



# The Scribe-- Searching for Jesus Christ In the Old Testament

If you lived when Jesus was on earth, would you have become his disciple? What about after his death and resurrection? A story from the Gospel of St. Luke helps us to understand why some people became disciples, and it has to do with the Old Testament.

After Jesus died, and rose, he appeared to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. He asked why they were sad, and they told him, whom they thought was a stranger, all about Jesus and the tragic death which he had suffered.

He did not seem puzzled. "Don't you see," he said, "that the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus shows that he truly was the Messiah?" He then spoke of Moses and the prophets, and all the passages that referred to the Messiah, and connected them to Jesus. Like putting on glasses, the disciples finally saw clearly that Jesus was the One who would be the savior of Israel. The story of Jesus does not truly begin with the New Testament, but rather, in the pages of the Old Testament.

"The Scribe--Searching for Jesus Christ in the Old Testament," connects the **people** and **events** and **beliefs** of the Old Testament to the New Testament. The Scribe, who works for the "Biblical Times" of Jerusalem, takes us on the search. He brings to light what was foretold--that which Jesus probably shared with the disciples on the road to Emmaus.



## The Scribe Speaks

My job, as Resident Scribe for the "Biblical Times," is to study our history as God's people, and report my findings. Malachi of Jerusalem, Editor of the Times, sends over a draft story for my comments. I look into the scriptures, and when I find something that will add wisdom to the news, I write. As drawing helps me gather my thoughts, I often illustrate my commentary.

I, Jonah, take my job seriously, as did my father before me. Our family motto says it all: "History in the Service of Wisdom." We Scribes have the responsibility to look to our past in order to understand, and make wise decisions about, the present. Our history is the history of God's chosen people--a tool for God to speak to us today.

Subj: John the Baptizer  
Date: 27 A.D.  
From: Malachi@BTimes  
To: Jonah@Solomon's Portico

Issue 1

Hello Jonah,

Please review the draft headline story, and write your response. Have you been out to see this fellow--seems to be gathering a crowd each day.

## Who is John the Baptizer?

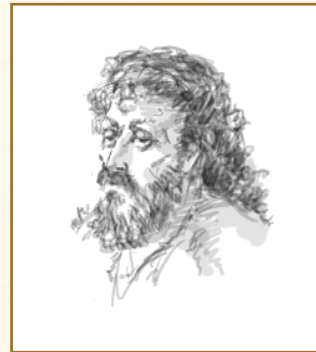
Priests have a reputation for being conservative and well-mannered. One wonders, then, how John, with ancestors on both sides who were priests, can be so unruly. He sleeps in the desert and wears camel-hair garments. He regularly challenges religious leaders. Although we have had some rather memorable prophets in our history, none were quite as, can we say, "wild?"

For months now, John has been a familiar figure in the Jordan Valley. He often shouts, "Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand!" Recently, however, his message has changed. He speaks about the arrival of another, who will separate the worthy from the unworthy, like a winnowing fork separates the wheat from the chaff.

When pressed about the identity of the "One who is coming," John explained, curiously, that he cannot "untie the sandal" of the Coming One. Simon of Bethany, a local sandal-maker, has received many inquiries since John made the comment and has told reporters that he knows of no sandal that cannot be untied.

While many of John's statements thus remain unclear, speculation about John's identity and the One of whom he speaks continues. One leading theory is that John is in fact the prophet Elijah, whom many believe will return to Israel to prepare the way for the Messiah. John has denied this, but his dress, preaching, and prophetic perspective resemble Elijah's.

One of John's kinsman, Jesus of Nazareth, is also drawing public interest. Recently, Jesus asked John to baptize him. After some discussion between the two men, Jesus went into the Jordan and was baptized. Our informant said he heard a strange rumbling, and people murmured that it was the voice of God. This has raised speculation that Jesus may be the Coming One John has spoken of. However, Jesus, who apparently retreated into the wilderness after the baptism, could not be reached for comment.





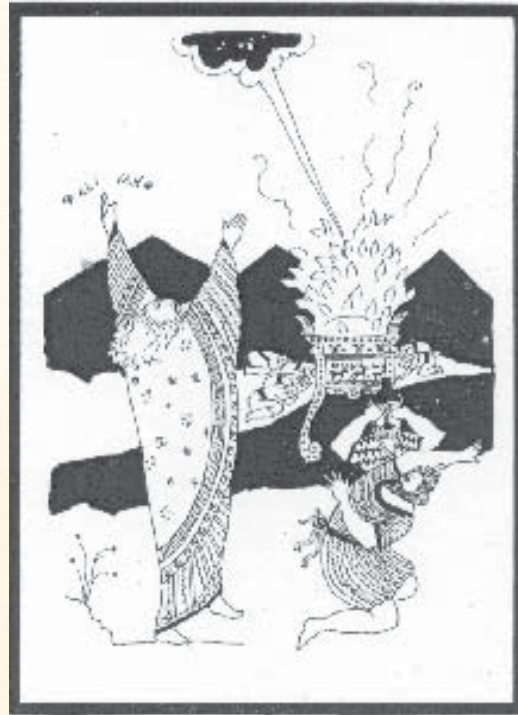
From the desk of The Scribe  
"History in Service of Wisdom"

## Let us recall the mighty acts of Elijah . . .

There was none quite like Elijah. He outran chariots at full gallop. He was fed in the desert by ravens. He faced down Ahab, one of our most powerful kings, in a spectacular display. He was wild, for God.

King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, brought worship of the foreign god, Baal, into Israel. Many were leaving the true God. Elijah knew this had to stop. He told the Israelites to come see a test of the gods. Elijah said that both he and the prophets of Baal would set up a sacrifice. They would kill the bull, make the altars, set up the sacrifice and do everything that was necessary, except light the fire.

The day came, and then the very moment of truth. Elijah told the prophets of Baal to call on their god to light the wood and burn their sacrifice. They called on their god, for hours, with no result. Elijah then prepared his offering to the true God. First, he asked that water be poured on it three times. Then he called on the name of the Lord. Immediately there came forth fire, consuming the sacrifice, the altar of stones, and even the dust around it.



The end of his life was no less spectacular. Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire, never tasting death. And so our tradition tells us, he will return just before the Messiah--to prepare the way for the one who will establish the everlasting Kingdom.

Now we have John, the Baptizer, living in the desert as did Elijah, with the same fearless devotion to God, and exhorting people to change their lives. I see many similarities; how can we know? Only the future knows. If John is Elijah, the future looks exciting indeed!

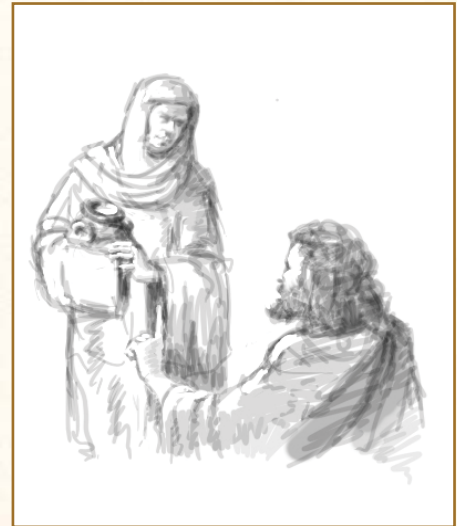
Subj: Use of God's Name?  
Date: 27 A.D.  
From: Malachi@BTimes  
To: Jonah@Solomon's Portico

Issue 2

Jonah,  
We're trying to verify these facts before press time--don't want to get this one wrong.

## Traveling Teacher in Samaria

SYCHAR- A local woman had a remarkable conversation with Jesus of Nazareth. Our reporter, a distant relative of the woman interviewed her for this story. The encounter began in an unusual way, with Jesus violating two taboos at once: he, a Jewish man, initiated conversation with a woman who was not related to him and who was a Samaritan.



**Biblical Times:** How did this encounter begin?

**Fotini:** He asked me for a drink when I was drawing water from the well, and his boldness surprised me.

**BT:** What did you say?

**Fotini:** I asked how it was that he, a Jew, would ask a drink of me, a Samaritan and a woman. He said that if I knew who it was that was asking for a drink, that I should rather ask him, for a drink. This was puzzling for he had no bucket to take the water. He told me that he could give me "living water." I said, "Sir, please do so."

**BT:** Did he?

**Fotini:** He then said, and this is what really puzzled me, "Go and get your husband." When I told him I didn't have a husband, he told me I had had five, and the man I am with now is not my husband" At that point I knew he was a prophet. So, I asked him to clear up where it is we are to worship, on Mount Gerizim or in Jerusalem. He told me we are to worship in neither place.

**BT:** What does that mean?

**Fotini:** We are worship, according to Jesus, "in spirit and truth." I said to him, "I know the Messiah is coming and that when he comes he will tell us all things."

**BT:** That is clear enough.

**Fotini:** Yes, but he replied, "I who speak to you am he."

**BT:** He said, "I am?"

**Fotini:** Yes, that was his intent.

We learned that Fotini brought several people to her village to see Jesus. He stayed in Samaria for two days.



## From the desk of The Scribe

"History in Service of Wisdom"

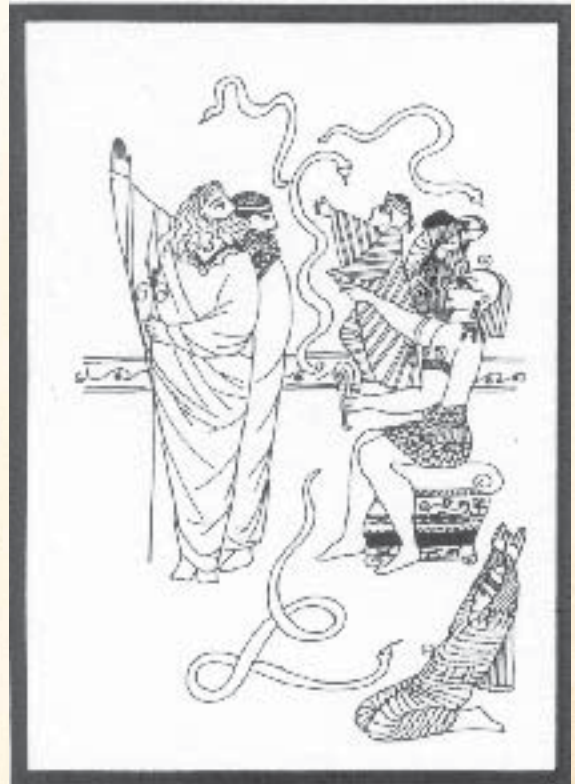
### Let us recall God's name!

It is reported that Jesus, the traveling teacher from Nazareth, has spoken with a Samaritan woman. In this conversation he referred to himself as "I AM." Has he forgotten sacred name of our God? Let us recall the story of when Moses was called by God to lead our people, and learned God's name. I take you back to the time our people were enslaved in Egypt.

Our ancestors lived among the Egyptians for four hundred years, and learned the names of their gods: for example, Isis, goddess of life, was connected with the river Nile; Sakhmet, an enormously powerful goddess, was ruler of plagues. Osiris was the god who governed life and death. They were used to gods with names. So it made sense for Moses to ask the Lord about His name. Moses said, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God's answer showed that He is not simply one of many gods. Rather the Lord is The One Who Is, or, as He said, "I am who I am." He thus told Moses to say that "I am" sent him. Then God showed them what that meant.

When Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, "I am" shone forth in victory. Sakhmet was helpless against him; she could not prevent the many plagues that God brought on Egypt. And Osiris proved no help when the angel of death claimed all of Egypt's firstborn, on the night we call "passover." The mighty name of God reminds us that we serve the Eternal One, whose name itself, is holy and set apart for only him.



Subj: Keeping the Sabbath  
Date: 27 A.D.  
From: Malachi@BTimes  
To: Jonah@Solomon's Portico

Issue 3

Jonah,

Your wisdom requested, as always.

## A Closer Look at Jesus' Sabbath Record



The breaking of the commandment, to keep the Sabbath holy by not working, has enraged religious leaders. When Jesus healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath recently, it was not the first time he healed on the Sabbath.

Several months ago, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Observers, though, soon realized that Jesus was no ordinary teacher. Instead of teaching about our many laws, as we are all used to hearing, Jesus stood up, faced an evil spirit that was raging against him, and sent it screeching from the hall. It was not, by most measures, a typical Sabbath.

More recently, Jesus was traveling through some fields with his disciples who were picking heads of grain and eating them on the Sabbath. He was confronted by some Pharisees about their breaking the Sabbath law.

Jesus brought up the example of King David. When he was traveling on a Sabbath, he and his men ate the sacred bread of the Temple. He then said, "Consider that the Temple priests work on the Sabbath." While this seemed to silence those who would criticize him (at least temporarily), it was Jesus' last comment that raised the most questions: "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."



## From the desk of The Scribe

"History in Service of Wisdom"

### We cannot defy God's law!

Before Moses died, he passed on final words of blessing. These contain a simple but important point: the Law is the "possession" of Israel. Other nations "possess" other things like size, wealth, or military power. But only God's people, Israel, possess His Law. What a gift--an entire body of wisdom and instruction by which His people could order their lives. Israel was to be the one nation that knew the ways of God and could teach them to the world.

When our ancestors forgot the gift from God, He sent prophets to remind them of the Law and the covenant he made with them. Our old poets also understood the significance of the Law. One of our greatest song-writers, Asaph, sang centuries ago that "He established a decree in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children; that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn,

and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."



We are in a covenant with God. He has given us the Law to set us apart and make us unique among the nations: we cannot defy it and remain true to ourselves.

The Law lives on in our hearts and minds. How can Jesus defy the Sabbath law, and expect good Jews to follow him? Perhaps he is not interested in good Jews. I would suggest he move to Samaria, where he was accepted by those who are not "our own."

Subj: Thousands Hear Jesus  
Date: 27 A.D.  
From: Malachi@BTimes  
To: Jonah@Solomon's Portico

Issue 4

This time our reporter was there--these are the facts.

## Thousands Gather on Mountain to Hear Preacher

The scene was a familiar one: a charismatic leader on a mountainside, surrounded by attentive followers, announces the start of a new movement to change the world. Jesus of Nazareth was at the center of such a scene yesterday when he addressed thousands of people in an outdoor rally.

Jesus came onto the scene some months ago, and his fame as a teacher and healer has spread throughout Judea, Samaria, Syria, and now Galilee, his native territory. As his fame has grown, though, so have questions about his view of the Law.

Many of his actions, such as healing on the Sabbath, have earned him a reputation as a law-breaker. It was thus timely for Jesus to clarify his positions.

Jesus claimed in his speech that he aims to fulfill the Law, not do away with it. He explained this further by providing new way of thinking about the laws we know. He seemed to dig beneath the words, to show the spirit of the law.

Instead of merely avoiding adultery, Jesus says we should also banish lustful thoughts. Where the Law permitted divorce, Jesus insists that marriage cannot be broken. The true meaning of the law against murder, he tells us, is that we should never even be angry with our brother. And we are to love not only our friends and brothers, but our enemies as well. Instead of fighting against our enemies, against the Romans who oppress and persecute us, we are to love them, and pray for them. I quote, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."





## From the desk of The Scribe

"History in Service of Wisdom"

### Let us recall Mount Sinai . .

Some twelve hundred years ago, our people had been rescued from slavery by God. Through-Moses, God chose to enter a covenant with us. Let us recall Mt. Sinai. Because Moses was so long gone on the mountain, the people began to worship a golden calf--an idol! When Moses returned with the tablets of stone on which the covenant was written, he broke them in anger.

After the idol-worshippers were slain, he went back up to the mountain. When he came down, with the Law once again, the people gathered round. Our ancestors made a solemn promise to become God's people, and to take him only as their God." Recall the 10 points of the Law that are called, "commandments:

Thou shall not worship any deities but God; Thou shall not worship idols or graven images; Thou shall not take the Lord's name in vain; Thou shall keep the Sabbath; Thou shall honor thy father and mother; Thou shall not kill; Thou shall not commit adultery; Thou shall not steal; Thou shall not lie; Thou shall not covet the property or wife of one's neighbor.

Now the headline is story is about Jesus speaking to the crowds in regard to the Law of God. I was there. I heard Jesus for the first time. As he spoke of the command, "Do not kill," he next said, "but I say to you, do not be angry at your brother." Over and over I heard him use the phrase, "but I say to you." What followed that phrase was a more strict meaning of the law. As a Scribe, I was truly impressed with his knowledge of the Law. He is quite a teacher as well, however, I am still not ready to be his follower.

