Jesus is the Messiah are staggered and condemned
by the prophecies that had announced Him (see Luke 24,25-27 / Acts 17,2-11 & 18,28). Isaiah reprimands those who do not understand the prophetic visions, saying that these are for them like "a closed book" (Isaiah 29,11).

Those 4 pagan 'Beasts' are found again in the book of Revelation in the shape of 'four horses' (Revelation 6,1-8). They combine together in one unique 'Beast' that represents them all (Revelation 13). That Beast in the book of Revelation which appears at the end of times, differs from those seen by Daniel: it symbolizes the neo-paganism which appears with force as one unique nation, militarily and universally powerful, and whose centre is Palestine with its coveted capital: Jerusalem (Revelation 13 & 20,7-9). The nation in question is Israel.

2.10.5.2 Chapter 8: Vision of the "Goat from the West"

Vision of the 'Goat from the West' (Alexander the Great: "king of Greece", Daniel 8,5 & 21) who triumphs over the Persian Empire, the "Ram" (Daniel 8,6 & 20). After his multiple victories, Alexander died at the age of 33: "The goat then grew more powerful than ever; but at the height of its strength the great horn snapped, and in its place sprouted four majestic horns..." They are the four generals of Alexander who divided his empire between them (Daniel 8,8). Antiochus Epiphanes, whom you have known while reading the book of Maccabees (1 Maccabees 1,10-44), followed one of these four generals and controlled the area of Palestine. His policy of hellenisation caused the revolt of Maccabees (in 167 B.C.: 1 Maccabees 2). He is symbolized by the "horn which grew to great size towards south and the east and towards the Land of Splendor" (Palestine). That 'Horn' soiled the Temple of Jerusalem by installing 'iniquity (Zeus’ statue) and flung truth to the ground" (Daniel 8,11-12).

Notice that Daniel did not understand the vision (Daniel 8,27). This prophetic principle, already mentioned, should be retained: a prophecy concerning a historical event is only understood after the achievement of the predicted event. Then, the prophetic books that had announced it "open". These books remain "closed" (or sealed) for those who refuse to admit the historical achievement of the prophecy. They will be blinded forever, their eyes closed to the divine truths.

2.10.5.3 Chapter 9: End of the 70 years of deportation

Daniel "was studying the Scriptures' (Jeremiah’s) and praying God to "know when the 70 years of exile, as revealed by God to Jeremiah the prophet, would come to an end" (Daniel 9,2). Instead, God seized the opportunity to reveal to him his plan of salvation by sending the "Anointed Prince" (Jesus) who would be suppressed 69 weeks after the reconstruction of Jerusalem" (Daniel 9,25-26). God invites Daniel not to limit himself to the 70 years of Jeremiah, but instead to look further and have a global vision: the 70 years are 70 "weeks" of years, therefore 70 x 7 = 490 years, approximate time of the Advent of Jesus.

Those "70 weeks of years" are divided into 3 periods: 62-7-1. "After 62 weeks, an Anointed One is put to death (He, indeed, was rejected and crucified) and... (David’s political Zionist throne) will not be His' because His reign is spiritual. Therefore, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple will be again 'ruined by a prince who is to come' (Daniel 9,26). This prophecy was achieved by Titus who destroyed the sanctuary a second time, in the year 70 A.D. Such a prophecy, announcing the second destruction of the Temple, was not likely to comfort Daniel.

The period of time going from Daniel to the 'Anointed Prince' is of 62+7= 69 weeks of years (symbolic). The last week of years concerns the period of the Advent of the Messiah. The last half week, which is 3 days and half, represents the apocalyptic times in which we live. They are known as the end of times, when 'the appalling abomination' will be seen in Jerusalem (Daniel 9,27 / Matthew 24,15). That abomination is the Zionist Antichrist in Jerusalem today: the enemy of Christ on the Holy Land with his successive crimes and destruction. The "70 weeks of years" will last "until the end, until the doom assigned to the devastator (Israel)"
Daniel 9,20-27

(Daniel 9,27). According to Jesus’ words: 'Jerusalem will be trampled down by the gentiles (the Zionists who reject Him) until their time is complete (the time of the State of Israel)' (Luke 21,24).

2.10.5.4 Chapter 12: Vision of the end of time

This last vision is about the apocalyptic period of time that precedes immediately the end of times. 'That will be a time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence' (Daniel 12,1)... 'and such as will never be again', confirmed Jesus later (Matthew 24,21). This period is a sign of the end of times, a sign given so that the wise ones get prepared for the final Judgment, then 'of those who are sleeping in the land of dust, many will awaken, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting disgrace' (Daniel 12,2).

This vision is similar to the apocalyptic visions of John. It reveals a symbolical number of days (1290 & 1335 days: Daniel 12,11-12), a complementary number revealed to John (1260: Revelation 11,3 & 12,6). A comparison between the two texts will be essential in order to understand.

Nevertheless, it is only after the achievement of the apocalyptic events (fall of Israel and 3rd world war) that these figures 'will be revealed' to our intelligence and their symbolism will become clear. This is why Daniel 'listened without understanding" (Daniel 12,8). These events will last 'a time and two times, and half a time', namely three times (or periods) and a half (Daniel 12,7). Those are the 'three - and - half times' and 'three - and - a half days' of Rev 11,8-11. They correspond to the half week of Daniel 9,27. No one can understand that prophecy before 'all these things will come true, once the crushing of the holy peoples' power is over" (Daniel 12,7). That concerns the destruction of the Israeli Antichrist who has seduced and weakened the believers. 'Go, Daniel: these words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the End" (Daniel 12,9). It is only with the explanation of the book of Revelation that all these prophecies will be clarified.

In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Daniel ends at chapter 12. Chapters 13 and 14 are only
found in the Greek Bible. They reveal Daniel’s wisdom. They are easy to understand.

2.10.5.5 The synthesis

Here is a concise text in order to understand well Daniel’s prophecies. I propose to read the first 12 chapters of his book and particularly chapters 1 / 2 / 3,1-23 / 4 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 12. The key to understand these prophecies is to realize that they aim to the time of the future Advent of the Messiah, which was impatiently awaited for, by the Jews of that time.

Jesus, on several occasions - more than 40 times in the Gospels - had said that He was the 'Son of man' (Matthew 8,20 / 12,40 / 24,30... Mark 9,12 / 13,29 / Luke 12,8 / 18,8 / 21,36 / John 1,51 / 6,27 / 9,35 / Acts 7,56). The Jews did not understand and asked him: 'Who is this Son of man?' (John 12,34). Jesus referred to Daniel’s vision (Daniel 7,13-14) which announced the Advent of the Messiah "Advent on the clouds of heaven as it were a Son of man... his kingship will never come to an end...". Notice that with his Advent "the court was in session and the books lay open" (Daniel 7,10). Those books are the prophetic books which should be opened and consulted in order to demonstrate, by the Holy Scriptures, that Jesus is indeed the Messiah announced by the prophets (Acts 17,2 / 17,11). This expression is found again in Revelation 20,12 concerning the Second Advent of Jesus in order to demonstrate - again always by opening Holy Scriptures - and especially the Book of Revelation, this 'other opened book' - that the Messiah, who came 2000 years ago, is back again spiritually.

To understand Daniel’s prophecies, one should realize that everything in his book is centered on the Advent of the Messiah. This is the core of this book. All the other prophecies have a historical nature and relate to the empires preceding the Advent of the Messiah, the empires that followed one another, during and after Daniel: Babylonian, Mede, Persian, Greek then Roman. It is under the last empire, namely the Roman empire, that the book of Daniel announces the Advent of this "Son of man" (Daniel 7,13-14), of this "Anointed One put to death" (Daniel 9,26), of that "stone broken away from the mountain untouched by any hand" (Daniel 2,34), that "corner stone" mentioned by Jesus (Matthew 21,42) which crushed the human empires and whose spiritual kingdom will last forever (Daniel 2,29-45).

Daniel’s anguish was due to the Babylonian exile and to the destruction of the temple. Jeremiah had predicted that this exile would last 70 years (Jeremiah 25,11-12 and 29,10). However, this period was exceeded. Daniel was not seeing the end of Israel’s misfortunes. Because there were two exodus: the first one in 597 B.C. followed by a second one in 587 B.C.. After Cyrus’ edict in 538 B.C., there has been a limited return from exile. Around 515 B.C., there has been an attempt to construct the temple followed by an interruption which lasted 'until the second year of the reign of Darius' due to the opposition of the Samaritans (Ezra 4,24). Thus, we understand Daniel’s anguish who was impatient to see the temple rebuilt: "In the first year of Darius’ reign, I, Daniel, was studying the Scriptures, counting over the number of years – as revealed by Yahweh to the prophet Jeremiah – that were to pass before the desolation of Jerusalem would come to an end, namely 70 years" (Daniel 9,1-2).Then, in the first year of Darius, the 70 years had passed but the temple was not yet rebuilt as Daniel’s and all Jews’ had expected.

Thus, the important point to understand is that Daniel languished to see the temple rebuilt and the Messiah Advent as an Almighty emperor to establish - finally - the Israeli empire in the whole world. Such is also the case of the Zionists Israelis nowadays.

This is why the prophet decided to make penance by fasting and acknowledging, in a well structured pleading, the multiple faults of his people, begging the Creator to forgive and rebuild the temple, not for the merits of the Israeli sinners, but for his own divine honor (Daniel 9,3-19). He seeks to convince Him that His own divine reputation is at stake: 'Let your face smile again on your desolate sanctuary... relying not on our upright deeds but on your great mercy; we pour out our plea to you. Listen, Lord... for your own sake since your city (Jerusalem) and
your people alike bare your name" (Daniel 9,17-19).

Due to this human insistence of good faith, an insistence due to the ignorance and the incomprehension of the divine plan by that "man of predilection" (Daniel 10,11), Heaven answers Daniel’s call - suddenly and with ardor - to stop this litany of vain words: "I was still speaking... when Gabriel, swooped on me in full flight..." (Dn 9,20). Gabriel’s brutal interruption reminds us of Jesus’ teaching: "In your prayers do not babble... your Father knows what you need..." (Matthew 6,7). This angelical intervention was necessary to put an end to Daniel’s avalanche of useless words. Because he acknowledges: "I was still speaking..." (Daniel 9,20).

Gabriel tells him: 'Grasp the meaning of the word, understand the vision: 70 weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city, for putting an end to transgression, for placing the seal on sin, for expiating crime, for introducing everlasting uprightness, for setting the seal on vision and on prophecy, for anointing the holy of holies. Know this, then, and understand...on the wing of the Temple will be the appalling abomination until the end, until the doom assigned to the desolator' (Daniel 9,24-27).

Daniel did not understand at all that vision although Gabriel had told him: "Grasp the meaning of the word, understand the vision". The prophet was in a hurry to see the achievement on the ground, 70 years after the exile, of the events announced by Jeremiah. However, Heaven announces to him that 70 weeks are assigned, namely 70 weeks of years, that is to say 70 X 7 = 490 years, still to come before the historical achievement of prophecies. All that, not for the reconstruction of Jerusalem’s temple, according to Daniel’s expectation, but "for anointing the holy of holies", namely the Messiah who is the real Temple according to the divine conception. Thus, the temple of Jerusalem loses its importance. It is Jesus who clarified that prophecy when He announced, at the time of his Advent, approximately 490 years after (70 weeks of years after Daniel): "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up... He was speaking of the Temple that was His body" (John 2,18-22). Later on, after Jesus’ Resurrection, the apostles understood that the Temple of God is in every soul believing in Jesus (1 Corinthians 3,16-17). The book of Revelation says even better: any material religious building - temple, church, mosque, pagoda etc - becomes null and void, because in the celestial Jerusalem there is no temple and no building of any kind (Revelation 21,22). Daniel was very far from this divine conception, he was overwhelmed, confused by that cult in the spirit. Thus, we understand his exhaustion due to his states of mind (Daniel 8,27 / 10,9-10).

We are given the spirit of Jesus to understand the prophecies according to God’s intention. That’s why Daniel could not yet understand them. John the Baptist, himself, who came five centuries later, he who was the forerunner of the Messiah had not yet understood them. According to Jesus’ testimony, "There has never been anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater that he" (Matthew 11,11). Because even John the Baptist, like Daniel, expected a theocratic Israeli kingdom. However, 'the least in the Kingdom of heaven' has understood well the spiritual and interior dimension of the divine Kingdom and of its eternal kingship. The psychological upheaval on Daniel, though unconscious, resulted in the fact that Daniel "lost consciousness and was ill for several days" (Daniel 8,27).

Daniel’s visions do not only concern Jesus’ first Advent; they even extend in time up to His Return in apocalyptic times: "A time of great distress, unparalleled since nations came into existence" (Daniel 12,1). Jesus mentioned again this prophecy in Mathew 24,21 and referred to 'the appalling abomination' of which the prophet Daniel spoke (Matthew 24,15). With his first and second Advent, Jesus "opens the books", namely the prophetic books which announce his Advent and his Return for judgment (Daniel 7,10 and Revelation 20,12). Thus, all Daniel’s prophecies are accomplished with these two Advents. We are still awaiting the "doom assigned to the desolator" (Daniel 9,27): namely the fall of the Beast. Then, and only then, shall we be able to understand what is still left to understand from the prophecies.

We should remember that the book of Daniel points mainly at the two Advents of Jesus who will explain, upon his return, Daniel’s words who were divinely intended to remain "sealed
until the time of the end* (Daniel 12,4). And now is the time!

2.10.5.6 Supplement

Let’s reflect on these 2 situations: Daniel in the past and us today, the Romans with the Israelis in the past and the USA with the Israelis today:

The second chapter of Daniel presents the dream of Nebuchadnezzar about the statue, the head of which 'was of fine gold... and its feet part iron, part clay'. This means, 'that the two will be mixed together in human seed, but they will not hold together, any more than iron will blend with clay' (Daniel 2,43). This fragile human seed that occurred three centuries after Daniel, indicated a fragile alliance between the Romans and the Israelis of that time as revealed in the first book of Maccabees (1 Maccabees 8,17 etc). This alliance 'in human seed', i.e. between Romans and Israelis, could only be fragile. Such a human mixture is as weak as the impossible amalgam between iron and clay. The Romans, at that time, had the reputation of being invincible, a reputation that the United States have today (1 Maccabees 8,1-14 and especially verses 11-13). The unconditional Roman support to the Jews is seen in the letter revealed in 1 Maccabees 15,15-24. Under the Roman Empire, Israel existed, then, already as a State. That is why it is not wrong to say that "this Beast" (Revelation 17,8) was in the past supported by the Romans. All that prepared the Advent of the One whose Kingdom will not have an end and "will never be destroyed..." (Daniel 2,44), because this kingdom is present in the souls. In fact, it was under the Roman Empire that our blessed Savior came. In spite of the support of the Romans to the Israelis in the past, it was Titus, a Roman, who destroyed the Israeli kingdom in the year 70. Thus appeared the fragility of that alliance.

Today 'again', Israel, the first apocalyptic Beast, obtained the protection of the almighty American State, the second apocalyptic Beast. This also prepared, and still prepares the arrival of the One whose "Kingdom will not have an end...". But nowadays, it concerns his Second Advent, his Return, in the soul. Those who do not sleep but remain faithful until the end, remaining awake with the weapon of discernment, "will open to Him as soon as He knocks on the door of the heart" (Luke 12,35-36 / 24,33 / Revelation 3,20).

2.11 Lesson 11 - The 12 small prophetic books

2.11.1 Hosea

He comes from the North. He prophesied against the Jews "during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah kings of Judah (in the South) and of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel (in the North)" (Hosea 1,1). He is thus contemporary of Isaiah (who also prophesied against Ahaz). Hosea is contemporary of Amos. It is possible that he saw the ruin of Samaria (721 BC).

God asked him to be a sign for the Jews by taking for wife a 'whore (like all the Jewish people), and get children with a whore; for the country itself has become nothing but a whore by abandoning Yahweh" (Hosea 1,2). God declares by his mouth: "I shall put an end to the sovereignty of the House of Israel. When that day comes, I shall break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel" (Hosea 1,2-5). This is the valley of Megiddo, where the disastrous defeat of Josiah took place one century and half later (2 Kings 23,29-30). The name returns in the book of Revelation as the symbol of the final defeat of the modern Israel (Revelation 16,16).

Hosea announces, like Jeremiah later (Jeremiah 3,18), the meeting of Israel and Judah under "a single head...for great will be the Day of Jezreel" (Hosea 2,2). This "single head" is the Messiah who must gather in His Person all men after the destruction of the Israeli army which is an obstacle to the plan of God. This is why it will be "great the Day of Jezreel", that will see the destruction of this army: 'Israel, you have destroyed yourself" (Hosea 13,9). Hosea is
Historical context of Daniel’s prophecies

The Assyrian Empire

612 Fall of Nineveh

1. The Babylonian Empire

609 Battle of Meggido
605 Battle of Carchemish
604 Nebuchadnezzar (604-562)

587 Deportation (Jeremiah 25: the 70 years)
Deportation of Daniel (Daniel 1)

545 Balthazar (son of Nabonide, son of Nebuchadnezzar)

2a. The Empire of Medes

555 Cyrus the Persian: revolt against the Medes

539 Cyrus enters in Babylon: Death of Balthazar (Daniel 5,30)

2b. The Persian Empire

538 Cyrus’ edict (Daniel 9)
530 Cambyses (son of Cyrus)
Interruption building Temple
Ezra 4 and 5

522 Darius 1 : (522-486) (Daniel 6,1)
Resumes building Temple
Ezra 6

3. The Greek Empire

336 Alexander The Great
333 Battle of Issus
331 Battle of Arbela
319 Four Seleucides

175 Antiochus IV Epiphanes
(175-164) (Daniel 7,8 / 8,9)

170 Abomination of desolation
(Daniel 9,27 / 11,31 / 12,11
Matthew 24,25)

63 Pompey takes Jerusalem
1 Jesus : (Daniel 9,25)

70 Titus destroyed the 2nd Temple
(Daniel 9,26)

N.B.: To read:
1 Maccabees 1: compare with Daniel 11,31-39
Ezra and Nehemiah.

Historical context of Daniel’s prophecies
against Jewish nationalism and its kingdom (Hosea 8,4 and 13,9-11); he reveals a non military, but spiritual salvation, a salvation which has to be "not by bow or sword, or force of arms, not by horses, or horsemen" (Hosea 1,7). See also Hosea 10,13-15 about the military destruction of Israel: 'you have trusted in your chariots, in your great numbers of warriors' rather than in God. Hosea thus dared to denounce, like Samuel before him, the Israeli royalty, therefore a Jewish nationalism.

Hosea rises up especially against the priests and the so-called prophets who leave the people in the ignorance (Hosea 4,4-6). While reading this great prophecy, we can understand very well his pain; it is an interior moan addressed to the Jews. He denounces their spiritual adulteries predicting the deportation of the North (Hosea 8,6-13). The Israelites persecuted him: "The prophet is mad...a fowler’s trap is placed on all his paths; and in the shrine of his God there is enmity towards him" (Hosea 9,7-8).

2.11.2 Joel

Reading Joel carefully you will note that he addressed his words to two different societies, one centuries far from the other:

1. To the Jews of Judah

2. Well later, to all the nations.

Both societies will be punished for their unfaithfulness. After the punishment there will be a restoration.

This is the general theme of Joel. Here are the details:

2.11.2.1 Punishment of Judah

Joel addresses to the Judaeans the divine invectives: 'Blow the ram’s horn in Zion (Jerusalem) sound the alarm on my holy mountain!' (Joel 2,1). "For a nation has invaded my country, mighty and innumerable...: it has reduced my vines to a desolation, and my fig trees to splinters' (Joel 1,6-7). "Vine" and 'Fig tree' are symbols of Israel. When Jesus curses the fig tree, He insinuated the destruction of Israel (Matthew 21,18-21).

Joel is a post exilium prophet. The announced punishment is thus the Roman invasion and the destruction of the Temple by Titus (70 AC). The priests are invited to penitence before the worship is abolished in the Temple: 'Priests, put on sackcloth (symbol of repentance)... For the Temple of your God has been deprived of cereal offering and libation (that the faithful ones offered)... (Joel 1,13-14)... Come back to Me with all your heart... Tear your hearts and not your clothes, and come back to Yahweh your God, for he is gracious and compassionate... Who knows if he will not come back (on his decision to destroy you), relent and leave a blessing behind him (and does not punish any more because of your repentance)...' (Joel 2,12-14).

The predicted plague will come 'from the North' and it will be similar, for the devastation it will cause, to an invasion of grasshoppers: "What the nibbler has left, the grown locust has eaten, what the grown locust has left, the hopper has eaten' (Joel 1,4). This plague of grasshoppers is also mentioned by Amos (Amos 4,9) and Malachi (Malachi 3,11). It is taken up again in the book of Revelation (Revelation 9,2-11).

This punishment is qualified as "the Day of Yahweh" (Joel 1,15 / 2,1 / 2,11), a prophetic expression that has become traditional (Isaiah 13,6 / Ezekiel 30,2-3/ Amos 5,18). Some Jews thought that this day would have been in their favour; but all the prophets invited them not to deceive themselves: "The day of Yahweh is near, coming as destruction from Shaddai (strong-God)... (Joel 1,15)...Let everybody in the country tremble...Day of darkness and gloom" (Joel
"Disaster for you who long for the Day of Yahweh... It will mean darkness, not light" (Amos 5,18).

2.11.2.2 The Restoration

After the destruction, God announces the restoration: "I will make up to you for the years devoured by grown locust and hopper...You will eat to your heart’s content" (Joel 2,25). This restoration will be done by the Christ and will be spiritual; it will be done by His Body and His Blood. Jesus had spoken to his Apostles about it: "In truth I tell you, when everything is made new again..." (Matthew 19,28). Those whose mentality will remain materialist and political will not taste this divine Food and "the new wine will be snatched from your lips" (Joel 1,5). The 'new wine' is the one Jesus gives for the restoration of the heart and soul (John 6,53-57 / Luke 22,14-20 / Matthew 26,27-29).

This first restoration is done by the gift of the Spirit of God: "After that (the plague of the grasshoppers) I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity" (thus on all men - by Jesus - not on the Jews only) (Joel 3,1). The Jews understood this restoration politically, a "resurrection" of the State of Israel.

The Apostles of Jesus, instead, understood that it was an interior spiritual dimension in human soul. This is why Peter refers to this prophecy of the effusion of the divine Spirit in Acts 2,17-21. He still specifies in Acts 3,20-21 that the 'universal restoration which God proclaimed speaking trough His holy prophets' will be realised by Jesus.

This restoration is accomplished in two stages: the first took place with the Coming of Jesus, 2,000 years ago and the second is currently taking place in our apocalyptic times by the Return of Jesus Christ within us. I speak about the latter further in the text "the Key of Revelation".

2.11.2.3 Punishment of the world

The punishment administered to Israel is an example, a lesson for all the nations of the world that has become indifferent to the message of Jesus. The cities will be on their turn judged, punished, because of their injustices and their defects: "When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I shall gather all the nations together and take them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; there I shall put them on trial because of Israel, my people and my heritage (Joel 4,1). Let the nations rouse themselves and march to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I shall sit in judgement on all the nations around. Ply the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come and tread, for the winepress is full. The vats are overflowing, so great is their wickedness...Multitude on multitude in the Valley of Decision!..." (Joel 4,11-16).

The 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' does not exist geographically; it is a symbolic place whose name means: 'God judges'; it is also the 'Valley of the Judgement' or of the 'Destruction' or of 'the divine Decision' to kill the enemies of God and his Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

This judgement takes place soon before the end of times since the "harvest is ripe" and the "winepress is full". The Revelation of John takes up again the same expressions of Joel (Revelation 14,14-19) and explains that Jesus, 'The Word of God... is the one who will tread out the wine of Almighty God’s fierce retribution" (Revelation 19,13-15).

Thus, 'Israel' or 'the people of God', whom Joel (Joel 4,1) speaks about, is composed of the disciples of Jesus. This is the true people of God. In our apocalyptic days, all the nations supporting Israel - a state based upon human injustice and the denial of Jesus - are thus judged. The deniers of Christ are gathered from all nations in Palestine "to be treaded there" like the grape in the press. This is the 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' where God judges, crushes, under the feet of the Messiah, the Antichrist and all the nations which support it.

With the first advent of Jesus, there has been the first effusion of the divine Spirit in all those who believed in Him. This effusion was not done without bloody events: destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple in 70 AC. At the time of the return of Jesus Christ, the second
effusion will be done by bloody events (and it is currently taking place) - wars and revolutions which prepare the 3rd world war: "After this, I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. I shall show portents in the sky and on earth: blood and fire and columns of smoke", the Lord says (Joel 3,3-5). These signs indicate wars: the columns of smoke are characteristic of the modern bombs...in particular nuclear bombs.

Jesus speaks again about all these signs (Matthew 24/ Luke 21), about "the distress of these days' when "the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light" (Matthew 24,29), as Joel also said (Joel 3,4) and as the Book of Revelation repeats (Revelation 6,12). One does not have to understand those expressions literally expecting the disappearance of the sun and of the moon. They are symbolic and prophetic expressions. They indicate difficult times, the disappearance of faith and morality: the eclipse of the spiritual Sun.

2.11.2.4 "The Universal Restoration"

After these cataclysms, all will be renewed: 'When that Day comes, the mountains will run with new wine,... and all the stream-beds of Judah will run with water. A (spiritual) fountain will spring from Yahweh’s Temple" (Joel 4,18-19).

The 'new wine' (or the 'fresh juice of the vine' as some translate) symbolises the 'new times' that will follow the universal punishment. They are 'the new Heaven and the new Earth' after the defeat of the enemies of Jesus (Revelation 21,1). Egypt and Edom, considered enemies of Israel by Joel (Joel 4,19) symbolise the unbelievers who will be always in desolation.

This is the time of a spiritual collective regeneration, I say exactly spiritual and collective. It occurs inside the souls of the believers, of all the true believers. The Christ Himself will appear to them as He had promised (John 14,21) and as Peter had revealed: "God will send you the Christ he has predestined, that is Jesus, whom heaven must keep till the universal restoration comes which God proclaimed, speaking through his holy prophets' (Acts 3,20-21). And as Paul also reveals: 'Christ will manifest himself a second time... (in spirit, in the soul) to those who are waiting for him, to bring them salvation" (Hebrews 9,28).

Those who will have understood that the universal restoration is an Israeli national resurrection will perish in the 'Valley of Jehoshaphat', crushed in the "tank of divine anger'.

2.11.3 Amos

He is the oldest of the prophets writers; his mission lasted from 783 to 743 BC. He is thus contemporary of Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, but he preceded them.

Amos preached in the North, at the sanctuary of Bethel, where he was sent by God to prophesy against Israel and its king, Jeroboam II (Amos 7,7-17). He was from the South, from Tekoa in Judea (Amos 1,1), a reason more to be hated by the northern Israelites.

Amos is a simple shepherd, without wealth nor instruction. He does not belong to a recognised prophetic institution, nor does he have a diploma to prophesy like other prophets of his time. He recognizes himself: 'I am not a prophet, nor do I belong to a prophetic brotherhood' (Amos 7,14), being member of no fraternity or prophetic grouping (like certain 'charismatic' movements nowadays). God is not impressed by religious diplomas in the choice of His men. Furthermore God took Amos "as he followed the flock" (Amos 7,15), just like He will have chosen Peter, Andrew, James and John eight centuries later, tearing them from their nets of fishermen to make them Apostles of his Messiah. He scorned the Scribes and the Pharisees – even if they were more cultured and more educated in religious topics - preferring men with simple hearts, docile to the Holy Spirit.

God asks Amos to prophesy against Israel: 'I am going to put a plumb-line in among my people Israel; never again will I overlook their offences... The sanctuaries of Israel laid waste' (Amos 7,7-9). The 'plumb-line' is a measuring instrument: God 'measures' the rectitude of the souls, as in Revelation 11,1, to reveal the hearts and to condemn the bad ones. It is the
prediction of the Assyrian invasion (Amos 3,11) and of the babylonian deportation (Amos 5,27).

Amos is the first speaking about the "Day of Yahweh... it will mean darkness, not light" (Amos 5,18) and about the "remnant" who will remain after the punishment (Amos 5,15).

He is the prophet of the social justice, because he rose against the rich person and their disproportionate luxury (Amos 2,6-7 / 4,1-3 / 5,7-12).

His prophecy extended even against Judah, predicting its ruin: "Yahweh says this:... I shall send fire down on Judah to devour the palaces of Jerusalem" (Amos 2,4-5).

Amos denounced the exterior superficial worship, revealing that God dislikes it, that the worship He requires is the practise of justice: "I hate, I scorn your festivals. Your oblations I do not accept them... But let justice flow like water, and uprightness like a never-failing stream" (Amos 5,21-24).

2.11.4 Obadiah

This is the shortest prophetic book. The name of the prophet means "Slave of God" (in Arabic: "Abdallah").

This small book is a prophecy against Edomites, as they had invaded Judah: "For the slaughter, for the violence done to your brother Jacob, shame will cover you and you will be annihilated for ever" (Obadiah 1,9-10).

Obadiah predicts to the Judeans a restoration: "People from the Negeb (Southern of Judea) will occupy the Mount of Esau (Edom)...etc" (Obadiah 1,19-21). This restoration is still nationalist with its expansionist ambitions to seize Edom.

2.11.5 Jonah

The story reported in this book is symbolic, non historical, even if it is ascribed to the prophet Jonah mentioned in 2 Kings 14,25.

The moral of the story is that God accepts the repentance of all men, even if they are Ninevites (Assyrians), enemies of the Jews. God is thus not the monopoly, nor the possession of the Jews only, but of the whole humanity.

Jonah is sent to the Ninevites, just as the Apostles of Jesus preached the repentance and the Messiah to the Pagans, and as Jesus was benevolent with Roman soldiers. This is a cause of scandal for the fanatics, Jews and others. What would some Christians think today, if one of their bishops preferred the Moslems to them? And vice versa, what would some Moslems say of one of their religious chiefs, if he preferred righteous Christians to impious Moslems?

The stay of Jonah in the belly of a whale during three days and three nights (Jonah 2,1) symbolises the burial of the Messiah during three days before his resurrection. The psalm pronounced by Jonah, after his exit from the belly of the whale, can be perfectly applied to Christ buried under earth after his crucifixion and His resurrection the third day: "To the roots of the mountains I sank into the underworld, and its bars closed round me for ever. But you raised my life from the pit, Yahweh my God", said Jonah (Jonah 2,7).

This is why Jesus spoke of Jonah like a "sign" (Matthew 12,40-41). This sign was and remains misunderstood by many, in particular by the majority of the Jews who will be judged by the men of Nineveh - who will condemn them for not believing in Jesus as the Messiah! Because the Ninevites believed in Jonah, less important than Jesus (Matthew 12,41). This judgement is a fatal blow to all fanatics.

2.11.6 Micah

Micah is a countryman of the South of Judea, "of Moresheth", in the South of Hebron. He prophesied "during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings de Judah" (Micah 1,1). Amos, a simple villager, is mentally similar to Amos', a simple shepherd. He is contemporary
of Isaiah. Like Amos, he denounced the unrestrained luxury of those "seizing the fields that they covet, they take over houses as well" (Micah 2,1-2).

He denounced the impiety of the Jews and prophesied the ruin of Samaria and Judea: "So I shall make Samaria a ruin...for there is no cure for the wounds that Yahweh inflicts; the blow falls on Judah, it falls on the gateway of my people, on Jerusalem itself" (Micah 1,6-9). He predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Micah 3,12) as well as the deportation (Micah 4,10): 'That is why, thanks to you, Zion will become plough land, Jerusalem a heap of rubble and the Temple Mount a wooded height (Micah 3,12)... To Babylon you must go' (Micah 4,10).

Micah comforts the Jews by the Messiah-King who 'shall gather them together like sheep in an enclosure...Their king leading the way' (Micah 2,12-13). This king will be born in Bethlehem: 'But you (Bethlehem) Ephrata, the least of the clans of Judah, from you will come for me a future ruler of Israel, whose origins go back to the distant past, to the days of eternity" (Micah 5,1). This prophecy has been achieved in Jesus, born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2,6 / John 7,42). Retain this important prophecy well, especially because it reveals the eternal origin of the Messiah (compares to his divine names in Isaiah 9,5).

Micah also comforts the Jews by the restoration after the ruin. But this restoration was once again understood from the nationalist point of view: "Yahweh's Temple Mountain will tower above the mountains...Then many nations will come...To you your former sovereignty will return, the royal power of the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4,1-8). Again the Messiah is seen only as the nationalist king whose 'greatness will extend henceforth to the most distant parts of the country...He will save us from Assyria, should he invade our country" (Micah 5,2-5).

Micah had a great influence. The Jews remembered his prophecies several centuries after him, as Jeremiah testifies (Jeremiah 26,18) refering to the prophecy of Micah on the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Micah 3,12).

### 2.11.7 Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk

These 3 prophets must be studied together because they are contemporary. They lived the same difficult period which preceded the fall of Nineveh (in 612 BC). They were animated by the same hope, to see the national restoration of Israel after the so much hoped fall of Nineveh. However, after this fall, there was a complete despair with the total defeat of Megiddo and the death of king Josiah who incarnated the hopes of the nationalists Jewish.

Historically, Zephaniah is older than Nahum. I thus will introduce him before the two other prophets, contrary to his place in the Bible.

#### 2.11.7.1 Zephaniah

Zephaniah prophesies under Josiah, therefore between 640 and 609 BC (year of Josiah's death in Megiddo). Josiah had ascended the throne when he was very young (he was only 8 years old in 640 B.C.: see 2 Kings 22,1). He thus had not yet undertaken his religious reforms and the clergy was really corrupted. Zephaniah thus rises against the ministers of worship and announces the destruction of Judah. This destruction is the "Day of Yahweh' which is 'near, and coming with great speed', and will be a "day of distress and tribulation..." (Zephaniah 1,14-18).

Josiah was influenced by Zephaniah. He undertook his reforms to avoid the worst for the nation. But, like the prophetess Huldah had predicted at this time, the divine punishment was inevitable (2 Kings 22,14-20).

After this punishment, a humble and small 'remnant' will remain, which will turn back to God (Zephaniah 3,12). It is by this remnant that the "restoration", predicted by the prophets, will be done. Anyway Zephaniah keeps on believing this restoration to be nationalist (Zephaniah 3,19-20).
Zephaniah prophesies not only against Judah, but also against Assyria and predicts the fall of Nineveh: "God will make Nineveh a waste" (Zephaniah 2,13-15). By predicting the end of Assyria and the ruin of Judah, Zephaniah indirectly proclaims the advent of the Babylonian empire which, at his time, was strengthening more and more.

2.11.7.2 Nahum

He prophesies few years after Zephaniah. The danger for Nineveh (Assyria) becomes clearer with the increase of the Babylonian power. Nahum breaks out against Nineveh a very short time before its fall: "The destroyer (Nebupolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar) has advanced on you... The sluices of the River (the Tiger) are open, and the palace melts in terror (palace of Nineveh, the Babylonians had already crossed the Tiger to reach Nineveh)... Nineveh is as a lake, whose waters are draining away (Nahum 2,2-9)... Nineveh has been ruined!" (Nahum 3,7).

Exalted by the prospect of the defeat of the Assyrians, enemies of Israel, Nahum sees nothing but salvation for Judah and its restoration. He is overcome by the hope of the (national) restoration: 'See... Peace! (for Judah, by the destruction of Nineveh)... (Nahum 2,1)... For Yahweh has restored the vine of Jacob...’ (Nahum 2,3). This hope did not last very long, because the defeat of the Jews in Megiddo in 609 BC followed quickly that of Nineveh in 612 BC. Thus, the hope of the salvation leaves the place to the bewilderment. Jeremiah will say few years later on this subject: "We are hoping for peace – no good came of it...for the moment of cure – nothing but terror" (Jeremiah 8,15 and 14,19).

However the prophecy of the restoration is not vain, if it is spiritually understood, according to the divine intention: in Jesus.

2.11.7.3 Habakkuk

He prophesies after the fall of Nineveh. The danger for the Israelites comes now from the "Chaldeans" (Babylonians): "For look, I am stirring up the Chaldaeans...to seize the homes of others" (Habakkuk 1,6).

Habakkuk resumed in a veiled way the threats of Micah against Jerusalem: "Disaster to anyone who builds a town with bloodshed and founds a city (Jerusalem) on wrong-doing" (Habakkuk 2,12 / Micah 3,10). It is the proclamation of the punishment by the Babylonian invasion.

2.11.8 Haggai and Zechariah

These two prophets have to be seen together because they worked together for the rebuilding of the Temple after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 5,1).

2.11.8.1 Haggai

The two chapters of Haggai are centred on the rebuilding of the Temple. Haggai encourages Zerubbabel and Joshua to build this sanctuary: 'The word of Yahweh was addressed through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak the high priest... Go up into the hills (of the Temple), fetch timber (for construction) and rebuild the House (Temple)' (Haggai 1,1-8).

The second Temple was completed about the year 515 BC. It was not as luxurious as the first and the old men cried with the nostalgic memory of the first scintillating Temple of 'glory' (Ezra 3,12). Haggai consoles them and promises a Temple more marvellous than the first: 'Is there anyone left among you who saw this Temple in its former glory? And how does it look to you now? Does it not seem as though there is nothing there? But take courage now,... the glory of this new Temple will surpass that of the old one, says Yahweh Sabaoth' (Haggai 2,3-9). That did not happen since this Temple was destroyed by Titus in 70 BC... is Haggai
an authentic prophet?!

Haggai and all the community understood materially this 'glory', believing in collecting the wealth of all the non-Jews. Indeed, Haggai makes the Lord say: 'I shall shake all the nations, and the treasures of all the nations will flow in, and I shall fill this Temple with glory, says Yahweh Sabaath. Mine is the silver, mine the gold!' (Haggai 2,7-8). It is difficult to believe that the Lord required all this material wealth for the coffers of the State of Israel! Such was certainly not the intention of God who always insists on the spiritual glory of the Temple, the one within the souls of the believers, and not in the vain glory of money and gold. This spiritual glory exceeds infinitely the poor and the false material glory of the Temple of Solomon. Jesus speaks of it while saying: 'Think of the flowers growing in the fields...I assure you that not even Solomon (famous for his taste for luxury) in all his royal robes was clothed like one of these' (Matthew 6,28-29).

Before the invasion, the prophets predicted the punishment. During the exile, they spoke about consolation, and, after the return in Palestine, they encouraged the national restoration. At the time of Haggai and Zechariah, the national hope was based on Zerubbabel, the descendant of king David. He was the Governor. The community hoped he would restore the kingdom of Israel. He was believed to be the announced Messiah and Haggai, 'inspired', says to him: 'I shall take you Zerubbabel...- Yahweh declares - and make you like a signet ring. For I have chosen you' (Haggai 2,23). This divine choice did not mean that Zerubbabel was the Messiah, but that the Messiah would have come from his line (Matthew 1,12-13).

2.11.8.2 Zechariah

Zechariah pushed the people to rebuild the Temple (Zechariah 1,16). He had 8 visions of which the two most important ones are:

1. The 'measurement' of Jerusalem means testing the hearts in order to restore the community with true believers (Zechariah 2,5-9. Compare to Revelation 11,1 and 21,15).


Zechariah proclaimed an important prophecy about the Messiah 'humble and riding on a donkey', and not on a tank of war; He who will remove 'the chariots and the horses' of war (Zechariah 9,9-10). This is a big innovation in judeo-zionist aggressive mentality. This prophecy is achieved with Jesus, the humble Messiah par excellence, who entered Jerusalem on a humble donkey (Matthew 21,1-5 and 11,29).

2.11.9 Malachi

This book derives its name from the word 'Malachi' that means 'my Angel'. This name derives from the fact that the author prophesies the close coming of the Messiah named 'the Angel - malach- of the Covenant' (Malachi 3,1). Malachi (My Angel) is thus a symbolic name and the unknown author writes after the return from exile and the rebuilding of the Temple, about 450 BC.

As the other prophets before him did, Malachi denounces the impiety of the priests and the vanity of their worship, declaring destroyed the covenant of God with Levi, tribe which the priests derive from: 'And now, priests this commandment is for you!...I shall certainly lay a curse on you and I shall curse your blessing...I am going to break your arm and throw offal in your faces – the offal of your solemn feasts – and sweep you away with it...You yourselves have turned aside from the way... You have destroyed the covenant of Levi' (Malachi 2,1-8. See New Covenant in Jeremiah 31,31-32).
The biblical course

Remember that David had prophesied the establishment, by the Messiah, of a priesthood different from that of Levi, a priesthood 'of the order of Melchizedek' (Psalm 110,4). This priesthood has been instituted by Jesus; it is the only priesthood which pleases God (Hebrews 7,11-19).

The new in Malachi’s book is the revelation of a Precursor sent to prepare the Coming of the Messiah: "Look I shall send my messenger (a Precursor) to clear a way before me. And suddenly the lord whom you seek will come to his Temple; yes the Angel of the Covenant (the Messiah), for whom you long is on his way, says Yahweh Sabaoth" (Malachi 3,1).

This precursory messenger of Christ is 'Elijah': "Look, I shall send you the prophet Elijah before the great and awesome Day of Yahweh comes..." (Malachi 3,23). Jesus explained that this prophecy referred to John the Baptist (Matthew 17,10-13), who has come, not as a reincarnation of Elijah, but in the same "spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1,17) as I have already explained.

This prophecy of the Angel (Malachi), the forerunner of the Messiah, is specific of Malachi. No other prophet did speak about this fact. This is why it is the most important point of this book and gives its name to it: Malachi (My Angel).

Here the study of the books of the Old Covenant ends, a covenant become obsolete, as you have noted, and requiring a reform. This one was achieved by Jesus who inaugurated times of the spiritual and universal restoration that we are still living today. Because, as Paul announces, the material rules of the Old Covenant "are rules about outward life (the body), connected with food and drink and washing at various time, which are in force only until the time comes to set things right" (Hebrews 9,10). We now will study the books which present this marvellous and vivifying New Covenant which "sets things right" by and in Jesus, the Messiah.

2.12 Lesson 12 - Books of the New Testament

The New Testament has 27 books, of which some do not exceed a few lines (2 & 3 John and Jude). To study them, we will divide them as follows:


The 4 Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles

2.12.1 Presentation of the synoptic Gospels

Gospel literally means 'Good News' (of the Greek: 'Ev': good and 'angelos': message or news). It is the proclamation of the 'Good News' of the Advent of this Messiah awaited with so much thirst.

There are four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first three are more or less similar and present a biography of Jesus. They have the same major concern: to show that Jesus is really the Messiah awaited by the Jews, though he 'neither liberated Israel' politically (Luke 24,21) nor 'restored the (political) royalty in Israel' (Acts 1,6). This point of view is common in the Gospels. This is the reason why they are called the "synoptic" Gospels, from the Greek "syn", which means 'same', and "optikos" which means 'point of view'. These three Gospels present a human biography of Jesus. Such is their common point of view. But John, on the other hand, reveals Jesus’ divinity.
I will present to you the synoptic Gospels, starting with the Gospel of Matthew. Then, I shall point out the common points this gospel has with Mark’s and Luke’s. But first, I present each of these three evangelists. After the synoptic Gospels, we’ll study the Gospel of John.

2.12.1.1 Matthew

He is one of the twelve Apostles of Christ. He is mentioned in Matthew 9,9 and 10,3. He was Jewish and hated by the Jews because he was "publican", i.e. he collected from the Jewish public the taxes imposed by the Romans. Thus, he took from the Jews to give to the Romans, he who was a Jew. But, when Jesus invited Matthew to follow him (Matthew 9,9), he answered the call at once, dropping everything. Mark and Luke call him by his Jewish name: 'Levi' (Mark 2,13-14 / Luke 5,27-28).

Matthew was the first to have written a history of Jesus. He wrote it for the Jews who had become Christians; this is the reason why he wrote in Hebrew (Aramaic) and often refers to prophecies of the Old Testament to show that Jesus achieved what had already been predicted about the Messiah (Matthew 1,22 / 2,5-6 / 2,15-18 / 3,3 / 4,14-16 etc...). The Gospel of Matthew is the only book of the New Testament written in Aramaic, all the others were written in Old Greek, the international language of the time which the Apostles had learnt and by which they preached (Acts 21,37-40).

2.12.1.2 Mark

He was not from the group of the Apostles, but joined their ministry after the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 12,12). He followed Paul and helped him (Acts 12,25), then he followed Peter who considered him as "his son" (1 Peter 5,13). He was to some extent his secretary. Inspired by Peter, Mark wrote his Gospel which is considered by some as being, indirectly Peter’s. Many biblical commentators think that the 'young man' mentioned by Mark without being named (Mark 14,51-52), is no other than Mark himself, because this detail should not have been mentioned had it not concerned the writer himself.

2.12.1.3 Luke

Luke was a pagan doctor. He knew Christ through Paul and became his travelling companion (Colossians 4,14) and his faithful collaborator, when others gave up (2 Timothy 4,9-11). He was influenced by Paul and wrote his Gospel in Greek to the notable named 'Theophilus' (Luke 1,3). His Gospel is indirectly Paul’s, just like the Gospel of Mark reflected the lesson of Peter’s teachings. He addresses it specifically to the noble Theophilus (Luke 1,3-4).

You will notice that Luke wrote to Theophilus with the concern of being precise in the facts "as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (the Virgin Mary, Peter, etc... Luke 1,2-3). I, in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning". He is the only one to give details on the birth of John the Baptist, the Annunciation made to Mary and the childhood of Jesus (Luke 1 and 2). That is due to his medical scientific formation which is precise.

Luke wrote the book of the Acts of the Apostles which he also addressed to the noble 'Theophilus' (Acts 1,1) to inform him of the history of Jesus and his disciples, after the Ascension of Jesus to Heaven (Acts 1,1-11). Thus, the book of the Acts can be regarded as the continuation of the Gospel of Luke. I recommend you to study it with the other synoptic Gospels, before the Gospel of John.

Starting with the Gospel of Matthew, we will familiarise ourselves with these first three Gospels: the synoptic Gospels.

The Jews, as you know, knew that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. Matthew hastens to tranquillise them by specifying that Jesus is a descendant of king David. Thus, he
starts his Gospel by giving the "genealogy of Jesus, the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham, etc..." (Matthew 1,1). The majority of the names mentioned by Matthew in this genealogy are found in the Old Testament, in particular those of the kings of Judaea, from David to the deportation until the return of exile with Zerubbabel (Matthew 1,12).

Luke also mentions the genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3,23-38). But, instead of giving us a list of names from Abraham to Jesus, as Matthew did, Luke starts, on the contrary, from Jesus to Abraham and goes up to "Adam, son of God" (Luke 3,38). The difference in the names of the ancestors is due to the fact that Luke says that Jesus is son of David by "Nathan, son of David" (Luke 3,31), whereas Matthew presents him as son of David by Solomon, son of David (Matthew 1,6-7). You will find the name of Nathan in 2 Samuel 5,14 and 1 Chronicles 3,5; he is one of the sons of David born in Jerusalem, and older than Solomon. Whether Jesus descends from the one or the other does not matter, nevertheless he is the "descendant and son of David". Moreover, notice that Luke, seeking the precision in his informations, knows that Jesus 'was believed to be son of Joseph, son of Heli etc...' (Luke 3,23). This "belief" adds an important nuance and invites us to exceed the human, strict and meticulous genealogy of names. Jesus is, above all, Son of God!

This fact especially invites us not to stop at the human genealogy, but to go, as John did in his Gospel, up to the divine genealogy of Jesus as John said: "At the beginning was the Word (Jesus)... and the Word was God... (John 1,1)... And the Word was made flesh and lived among us...' (John 1,14). The importance of this last genealogy completely eclipses the previous one and Jesus Himself invites us to consider it when He told the Jews: "If David calls him (Jesus) Lord how then can he be his son?" (Matthew 22,41-46 and Psalm 110,1).

Some Jews use this text to claim that Jesus "acknowledges" not being the son of David. This is wrong! Jesus does not mean that, but that he is even more than just the son of David: he is the "only Son of God", the only one to be miraculously conceived in the world by God, in the womb of a virgin woman, without the intervention of a man. And, especially, that He existed already before his incarnation.

I insisted on the topic of the genealogy, because many people, weak and immature in faith, and many enemies of the Gospel, base the "difference" between the genealogy of Matthew and that of Luke to claim that the Gospels are false, the proof being this 'divergence' between the two gospels on this point. This is a superficial criticism made by people who are unable to look into the depth of things. However, it is necessary, that you should be informed and attentive.

At this stage, you can read the texts on the genealogy in Matthew and Luke as well as the other texts mentioned. But do not read yet the Gospels entirely before studying my explanations.

I shall point out from the Gospel of Matthew the main points which need clarification.

2.12.2 Jesus prepares his mission

Before assuming his mission, Jesus withdrew to the desert. This retreat is a period of transition between his life as a carpenter - a life of social and public integration common to all men - and his life as the Messiah who must reveal a new, unknown and unsuspected personality to his people. To assume this serious and heavy task - and to prepare society to realize it, it was necessary to break away from the daily professional and routine life. This is why Matthew and the other evangelists tell us that it is 'the Spirit (of God) which leads Jesus to the desert' (Matthew 4,1 / Mark 1,12 / Luke 4,1).

Every apostle must experience, in one way or another, this temporary rupture with society and make a spiritual retreat in order to deepen and understand God’s call, before facing his mission.

The devil always intervenes to disturb this loneliness and to prevent the soul from reaching God. He deafens the ears by his sound effects and his blindesses. Furthermore, before serving
God, it is necessary to triumph over his enemy, the devil, who is also the enemy of God’s lovers. Jesus "was tempted by the devil" in 3 ways:

2.12.2.1 To act at the request of the devil, not of God

"Tell these stones to turn into loaves", orders him Satan (Matthew 4,3-4). Jesus can make this miracle. However, he does not want to act at the request of the devil, but only according to the divine plan, and when the hour of God sounds. Then, he will multiply breads and fish so that others may be nourished in the desert (Matthew 14,13-21). One should refuse to take an action - should it appear good - when not inspired by the divine Spirit. It is a lesson for those who are devoted to the condemnable practices of "black" magic or alleged "white" magic.

2.12.2.2 Do not put God to test

"If you are Son of God, throw yourself down...", also said the devil to Him (Matthew 4,5-6). "Do not put the Lord your God to the test", answered Jesus. If it is necessary to rely on God, one should not, on the other hand, misuse this confidence. That would be defying God. God does not let himself be blackmailed. Many believe that they are selected by God and allow themselves irregularities condemned by God. For instance: God refuses a kingdom of Israel, but the Israelis keep insisting on wanting to establish one, while continuously proclaiming that they are the "chosen people" of God. They are in perfect illusion. By establishing this political kingdom - contrary to the will of God - they will not obtain his blessing. One cannot force the hand of God nor put him in front of an accomplished fact. If Jesus had listened to Satan and would have thrown himself down, God would have abandoned him, even though it is written: "He will give orders to his angels and they will carry you in their hands... etc", because this fall was inspired by the devil, not by God. Moreover, this verse invites us to fully rely on God during the tests - allowed by God - that attack us. But God does not assist us in unwise actions we commit to demonstrate, with pride, that God will nevertheless protect us and that He is at our service. In such case, God abandons us. Thus, a person driving madly at 200 km/h pretending that God is protecting him, will be disappointed. Because one should not put God under test. We should make use of virtues of prudence, wisdom etc, then God will protect us.

2.12.2.3 The Kingdom of God is within the soul

"I will give you all these (kingdoms), if you fall at my feet and do me homage", said Satan to Jesus (Matthew 4,8-11). It is the Zionist empire that the devil offered to Christ, a political power coveted by the Israelis. But Jesus cannot be misled; He refuses. His Kingdom is not of this world, it is within, in the hearts (John 18,36 / Luke 17,20). Defeated, the devil goes away obeying the order of Christ: 'Away with you, Satan!' (Matthew 4,10). This means that Jesus allowed the devil to test him for a wise reason: that is to teach us how to act when dealing with devils.

The devil went away, but, as specified by Luke, "until the opportune moment" (Luke 4,13). This return of Satan was through the Jews who wanted to crown Jesus as a Zionist king, by force, as John said. But, "Jesus realized they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, fled back to the hills alone" (John 6,14-15). Again Jesus refused to be a king of an Israeli empire, an offer that the devil had already offered Him.

When we choose the Kingdom of God, we must always be prepared for the tests the devil and the lovers of the kingdom of the earth will impose on us. "My child", says the book of the Ecclesiasticus, "if you aspire to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for an ordeal. Be sincere of heart, be steadfast, and do not be alarmed when disaster comes" (Ecclesiastes 2,1-2). This is what Jesus teaches us through the temptation to which he agreed to subject himself, for us. It is only after his victory over the test, that "Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him,"
Palestine map at Jesus’ times
returned to Galilee' (Luke 4,14). It is with this divine spiritual Power that he undertakes his mission. We too must be careful not to act and not to get engaged without ensuring the indispensable help of God. Also, it is necessary to detect the Spirit of God in us. It is a grace we should ask for. We must have the Holy Spirit within us; this is the first spiritual treasure Jesus recommends us to ask from our Father of Heaven (Luke 11,13 / Matthew 7,11).

2.12.3 Jesus on mission: his inaugural speech (Matthew 5,1 - 7,28)

Jesus does not begin his mission in Nazareth, his city, but further away, in Capernaum, where he settled (Matthew 4,12). It is Peter’s and the first Apostles’ town, all were fishermen on the Lake of Galilee which lies along Capernaum to the north (See on the chart). This city became his centre of action. The miracles of Jesus made him known throughout the area (Matthew 4,23-25). This was the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy, which indicated that the land of Zabulon and Nephtali (in Galilee), was to become the centre from which the Great divine Light will radiate as Isaiah had predicted (Isaiah 8,23 – 9,1).

The crowds followed Jesus who ceased the occasion to preach his great inaugural speech known as the speech of 'the Beatitudes'. It contains revolutionary lessons for the Jewish society of that time, as well as of ours. It is revolutionary because it is anti-Zionist and antiracist, intended for the salvation of all men, not only the Jews.

Luke specifies that Jesus addressed the Jews who came to listen to him: 'I say this to you (Jews), who are listening to me: Love your enemies (palestinians)...' (Luke 6,27). Jesus knew that those who were listening to him, were all Zionist Jews who thought that any non-Jew was a hateful enemy. He wants to break the psychological ghetto in which his audience was locked in for many long centuries; this is why He said: "You learnt that it was said: you will love your neighbour (the Jew like you) and you will hate your enemy (any none-Jew: Leviticus 19,17-18 / Deuteronomy 15,3). Well, I say to you: Love your enemies (those whom you consider as such), pray for your persecutors (they do not persecute you, but defend themselves against your evil actions. Think about the Palestinians persecuted by the Israelis and considered 'terrorists'). Jesus would have said to the modern Jews: 'Pray for your Palestinian enemies, be good to them, give them the other cheek if they slap you, because they are the ones who are right. Give them the earth they ask for because it belongs to them". Remember well that it is to the pitiless Zionists that Jesus addressed himself: 'I say this to you who are listening to me...'.

"If your uprightness does not surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the Kingdom of God", said Jesus, because this so-called 'uprightness' is racist and favors the Jews, with all their faults, over the innocent non-Jews (Matthew 5,20). Today, this sentence could be translated as follows: "Men, if your justice does not exceed that of all the theologians and the clergy, you will never be close to God, whatever your faith"... "If you do not love the upright, whether Jew, Christian, Moslem, Easterner or Westerner, from the North or the South, vain is your faith'.

The Jews hated the Samaritans. Therefore, Jesus gave the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10,29). He gave this parable to a Jewish man of law who, remember, ' wanted to justify himself" for not being ready to help a non-Jew whom he did not consider as his neighbor. This Jewish man of law only does what is good according to the racist Jewish law: one must go beyond this inhuman law if one wants to enter God’s kingdom.

By preaching this, Jesus 'does not abolish the Law (Torah) but, on the contrary, completes it by a Law of Love' that the Jews badly interpreted. 'I have come not to abolish but to complete them' said Jesus. He comes to perfect (Matthew 5,17-20). Not only 'you shall not kill', but 'you shall not insult' your brother (Matthew 5,21-26). And your brother is every upright man. You too, be upright and capable of understanding this noble truth.

For the Jews, as for many believers up to this very day, the sin lies in the material achieve-
ment of an evil act. However, Jesus comes to upset this conception: evil is already in the intention of achieving an act: 'If a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matthew 5,27-28). It is not bad to look, but it is bad to look with desire and to act accordingly. Therefore, even if we are unable to consume the action, sin is already accomplished in us. If I plan to steal an object, but I am unable to do so for one reason or another, this is already considered as a bad act accomplished in my conscience. As the Kingdom of God is within us, so is evil.

These are the most misunderstood lessons in the "Beatitudes". The rest is easy to understand. Also keep this in mind: 'to offer the other cheek to whoever strikes you", is a commandment addressed to the unjust people and does not mean that honest and innocent men should be weak in front of injustice. It is necessary to know how to defend oneself, self-defense is a virtue, especially when one has to protect his family, his children and his own life against a criminal attacker. The book of Revelation, talking about the Antichrist (the prostitute), asks us to pay her "double the amount she exacted", and even to give her a 'double strong cup' for the torments she will have caused to others (Revelation 18,6-7).

On this subject, I invite you to meditate on the attitude of Jesus in front of one of the guards who slapped him when he was arrested (John 18,19-23); he did not offer the other cheek, but asked the guard who slapped him unjustly to account for his act. We must defend our dignity in front of the violent injustice, this too is humility and greatness of soul. As for presenting the other cheek, this means the cheek of whoever commits an injustice towards somebody who reproaches it to him. The guilty must humble himself and recognize himself as such, he must redeem himself, and be grateful towards those who take him and slap him with the word of justice in order to rectify him.

2.12.4 Jesus and John the Baptist (Matthew 11,1-15)

John the Baptist was announced, as previously explained, by Malachi "to clear a way before the Messiah" (Malachi 3,1). Jesus himself refers to this prophecy (Matthew 11,10). This precursor of the Messiah had, according to the Israeli conception, to prepare the Jews to the advent of the Messiah King of Israel, who, according to the Jews, would restore the kingdom in Israel, a political kingdom of the dynasty of David. John the Baptist himself had not understood that the Kingdom of the Messiah is spiritual and universal. Matthew reports that "John the Baptist heard in prison what Christ was doing" (Matthew 11,2). However, these deeds had nothing to do with politics: neither armed gatherings to depose Herod who was not from the David’s dynasty, nor outbursts of violent resistance against the Romans, as had thought the Zealots (Jewish nationalist party to which belonged the apostle Simon the Zealot: Matthew 10,4). Instead, Jesus preached forgiveness of sins, the cure of the sick and the kindness towards Roman officers, considered by Jesus as having an ardent faith as is not found in Israel: "...in no one in Israel have I found faith as great as this' (Matthew 8,5-13).

In prison, John the Baptist expected to be delivered by a revolutionary uprising lead by Jesus. However the 'deeds' of Jesus, which were not nationalist, astonished the Baptist and scandalized many other Jews. The captive Precursor sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus: 'Are you the one who is to come (the "nationalist" Messiah) or are we to expect someone else " (Matthew 11,3). This question intrigued the disciples of John the Baptist, who plagued as well their Master. They had relied upon him, he had told them that the awaited Messiah was Jesus of whom "he was not fit to carry his sandals' (Matthew 3,11). Therefore, they wondered why this Messiah was not working to restore the kingdom in Israel? What was he waiting for? How come that he was kind with the Romans and visited the Pagans to cure the sick, like the Gadarenes (Matthew 8,28-34) and Sidonians (Matthew 15,21-28)? All this scandalized the Jewish fanatics.

The answer of Jesus to the envoys of John the Baptist aimed at breaking the nationalist
and fanatic spirit in the Jewish hearts who, in good faith, were misled by the Zionist spirit: 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see: the blind see again... etc... (as Isaiah had predicted: Isaiah 29,18 / 35,5)... the Good News (of the advent of the Messiah) is proclaimed to the poor (not to the rich people who believed themselves privileged: Isaiah 61,1) and blessed is anyone who does not find me a cause of falling (being myself a non nationalist activist)' (Matthew 11,4-6). This answer could only upset the envoys of John.

By stressing that John the Baptist is a prophet, and saying that "of all the children born to women there has never been anyone greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11,9-11), Jesus invites his listeners to believe in the testimony of this prophet who considered himself "not fit to untie the sandals of Jesus" (Matthew 3,11). He invites them to believe that He, Jesus, is really this awaited Messiah, even if they find his non political deeds strange. However, Christ hastens to specify that John the Baptist, in spite of his might is smaller than "the least in the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 11,11). The reason is that the smallest in the Kingdom of Heaven (not of Israel) understands that Jesus is a king, not of a political State, but of an interior spiritual life, a non-political one, as the great John the Baptist and the Apostles of Jesus themselves had believed in good faith in the beginning.

Thus, John the Baptist's greatness is due to the fact that he puts an end to an epoch, that of the conception of the nationalist Messiah: "It was towards John that all the prophecies of the prophets and of the Law were leading" (so that John testifies that the Messiah, this Jesus, is neither a soldier, nor a politician like Ariel Sharon, Itzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres). Starting with John a new conception of messianism began: "Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time (and still today) the Kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violence, and the violent ones had to take it by storm" (Matthew 11,12-13). Why by storm? Because the Jews had to force themselves, to shake themselves violently in order to liberate themselves from the prejudices and the preconceived ideas, and from a whole mental heritage which shaped and distorted their comprehension of the messianism. Thus, they let themselves be collectively involved in awaiting a Zionist Christ in spite of the repeated warning of the prophets, and the frank refusal of an Israeli king, declared by God and Samuel.

It is difficult to break with a nationalist mentality. However, if one wants to belong to the Kingdom of God, such as God intends it, it is necessary to force oneself, and to give up any political idea that one has about messianism. The Jews imprisoned by the idea of an Israeli State, the Christians who believe in the State of the Vatican (called Christian but has became a political state) and the Moslems who militate to establish Islamic or republic monarchies must today, all "force themselves' to be released from the chains of such deviated ideas if they want to enter the spiritual Kingdom of Heaven.

As far as the everyday and personal life is concerned, it is often necessary to shake oneself, 'to subject oneself to violence' in order to liberate oneself from the indolence that paralyses us and thus, to resist the materialistic current in which the weak get involved. Such people follow the majority blindly, without reflecting, incapable of choosing freely a personal life, different from the others, but more useful for the heart and the soul.

Finally, John the Baptist is, "this Elijah who was to return", explained Jesus (Matthew 11,14 / 17,11-13). I had explained that the precursor of Jesus was to be presented in the world 'with the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1,17). Thus, we must interpret the prophecy of Malachi 3,23 spiritually not textually, as do those who are waiting for the return of Elijah in person, his reincarnation. Such was the intention of John by saying that he was not Elijah (John 1,21).

There is an important point that needs to be well understood: John the Baptist deeply marked the Jews, to such an extent that many believed he was the Messiah. Therefore, this Precursor did not fail to stress upon the fact that he was not the Messiah: 'I am not the Christ' he declared (John 1,20). "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ and not Elijah?" the priests asked him (John 1,25). He answered: * I baptise you in water for repentance, but the
one who comes after me is more powerful than I... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and Fire" (John 1,26 and Matthew 3,11).

Thus, John’s baptism is a preparation, a call to repentance. Jesus’s baptism gives the grace and forgiveness that could not be granted by John the Baptist. Therefore, Jesus’s baptism is more powerful than his precursor’s. To obtain it, it has to come upon an already repented heart. Thus, John, calls for the repentance by a water baptism which will no longer be after the Advent of the Messiah. Jesus inaugurates in the world a new, spiritual baptism, for all men who repent and decide to change for the better.

Many Jewish pilgrims came to Jerusalem during the religious festivals. Some, came from Ephesus, had met John the Baptist and, impressed by him, recognized the importance of his baptism. Thus, they were baptised by him, then returned home. This category of Jews formed the core of the first Christians. They were visited by the Apostles, who explained to them the insufficiency of John’s baptism and the importance of Jesus’ baptism: "When they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus... and the Holy Spirit came down on them" (Acts 19,1-7). Nowadays, with the book of Revelation, the conception of the baptism passes on a higher spiritual level.

2.12.5 How the Apostles conceived the Messiah (Matthew 16)

The Apostles - like the whole Jewish society of yesterday and today- did not expect at all the kind of Messiah that they saw in Jesus. Great pedagogy and much tact was needed on behalf of the Carpenter of Nazareth to introduce into the politicized Jewish mentality, the concept of the modest and humble, spiritual and universal Messiah.

In several forms, Jesus presented to his disciples his nontemporal Kingdom, open to all men, that this young man and modest carpenter came to inaugurate. Speaking about the Kingdom they believed to be political, he told to them: "One could not say: 'Look it is here! Look it is there!' For look, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17,21), thus it should not be sought after outside, in a geographical place, in Jerusalem or in Samariah. And still: "People from east and west, from north and south, will come and sit down at the feast in the Kingdom of God" (Luke 13,29). Thus the subjects of this universal Kingdom will not only be the Jews since "many who are last (the Pagans who came to the faith after the Jews) will be first, and the first (the Jews) will be last" (Matthew 19,30 / Luke 13,30). The messianism as explained by Jesus was unthinkable to all the Jews, with their nationalist and patriotic conception. Still today, the idea of such a messianism is neither acceptable nor imaginable to the Israelis.

After two years in his Apostles’s company and their preparation, and a year before being delivered to the crucifixion, Jesus probes his Apostles. They had seen his miraculous works, but had they understood his teaching and the smoothness of his insinuations? It was necessary that they understand two things:

1 - That Jesus, under this modest appearance, is the awaited Christ.

2 - That the mission of Christ, contrary to their hope, is not to restore the State of Israel. The Messiah was to confirm his Apostles in their total faith in him so that they do not disavow him after his apparent 'defeat' on the cross, and that they continue to believe in him in spite of the fact that he did not restore the Israeli State (see Luke 24,21 and Acts 1,6).

Thus, Jesus asks, a year before being put to death: "But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered: 'You are the Christ' (Matthew 16,15-20). Jesus praised his apostle because, through his appearances of poverty, Peter recognized in him the Messiah, in spite of the fact that the Messiah was expected to come from a noble, royal family. No luxurious aspect distinguished this humble and modest carpenter from Nazareth; his nobility was interior. Peter distinguished in his Master the Messiah, nothing less than "the Son of God", in spite of the simplicity of his clothing. This is why Jesus told him: 'This revelation came to you neither from the flesh nor the blood (not of the aspect of a human glory), but from my Father who is in Heaven'. It is a
strong interior intuition, a powerful and deep spiritual light which pushed Peter to answer.

But, paradoxically, Christ hastened to tell his Apostles 'not to say to anybody that he was the Christ' (Matthew 16,20). Why? Because the crowd would come and force him to be the political king of Israel as has already happened before (John 6,15). Not only did he ask for total discretion from them, but, 'from then onwards, Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes and to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day.' (Matthew 16,21).

Jesus' words overtook Peter. He no longer understood what the heavenly Father has inspired him. Convinced that the Messiah was to restore the kingdom in Israel, he could not imagine that this savior of 'the nation' was to be put to death. With a violent gesture, Peter, 'taking him aside started to rebuke him', (to reprimand, to scold him): 'this must not happen to you!!' (Matthew 16,22). If such were the attitude of the Apostles after two years of initiation, imagine what would the other Jews think of Jesus... and in particular Judas Iscariot, he who only aspired to the kingdom of Israel.

After praising Peter for having recognized him as the Messiah, Jesus reprimanded him for having 'rebuked' him. The Messianic conception of Peter was still of this earth. Jesus' reaction was immediate: "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because you are thinking not as God thinks but as human beings do!" (Matthew 16,23). Since Samuel, the Israelis seek an Israeli kingdom condemned by God.

By the condemnation of the State of Israel, God establishes in the world a new principle of judgment of consciences. This principle is valid for us, men of the XX century, it is a criterion, a measurement of the true faith. Men who have worked - and who still work - for the construction and the permanence of the state of Israel, do not think like God, but like men as Jesus said to Peter. The Revelation of John tells us, that at the end of times, God will instruct his Envoys 'to measure the Temple', i.e. to probe the consciences of men, especially the believers represented by the 'Temple' (Revelation 11,1 / 21,15). This survey is currently in the process of being achieved through the State of Israel: those who are for this State are against God and those who resist Israel serve God’s plan of universal redemption. The examination of conscience operated by Jesus through the question put to his Apostles: "But you, who do you say I am?", this question revealed that they understood that he was the Christ... but, that according to them, he was to restore the Israeli kingdom. Before his Ascension, they still asked him: "Lord, has the time come for you to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1,6). Thus, they had not understood yet, the intention of the Master, in spite of the fact that 'he had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the Kingdom (spiritual) of God" (Acts 1,3).

The survey done by Jesus among his apostles revealed their unshakable faith in him: 'You are the Messiah!'. After two years of formation, this first step of recognizing Jesus as the Messiah was made. The second step i.e. that the Messiah is not political still remained to be made. But, at this time the Apostles were unable to understand further, they were paralyzed by the secular conception - erroneous but nevertheless becoming traditional - that the Messiah was to be the secular king of Israel. For all the Jews this seemed obvious and a matter not even to be discussed.

Thus, it was already great for Peter to have the certainty that Jesus, the humble carpenter, is the Messiah. It is on this certainty that the rest could be built: 'I still have many things to say to you', Jesus said to the Twelve, "but they would be too much for you to bear now" (John 16,12). At this time, they could not, indeed, understand that the one in whom they had put all their hopes to reestablish the Israeli empire, would end tragically nailed to a cross.

Also, it is only after having guaranteed the solidity of their faith in his person, that Jesus 'started' to reveal to them the plan of God: 'I will suffer and be put to death...' (Matthew 16,21-23). To explain that this tragedy has major reasons, that he freely accepts it for their
own good, and that he is sufficiently powerful to avoid it, Christ transfigured himself in front of them into light "six days after" having announced his death, this outcome, humanly distressing, of his messianism. But, it was necessary for them to know that, had he wanted, he could have escaped this ignominious death, he who had been transfigured in front of them, he who had resurrected dead people. It is for their own benefit that he had - freely – submitted himself to this sacrifice: "It is for your own good that I am going" (John 16,7), Jesus told them. And still: "I lay down my life... No one takes it from me. I lay it down from my own free will. I have power to take it up again" (John 10,17-18). "I have told you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe" (John 14,29).

Thus, keep in mind that it was to save his disciples, that Jesus voluntarily agreed to hand himself over to his torturers. But, it was initially necessary to guarantee their faith in his messianism. After having ensured himself of this faith in his Apostles, he tested his close friends by asking Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life! Do you believe this?" She answered: "yes Lord! I believe that you are the Christ..." (John 11,25-27). What was Jesus going to save them from? From the Zionist lie, from the seduction of nationalism and their pretention they wandered in by believing they were the only elected people and more important in the eyes of God than the non-Jews. Finally, Jesus saves from the fire of fanaticism and materialism all those who really believe in him.

To consolidate the faith of his Apostles, Christ wanted to show them the power of his body over the elements of nature. They witnessed this by seeing him walking on water, something Peter was unable to imitate. This had contributed to the increase of their faith (Matthew 14,25-33).

Jesus reminded his Apostles a second time about his death 'and a great sadness came over them' (Matthew 17,22-23), especially that it had occurred just after the Transfiguration.

A third time, Jesus repeated: "The Son of man is about to be handed over to the chief priests and scribes... and will be crucified" (Matthew 20,17-19). "But", Luke adds, and despite these warnings, "they could make nothing of this; what he said was quite obscure to them, they did not understand what he was telling them" (Luke 18,31-34). The reason is that they were obsessed by the idea of an Israeli kingdom and still thought that, with Jesus, the illusory Israeli kingdom was to appear at that very moment (Luke 9,11).

For the Jews, the 'Kingdom of God' (or "of Heaven") on earth, means the kingdom of Israel in Palestine. For Jesus, it is not so. As for you, how do you understand this Kingdom?

The whole Jewish society was so thirsty and blinded by the political power, that even the mother of two Apostles - James and John - came to Jesus, just after the third announcement of his passion, to demand a material favor for her two sons: "Then, the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to make a request of him...: 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom'... When the other ten heard this they were indignant with the two brothers' (Matthew 20,20-24). Believing that this kingdom was of a temporal and immediate nature, the disciples were fighting for the first place, each seeing himself ready to be the Prime Minister, or wanting important ministerial positions.

To the question asked by the Apostles: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?", Jesus did not answer: "It is you, Peter, or you x", but "he called a little child... The one who makes himself as little as this little child is the greatest..." (Matthew 18,1-4). And, in response to the request of the mother of James and John, Jesus said: 'Great men make their authority felt... Among you this is not to happen... Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant...' (Matthew 20,24-28).

To remove any illusion from his Apostles, Christ invites them to follow him in the way of sacrifice, not in glory according to the world: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me... What, then, will anyone gain by winning the whole world (as the Israelis covet it), and forfeiting his life?" (Matthew 16,24-26). Hadn’t Christ rejected the empire of the world which Satan offered him (Matthew 4,9-10), and
thereafter the Jews (John 6,15)? But the Antichrist, contrary to Jesus, will accept this zionist empire offered by the "Dragon" (Satan) in the apocalyptic era in which we live (Revelation 13,2).

The majority of Jesus’ teachings aim at destroying the ghetto, tribal or family cast mentality in which the Jewish society sank. It is precisely to break this fanatic mentality that Jesus had said to his Jewish listeners: 'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace (the "Israeli shalom", a kind of "Paz israeliana") to the earth, it is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set son against father, daughter against mother... a person’s enemies will be the members of his own household' (Matthew 10,34-36). The sword about which Jesus speaks is the word of truth which slices.

The Jews reproached Jesus for these words which, according to them, are against the divine commandment of respect towards the parents. This is not so, because what the Christ wants to say, is that the parents will oppose their children when they see them following the nonpolitical lessons of Jesus, considering them against the Jewish nation and nonpatriotic. Also, those who will be intimidated by their parents to the point of deviating from the Christ, are unworthy of him: "No one who prefers father or mother to me is worthy of me" (Matthew 10,37). God is the first to be served. This is the meaning of making violence to oneself in order to break away from the chains of human traditions which prevent us from conquering the Kingdom of God (Matthew 11,12).

The majority of modern societies, even those which claim to believe in God and in democracy, are condemned because of their fanaticism. What would the Israelis, the Christians, the Moslems and the whole world say of Jesus today when hearing the Messiah speak in such a manner? What would the Jews of the XXth century in Palestine say today, when hearing Jesus deny them a divine right to establish an Israeli State in Palestine? What would the Christians say by hearing Jesus condemn the State of the Vatican that became political and the whole Christian cult that became pagan? Who can detach himself from his own family to follow Jesus freely? In truth, only a few people.

2.12.6 Why was it necessary that Christ be put to death?

By dying without restoring the temporal kingdom in Israel, Jesus gave the fatal blow to the concept of a Zionist Messiah. After his death, his disciples continued, indeed, to believe that he was the Messiah, in spite of the fact that he had not restored the kingdom of the dynasty of David.

Jesus was to be put to death to kill, by dying on the cross, the Jewish nationalism. He thus gave life again to the essence of the true Judaism which is spiritual, non-political.

It is by his death that Jesus liberated his people by appearing as a spiritual and universal Messiah who came into the world for the whole humanity, not for the Jews alone. A non-Jew owes to the death of Jesus the possibility of owning a Bible. This Book was jealously held by the Jews before Jesus. The Jewish priests and scribes made hermetic and inaccessible the words of the prophets who condemned them. The Jewish chiefs did not want to expose their shame in front of the whole world.

This made the Bible inscrutable not only for the non-Jews, but also for the large majority of the Jews themselves. Hosea blamed the priests for leaving the people in ignorance (Hosea 4,4-6) and Malachi condemned them to have imprisoned the science of God behind the bars of their lips (Micah 2,7-9). It is also against the clergy that Jesus rose, accusing them "for having taken away the key of knowledge. You have not gone in yourselves and have prevented others from going in who wanted!", Jesus told them (Luke 11,52 / Matthew 23,13). By giving the 'keys of Heaven' to Peter, Jesus opened the door of knowledge of God to the people of the whole world (Matthew 16,19), releasing these keys from the hands of the unfruitful Jewish clerical cast.
Jesus had an immense, an infinite love, and an untamable courage to face the Israelis. He did not hesitate to dive into this burning fire to obtain for us the Light hidden behind the Israeli iron curtain: "For this is how God loved the (whole) world: he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3,16).

What would the Jews of Israel do today, especially the rabbis, to a Jew who presents himself as the Messiah should he refuse any form of Jewish nationalism and a State of Israel? All the evil comes from the fact that the Jews stubbornly want to establish such a political State. This State was the central conflict between Jesus and the Jews, as it was between them and Samuel... and between them and God (1 Samuel 8). If the Israelis had been able to admit the divine, non-political messianism, there would have been no reason for Jesus to go through a physical death. He would have continued to teach peacefully and to proclaim the spiritual path accessible to all men, and would have been supported - not crucified - by the whole Jewish community.

Only the disciples of Jesus made faith accessible to the Pagans. This astonished certain Jews and scandalized their majority (Acts 10,34-48 / 11,1-8 / 14,27 / 15,7-12 / 26,23...). It was necessary for Jesus to go all the way, up to the cross, to kill the political and fanatic messianism. But the "Key" entrusted to Peter gave many fruits (Matthew 16,19).

2.12.7 When is it necessary to forgive or to judge?

Some people wrongly understand the teaching of Jesus on forgiveness and judgement. They believe that one must always forgive everything to everybody, unconditionally, without even judging. Such an attitude is an alienation of oneself, a renouncement of man’s dignity and a green light given to evil in the world.

Here is the intention of Christ concerning forgiveness and judgement:

2.12.7.1 Forgiveness

It is granted only under condition: "If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone... If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen... report it to the community. And if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax collector" (Matthew 18,15-17). Pagans and tax collectors were rejected by the community of believers.

That means that one should not have hard feelings and stop at the fault, but open one’s heart to the other and forgive if and when the reprimand is listened to. If there is repentance, then one must forgive in order to obtain forgiveness: "Yes if you forgive... your heavenly Father will forgive you yours... But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either" (Matthew 6,14-15). But if the offender has no regret, then he must be rejected since he would be considered a Pagan.

Thus, to forgive does not mean to adopt a weak attitude since:

1. The sinner should be rebuked, openly and publicly if it is needed, and

2. If he sticks to his errors, we must break away from him since he refuses to listen. "If your brother sins, rebuke him", says Luke, " if he wrong you seven times a day and seven times comes back to you and says 'I am sorry', you must forgive him" (Luke 17,3-4). The reprimand must thus be followed by a tender forgiveness if the repentance is sincere.

The role of John the Baptist was precisely to invite for repentance in order to deserve forgiveness.

However, there is such a sin which is not forgivable "neither in this world nor in the other", says Jesus, this is the sin "against the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 12,31-32). This sin consists in opposing one’s ideas and thoughts, to those of God. There is no possible forgiveness in this
case because there is never true repentance. Jesus addressed these words to the Pharisees who resisted him and allotted his miraculous power to the devil, not "to the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12,22-28). It is unforgivable for people so-called religious not to be able to distinguish the Spirit of God in divine deeds. This is one of the aspects of the sin against the Spirit. Pride and selfishness are other examples. The book of Revelation draws up a list of this kind of sin (Revelation 21,8)

This serious and unforgivable sin consists in the proud and illogical refusal of the obvious truth. To divert the eyes from one’s wrong doing, to say that Beauty is ugly and that the Truth is false, are all sins against the divine Spirit: "Woe to those who call what is bad, good, and what is good, bad, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness", says Isaiah (Isaiah 5,20). To give oneself the right to judge without resorting to God is like eating from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die" (Genesis 2,17) for having given oneself the freedom to judge superficially, according to one’s own human mentality - often deformed - without referring to the Spirit of God as a criterion of judgment.

John asks us to pray for a brother who "committed a sin that is not a deadly sin, God will give life to this brother (by the grace of repentance)". But, on the other hand he says, "there is sin that leads to death and I am not saying you must pray about that" (1 John 5,16-17). John means the sin against the divine Spirit to which God is inexorable. Because only the enemies of God commit this kind of serious faults, should they call themselves believers. The true children of God do not make such errors: "We are well aware that no one who is a child of God sins, because he who was born from God (Christ Jesus) protects him and the Evil One has no hold over him", says John (1 John 5,18-19). Indeed, to pray for the enemies of God, is to offend God: 'You, for your part must not intercede for this people... for I will not listen to you', said the heavenly Father to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 7,16).

To be able to recognize the forgivable sin from the unforgivable one, one must have the Spirit of God. God gives his Spirit to his true children (Luke 11,13). It is in the light of God and in the person’s general attitude that we perceive what is hidden in the heart and recognize whether the repentance is sincere or for selfish motives, clinging to sin without true remorse.

2.12.7.2 The judgment

Many mistake when thinking that Jesus prevents the believers from judging others when he said: 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned" (Luke 6,37).

However, to recognize any sin, a judgment must be made. Jesus, while advising not to judge, addresses those who condemn others lightly, those who appreciate others according to what is in their own interests and ways of thinking. They rejected Jesus, judging him on superficial facts, according to his poor appearance which did not match their pompous concepts of the messianism. The Jewish chiefs did not judge Jesus according to Messianic prophecies and the criteria of justice which require an absolute objectivity.

Such an objectivity is only obtained after having been purified of prejudices and passions. As long as this purification is not achieved, one must abstain from judging the behavior of others: 'Do not keep judging according to appearances', says Jesus, but, he adds immediately: 'Let your judgment be according to what is right" (John 7,24).

One must above all judge oneself, recognize one’s defects, correct them and see them clearly and, only then, judge others, but "in justice", not according to our opinion. And justice prescribes us to remove the evil in us 'and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother’s eye’ added Jesus (Matthew 7,5).

Jesus prescribes: "Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs" (Matthew 7,6). To practice this, one should judge who is "dog" and who is "pig".

Thus, one should conclude that judging is a duty one should not abstain from, but that
one’s judgments must be put forth in the light of God, according to his perfect Justice.

2.12.8 Jesus and the rich (Matthew 19,16-26)

Christ is not against having material wealth, but against being attached to money, like the misers who prefer money to spiritual values: "You cannot be the slave both of God and Mammon" (god of money: Matthew 6,24).

When Jesus invited a rich young man to follow him as an apostle, but only after having stripped himself of his goods and given them to the poor, instead of rejoicing, he "went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth". He was not ready to give up his material wealth for spiritual goods (Matthew 19,22).

"It is hard for someone rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven", said Jesus (Matthew 19,23) not because he is rich, but because he puts all his trust in his material wealth, not in God: "Watch! And be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for life does not consist in possessions" He said (Luke 12,15). Also, "those who are rich should not set their hopes on money, but on God... They are to do good... be generous in giving... if they want to possess the only life that is real (eternal life)" (1 Timothy 6,17-19).

Among the disciples of Jesus there were rich people, but who could make good use of their material properties: "A rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph", put the body of Jesus in his own new tomb (Matthew 27,57-60). Also Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, were rich and so was Zacchaeus, "a wealthy man" (Luke 19,2), who was saved for having said "I am going to give half of my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount" (Luke 19,1-10). (See 2 Corinthians 8,13: to seek equality, but without ruining oneself).

The Apostles, like all the Jews, believed that material wealth was a blessing. Thus, they were astonished by the words of Christ concerning the rich person and asked him: "Who can be saved, then?" since the rich person have such difficulties to be saved (Matthew 19,25). However, Jesus had already mentioned to them the prophecy of Isaiah: "The Good News is proclaimed to the poor" (Matthew 11,5, Isaiah 61,1). This is why "Jesus gazed at them (the apostles who were poor), and answered them: 'For men (even though they are rich), this (salvation) is impossible; for God everything is possible' " (Matthew 19,26). This meant to say that God preferred them - the poor who had given up all (though they had only a little) in order to follow him - to the rich who refused to be his disciples.

In short, there are rich people who are rich spiritually also by the good use they make of the money. These follow Jesus. There are rich people who are spiritually miserable because they are attached to their money on which depends their welfare and security. On the other hand, there are poor people who are spiritually rich because they know how to trust in God who never disappoints them (Matthew 6,25-34). There are poor people who are twice miserable because they thirst for money and are ready to do anything - even commit injustice – in order to obtain always more, instead of relying on God.

2.12.9 The Curse of the fig tree (Matthew 21,18)

This curse is true, but above all symbolic. Notice that it follows the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple and precedes the return of Jesus to the Temple, where he was intercepted by the religious chiefs (Matthew 21,23-27) who questioned him maliciously. The fig tree (as well as the vine) is a symbol of Israel. By cursing it, the Jewish chiefs felt attacked (as would - for example - the Lebanese when the Cedar, symbol of Lebanon, is cursed). This curse of the scribes and the "hypocrite" Pharisees is obvious in chapter 23 of Matthew, a chapter devoted to the judgment of these "serpents, brood of vipers". The blood they spread "will draw down" on them, and end in a judgment of Jerusalem (Matthew 23,37-39), symbolized by the
cursed fig tree. Yet "It was not the season for figs", says Mark (Mark 11,13); thus, Jesus knew that he could not find figs on the fig tree in this season. The symbol is thus clear: as the fig tree had no figs and mislead people by hiding this emptiness with leaves, thus Jerusalem disguises to dissimulate its wickedness and its innumerable crimes (see Jeremiah 4,30 and Matthew 23,37). Read the parabola of the sterile fig tree (Luke 13,6-9).

Finally, notice the morality of this story: "... if you have faith and do not doubt at all, not only will you do what I have done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be pulled up and thrown into the sea', this will be done" (Matthew 21,21). The 'Fig tree' and the 'Mountain' are two symbols of Israel. Jesus "as he was returning to the city" (Jerusalem: Matthew 21,18) spoke, and looked at it while talking. It is this "mountain", mentioned in the book of Revelation, which is aimed and "was hurled into the sea" (Revelation 8,8). This mountain is the Beast of the book of Revelation against which one must resist and overcome by faith, a faith that does not hesitate, 'throwing it into the sea' from where it emerged (Revelation 13,1). Such is the morality of the story, to be applied today, after the return of this cursed mountain which mislead people of little faith. (The mountain of Sion is often mentioned by the Bible as the symbol of Israel: Micah 3, 12 / Joel 2,1 / Daniel 9,20).

2.12.10 The taxes (Matthew 22,13-17)

The Romans collected taxes from the countries they occupied. In Palestine, the Jews paid these taxes in current currency which was, at the time Roman, struck with the effigy of Cesar. There was no Israeli currency, in spite of the fact that there was an apparent Israeli kingdom under king Herod.

The Jews considered an unbearable alienation, the fact of having to pay such taxes. The Romans charged Jewish civil servants, the Publicans, to collect these taxes from their fellow citizens who hated them. Jesus, by choosing Matthew (a publican), defied and irritated many Jews (Matthew 9,9-11).

"Then the Pharisees went away to work out between them how to trap him in what he said. And they sent their disciples to him, together with some Herodians (a sect of king Herod who, being known as loved by the people, had his men spying in the Temple and in the cities) to say: '... Is it permissible to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' " (Matthew 22,15) Had he answered: "Yes", Jesus would have been accused of treason by the Jewish nation and would have attracted the animosity of the people who admired him, destroying himself, "taken in by the trap of his word" like the Pharisees wanted it. Had he answered: "No", He would have been regarded by the Romans as a revolutionary who prevents the people from paying the taxes. The trap was well prepared.

The Jews would have liked Jesus to be this revolutionary nationalist. They would have supported him. Hadn’t they tried to make him king of Israel? (John 6,15). It is only after having understood his non political intentions that they decided to abandon him. Even by accusing him of what, in fact, they wanted him to do: a revolution against Rome. The hypocrites! Note well that it was towards the end of Jesus’ mission that this episode took place, after the fact that the Jews, disappointed, had realized that his mission was not nationalist. Only then, they decided to destroy him.

Jesus evaded their trap: "Aware of their malice, he answered them: ...Show me the money you pay the tax with...: who’s portrait is this?" They answered: "Caesar’s". Thus, the money handled in Israel was stamped with the Caesar’s effigy, not of Herod’s, nor of any Jewish king of the past. The concise answer of Jesus struck down his detractors: "Pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar and God what belongs to God!". It is not without a certain embarrassment that the Herodians had to bring back these remarks to their king.

The Jews, by agreeing to sell and to buy in Roman currency, should have agreed to pay the
taxes to Rome in that same currency.

2.12.11 The truth about Judas

Why did Judas betray Jesus?

Few people can clearly answer this question. Try to answer it before continuing reading.

Why did Judas follow Jesus?

The answer to this question enables us to answer intelligently to the first one.

All that Judas wanted of Jesus was the national restoration of the Davidic kingdom. He expected from Jesus to put all his spiritual power at the service of this political goal, hoping to appear in it among the most brilliant figures. The miracles of Christ and their spiritual significance hardly interested him; they created neither his admiration nor an enthusiasm capable of spiritually elevating his judgment. He remained materialistic.

After the miracle of the multiplication of bread, the crowds followed Jesus with admiration to proclaim him king. He hid himself. They looked for him, and found him, but only to hear his reprimand: "You are looking for me, not because you have seen the signs, but because you had all the bread you wanted to eat... Work for food that endures for eternal life" (John 6,26-27).

Like Judas, all this crowd was only interested in the material benefits. The fact is that, when he spoke about the real food which gives eternal life to the soul, no one listened to him and Jesus concluded: "But there are some of you who do not believe". John further explains: "Jesus knew from the outset who did not believe and who was to betray him" (John 6,64-71).

Thus, Judas was among those who did not believe in the major significance of the miracles of Jesus, in spite of his presence where they were performed. More serious than his indifference, was the fact that he continued to follow Jesus without believing in him. He should have left with the crowd, when Jesus asked the Twelve: "What about you, do you want to go away too?" (John 6,67). Why did Judas stay? The reason is that he was too attached to the benefits he could have had from a possible political kingdom he hoped to see established by Jesus. Nothing else mattered for him.

Jesus understood the real intentions of this false disciple and said: "Did I not choose the Twelve of you? Yet one of you is a devil". John does not let us guess who this "devil" was and he adds: "He meant Judas son of Simon Iscariot, since this was the man, one of the Twelve, who was to betray him" (John 6,67-71).

As Peter was irritated when Jesus announced his future death, Jesus replied: "Get behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16,23). But Peter ended up by accepting the spiritual kingdom of Jesus. Out of the Twelve, only one stuck to his devil: "One of you is a devil", Jesus precised, only one: Judas Iscariot.

Another difference between Peter and Judas is that Peter, while denying knowing Jesus (Matthew 26,69-75), was under the shock of the surprise. But Judas betrayed Christ with calm and calculated premeditation. The sin of Peter is of the forgivable kind. That of the traitor Judas, is against the Holy Spirit, an unforgivable sin (Mark 3,28-30 / John 15,22-24 / 1 John 5,16).

Judas decided to deliver Jesus when he lost all hope of seeing him carrying out his most cherished wish: the kingdom of Israel. The decision germinated gradually in the heart of Judas and the desire to act started during the meal at Lazarus' house, "six days before the Passover" (John 12,1-11), that is five days before the crucifixion and four days before the treason in the garden of the olive-trees. During the meal at Lazarus, "Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus... Judas Iscariot then says: 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he was in charge of the common fund and used to help himself to the contents" (John 12,5-6). Such is the ignored aspect of Judas, his true face of "thief" was revealed by John the apostle who knew him well.
Jesus answered the indelicate remark of Judas: 'Leave her alone; let her keep it for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always; you will not always have me' (John 12,7-8). It is with his powerful and penetrating glance that Jesus addressed these words to the one who was to betray him and who felt all the overpowering weight in his conscience. Judas could not bear this insult against himself nor the praise that Jesus made to Mary, whom he wanted to blame: "In truth I tell you, wherever in all the world this gospel is proclaimed, what she has done will be told as well, in remembrance of her" (Matthew 26,13). It is "then", comments Matthew 'that one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests' to hand them over the Messiah (Matthew 26,14-15). His pride could not bear this public affront.

The hypocrisy of Judas is also apparent when Jesus announced to the Apostles: 'One of you is about to betray me. They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn: 'Not me, Lord, surely?" Judas too (knowing well that he was aimed), asked him: "Not me, Rabbi, surely?" "It is you who said it!" answered Jesus (Matthew 26,20-25).

By delivering Jesus, Judas hoped to be restored in the confidence of the Jewish clergy. Realizing that he had lost the respect of the Apostles as well as of the Jews, he went to hang himself, corroded by despair, knowing well that he had delivered an innocent to his aggressive torturers (Matthew 27,3-4).

Judas did not expect such a dramatic outcome. Perhaps he planned to force Jesus, by handing him over, believing he could make him compromise with the religious chiefs to finally restore the kingdom in Israel. But one cannot force the hand of God and have him achieve our own will, under threat of death. 'You will not test the Lord your God!' Judas put God to the test. And this, in his own interest, being too attached to his ambition of appearing among the powerful leaders of the kingdom of Israel.

Therefore, Judas 'was filled with remorse' of having followed Jesus, only after "he found that Jesus had been condemned" to death (Matthew 27,3). This definitively put an end to his dream. This is the real reason for his regret. He had no regret for his bad ambition, this would have given him divine forgiveness and salvation. All what was left for him was to choose death to flee reality. He committed suicide!

This suicide is the symbol of the final fate of the old and modern Zionism. While dying, Jesus put an end to the false Zionist hopes which leads to spiritual suicide: "Through his death, Jesus overcame death", says one liturgy of Easter. The Jews who followed Jesus were saved of an inevitable spiritual death. 'Death where is your sting'; says Paul after his conversion to Jesus (1 Corinthians 15,55)? This is why 'it was necessary that Christ endured these sufferings' and passed through death (Luke 24,26). Having destroyed the Zionist illusion by his cross, Jesus resurrected to give back Judaism its true face and to his faithful people the true hope.

**Reflection**

Others thought of following Jesus, like Judas, not for spiritual but for nationalist purposes. Matthew talks about two examples (Matthew 8,18-22):

1. **The scribe who told Jesus** "Master, I will follow you wherever you go". At this time, Christ had just performed several miracles and the people were enthusiastic in his favor. He "saw the crowd all about him and he gave orders to leave for the other side" of the sea of Galilee. However, this area was pagan, scorned by the Jews and not to be associated with.

In the general enthusiasm, this scribe was noticed for wanting to offer his services and to follow Jesus "wherever he goes", even into an impure pagan country, proscribed by the Torah. It should be noted that he is a scribe convinced of the Israeli prejudices and patriotism. He was ready to follow Jesus as any patriot would follow a revolutionary military leader who rushes forward to free the motherland, weapons in hand.

However, the Christ’s Motherland is heavenly, non geographical. This scribe did not consider this dimension. Also, Jesus makes him understand that he will have no terrestrial glory to
offer him: "The Son of man has nowhere to lay his head", this means, thus: why would you follow me? Some think that Jesus refused the offer of this scribe. This is not the case, Jesus just painted, in a few words, the real requirements and the sacrifices to which one must agree to be his disciple. It seems that this scribe withdrew his proposal, because had he followed Jesus, he would have appeared among the Apostles. Therefore, it is the scribe who withdrew, not Jesus who rejected him.

2. This also explains why "another man, one of the disciples" who, after having heard Christ’s answer to the scribe, told Jesus: "Lord, let me go and bury my father first." He also wanted to withdraw elegantly: "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead", Jesus then replied, to cancel his pretext (Matthew 8,21-22).

Judas should have rather dismissed himself, in time, like so many others (John 6,60-71). But, guided by his materialistic lust, he preferred to keep on hoping and waiting... unwillingly... till despair, treason and finally suicide.

2.12.12 The end of times (Matthew 24)

A few days - three or four - before the end of his terrestrial life, Jesus spoke to the Apostles about another end, that of the Temple, therefore also of the Israeli State, both destroyed in 70 A.D., approximately 35 years after this prophetic announcement. This was the second "end" of Israel.

While speaking about the prophet Ezekiel, I had mentioned that he too had predicted at that time, the end of Israel, which occurred in 586 B.C. This was the first 'end' of Israel.

In our times - precisely since 1948 - and for a third time, an Israeli State exists in the world, 2000 years after its second destruction. It will see its end coming soon like the two preceding ones. Because, when Jesus spoke about the end, he meant to say, like Ezekiel, the end of Israel, this State which is an obstacle to God's plan.

It was destroyed a first time to show the Jews that God’s goal is not a Hebrew nation and that the awaited Messiah should not be perceived as a "Jewish patriot" who rushes to a military conquest of the world, spreading a universal Israeli empire (Zionism). Israel was destroyed a second time (70 A.D) to show that the Messiah already came into the world in the person of Jesus. It will be destroyed a third and last time - and forever – never to return again. This third and final end of Israel announces the spiritual Return of Jesus as Himself had prophesied in the Gospel.

A few days before being delivered by Judas, Jesus was with his Apostles in Jerusalem. They were admiring the construction of the Temple, embellished by Herod the Great. Jesus told them at once: 'You see all these? In truth I tell you, not a single stone here (in Jerusalem) will be left on another: everything will be pulled down!' (think of the secret indignation of Judas by hearing this). Then they asked him: 'Tell us, when is this going to happen, and what sign will there be of your coming and of the end of the world?' (Matthew 24,2-3).

Pay attention to the question asked by the Apostles: they wanted to know "when is this (destruction of the Temple) going to happen" and also to know "what sign will there be of your coming (political, they believed) and of the end of the world" the pagan world. They understood that Jesus would reign, but after the destruction of this beautiful Temple. According to their mentality, Jesus would then restore the Israeli kingdom as it was at the time of David and Solomon. Thus, He would put an end to the power of the pagan nations, Rome above all. But Jesus meant the destruction of the Temple and the political end of Israel, of this kingdom which, according to God, incarnated, paradoxically, paganism. Hadn't Christ said that the Roman officer, a pagan, had more faith than all the Israelis, these "children of the kingdom (of Israel) who will be thrown out into the darkness" because of their rejection of Jesus? (Matthew 8,5-13).
Today, especially after the reappearance of the state of Israel, we are able to understand, much better than in the past, the eschatological prophecies of Jesus which are in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. John does not speak about them because he wrote his Gospel well after the synoptic ones (approximately 45 years after) and he knew that they were mentioned there.

Jesus answers the question of the Apostles ("when is this going to happen?") in a much greater way than they could conceive it. His answer not only include the destruction of the Temple and the second end of Israel (occurred some 35 years later), but also the future events. These prophecies of the end of times will take place after this third establishment of the actual state of Israel, established since 1948 and will precede its third and ultimate fall.

The third reappearance of the Zionist State has a universal and spiritual specific importance: it precedes the Return of Christ in the consciences. This Return began with the revelation of the apocalyptic Mystery on May 13th, 1970. The third and ultimate end of Israel is very close.

2.12.12.1 The signs of times

Chapters 13 of Mark and 21 of Luke bring back these eschatological prophecies (end of times). The main signs of this end of times are the following:

Persecution of the Apostles Before the second fall of Israel, the Apostles were persecuted as predicted (Luke 21,12). Likewise, today, Israel persecutes its enemies who, in justice, resist to it. It is the prelude of the end of the State of Israel.

Jerusalem invaded by the Pagans and the false christs The Pagans in Jerusalem are a sign of its future downfall. Yesterday, the Pagans were the Romans who, having invaded the city, burnt it down with its Temple and dispersed the Jews throughout the world (Luke 21,23-24). But today, the Pagans are the so-called Jews who invaded Jerusalem: they are the modern Pagans (because of their refusal of Jesus). Their massive presence in Palestine and in the Holy City means the close and ultimate end of the State of Israel: 'Jerusalem will be trampled down by the gentiles (the "false Jews" about whom speaks the book of Revelation: Revelation 2,9 and 3,9) until their time is complete' (Luke 21,24). Thus, it will be the end of the visible and occult Zionist power in the world.

False Christs will appear, saying that "time (the time of the Zionist Messiah) is very close'. They are false prophets (the current Zionists) who see in the State of Israel a 'proof' that the time of the Israeli Messiah has come, that he is at the door, and that he will appear soon in front of the whole world. Indeed, Jesus had said: 'Many will come and saying: 'I am the Christ' and they will deceive many (Matthew 24,5)... If they say to you: 'Look, here is the Christ', or 'over there', do not believe it' (Matthew 24,23-24). We heard the Israelis say that the Messianic time has finally arrived, that Ariel Sharon was the Christ, others said that Menahim Begin was the Christ, still others that the rabbi Meïr Kahana was the Christ, the king of Israel. We know that Jesus is the unique Christ of God and that the Messianic time has been inaugurated by him 2000 years ago.

International tension and nuclear threat 'Men fainting away with terror and fear at what menaces the world... Nations in agony, bewildered by the turmoil (nuclear wars: Luke 21,25-26)... Nations will fight nations... (Matthew 24,7)... Then they will see the Son of man (Jesus) coming... (Luke 21,27)' . This is why we say that these events are 'signs of times',

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because they indicate the time of the return of Jesus.

**Universal propagation of the Gospel**  "This good news of the kingdom (the good news that the Messiah, Jesus, came in the world) will be proclaimed in the whole world as evidence to the nations. And then the end will come" (the third and ultimate end of Israel: Matthew 24,14). Today the Gospel is widespread everywhere in the world. It is translated into more than 360 languages and 1500 dialects. The end of the Israeli Antichrist is very close as well as the 'new heaven and the new earth' announced by the book of Revelation and Peter (Revelation 21,1 / 2 Peter 3,13).

**The Apostles of the end of times**  Jesus said: 'Then... they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven... He will send his angels with a loud trumpet to gather his elect from the four winds...' (Matthew 24,30-31).

These 'angels' are men sent by God at the end of time to 'awake' men of goodwill all over the world by explaining the eschatological prophecies, showing their achievement with the 'signs of times' (the return of Israel, world persecution of its enemies, international tension, fear of the nuclear power, universal propagation of the Gospel).

The 'loud trumpet' which awakes 'the wise virgins' of the parable (Matthew 25) is the apocalyptic Message. It reveals the identity of the Antichrist, the 'Beast of the book of Revelation' (Revelation 13) which had succeeded in misleading them and putting their minds sound asleep. The revelation of the apocalyptic mystery is this 'cry sounding at midnight' (Matthew 25,6), while all the virgins are fully asleep, in order to wake up those of good faith who had been deceived by the satanic tricks of the Zionist 'Beast' (Matthew 25,1-7).

Only Matthew tells us about the Apostles of the end of times. Indeed, he informs us that Jesus, speaking about these times, said: '... at harvest time (last selection of the elect at the end of the world), I shall say to the reapers (thus it is Jesus himself who will send his 'reapers', the Apostles of the end of time): first collect the darnel and tie it in bundle to be burnt, then gather the wheat into my barn' (Matthew 13,30). He also said: "Just as the darnel is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time: The Son of man will send his angels and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of falling ('the darnel') and all who do evil, and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth (Matthew 13,40-42). "This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels (Apostles of the end of times) will appear and separate the wicked from the upright" (Matthew 13, 49-50). Now read Matthew chapter 13.

2.12.12.2 Useful explanations regarding Matthew 24

The Abomination of desolation settled in the Holy Place, in the Holy Land (Palestine), represents the state of Israel, the height of abomination because, rejected by God, this State presents itself as the 'chosen people' and the work of God in the Holy Land of the Bible.

This State, which caused so much destruction and horrors, presents itself as a 'sheep' and accuses others of terrorism, when this state is a 'ravenous wolf' which one could easily 'recognize by its fruits', its criminal deeds in spite of its disguise as an innocent sheep (Matthew 7,15-16). The Israeli crimes committed in Palestine, known and seen by the whole world, makes of the state of Israel this 'Abomination of desolation', the height of horror, predicted by Daniel (Daniel 9,27 / 11,31 / 12,11) and recalled by Jesus (Matthew 24,15).

'Alas for those with child...', because their escape will be more difficult than for the others due to their pregnancy. Jesus does not threaten the pregnant women, he sympathizes with them. One should translate 'I pity those with child, or with babies at the breast, when those days come'. Because these days will be particularly difficult for them (Matthew 24,19).
'Pray that you will not have to make your escape on a Sabbath': this is an irony, because on the Sabbath, the Jews are not to walk more than one kilometer... However, they will have to flee through very long distances to escape their enemies... (Matthew 24,20).

Now you can undertake the systematic reading of the synoptic Gospels without encountering major difficulties. Then, you will be able to move on to the book of the Acts of the Apostles which you will read after having consulted my explanations.


This book is the continuation of the Gospel of Luke and was written by him. It is the second book sent to "Theophilus" to inform him of "everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning... until the day he was taken up to heaven" (Acts 1,1-2). It may be considered as the continuation of the Gospel of Luke. It informs us of what the Apostles did after Jesus, until approximately the year 62 A.D, just before the martyrdom of Peter and Paul which took place in 64 A.D in Rome.

Being the historian of the Apostles, Luke tells us that he writes as a traveling companion of Paul. After having spoken about Paul in the 3rd person in the singular: "He crossed Syria... He went to Derbe... He took Timothy with him... They traveled through Phrygia...", Luke uses the first plural pronoun: "we", thus including himself in the group of Paul: "We lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the good news." (Acts 16,1-10). It is in Troas, currently Turkey, that Luke joined Paul (see biblical chart).

After having informed Theophilus of the advent of the Messiah in his "first Book", namely his Gospel, Luke, in his second book to Theophilus (the Acts of the Apostles), reports to him the propagation of the evangelical message "not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to earth’s remotest end" (Acts 1,8), which means to Rome. He informs him about the resistance of the fanatic Jews to the universal and non racist message of Jesus. This resistance led to the persecution and death of several Apostles and disciples by the Jews. You will read the story of the conversions of many Jews and Pagans and their unity in the person of Jesus.

I will mention the most important points of the book. They should be understood in order to seize the essence and the spirit that Luke wants to communicate to his reader. Then, read this book attentively. It is of great interest to us today, because of the current events with the reappearance of Israel. The continuous resistance to Jesus by the modern Israelis and their subtle, but real persecution of the disciples of Jesus, make the message of the book of the Acts current and powerful.

#### 2.12.13.1 The Apostles had not yet understand (Acts 1,6)

During Jesus' Ascension, the Apostles had not yet understood the interior spiritual dimension of the Kingdom of God; they asked Jesus: "Lord, has the time come for you to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Thus, after three years of formation and "brain washing", after the crucifixion, the resurrection of Christ and his miraculous stay with them for 40 days, the Apostles were still at the dead point. It needed an intervention of the Holy Spirit, and some time, for them to realize the true nature of the Kingdom of God and its true "restoration" (Acts 3,21).

#### 2.12.13.2 Pentecost

God gave his Spirit, his "mentality", to the Apostles 50 days after Jesus' Resurrection (Passover). That corresponded to the Jewish feast of the 'Harvest', thus symbolizing the spiritual harvest by the Gospel, the election of the chosen ones by the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believe in the Gospel (John 4,34-38 / Luke 10,2 / Matthew 13,30 / Revelation
The biblical course 14,15-16). The non-believers do not profit from this Spirit which cures and gives eternal Life and happiness to the soul.

The Apostles were then also understood by all those who did not speak Hebrew, not only by the Hebrews. It is a form of restoration, after the confusion of Babel, where men could no more understand each other (Genesis 11,1-9).

2.12.13.3 The strong Jewish opposition to the message of Jesus

This opposition is noticed all through the book of the Acts and made Peter say: "In this very city (Jerusalem) Herod and Pontius Pilate plotted together with the gentle nations (Jews of everywhere) and the peoples of Israel, against your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4,27). 'Against Jesus' means 'Anti-Christ': it is about them that John speaks when mentioning the Antichrist (1 John 2,22 / 4,1-6 / 2 John 1,7). In this end of times, the same anti-Christ league is formed by the Israelis of the world who, while disavowing Jesus, joined the so-called Christian nations (see the texts 'Christians and Israel' and 'The Antichrist and the Return of Christ'). The opposition of the Jews led to the persecution and the martyrdom of the Apostles and the disciples of Jesus. Stephen was the first martyr (Acts 7 and James 12,1-2).

2.12.13.4 The conversion of Paul to Christ

Luke insisted on the conversion of Paul to Christ. Yet Paul had "approved of the killing (of Stephen)" (Acts 8,1) and "was still breathing threats to slaughter the Lord's disciples" (Acts 9,1). Luke repeated three times the story of Paul's conversion (Acts 9,1-19 / 22,5-16 / 26,10-18), after having stressed that this spectacular upheaval of Paul took place after he "began doing great harm to the church; he went from house to house arresting both men and women and sending them to prison" (Acts 8,3). But Paul acted in good faith, convinced of serving God's cause; he was moved by the love for God, not by hatred for Jesus like the other persecutors of the disciples. This is why he deserved to be enlightened by Christ Himself, directly, not by men, because God, and God alone, could convince him of his error (Galatians 1,11-17 / 1 Timothy 1,12-16).

2.12.13.5 Faith communicated to the Pagans (Acts 10,1-11 and 10,18)

A divine intervention was needed to both the Pagans (Acts 10,1-8) and Peter (Acts 10,9-24) in order to spread the biblical Message: the knowledge of one unique God. This knowledge was kept hermetically closed by the Jewish clergy. This divine intervention passed the message to the Pagans and then to the world.

The first Jews who became disciples of Jesus were themselves astonished when they knew that this knowledge had extended to the non-Jews: "God has clearly granted to the gentiles too the repentance that leads to life!" (Acts 11,18). Because the Jews believed - and they still believe today - that the non-Jews, not having a spirit like the Jews, live only for this earth and do not have access to the eternal life and resurrection, that their fate is similar to that of the animals which do not have an eternal soul.

This contempt of the Pagans - due to the fanaticism of the Hebrew clergy - has made the mission of the Apostles quite painful, particularly in the Jewish community. Indeed, the evangelic message was to pass through the thick barrier of the Jewish extremism, this impassable psychological border set up by the Israeli clergy, and that God alone could break. He broke it indeed by manifesting himself, at the same moment, to a Pagan: the centurion Cornelius, and to an apostle: Peter. This astonished the well intentioned Jews but caused the resistance of the fanatics of the Jewish community (Acts 22,21-22). Without this direct divine intervention, the evangelic Message would never have passed to the Pagans.

This savage resistance of the Jews to the divine message of the Apostles of Jesus appeared
in several forms:

1. The persecution of the Apostles as well as of the believers as previously shown. One should not be astonished because the prophets too, were persecuted in Israel.

2. Infiltration within the Christian ranks to bring the Jewish disciples of Jesus back to the practice of the Law of Moses (Acts 15,1-5 / 20,28-30). This insidious method succeeded with certain Apostles who, themselves, ended up by returning back to the practice of the Law of Moses, ineffective for salvation, as Paul explained (Galatians 3,11). Thus, they yielded to the pressures of "some false brothers who had secretly insinuated themselves to spy" on the Christian community from the beginning (Galatians 2,4). Thus, we see the apostle James himself who was nothing less than the chief of the Christian community of Jerusalem, requiring of Paul to sacrifice to the mosaic law as did "the thousands of Jews who have now become believers (in Jesus) and who are, all of them, staunch upholders of the Law (of Moses)" (Acts 21,17-26). Paul had to subject himself to the requirements of James, but that did not prevent the Jews from continuing to chase him in order to kill him (Acts 21,30-31).

3. The Jewish infiltration into the Christian community was denounced by Paul (Galatians 1,7 / 2,4 / 6,12 / Titus 1,10-14 / 2 Corinthians 11,13-15 / Colossians 4,11), by Peter (2 Peter 2,1) and by Jude (Jude 1,4 and 12; compare with 1 Corinthians 11,17-33).


5. Paul is accused of being "a ringleader of the Nazarene sect" (Acts 24,5), thus giving the Romans the impression that it is a political party which opposes Caesar in order to proclaim another king, namely Jesus, instead of the Emperor (Acts 24,14 / 17,7 / 25,8). This is the same trick the Jews used against Jesus (John 19,15). It is the weapon used nowadays by Christians against the Apostles of the end of times, whose mission is to denounce the Antichrist: Israel. These apostles, who denounce both the Zionists and their so-called Christian allies, are accused of "making politics". These Zionists and their allies transformed the Bible's spiritual message into a political Zionist state.

2.12.13.6 "From Scripture" (Acts 17,2-3)

"Paul developed the arguments from Scripture for them, explaining and proving how it was ordained that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead" (Acts 17,2-3), and the Believers "every day studied the Scriptures to check whether it was true" (Acts 17,11). Every true Christian must be able 'to demonstrate from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ' (Acts 18,28) and that Israel (which denies that Jesus is the Christ) is the Antichrist announced by John (1 John 2,22).

Peter recommends us: "...always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3,15).

We cannot defend our faith when ignoring the Holy Scriptures. It is through biblical knowledge that we can be Apostles of Jesus, the true and unique Messiah.

The goal of this biblical course is to offer this knowledge to those who are called to be disciples of Jesus and who want to answer this divine call.
First Paul’s missionary journey (46-48 A.D.)

Second Paul’s missionary journey (49-52 A.D.)
Third Paul’s missionary journey (46-48 A.D.)

Paul’s journey to Rome (59-62 A.D.)
2.13 Lesson 13 - The Gospel of John and the letters of the Apostles

2.13.1 Presentation of John’s Gospel and his letters

John’s Gospel is not, like the synoptic ones, a biography of Jesus. What interests the evangelist here is not the human genealogy of the awaited Messiah, but another reality much deeper and moving concerning His personality: His divine origin. He begins therefore his work with a masterly introduction to reveal us what he had discovered himself, the divine genealogy of Jesus, saying: "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1,1)... The Word became flesh, he lived among us" (John 1,14).

John is thus not a historian of the earthly life of Christ, like the other evangelists are, but a theologian who reveals His divine nature. The synoptic gospels teach us that Jesus is the awaited Messiah. John also attests this truth, but he goes further - or rather higher to teach us what the others did not reveal, that this Messiah is God incarnated, the Creator who took a human form to be personally present among men on earth and in a tangible way. It is upsetting, striking to think of it. Furthermore it is true.

John is the only evangelist to communicate this precise information to us, that’s why he was called "the theologian". He is represented by an eagle because he went high with thought.

John decided to write his Gospel only after having reached 90 years. He was the only survivor among the Apostles. He had considered not convenient to write it before, as other Gospels and various letters of the Apostles were present to inform the believers about Jesus. What spurred him to write? It is important for you to know.

We have seen in the previous lesson that the anti-Christ Jews had infiltrated within the nascent pro-Christ community to destroy it by the inside. They disturbed the believers not only by obliging them to practise the Jewish worship, but by claiming that John the Baptist, and not Jesus was the Messiah. They even attacked some Christians because they believed in the divinity of the Messiah. The faithful ones, so upset, turned to John looking for the light they needed. They knew he was Jesus’ beloved disciple, and that they could have relied on his words.

John thus began his Gospel enlightening them on these two controversial points:

1. Jesus is the Messiah John the Baptist is not the Messiah (the Light): 'he came as a witness to bear witness to the Light, so that everyone might believe (in the Messiah) through him. He was not the Light, he was to bear witness to the Light. The Word was the real Light...' (John 1,6-9). Jesus, the Word of God, is thus also the Messiah.

2. Jesus is God incarnate Jesus is the Word, the Word is God (John 1,1) and the Word became flesh, He took a human body to live among men (John 1,14). Thus Jesus is really God incarnate.

As John had been disciple of John the Baptist and apostle of Jesus (like Andrew: John 1,35-40) at the same time, John was the right person to tranquillise the faithful Christians who had turned to him. He also confuses the errors spread by the false prophets whom he denounces in his letters (1 John 4,1-6 / 2 John 1,7) and in the book of Revelation (where he qualifies them "false Jews" belonging to a "synagogue of Satan": Revelation 2,9 and 3,9). The "Nicolaitans" were a sect made of supposedly converted Jews who denied the divinity of Jesus (Revelation 2,6).

A good method to study John’s Gospel is to read it while paying attention to discover:

1. The verses showing that Jesus, and not John the Baptist, is the Messiah,
2. The insinuations—often subtle in the discussions of Jesus—where He reveals Himself as God’s incarnation.

Read this marvellous book after the explanations given on each of these two points to help your research.

2.13.1.1 Jesus is the Messiah

In the beginning, many Jews believed that John the Baptist was the Messiah. The Gospels inform us that John insisted to tell them: "I baptize you in water for repentance, but the one who comes after me (Jesus) is more powerful than I, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matthew 3,11). Nevertheless, Luke informed us that later, in Ephesus, there were still some Jews who thought that the baptism of John was enough (Acts 19,1-7). John was in Ephesus too, where most of the Jews were violently anti-Christ: "Some Jews from Asia (actual Turkey) caught sight of him (Paul) in the Temple and stirred up the crowd and seized him..." (Acts 21,27 etc).

In his Gospel, John insisted and repeated often the witness of John the Baptist: "A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as witness, to bear witness to the Light... He was not the Light, he was to bear witness to the Light. The Word was the real Light' (John 1,6-9)... John witnesses to him. He proclaims: 'This is the One of whom I said: He who comes after me has passed ahead of me because he existed before me' (John 1,15)... This was the witness of John...: 'I am not the Christ'... (John 1,19-27)... The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said: 'Look, there is the Lamb of God...It was of him that I said: 'Behind me comes one who has passed ahead of me... I have seen and testify that He is the Chosen One (the Christ) of God... (John 1,29-36)". "You yourselves can bear me out. I said: 'I am not the Christ; I am the one who has been sent to go in front of him..." (John 3,26-36).

Thus, since the beginning, John tranquillises his disciples: Jesus is really the Christ-God. He finishes his Gospel by confirming them in this belief, saying that he brought back all these signs operated by Jesus to them "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name' (John 20,30-31).

2.13.1.2 The divinity of Jesus

John begins his Gospel with a key word having a great impact on Jewish mentality: "In the beginning", in Hebrew "Bereshit" ("Be": in, "reshit": beginning). The importance of this word is due to the fact that it opens the Old Testament, the Torah. Indeed, the book of the Genesis begins as follows: "In the beginning was the Word... Through Him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him. What has come into being in him was Life, Life that was the Light of men... John (the Baptist) was not the Light... The Word (Jesus) was the real Light' (John 1,1-9).

By these courageous words, John gave a deeper explanation of what the Genesis had said of God, the Creator of the heaven, the earth and the light. This Creator is not other than the Word: "Through Him all things came into being" (John 1,3), because "He was with God in the beginning" (John 1,2) and He Himself "was God" (John 1,1). "And the Word became flesh (in Jesus)" (John 1,14). Those who had turned to John could not hope for a better answer. You understand why John was called "the Theologian".

All throughout his Gospel, John applied himself to report faithfully Jesus’ words on which
he relied to say that "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God". Hasn't John listened to Jesus Him saying to the Jews: "Before Abraham ever was, I Am?" (John 8,58). Hasn't John also listened to the Baptist saying in front of him, his disciple: "behind me comes one (Jesus) who has passed ahead of me because he existed before me"? (John 1,30). John knew that Abraham had preceded Jesus by 2000 years and that John the Baptist preceded Jesus by six months. He could not hide in his Gospel the logical conclusions he had drawn from what he had heard. He delivered his witness to us with love and precision so that those who believe in it are saved.

The belief in the divinity of Jesus already existed before John's Gospel. In his letters, Paul referred to it when he wrote about Jesus: "Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped" (Philippians 2,6). And again: "So then, as you received Jesus as Lord and Christ, now live your lives in Him... In Him, in bodily form, lives divinity in all its Fullness" (Colossians 2,6-9).

The letters of Paul have been written approximately 40 years before John's Gospel. Since the Christians already believed in the divine incarnation, in "all its Fullness", in the Person of Jesus, why did John write to convince his disciples of what they had already known? It is, as I said, because they were annoyed by disturbers who aimed at sowing doubt and dissension among the Christians. These disturbers, coming from the Jewish mass which denied Jesus, are described as 'antichrists' by John: "You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and now many Antichrists have already come... They (the Jews anti-Christ) have gone from among us (the Jews pro-Christ), but they never really belonged to us... Who is the liar, if not one who claims that Jesus is not the Christ? This is the Antichrist!" (1 John 2,18-22). Paul still refers to them while warning the first Jews faithful to Jesus, the faithful Judeo-Christians: "The mystery of wickedness (the anti-Christ Jews) is already at work" (2 Thessalonians 2,7).

2.13.1.3 The two Jewish categories

Speaking about the antichrists, I take the opportunity to speak about the 2 categories of Jews derived from Jesus' Advent: those who were for Him, the pro-Christ, and the others who stood against Him, the anti-Christ.

Jesus, the spiritual Messiah, who was not a Jewish nationalist, divided the Hebraic society into two opposite parts: "These words caused a new division among the Jews. Many said: 'He is possessed, he is raving: why do you listen to him?' Other said: 'These are not the words of a man possessed by a devil...'" (John 10,19-21).

In the same way, Paul "stirs up trouble among Jews the world over" (Acts 24,5) separating "the darnel from good corn", that is to say the believers from the unbelievers. This is what Jesus also meant when He said: "It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword. For I have come to set son (who does not believe in me) against father (who believes in me)..." (Matthew 10,34-35). The unbelievers among the Jews reproached Jesus for having proclaimed such words and accused Him of breaking the union of the people and the family...

The believers became convinced – by the prophecies- that the Messiah had to undergo death, so that the monotheist message would pass from the Jews - who had made it hermetic-to the Pagans (Acts 17,1-4), and that "Everybody in Ephesus, both Jews and Greek (Pagans who were polytheists) heard about this episode; everyone was filled with awe, and the name of the Lord Jesus came to be held in great honour" (Acts 19,17). All those believed in Jesus, in spite of the resistance of the Jews of Israel who did not recognize in Him the nationalist Christ they illusorily imagined. Thus, "thousands of Jews have now become believers (Christians)" (Acts 21,20).

On the other hand, the fundamentalist Jews formed an exclusively Jewish fanatic party, a "ghetto" violently nationalist. This opposing camp, aspiring only to the political restoration of the kingdom of David in Palestine, opposed without pity the Judeo-Christians. This opposition
was so violent that it led to the persecution of the disciples of Jesus who had to meet at "doors closed for fear of the Jews" who attacked Jesus’ disciples (John 20,19).

The scission was thus total between the two camps, fulfilling exactly the words of Jesus: "It is not peace I have come to bring, but a sword". In fact, it is by "the sword" that a good number of Apostles perished, stoned like Stephen (Acts 7,59) or literally killed "by the sword" like "James, the brother of John" (Acts 12,2).

In God’s opinion, which of these two camps represent the true face of the Judaism? That of the fundamentalist Jews attached to the nationalist ideal, or that of the Jewish disciples of Jesus, transformed into "universalists" after their release from the prejudices imposed by the narrow fanatic vision of a Judaism so badly understood?

Jesus answers this question when He says: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets (i.e. books of the Old Testament): I have come not to abolish but to complete them... If your uprightness does not surpass that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5,17-20).

Jesus is thus the perfection of the Judaism and the true Jews are those who become His disciple: 'If you wish to be perfect... then come, follow me', Jesus said to the rich young man who practised scrupulously, to the letter, the precepts of the mosaic law (Matthew 19,21). Paul, who was a practising Pharisee, having understood that, declared to the Jews: 'And simply by being Christ’s, you are that progeny of Abraham, the heirs named in the promise' (Galatians 3,29).

Thus, according to the Gospel, the true Jew is the one who becomes disciple of Jesus. Those who denied Him are not true Jews, but "false Jews", the "false friends", these "intruders" whom Paul speaks about, 'trouble-makers among you who are seeking to pervert the gospel of Christ' (Galatians 1,7). They are the false Jews whom John denounces like "antichrists" and "deceivers" (1 John 2,18-22 / 1 John 4,2-3 / 2 John 1,7), "refusing to acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in human nature" (2 John 1,7). "If anyone comes to you bringing a different doctrine", John continues, "you must not receive him into your house or even give him a greeting. Whoever greets him has a share in his wicked activities" (2 John 1,10). The Book of Revelation warns us against their reappearance at the end of times and qualifies them as "false Jews", "who falsely claim to be Jews", even belonging to the 'synagogue of Satan' (Revelation 2,9-3,9). Jesus had accused their predecessors to be "from their father, the devil", not from God (John 8,44). These false modern Jews are the Israeli nationalists.

2.13.2 Teachings of John’s Gospel

What John was interested in was Jesus’ teachings rather than his actions. He communicated them to us by writing the various discussions his Master had with different persons, letting us understand by ourselves the lights that Jesus wanted to give to mankind.

John thus did not leave a list of doctrines, but he relies upon the good sense of those who can read between the lines, and understand Christ’s teachings from His own words during discussions or controversies.

Jesus often took the opportunity, sometimes apparently banal (e.g. His dialogue with the Samaritan: John 4) to reveal a truth. Sometimes He even created the occasion to draw an useful discussion. Thus, the purposes of His miracles were indirect and deeper, to cause discussions during which, He could expose His points of view - about the Torah, for example - to rectify the deviationism into which the Hebraic community had sunk.

Indeed, Jesus worked miracles on Saturdays to demonstrate that one should not reduce oneself to a complete immobilism on this day, as the Jews thought. He thus healed a paralytic one Saturday, thus scandalizing the Jews and seized the occasion to declare: "My Father still goes on working (on Saturdays) , and I am at work too. But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but He spoke of
God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal" (John 5,17-18).

John wanted to give us above all this word of Jesus: "My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the One who sent me" (John 7,16). This doctrine of Jesus was transmitted to us by John through the following discussions that Jesus had:

2.13.2.1 Building of the true Temple (John 2,13-22)

Jesus discussed with the Jews in the Temple about its destruction and the building of the true Temple, the "Temple that was his body", i.e. his Person (see Revelation 21,22).

2.13.2.2 Dialogue with Nicodemus (John 3,1-21)

Jesus reveals there the need to "be born again from above in spirit", i.e. to decondition and to liberate oneself from the prejudices in order to see the truth and to objectively choose it after having broken the body chains, because 'what is born of flesh (human nature) is flesh, but what is born of the Spirit is spirit" and lives eternally.

2.13.2.3 Dialogue with the Samaritan (John 4,1-42)

Jesus provoked a dialogue with a Samaritan woman for three reasons:

1. To break the hatred between Jews and Samaritans, a hatred set up by racism: "Jews, of course, do not associate with Samaritans", explains John (John 4,9). The parable of the good Samaritan shocked the Jews (Luke 10,29-37). This friendly approach of Jesus, a Jew, thus astonished the Samaritan woman: "You are a Jew! How is it that you ask me, a Samaritan, for something to drink?" (John 4,9). Jesus took an antiracist step.

2. To break the social prejudices of the time, especially in the mentality of His disciples who were astonished to see Him speaking with a woman (John 4,27), who, moreover, was a Samaritan (John 4,9).

3. The main reason was to reveal to the Samaritans He was the Messiah (John 4,25-26 / 4,41-42).

Notice that the Samaritans - as innocent and docile children - believed in Jesus, not because they had seen Him making miracles, but simply because of what they "had heard" from Samaritans (John 4,39-42). The Jews, instead, were reticent. Jesus Himself had declared, while returning to Galilee two days later: "... a prophet is not honoured in his own home town" (John 4,44). At Cana, He still says, not without bitterness: "Unless you see signs and portents, you will not believe!" (John 4,48)... as the Samaritans had believed in Him without seeing miracles.

2.13.2.4 The Spiritual Resurrection (John 5,1-47)

It is the resurrection of the soul by accepting the Truth proclaimed by Jesus. It is called the "first resurrection" (Revelation 20,5-6). Healing a paralytic, Jesus took advantage to reveal his divine filiation, his 'equality with God' and 'God Himself' as the scandalised Jews said (John 5,17-18 / 10,33). At this occasion, Jesus also announced that "the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it will live" (John 5,25). It means that the Pagans, considered dead by the Jews, will come to the spiritual life thanks to their faith in Jesus. The prophet Baruch said to the Jews exiled among the Babylonians, considered as "dead" who 'go down in Sheol': 'Why, Israel, why are you in the country of your enemies, growing older and older in an alien land, defiling yourselves with the dead (Babylonians), reckoned with those who go to Sheol?' (Baruch 3,10-11).
This return to life of the soul is a spiritual resurrection, that of the soul in the living body since down here on earth. Jesus says indeed: "The hour is coming - indeed it is already here – when the dead (the sinners) will hear the voice of the Son of God, and all who hear it (those who repent) will live" (John 5,25). The Revelation calls it "the first resurrection" (Revelation 20,5-6).

Thus this does not concern the 'second resurrection', the one that will take place at the end of the world. Jesus said in fact: "The hour is coming, where the right ones will have share with the Eternal Life and the irreligious people will know 'eternal death'" (i.e. eternal sadness: John 5,28-29). This final death of the soul is called the "second death" by Revelation 20,6 (the first being the physical death, and the second the death of the soul).

Notice the perseverance of the healed disabled man: "for thirty-eight years" he had presented to be healed, but "someone else got down there before him". Jesus healed him, because he 'knew he had been in that condition for a long time" without loosing the hope to be healed.

2.13.2.5 The "Bread" of the Eternal Life (John 6,1-67)

Jesus multiplies the breads to speak about another 'Bread' which gives Life to the soul, the Eternal Life, in the same way as He had spoken to the Samaritan about the 'Water' of the Eternal Life starting from the water of the well of Jacob (John 4,13-14).

Yet, before operating the miracle, as 'he Himself knew exactly what He was going to do', He wanted "to put Philip to the test", as well as the other Apostles. He thus says to Philip: "Where can we buy some bread for these people to eat?" Notice that He said that "to put him to the test" (John 6,5-6). Because Philip had been one of the Apostles present at Cana, when Jesus had multiplied the wine (John 1,43 and 2,1-3). He should thus have known that Jesus could feed these thousands of people without problem. However, neither Philip, nor Andrew, also present at Cana, understood what the Messiah wanted to do and could do (John 6,8). They should have answered Him: 'But Lord you can do anything! You have only to say a word, as at Cana, and there will be bread for all!'

The two miracles should be brought closer: that of the wine and that of the bread. These two products through which Jesus gives Himself to us in his spiritual Meal. I did not explain yet the miracle of Cana (John 2,1-11) I will do it now.

Compare the attitude of faith of Mary, the Blessed Virgin, at Cana, with that of the Apostles here. At Cana, she was the one who took the initiative to ask Jesus to multiply the wine. His Apostles -Philip and Andrew in particular, and others- "had also been invited" (John 2,2). Nevertheless, Philip and Andrew -in spite of the fact they knew what had happened in Cana- were far from thinking of what Jesus wanted to do and could do concerning the miracle of the breads and the fishes. At Cana, instead, His Mother had take the initiative, pushing Jesus to multiply the wine. She obtained it for the joy of the guests. Mary, to whom God does not refuse anything, thus managed to anticipate the time for Jesus to perform miracles (John 2,4). That should have inspired Philip and Andrew in their answer to Jesus concerning the bread.

I indicate here a bad translation: at Cana Jesus does not say to His Mother: 'Woman, what do you want from me?... etc' as some translate, but: 'What does it matter to you and me, woman? My hour has not come yet" (John 2,4). In other words, Jesus answers Mary -who tells him that the wine was lacking- what in fact really means: "What has that got to do with you and me? It is not up to us guests; it is not our business. It is neither my Wedding, nor my hour! At my Wedding the Wine will not lack. Here no one put me in charge of wine". It is in this spirit that we should understand and translate the words of Jesus according to the original text in Greek (see the translation in the Bible of Andre Chouraqui). We should not think as some do, that in the answer of Jesus to his Mother, there was a lack of respect to her. That would have been unworthy of the Messiah...Let us not forget that Jesus, finally, granted the
In his controversy with the Jews, Jesus told them: "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (John 6,44). He said that because many went to Him believing that He was the Messiah, therefore the political King of Israel. They were thus not attracted by the Spirit of the Father of Jesus. This crowd ran after Jesus, not for spiritual reasons, but because they were attracted by Him for political, economic and material interests, like Judah. This is why Jesus warned them: 'Do not work for food that goes bad, but work for food that endures for eternal life' (John 6,27). He spoke about His Body and His Blood, Bread and Wine of Eternal Life (John 6,51-58). Only those who are attracted by the Father are able to get the deep meaning of the spiritual words of Jesus. Those who went to Him for material goods found no meaning in his words and ended up by leaving Him, as Judah did later (John 6,60-71).

2.13.2.6 Living water (John 7,37-39)

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan about the water He gave her to drink, He was referring to 'the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive' (John 7,39). To be watered by this Spirit that gives the Life to the soul, it is necessary to be thirsty of it. The tepid ones are excluded. Jesus gives this same Spirit in the Eucharist to 'all who are thirsty' (Matthew 26,27-28 / Revelation 22,17).

2.13.2.7 Speech of Jesus at the Temple (John 7,1-53)

The feast of Shelters, known also as feast of the Harvest (Exodus 23,16), commemorated the stay in the desert of the Sinai in shelters during 40 years (Leviticus 23,42-43). In occasion of this feast the Jews went each year in pilgrimage to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple. This feast is famous still today in Israel.

Jesus' "brothers", i.e. the inhabitants of Nazareth, ironically told him: 'Leave this place and go to Judaea, so that your disciples, too, can see the works you are doing; no one who wants to be publicly known acts in secret; if this is what you are doing, you should reveal yourself to the world' (John 7,3-4). John explains just after these verses that: "Not even his brothers had faith in Him" (John 7,5).

Why did the fellow citizens of Jesus push him to go to Jerusalem to manifest himself to the world since they did not believe in him? Furthermore they knew that "the Jews were seeking to kill Him" (John 7,1 / 7,13)!

One must understand that it is with a cynical and mocker tone that these people addressed to Jesus and challenged him to appear before the people as the awaited Messiah. They did not believe He was able to be this awaited political leader, able to satisfy the Israelites thirsty of national independence. Do not forget, in fact, that John the Baptist himself and the apostles had difficulties to understand the purely spiritual mission of Jesus and his spiritual Kingdom that "is not a kingdom of this world", as He revealed to Pilate (John 18,35-37).

These Nazarenes spoke to Jesus in the same spirit of challenge as the devil who had said to Him: 'If you are Son of God (the Messiah) tell these stones to turn into loaves... If you are Son of God throw yourself down' (Matthew 4,3-5). It is still in this bad spirit that, seeing Jesus on the cross, 'the passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said: 'Then save yourself if you are God's son and come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, with the words: 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now (to restore the kingdom of David), and we will believe in Him!... For he did say, 'I am God's son!' (Matthew 27,39-44). However, one must not 'put Yahweh your God to the test!' (Deuteronomy 6,16).

We can now understand the reason why Jesus answered to his fellow citizens: 'For me the right time (to be the spiritual and universal King) has not come yet, but for you any time is the right time (to wait for the nationalist Messiah). The world cannot hate you (because...
it waits for the same Messiah as you do and has the same spirit as yours), but it does hate Me, because I give evidence (by my spiritual messianism) that its ways are evil. Go up to the festival yourselves: I am not going to this festival, because for Me the time (to be a King) is not ripe yet' (John 7,6-8).

Jesus refused to go to Jerusalem with 'his brothers' of Galilee, because he did not want to accompany them in their worldly and opportunist spirit. Indeed, they did not invite Him to go to Jerusalem in a spirit of pilgrimage and meditation, but in a spirit of an election campaign, making of a religious festival a springboard for a political purpose. This is why Jesus replied: 'I am not going to this festival', i.e. I am not going there with you, not even in this spirit. But John adds "however after His brothers had left for the festival, he went up as well, not publicly but secretly" (John 7,10). Jesus finally went to Jerusalem but in a spirit quite different from the others, since He went up 'secretly', without trying to be recognised as they thought (John 7,4).

Jesus always refused to reveal Himself in a spirit of noisy publicity, to the point that it was 'the Jews (who) were on the look-out for him' (John 7,11). It was thus not Jesus, who sought to manifest himself, like his 'brothers' had asked him. Hadn’t He recommended the apostles not to say to anyone that He was the Messiah? (Matthew 16,20).

God spoke to Isaiah about this discrete Messiah, describing him as follows: 'Here is my Servant whom I uphold, my Chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have sent my Spirit upon him...He does not cry out or raise his voice, his voice is not heard in the streets' to make electoral speeches and to be known by the world (Isaiah 42,1-2). Only those who have spiritual eyes to see, they only, can understand that Jesus is the Christ, the Chosen one of God: "Anyone who has ears should listen", Jesus often said (Luke 14,35 and Matthew 13,9).

However, it happened that Jesus raised his voice, but it was always to proclaim spiritual truths and to be heard by everyone. Indeed, John said that: "On the last day, the great day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out: 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!' As scriptures says, 'From his heart shall flow streams of living water'. He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive' (John 7,37-39 / to see also Ezekiel 47,1-13 and Revelation 22,2). It is of this same "living Water" that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan (John 4,13-14).

The Messiah promised to His disciples neither empire on the world, nor temporal glory, but the Spirit of God who restores the man with the image of God. Those who are thirsty of it, and who will turn to Him, will never be disappointed.

The fellow citizens of Jesus did not seek this divine Spirit; they were not thirsty of this water. On the contrary, his disciples wanted to water themselves only with the vivifying Source that the Messiah had opened inside them. St Paul, for example, considered the mosaic worship of the Torah worthless compared to the faith in Jesus, saying: 'Circumcised on the eight day of my life, I was born of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrew parents. In the matter of the Law (the Torah), I was a Pharisee; as for religious fervour, I was a persecutor of the Church; as for the uprightness embodied in the Law, I was faultless. But what were once my assets, I now, through Christ Jesus, count as losses. Yes, I will go further: because of the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, I count everything else as loss. For him I have accepted the loss of all other things, and look on them all as filth if only I can gain Christ..." (Philippians 3,5-8). Paul, who was thirsty of the Spirit of Jesus, was not disappointed. He was quite conscious of having It since he said: 'I believe that I too have the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 7,40). "We are the true people of the circumcision since we worship by the Spirit of God and make Christ Jesus our only boast’ (Philippians 3,3). Paul would not have said these experienced words had he been satisfied with the worship of the Torah and had he not been fully satisfied with the Water of Jesus.

For us who are studying this biblical course, these words about the Water of the Eternal Life are of the highest importance, because the purpose of our study is to have within us the
Source of this Water promised by Jesus. We are thus directly and personally concerned and interested. This is why we must do our "spiritual assessment" as already recommended at the beginning of this Spiritual Itinerary. Let us know if we are thirsty of the Water of Jesus, if we have drunk from it, if "from our hearts flow streams of living water" (John 7,38). Can we say like Paul: "I believe that I too have the Spirit of God?" Do we think like God? Am I as He wants me to be? If such is the case, then happy and blessed are we! Are you happy? If so, then your study has not been useless.

Let us thank the Messiah who gave us His Life to grant us this happiness. Let us not allow anybody to tear off this "treasure we hold in pots of earthenware (fragile), so that the immensity of this power is God’s and not our own" like Paul says (2 Corinthians 4,7). Let us remain with God and He will protect us.

2.13.2.8 Discussions between Jesus and the Jews (John 8,12-59)

In this violent controversy between Jesus and the Jews, Jesus reveals that He always acted according to "what He has seen at His Father’s side", while, on the other hand, the Jews who have refused him acted according to "the lessons they have learnt from their father...the devil" (John 8,38-44).

The teaching of these words is that we all act - consciously or unconsciously - according to what we contemplate in the secret of our soul. We produce acts inspired by the spirit we listen to. If our heart leans towards God, we behave in a good way, but if we are attracted by the spirit of the devil, then our actions will be diabolic. If the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, it is because they have "the devil as father", they are allured by his dominating spirit and they contemplate him, consciously or not, unceasingly.

Men always imitate what they contemplate and admire. This criminal father, the devil, "was a murderer from the start", Jesus declares. Hadn’t he allured the parents of humanity, seeking to kill their souls by moving them away from God? The apostles, instead, have followed Jesus, because they were unconsciously looking for God, they were contemplating Him without knowing. The Christ wanted them to become aware of that, when He tells them on the eve of his Passion: "No one can come to the Father except through me... From this moment you know Him and have seen Him" (John 14,7). On this same occasion, he also revealed to them that, unconsciously, they already knew him: "the Spirit of truth...but you know Him, because He is with you, He is (already) within you" (John 14,17).

2.13.2.9 The Jews want a nationalist Christ (John 10,24)

The Jews gathered round Jesus and asked him: "How much longer are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us openly". Jesus answered: 'I have told you, but you do not believe'.

The Jews ask for an answer; not to submit to the divine requirements which are spiritual, but to lead Jesus to bend to their political requirements, to take the head of a violent insurrectionary movement against the Roman occupation. They wanted him to know they’re ready to fight against the Romans and follow him if he were the nationalist messiah. He only had to say one word and they would take the weapons and follow him..

The Jewish world had forgotten what the prophet Isaiah had said of the Messiah: "On Him will rest the Spirit of YHVH...He will strike the country with the rod of his mouth (his mouth, i.e with his words, not with the sword) and with the breath of his lips bring death to the wicked" (Isaiah 11,2-4). Jesus never restrained from fighting the Israeli violence with his words to eradicate the sin of nationalism. The fanatics refused to listen to him, preferring "to die in their sin" (John 8,21-24) rather than to give up their ambitions of political hegemony, as it is the case of the Israelis of the XXth- XXIst centuries who prefer to die rather than to give
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2.13.2.10 The Paraclete, the Trinity (John 14,16-31)

John is the only one to have spoken to us so much about the Holy Spirit (John 15,26 / 16,7-15). It is the 'Paraclete' or 'Comforter' Jesus spoke about (in Greek: "Paraclitos", and in Hebrew: "Menahem": John 14,16 and 14,26). This Spirit will support the Apostles and 'will be with them forever' after the dramatic departure of Jesus: "I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter (than Me)... I shall not leave you orphans (without Me); I shall come to you (by this Comforter)" (John 14,19). Notice that it is still Jesus who 'comes to them' in the form of the Holy Spirit to 'comfort and console' them. Jesus and this Spirit are thus One, like Jesus and the Father are also One. The Father, Jesus and the Spirit are thus One. This text reveals the Trinity.

The consolation derives from the fact that the Christ, after His death, appears -exclusively- to those "who love Him" (John 14,21) to comfort them. The Apostles did not understand these words. They still thought that Jesus would be the nationalist king of Israel, who had to manifest himself, soon and alive, to the Jews. That's why they asked him: 'Lord, how is it that you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?' Jesus did his utmost, until the last moment, to explain that the kingdom they should wait for was not the one they imagined, but that it was interior: 'Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home in him' (John 14,23). They were not able yet to understand this interior dimension. John wrote all that much later, after having himself understood the deep importance of these words. He wrote then to enlighten the other Judeo-Christians for them to overcome the limits of the false Judaism whose fatal consequence was a nationalism non desired by God. This spiritual lesson is valid for all men of all centuries...in particular the materialistic ones.

2.13.2.11 To sanctify the Name of God (John 17,1-26)

Jesus prayed aloud to give His last teachings before leaving the world:

1) The Eternal Life consists in "knowing God and his Messiah", i.e. to have in oneself the true conception of God, not to imagine Him to be different than He really is. Only the chosen ones recognize in Jesus this "image" of God, thus sharing the Eternal Life since down here on earth (John 17,3). St Paul said: 'If our Gospel seems to be veiled at all, it is so to those who are on the way to destruction, the unbelievers whose minds have been blinded by the god of this world, so that they cannot see shining the light of the Gospel of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4,3-4). That applies today to those who cannot recognize the Beast of the Revelation, those for whom the Book of the Revelation of John remains closed.

To require a Zionist Messiah means to have a misleading image of God. When Jesus asks us to pray thus: 'May your Name be sanctified', he invites us to purify our concepts of God and his plans of salvation in favour of all mankind. Our stains prevent us from seeing the divine Essence in its purity. A short-sighted eye sees a face deformed, it is not the face which is bad, but the eye which looks at it. 'Father heal my eyes so that I can see You as You are. Let your Name be sanctified in me, not disfigured by my blindness'. Jesus asked a blind man: 'What do you want me to do for you?' He answered: 'Sir, let me see again'. And Jesus healed him at once. We must also make this request to the Christ with faith. Because Jesus is alive, and alive forever, to answer our prayers. We will hear him say, in our hearts, what he had said to the blind man: "receive your sight! Your faith has saved you" (Luke 18,35-43). Jesus even said that he had come to give the sight, meaning the spiritual insight (John 9,39-41).

"I have revealed your Name to those whom you took from the world", Jesus said to the Father (John 17,6). This Name is no more "YHVH", as it has been revealed to Moses, but...
it is a much deeper and immanent truth, within men, it is written in letters of fire in men's intimate life: God dwells in the heart of the believers, and hell is a Godless heart. God is the perfect Happiness. Who knows God as He really is, enjoys perfect happiness: John informed us that "God is Love" (1 John 4,16), and 'whoever fails to love (Jesus) does not know God (i.e. does not love Him)' (1 John 4,16). John also says, because 'this is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent His Only Son into the world that we might have life through Him'. (1 John 4,9). Such is the 'Name' of God, the name by which we recognize Him: Love! And the incarnated Love: the Messiah! This holy Name is a scandal for many. But for the believers it is the Eternal Life. Such is the Name revealed by Jesus, the only one who could reveal it to us.

Jesus revealed this Name of God and said that He 'will continue to make it known', i.e. in the future (John 17,26). This revelation is done in us, until the end of times, 'so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and so that I may be in them'', said Jesus. This immanence of God must thus be perfect in the hearts of the believers to be full of Him. The Christ, forever alive, will keep on teaching them the Love, the Love that links and that unites to the Father.

Those who preach a 'transcendence' of God have a remote and distorted image of Him, that does not conform to the Name revealed by Jesus: a Name "within us", immanent to the believers, because it is love and love is never transcendent. The Name of God is 'Immanent'.

2) 'I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the Evil one' (John 17,15). Thus, one should not isolate oneself from the world as certain monks and religious do. These believers, in the majority, are afraid of the world and they fear to face the realities of the everyday life and the difficulties of the testimony of Jesus. They resemble that scared servant who hid his single talent into the ground, thus deserving to be rejected by the Master (Matthew 25,24-30). We have 'to win the world' knowing that 'He (Jesus) who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (Satan)' (1 John 4,4). The Apostles never isolated themselves.

It is by dwelling in the world with the strength of God, that we will be able to save the people of good will who are misled by the tricks of the world. Those who live in the world, like Jesus, but who have the true knowledge of God and his true 'Name', do not fear "to be led into temptation"; they will overcome the worldly seductions by fighting with courage; they triumph over evil, 'the gates of hell can never overpower them' (Matthew 16,18). We must have this faith!

2.13.2.12 "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18,33-36)

Pilate, anxious, asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews. Jesus answered: "My kingdom is not of this world (Pilate did not have thus to worry about nor to arrest Him). If my Kingdom were of this world, my men (the Apostles and all the disciples after them) would have fought to prevent me being surrendered to the Jews". Jesus answered Pilate, who was obviously worried, believing that Jesus presented himself as a temporal king of Israel instead of Herod, a friend of the Romans. He wanted to be sure that Jesus was not preparing an insurrection against Rome. It is necessary to note Pilate's concern, that worsened when he heard Jesus presenting Himself like the 'Son of God': "When Pilate heard them say this his fears increased", said John (John 19,8). Pilate's crisis of conscience was made even more acute by the premonitory dream of his wife, Claudia Procula, in favour of Jesus (Matthew 27,19). According to the tradition, she would have given up her husband, after he had delivered Jesus to the Jews. She would then have become Christian.

By his answer, Jesus wanted to tell Pilate that his mission was not to oppose Rome, otherwise he would have ordered all those who followed him to rise against Herod and Caesar, and to avoid, by the violence of the weapons, that Jesus "be surrendered to the Jews" his enemies. All his disciples were waiting for only one word from him to revolt themselves. This is what
The Jewish chiefs introduced Jesus to Pilate as a revolutionist against the Romans. Luke says that they brought Jesus before Pilate and they accused him saying: ‘We found this man inciting our people to revolt (against Rome), opposing payment of the tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be the Christ-King’ (Luke 23,1-2).

It was this claim of sovereignty that had worried Pilate. But when he realised that Jesus did not aspire to a political kingdom, he wanted to set Him free (Luke 23,13-16). ‘But the Jews shouted: ‘If you set Him free you are no friend of Caesar’s; anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar... We have no king except Caesar!’ (John 19,12-15). It is only "then", i.e. after this proclamation of the unique sovereignty of Caesar, that Pilate 'handed him over to them to be crucified', John specifies (John 19,16). As a representative of Caesar, Pilate could not resist to the threat of being accused of treason to the emperor and of supporting Jesus, after he had been introduced to him like a terrorist and a rebel against the Roman occupation. To be saint, Pilate should 'have made violence' to himself by supporting the right cause of Jesus until the end, with the risk of undergoing infamy among men to deserve the eternal glory of Heaven.

Finally, we must note the bad faith of the Jewish chiefs who 'incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas' and that Jesus should be condemned (Mark 15,11). 'Barabbas was a bandit' (John 18,40), 'a notorious prisoner' (Matthew 27,16), 'with the rebels who had committed murder during the uprising (against the Romans)' (Mark 15,7). The bad faith of the Jews is evident in the choice of the release of the activist Barabbas, a 'famous' Israeli nationalist of the time, and in the condemnation of Jesus as a revolutionary activist, accusing him of being what Barabbas really was.

Notice that the Apostles were armed with two swords (Luke 22,38), still believing in an uprising against the established power. When Jesus spoke to them about the decisive fight they were to carry out, he meant the spiritual fight they were to face after his crucifixion: ‘Now if you have a purse, take it... if you have no sword, sell your cloak and buy one... what it said about Me is even now reaching its fulfilment’ (Luke 22,36). Jesus was speaking about the sword of the word, about the moral strength the Apostles should have had in front of the difficult moments and the spiritual fights that would have presented when 'what it said about him was now reaching its fulfilment' i.e. his crucifixion soo. They did not understand his words; they believed that the hour of the revolt against Herod and Caesar had come. This is why they answered at once: 'Here are two swords'. Exasperated by their incomprehension, the Christ answered: 'That is enough!' (Luke 22,35-38). In fact, like Paul understood later, the sword ment by Jesus is "the sword of the spirit, that is the word of God" (Ephesians 6,17). The Revelation explains well that, for the Christ, "the sword" is the word, the power of the word of truth: "Out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double edged" (Revelation 1,16), "I shall soon come to you and attack these people with the sword out of my mouth" (Revelation 2,16).

At the Mount of Olives, during the arrest of Jesus, "his followers, seeing what was about to happen, said, 'Lord, shall we use our swords?' And one of them struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear'. Jesus intervened to prevent his people from defending him by the sword and said to his Apostles: "That is enough!' (Luke 22,49-51). Receiving no order of fighting, "then all the (disappointed) disciples deserted Him and ran away" (Matthew 26,56), as Jesus had just foretold them: 'Listen; the time will come – indeed it has come already – when you are going to be scattered, each going his own way, leaving me alone" (John 16,32).

2.13.2.13 John remains until the Return of Jesus (John 21,22)

"If I want him (John) to stay behind till I come, what does it matter to you?..." These words were addressed by Jesus to Peter, regarding John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved", as John liked to define himself (John 21,20). These words made the disciples believe
that the return of the Christ was imminent, that it would have taken place while John was still alive.

This belief is reflected in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: "We who are still alive for the Lord’s (Jesus’) coming..." (1 Thessalonians 4,15 / repeated into 4,17).

For this reason, John, old and close to leave this earth (he was approximately 95 years old when he wrote his Gospel), knowing that "the rumour then went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die (before the return of Jesus)’, explains the words of the Saviour saying: 'Yet Jesus had not said to Peter: 'He will not die', but, 'If I want him to stay behind till I come' (what does it matter to you?)" (John 21,23).

Paul, who also had believed in the immediate return of Jesus, had realised his error well before John had written his Gospel. In his second letter to the Thessalonians, he rectified what he had said in the first one concerning the Coming of Jesus. He specified about this subject: "Please do not be too easily thrown into confusion or alarmed by any manifestation of the Spirit or any statement or any letter claiming to come from us, suggesting that the Day of the Lord has already arrived. Never let anyone deceive you in any way. It cannot happen until the Great Revolt has taken place and there has appeared the wicked One, the lost One, the Enemy" (2 Thessalonians 2,1-4). This 'Enemy', called 'Antichrist' by John, is the adversary of Christ Jesus (1 John 2,22).

Before the Coming of Jesus, at the end of times, a large sign is given to us as a point of reference: the appearance of the Antichrist, the 'Beast' which should be recognized (Revelation 13).

The book of the Revelation of John, is given to us for this purpose. It contains the revelations given to John to help us to identify this ferocious enemy who must appear on the eve of the Return of Jesus. It is in this way, by his Book of Revelation, that John must remain in the world until Jesus returns. It is by his Revelation that John is still in the world, to prepare the believers for this Return because, thanks to this salutary book, we know that the Antichrist has already appeared on the earth. The Return of Jesus is not thus far; it has even already begun in certain hearts.

Here the study of the Gospel and the letters of John end. What I have written about his 3 letters is enough to make you read them without finding major unclear points.

Now read the Gospel of John and his letters. Then go to the letters written by the Apostles.

2.13.3 The letters of Paul

Paul has written 14 letters to strengthen the faith of the first Christians who were, in the majority, Judeo-Christians. His principal concern was to warn them against these adversaries who made every effort to move them away from Jesus. These were the Jews who resisted to him everywhere and who wanted the neophytes to go back to the practise of the Torah by all kinds of reasoning. This is why Paul, writing to the Galatians, said to them: "You stupid people in Galatia!...who has put a spell on you...There is only one thing I should like you to tell me: How was it that you received the Spirit – was it by the practise of the Law (the Torah), or by believing in the message you heard (the Gospel)?" (Galatians 3,1-2). 'I am astonished that you are so promptly turning away from the one who called you in the grace of Christ... there are trouble-makers (the non-believers Jews) among you who are seeking to pervert the Gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1,6-7). That’s how the diabolic spirit of the Antichrist acts.

The two letters of Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians must be studied together because they tackle the same problem: to prevent the Judeo-Christians from turning over to the useless practise of the worship and of the works of the Law (the Torah): "It is obvious that nobody is reckoned as upright in God’s sight by the Law (the Torah), since the upright will live through faith (in Jesus, not through the cult prescribed by the Torah); and the Law (the Torah) is based not on faith (in Jesus)... Christ redeemed us (liberated us) from the curse
2.13 - Lesson 13 - The Gospel of John and the letters of the Apostles

of the Law...' (Galatians 3,11-13). In his letter to the Romans, Paul also says: "A person is justified by faith and not by doing what the Law (the Torah) tells him to do" (Romans 3,28). Paul condemned himself before the Jews by qualifying the Torah a curse. But this justified him and glorified him before the Father and his Messiah.

Thus, all the effort of Paul was to convince these Jews who became Christians- and still used to attend the worship prescribed in the books of the Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy- that these practices were sterile for the soul and that only the faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and this faith alone could save, without the practices of the Law (Torah).

Now you can read the letter to the Galatians.

Before reading the letter to the Romans, you must know that Paul addressed it to the Christians of Rome. They were divided into two distinct and, alas, adverse communities:

1. That of the Judeo-Christians, founded by the Jews who had believed in Jesus.
2. That of the Pagan-Christians, founded by the Pagans (Romans in the majority) who have joined the disciples of Christ.

These two communities despised each other. The first, formed by Jews, considered the Pagans unworthy of belonging to the people of believers. The Jews who had followed Jesus thought that Christianity was reserved to the Jews only, they had not understood yet the universal dimension of the message of Jesus. Paul then wrote them: "Do you think God is the God only of the Jews, and not of Gentiles too? Most certainly of Gentiles too, since there is only one God; He will justify the circumcised (the Jews) by their faith (in Jesus), and He will justify the uncircumcised (the Pagans) through their faith (in Jesus)" (Romans 3,29-30).

The Pagano-Christian community in turn despised the Judeo-Christians, believing – wrongly - that the Jews were to be excluded from the people of the believers because Jews had rejected Jesus. Paul contradicted them saying: "I too am an Israelite?... God never abandoned His own people... There is a remnant, set aside by grace (by the faith in Jesus). And since it is by grace, it cannot now be by good actions (cult of the Torah)' (Romans 11,1-6). One thus had not to close the door in front of 'this jewish remnant", these "chosen" Jews, because they had believed in Jesus. The same situation exists today since many Jews - as the movement "Jews for Jesus" - believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

By such sincere, true and peaceful, arguments, Paul tried to put the harmony between Judeo-Christians and Pagano-Christians, inviting them to 'accept one another" (Romans 15,7).

The modern Zionist Israelis avail themselves of such verses, from the same letter, to be accepted by the Christians, in spite of their refusal of Jesus as Messiah, misleading them by an astute and distorted interpretations of Paul’s words and intentions. By doing this, the Zionists aim at obtaining the support of the Christian world to the State of Israel. However, the words of Paul do not refer neither to the support of the State of Israel, nor to the Israelis of the XXth-XXIst centuries, but to "this elected remnant" (Romans 11,5) among the Jews, chosen in the past, because of their faith in Jesus. These benevolent words also apply nowadays to the Jews who will believe in Jesus. The nationalist Hebrews of today, by their refusal to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, are the Antichrist (1 John 2,22) and the false Jews denounced by Jesus (Revelation 2,9 and 3,9).

It should not be forgotten that Paul gave to the Jews a condition to be saved. Indeed, he said clearly: "If they do not persevere in their unbelief (i.e. in their refusal of Jesus), they will be grafted in (in the people of God)" (Romans 11,23).

Those who think that Paul takes the defence of the Israelis of our time and of the State of Israel must realise that:

1. Paul was a Hebrew who became an apostle of Jesus. He gave up the Jewish worship of the Torah which he regarded as nothing, even a curse (Galatians 3,13).
2. Paul fought violently the deniers of Jesus, considering them enemies of God and of men; he said indeed: "The Jews who put the Lord Jesus to death, and the prophets too, and persecuted us also. Their conduct does not please God, and makes them the enemies of the whole human race..." (1 Thessalonians 2,15-16).

3. Paul said clearly that the conclusion of his reasoning was the failure of those who are for the State of Israel, and the success of the chosen ones of Jesus: "What follows? Israel (an imperialist political State) failed to find what it was seeking: only those who were chosen found it (the disciples of Jesus obtained the Holy Spirit and reached the Kingdom of God)" (Romans 11,7).

The letter to the Romans ends with greetings which Paul addressed to both members of the two communities, citing their names to contribute to their reconciliation: Prisca and Aquila are of Jewish origin (Romans 16,3) and Luke mentions them in Acts 18,1-2. You will read the names of the Pagano-Christians mentioned by Paul at the end of the letter, making to both communities a last recommendation of love: "Greet each other with a holy kiss" (Romans 16,16).

Now read the letter to the Romans, taking into account that it has been addressed to these two communities to reconcile them and to link them in the love of the Messiah, Jesus, inviting the Jews to rise above the Pharisees’ considerations condemned by God (see Matthew 5,20), and the seconds not to fall in turn into racism by drawing aside the Jews, as such, from the possibility of believing in Jesus to be saved.

Paul, indeed, constantly taught that Jews and Pagans merge in Jesus: 'For He (Jesus) is the peace between us, and has made the two (Pagans and Jews) into one entity and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, by destroying in his own Person the hostility, that is, the Law (the Torah) of commandments with its decrees. His purpose in this was, by restoring peace, to create a single New Man out of the two of them, and through the Cross, to reconcile them both to God in one Body" (Ephesians 2,14-18).

Knowing that his mission was to reveal God and the Christ to the Pagans (Acts 9,15), Paul realized that he had to fight bravely against the exclusivism of the Jews who "are hindering us from preaching to gentiles to save them" (1 Thessalonians 2,16).

All the letters of Paul are the fruit of his fights "to reveal his Son in me, so that I should preach him to the gentiles" (Galatians 1,16). He appreciated the grace to announce to the Pagans "the unfathomable treasure of Christ" (Ephesians 3,8), 'the glory of this mystery among the gentiles' (Colossians 1,27), thus becoming the indisputable 'apostle of the gentiles' (Galatians 2,8), as Jesus wanted him to be (Acts 9,15).

Having understood this most important point concerning Paul, you can now read his letters.

The letters of Peter, James and Judah do not present difficulties. Read them.

2.14 Lesson 14 - John’s book of the Apocalypse (The Revelation)

The Apocalypse is a prophetic book reporting the events and the protagonists of the 20th century. This tumultuous time is that of the reappearing and the end of a Beast: the Antichrist, at the eve of Jesus’ Return.

This Book had been revealed to John in the year 95 A.D.

See the Text: The key of the Apocalypse
2.15 Lesson 15 – Study of themes

2.15.1 The final endings

See the Text: The final endings

You will complete your spiritual formation opening yourself to the Koranic inspiration. Let study "A look of faith on the Koran" and the booklet "The Antichrist in the Islam".

2.15.2 The Theology

A knowledge of the 'Theology' will complete your 'scientific' formation and will help you to grow spiritually. Each religion has its own theology. Christian theology is divided into two parts: the doctrinal theology and the moral theology.

The doctrinal theology

The main points we need to know which are based on the Holy Scriptures:

- One God and the Trinity
- God creator
- God incarnated (Christology)
- The Sacraments
- The Virgin Mary (Mariology)
- The notion of God’s people, etc...

The study of the biblical course contains many theological teachings. The Apocalypse brings new lights especially on the concept of who God’s people is, which is treated in the traditional theological works in the chapter about "the Church", and on the concept of 'Priest'.

The moral theology

- The ten commandments
- The social and international justice, etc...

This moral is simplified in one of Jesus’ sentence: 'Love God and your neighbour like yourself'...Here ends the third stage of this Spiritual Itinerary which consists of, as I’ve already mentioned at the beginning of the course, choosing and deepening the chosen spiritual way.

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