

# Way of Truth

## Contents

Preface		2
Chapter 1	Missing the Point	3
Chapter 2	YAH's Word Alone	10
Chapter 3	Circumcisions	15
Chapter 4	Torah	21
Chapter 5	The Way of YAH	27
Chapter 6	The Birth of the Christianity	30
Chapter 7	The Narrow Way	32
Chapter 8	One Faith	36
Chapter 9	A Falling Away	40
Chapter 10	Two Witnesses and a False Prophet	43
Appendix	Ancient Isaiah Commentary	47
Scripture Index		49

## Preface

What is the underlying reason for one accepting the Gospel? Is it so we can go to heaven? Is it so we can avoid going to hell? Or is there another reason? How about sharing the Gospel with others? Should we communicate to them that only the acceptance of our specific set of beliefs ensures their salvation? Should we insist they become disciples under our denominational preference?

This was happening 2,000 years ago. At that time, a new religion was forming in the land of the Bible. This religion later came to be known as Rabbinic Judaism. Schools were formed that followed the teachings of two men: Hillel and Shammai. At this time, the practice of proselytizing was commonplace. Making disciples under a specific denomination was the norm.

What was the answer to this problem back then? Prophets, and YAH's own Son, telling the religious masses to avoid these "teachers!" Instead, they taught them to follow YHWH alone. Live according to His Word alone. If you love Him, live for Him. No other motivation is required.

The Bible teaches that YHWH does not play favorites in choosing people to unite with. "Turn to me, and I will turn to you", He twice declares.<sup>1</sup> This promise is not dependent upon social status or ancestry. Nor is it based on our merits. Instead, the promise is given to those who turn to Him with their entire heart.<sup>2</sup>

When we put our confidence only in Him, and if we truly want to please Him, then we follow His instructions. Following His instructions without trusting and desiring Him is not being faithful. In this latter scenario, we could not expect His reciprocation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Zec. 1:3; Mal. 3:7

<sup>2</sup> Deu. 4:29; 30:2, 10; 2 Ch. 6:38; Psa. 119:2; Jer. 24:7, 29:13; Joe. 2:12

## MISSING THE POINT

And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

And Yeshua answered him, “The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; YHWH our Mighty One is one YHWH: and you shall love YHWH your Mighty One with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this *is* the first commandment.

And the second *is* like, *namely* this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. There are none other commandments greater than these.”

And the scribe said unto him, “Well, Master, you have said the truth: for there is one Mighty One; and there is none other but He: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

And when Yeshua saw that he answered wisely, he said unto him, “You are not far from the kingdom of the Mighty One.”<sup>3</sup>

**W**e can see in the above text, that this scribe was not far from accepting Yeshua’s message. Why? Because he almost fully understood it. He was close because at least with his mind,<sup>4</sup> he understood what the prophet Hosea meant when he declared: “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice”.<sup>5</sup>

Yeshua, on two occasions, quoted these Words:<sup>6</sup>

1. In one instance, He did so because certain Pharisees questioned His choice to eat with people they regarded as sinners.
2. In the other, they accused His disciples of violating the Sabbath for simply picking and eating ears of corn.

The accusers, unlike the scribe we first introduced, evidently had no idea what it meant. It was for this and other reasons Yeshua openly rebuked them. He did so on many occasions.<sup>7</sup>

He charged them with many things:

- He reprimanded them for rejecting John’s message of repentance.
- He accused them of putting on an outward show before men by enlarging their religious attire, making public prayers, and making it obvious when they fasted and made donations.

---

<sup>3</sup> Mar. 12:28-34

<sup>4</sup> Luk. 10:28

<sup>5</sup> Hos. 6:6

<sup>6</sup> Mat. 9:13; Mat. 12:7

<sup>7</sup> Mat. 23; Luk. 11; Mar. 12; Luk. 20; Mat. 6; Luk. 18; Mat. 21

- He charged them with thinking they were more righteous than others.
- He also condemned them for scrupulous proselytizing, for disallowing their disciples access to YHWH, for extorting widows' houses through their prayers, for receiving praise from others, for being greedy, for teaching nonsense concerning oath-taking, and for refusing to acknowledge the faults of their ancestors.

Yeshua said something else regarding their behavior, that is very important as it sets the context for what is later discussed in the book of Acts and a handful of the apostle Paul's letters.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the Law: judgment, mercy, and faith. These things you should have done, and not to leave the others undone. You blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.<sup>8</sup>

Like His criticism discussed earlier, these religious leaders put too much emphasis on the small details and too little on the things of greater importance. They were majoring in minor matters. As a commandment, tithing is important. However, they were tithing meticulously and yet overlooking the fundamental teachings of the Law:

- Justice
- Compassion
- Faith

In a parallel account, He says they were overlooking the love of the Mighty One.<sup>9</sup> This is why He had to highlight Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, two of the many instances in the Law that expressly teach this.<sup>10</sup>

The Pharisees' ancestors also rejected this message. Had they accepted the Words of the prophets, they would have accepted His Words also, as they were the same.

For example; Solomon, although not generally considered a prophet, declared these words in the Spirit:

“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to YHWH than sacrifice.”<sup>11</sup>

Isaiah condemned the people for their mistreatment of others—particularly the oppressed, the fatherless, and the widow—while at the same time conducting the religious services outlined in the Law.<sup>12</sup> According to the prophet, the parts of the Law that taught justice<sup>13</sup> were of greater importance than the parts about burnt offerings, new months and Sabbaths. The prophet again brought this up regarding fasting and praying on the Day of Atonement while at the same time mistreating hired labor.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Mat. 23:23-24

<sup>9</sup> Luk. 11:42

<sup>10</sup> Mat. 22:37-40. Cf. Exo. 20:6; Deu. 5:10; Deu. 7:9; Deu. 10:12; Deu. 11:1, 13, 22; Deu. 13:3; Deu. 19:9; Deu. 30:16, 20; Lev. 19:34; Deu. 10:19

<sup>11</sup> Pro. 21:3

<sup>12</sup> Isa. 1:11-17

<sup>13</sup> Exo. 23:1-9; Lev. 19:36-37; Deu. 15:7-14; 24:17; 25:13-16; 27:19; Exo. 22:21, 22; Deu. 14:29; 24:19-21; 26:12-13; etc.

<sup>14</sup> Isa. 58:3-9

Jeremiah likewise rebuked them for their oppression of the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow [in addition to shedding innocent blood, trusting in false prophecy, theft, adultery, and idolatry], then coming to the Temple for sanctuary. The prophet also placed obedience over burnt offerings.<sup>15</sup> The prophets Amos,<sup>16</sup> Hosea,<sup>17</sup> Micah,<sup>18</sup> and Zechariah<sup>19</sup> also taught this truth.

Moses himself placed a great emphasis on justice. This was the whole purpose for appointing judges and making it mandatory to listen to their sentences.<sup>20</sup> Anything that would pervert justice, such as giving false testimony in court,<sup>21</sup> showing discrimination or favoritism,<sup>22</sup> being intimidated,<sup>23</sup> or accepting bribes,<sup>24</sup> was strictly forbidden.

It is not just the fair treatment of others that should be elevated above religious ceremony; this is secondary to giving our entire hearts to YHWH. This is the first and greatest commandment.

When we compare Matthew 23:23 with Luke 11:42, we can see that mercy and faith are likened to the love of YHWH. This love is mutual. YHWH first loves us. Because of this, He is merciful and faithful towards us. Likewise, we can show Him mercy by being merciful to others.<sup>25</sup> In addition, we should be faithful to Him.

In Deuteronomy 6:4, faith is implied. We believe that YHWH is one. This is immediately followed by the commandment to love Him (6:5). This means that faith is more than simply believing. See also James 2:19.

It also involves loyalty and fidelity—that is to say, faithfulness. It is trusting in YHWH and saying, “I love You and I want to please You. I will follow You and do what You tell me to do.” This was the faith that Abraham had when he took up his beloved son to the altar.

In the context of the Pharisees’ religion, Yeshua and the apostle Paul each spent a great deal of time addressing this kind of faith.

We can see this in a confrontation regarding His disciples not following their extra-Biblical traditions, when He said: “...These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”<sup>26</sup>

Their long and public prayers were nothing more than lip service. Because their hearts were uncircumcised, even in their partial obedience, they were disobedient to YHWH’s Law.

“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law?”<sup>27</sup>

“Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Jer. 7:6-10, 21-23

<sup>16</sup> Amo. 5:21-24

<sup>17</sup> Hos. 4:1-2; 6:6; 14:2

<sup>18</sup> Mic. 6:6-8

<sup>19</sup> Zec. 7:9-10

<sup>20</sup> Exo. 18:25-26; Deu. 1:15-17; 16:18-20; 25:1; Deu. 17:9-12

<sup>21</sup> Exo. 23:1, 7; Deu 19:16-17

<sup>22</sup> Exo. 23:3; Lev 19:15; Deu. 16:19

<sup>23</sup> Deu. 1:17

<sup>24</sup> Exo. 23:8; Deu. 16:19

<sup>25</sup> Mat. 25:40

<sup>26</sup> Mat. 15:8; Mar. 7:6. Cf. Isa. 29:13

<sup>27</sup> Joh. 7:19

<sup>28</sup> Act. 7:53 cf. v. 51

“You that make your boast of the law, through breaking the law...”<sup>29</sup>

“For not even those who are circumcised keep the law...”<sup>30</sup>

The apostle Paul, being a former Pharisee,<sup>31</sup> understood this all too well. The second chapter of his letter to the Romans is dedicated to those of his past religion.

The first five verses speak to their judgmental and self-righteous attitudes. This is later repeated in verses 21-22. This lines up with the accounts given in the Gospels concerning the Pharisees.<sup>32</sup> In the rest of the chapter, he explains how there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, but that all are judged according to their actions, dictated by whether or not the Law is in their heart.

Paul emphasizes the interior because he knew that the Pharisees emphasized the exterior.<sup>33</sup> It was in this context that he said:

“Not the hearers of the Law are just before the Mighty One, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.”<sup>34</sup>

Paul repeated this statement in his first letter to Timothy, in a slightly different way: “We know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully.”<sup>35</sup> By first believing, then by trusting in the Lawgiver, the faithful men and women from all generations are declared righteous.<sup>36</sup> This is why Paul quoted the prophet on three separate occasions. “The just shall live by his faith.”<sup>37</sup>

It was in this faith that Abraham beheld the Messiah.<sup>38</sup> It is in this faith that Abraham's faithful descendants also behold Him –both Jew and Gentile.<sup>39</sup>

In the beginning and end of his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul clarified that this faith is not belief alone.<sup>40</sup> He was not proposing that this faith would replace obedience to YHWH's Law.<sup>41</sup> Instead, he taught that the main point, or goal, of the Law, is the Messiah in our heart – through faith in Him. What does he say?

In Romans 10:4-8, he quotes Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:11-14:

You shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I *am* YHWH.<sup>42</sup>

For this commandment which I command you this day, it *is* not hidden from you, neither *is* it far off. It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither *is* it beyond the sea that you should say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us,

---

<sup>29</sup> Rom. 2:23

<sup>30</sup> Gal. 6:13

<sup>31</sup> Act. 23:6; 26:5; Phi 3:5

<sup>32</sup> Mat. 9:11, 11:19; Mar 2:16; Luk. 5:30, 10:29, 15:2; 16:15, 18:9-14; Joh. 9:34

<sup>33</sup> Mat. 23:5, 25-28; Luk. 16:15; also Mat. 15:19-20 cf Luk. 11:37-41

<sup>34</sup> Rom. 2:13

<sup>35</sup> 1 Ti. 1:7-8

<sup>36</sup> Heb. 11

<sup>37</sup> Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38 cf. Hab. 2:4

<sup>38</sup> Joh. 8:56

<sup>39</sup> Mat. 3:9; Rom. 4:12; Gal. 3:7

<sup>40</sup> Rom. 1:5; 16:26

<sup>41</sup> Rom. 2:7, 13; 3:31

<sup>42</sup> Lev. 18:5

that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word *is* very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.<sup>43</sup>

Paul did not contrast these passages because he thought they were at odds with one another. After all, both Scripture references come from the same Law. Rather, the contrast he was making was with “works of the law” (trying to obey the law without faith), and obedience “mixed with faith.”<sup>44</sup>

This is to say, instead of trying to obey with our own ability, we ask YHWH to help us put His Law in our hearts so that we can obey through faith. In short, Paul’s point was this: works without faith is dead.

While the same could be said in reverse,<sup>45</sup> the apostle Paul elevates faith over works (particularly in his letters to the Romans and Galatians) because he was combatting the teaching of the Pharisees. Being called out of this this false religion, he understood that a person’s works (performing “good deeds” or *mitzvahs*) do not necessarily mean they are being obedient to YHWH. On the other hand, he concluded that faith in YHWH would naturally lead to good works.

Paul also brought this up in his letter to the assembly in Philippi. In the third chapter of his letter to them, he said:

Beware of the concision (cutting of flesh). For we are the circumcision, who worship the Mighty One in the spirit, and rejoice in the Messiah Yeshua, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinks that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

But what things were a benefit to me, those I counted loss for the Messiah. Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Messiah Yeshua my Master: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win the Messiah, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of the Messiah, the righteousness which is of the Mighty One by faith.<sup>46</sup>

As a Pharisee, Paul had tried to establish his own righteousness through obedience to the Law. At the time, he considered himself “blameless”. But he was trying to obey the Law without the faith that the It teaches.<sup>47</sup>

After having come to the Messiah, he understood the foolishness of his old way of thinking. He expressed this well in his letter to the Romans:

---

<sup>43</sup> Deu. 30:11-14

<sup>44</sup> Heb. 4:2

<sup>45</sup> Jas. 2

<sup>46</sup> Phl. 3:2-9

<sup>47</sup> Rom. 7; Gal 3:19, 23-25. Cf. Mat. 23:23

Being ignorant of the Mighty One's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of the Mighty One.

Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.<sup>48</sup>

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul described this condition as a veil that blinded their hearts from receiving YHWH's righteousness in faith.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Master, the veil will be taken away.<sup>49</sup>

This is why he said that blindness had happened to much of the people of Israel in his day.<sup>50</sup> By accepting YHWH's Word (His Teaching and His Messiah), the "veil" would be removed.<sup>51</sup>

While many individuals in first-century Judaea did turn to the Word, many did not.<sup>52</sup> This is why he quoted the prophet Isaiah regarding the Judeans who had not accepted YHWH's message:

Go unto this people, and say, 'Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.' For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.<sup>53</sup>

In three of the four Gospels, this passage is likewise applied to that generation.<sup>54</sup> In John's Gospel, the author provides additional comments. He spoke of certain religious leaders who did believe Yeshua, but would not confess Him "because of the Pharisees, lest they should be put out of the synagogue".<sup>55</sup>

Instead of trusting in YHWH for their justification, these Pharisees tried to justify themselves (e.g. Luke 18:9-11). What did Yeshua say?

"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men..."<sup>56</sup>

"But all their works they do to be seen by men..."<sup>57</sup>

"You are those who justify yourselves before men..."<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Rom. 10:3 & 9:32. Cf. Phi. 3:9

<sup>49</sup> 2 Co. 3:14-16

<sup>50</sup> Rom. 11:7, 25

<sup>51</sup> 2 Co. 3:16

<sup>52</sup> Act. 28:24

<sup>53</sup> Act. 28:26-27 cf. Isa 6:9-10

<sup>54</sup> Mat. 13:14-15; Mar. 4:11-12; Joh. 12:39-40

<sup>55</sup> Joh. 12:42

<sup>56</sup> Mat. 23:28a

<sup>57</sup> Mat. 23:5

<sup>58</sup> Luk. 16:5



The teaching that Paul felt obligated to correct was the very teaching Yeshua taught His disciples to avoid. He taught them to beware of their “leaven”—that is to say, their “teaching”.<sup>59</sup> When Paul told the Galatians that a little “leaven” leavens the whole lump<sup>60</sup>, he was using the same terminology Yeshua used. When he called their practices hypocrisy,<sup>61</sup> he was also using the same term Yeshua used for the Pharisees.<sup>62</sup>

The rabbis who had the authority to throw people out of the synagogues had lost the whole reason the Law was given: to teach Israel to put their hope in YHWH and live the way He wants them to live. What do the Scriptures say?

For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children:

That they might set their hope in the Mighty One, and not forget the works of the Mighty One, but keep His commandments.<sup>63</sup>

That you may love YHWH your Mighty One, *and* that you may obey His voice, and that you may cleave unto Him: for *He is* your life...<sup>64</sup>

...that He might make you know that man does not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH does man live.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Mat. 16:11-12; Mar. 8:15; Luk. 12:1

<sup>60</sup> Gal. 5:9

<sup>61</sup> Gal. 2:13

<sup>62</sup> Mat. 23:38b; Luk. 12:1; Mat. 6:2, 5, 16; Mat. 15:7; Mat. 23:14-19; etc.

<sup>63</sup> Psa. 78:5-7

<sup>64</sup> Deu. 30:20

<sup>65</sup> Deu. 8:3b; Mat. 4:4/Luk. 4:4

## YAH'S WORDS ALONE

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

He answered and said unto them, "Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. However, vainly do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'.

For laying aside the commandment of the Mighty One, you hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such things you do."<sup>66</sup>

**A**nother issue Yeshua had with the Pharisees was their practice of supplementing what is Written with their own commandments and traditions. Many of these traditions, according to Yeshua, actually conflict with what is Written.

Concerning the tradition of washing hands before one eats, we can find it today within Orthodox Judaism. A prayer is recited during each of these ceremonial hand washes: "Blessed are you L-rd our G-d, who...has commanded us concerning the washing of hands." The problem is, nowhere in the Law of YHWH can such a commandment be found. Instead, it can be found in the tractates of Hillel the Elder.<sup>67</sup>

We can also easily deduce that in Yeshua's day, there were extra-Biblical commands concerning Sabbath observance. In the Gospels, the Pharisees accused Yeshua of breaking the Sabbath.<sup>68</sup> However, according to the prophet Isaiah<sup>69</sup> and the apostles,<sup>70</sup> Yeshua did not sin.

We can find further evidence in the phrase "Sabbath day's journey", found in Acts 1:12. This was the distance one was allowed to travel on the Sabbath. It came from the rabbinic interpretation of Exodus 16:29. They arrived at the distance by extrapolating it from the prescribed radius of Levites' cities.<sup>71</sup> One can see, from this example, how ridiculous this method of interpretation is. At one point, there were said to have been over 1,500 extra-Biblical derivative laws concerning the Sabbath.<sup>72</sup> It would certainly be plausible that they even had laws forbidding healing and picking corn (even for immediate consumption) on the Sabbath.

This kind of "fence building" (Heb. *chumra*) would also explain why Yeshua had to say that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."<sup>73</sup> In the beginning, YHWH blessed it and gave it to mankind.<sup>74</sup> *He* certainly did not need to rest after the six days of creation.<sup>75</sup> The few Written Sabbath commands were amplified by a multitude of man-made

---

<sup>66</sup> Mar. 7:5-8

<sup>67</sup> Mishnah Zavim 5:12

<sup>68</sup> Joh. 5:18

<sup>69</sup> Isa. 53:9

<sup>70</sup> 2 Co. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pe. 2:22

<sup>71</sup> Num. 35:5

<sup>72</sup> Yer. Shab. 7:2

<sup>73</sup> Mar. 2:27

<sup>74</sup> Gen. 2:3

<sup>75</sup> Psa. 121:4

laws, and the gift of rest became a burden. Man would become a servant to what was meant to be a blessing.

Another tradition that existed in the first century was the one where Jews were not allowed to eat with Gentiles, as we see in Acts chapter 10:

And [Peter] said unto them, You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but the Mighty One has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.<sup>76</sup>

Notice that Peter said it was “unlawful” for him to even keep company with a Gentile. However, like the previous examples, this prohibition does not come from the Law of YHWH. It must have then come from the laws of the Pharisees.<sup>77</sup>

It was traditions such as these that Paul had a serious problem with. We can see this in Galatians chapter two:

“But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, “If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why do you compel the Gentiles to live as the Jews?”<sup>78</sup>

Peter, it would seem, had forgotten the vision he had earlier in which he said “the Mighty One has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”<sup>79</sup> At this time, Paul accused Peter of compelling Gentiles to live as Jews. In fact, in Greek, he accused him of Judaizing. The only time this word is used by any of the apostles, Paul uses it against Peter. But why? Because, Peter was promoting this man-made tradition, and by extension, the entire Pharisaic religion.

In Matthew 23:4, Yeshua said: “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to bear and lay *them* on men’s shoulders, but they, *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.” We can find this same thing is said of the Pharisees in Acts 15:

But there arose one of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying that it was needed to circumcise them and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.

Now therefore why do you tempt the Mighty One, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?<sup>80</sup>

At first glance, it might seem that the “yoke” trying to be placed on the necks of the disciples was the “Law of Moses”. However, this cannot be the correct meaning because the apostles kept the Law. The Feast of Weeks, or “Pentecost” in Greek, was when they and every other Jew from all over the Roman Empire came to celebrate in Jerusalem.<sup>81</sup> Acts 20:16 and 1 Corinthians 16:8

---

<sup>76</sup> Act. 10:28

<sup>77</sup> Act. 10:28 cf. Avodah Zarah 30-36; Rambam, *Hilkoth Ma’achaloth Asuroth* 17:9-12

<sup>78</sup> Gal. 2:11-14 cf. Act. 10:28

<sup>79</sup> Act. 10:28. Cf. 10:10-17

<sup>80</sup> Act. 15:5, 10

<sup>81</sup> Act. 2

indicate Paul continued to observe this feast. In Acts 21:24, the apostle was advised by the elders of the Jerusalem assembly to prove that he kept the Law. He followed their advice, thereby proving that he not only kept the Law, but did not teach others not to.<sup>82</sup>

The yoke that they nor their fathers were able to bear must have been a reference to the entire *halakha* of the Pharisees –which consisted of YHWH’s Law, *as well as* their own. It was the same “heavy burdens” Yeshua said they tried to “lay on men’s shoulders, why they, themselves will not move with one finger.”<sup>83</sup>

The Pharisee in Acts 15:5 was not advocating faithfulness to YHWH. Instead, he was promoting Pharisaic Judaism. Overlooking the weightier matters of the Law, these Pharisees instead focused on outward shows of piety and trapping proselytes into obeying their own laws and traditions, in addition to the Law of YHWH. In Scripture, circumcision has never been necessary to enter into a covenant with the Mighty One. We will discuss this in the next chapter.

In his letter to the Galatians, the apostle Paul again mentions his former religious life and his zeal for these traditions:

“For you have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of the Mighty One and wasted it: And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.”<sup>84</sup>

He brought this up for a reason. He had firsthand insight into this religion and its practices. At the beginning of his second chapter, he brings up circumcision and says that Titus, who was with him, was not “compelled” to be circumcised.<sup>85</sup> It is unlikely he was talking about simply the act of circumcision, as he earlier had Timothy circumcised.<sup>86</sup>

Instead, he must have been talking about conversion to Pharisaic Judaism. Circumcision, after all, has always been a necessary part of the conversion process.<sup>87</sup> He uses this same word ‘compelled’ again in verse fourteen in conjunction with the word Judaize. This was touched on earlier and cannot mean what many commentators think it means. Advocating obedience to YHWH’s Law is not what Paul accused Peter of doing. To Judaize means to convert someone to a religion that rejects Yeshua, and follows the rabbis.

In the next verse, Paul confirms this understanding by saying: “and that because of false brethren unawares were brought in, who came secretly to spy out our liberty which we have in the Messiah Yeshua, that they might bring us into bondage”.<sup>88</sup>

Some suppose that Paul taught that obeying YHWH’s Law is bondage. However, if this is what he was saying here then he would be contradicting himself when he said: “The Law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” and “For I delight in the Law of the Mighty One after the inward man”.<sup>89</sup> Clearly there was something else he was trying to communicate here.

---

<sup>82</sup> Act. 21:26-27 cf. 21:20-24

<sup>83</sup> Mat. 23:4

<sup>84</sup> Gal. 1:13-14. Cf. Act. 23:6; 26:5; Phi. 3:5

<sup>85</sup> Gal. 2:3

<sup>86</sup> Act. 16:3

<sup>87</sup> R. Elazar ben Azarya: Nedarim 3:11; R. Yehuda HaNasi: Ned. 32a, Keritot 9a; R. Yirmeya bar Abba: Shab. 137b

<sup>88</sup> Gal. 2:4

<sup>89</sup> Rom. 7:12, 22

These “false brethren”<sup>90</sup> were proselytizers sent by the Pharisees. Like the man in Acts 15:5, they “believed” and so were invited by someone(s) who was unaware of their intentions. The bondage they were trying to bring the people into was the authority of those who “bind heavy burdens”<sup>91</sup>. This understanding is later confirmed at the end of the letter:

As many as those who desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the stake of the Messiah.<sup>92</sup>

As he said in 2:4 and 2:14, they intended to “compel” (or constrain) the congregants to convert to their religion and thereby come under the rabbis’ authority.

For neither, they, themselves who are circumcised, keep the Law...<sup>93</sup>

Like he previously said in his letter to the Romans<sup>94</sup>, these “blind guides”<sup>95</sup> did not even keep YHWH’s Law.

In the letter Paul wrote to Titus, he makes mention of this issue: “Give no heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.”<sup>96</sup>

Paul appears to have addressed a similar issue in his letter to the Colossians:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men...

...you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of the Messiah... And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh...

blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross...

Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of a feast, or of the new moon, or the Sabbath *days*: Which is a shadow of things to come; but the body of the Messiah.

Let no man steal your reward .... after the commandments and doctrines of men.<sup>97</sup>

Notice the phrases “ after the traditions of men” (Col. 2:8) and “after the comandments and doctrines of men” (Col. 2: 22). There was some unidentified ultra-religious group involved here that placed great emphasis on circumcision. In this way, they were like the Pharisees. This group also had its own teachings and commandments, like the Pharisees. Another comparison can be

---

<sup>90</sup> Gal. 2:4

<sup>91</sup> Mat. 23:4

<sup>92</sup> Gal. 6:12

<sup>93</sup> Gal. 6:13

<sup>94</sup> Rom. 2:23

<sup>95</sup> Mat. 23:16, 24

<sup>96</sup> Tit. 1:14

<sup>97</sup> Col. 2:8, 11, 14, 16, 18, 22

made with Paul calling their teaching “rudiments”.<sup>98</sup> This group also retained elements of YHWH’s Law.

This Colossian group, however, had other strange teachings such as worshiping angels, some form of self-neglect, and abstinence of food and drinks.<sup>99</sup> This group may have been vegetarian like those alluded to in his letter to the Romans.<sup>100</sup> Unlike those in Rome, however, Paul did not consider this group part of the Body of the Messiah. For this reason, they were not in the position to judge the Colossian assembly on matters such as feast days or Sabbaths, which serve as foreshadows.

Yeshua and Paul each taught others to follow YHWH’s Law, but not the commandments of men. Aside from Matthew 5:17-19 and Romans 3:31 endorsing His Law as a whole, specific examples can be found in passages such as Matthew 19:17-19 and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

While Isaiah’s primary criticism of their ancestors’ actions related to their hearts’ condition,<sup>101</sup> his secondary one referred to their habit of replacing YHWH’s commandments with their own.<sup>102</sup> This latter practice traces its roots at least as far back as the time of the Assyrian captivity: “Judah kept not the commandments of YHWH their Mighty One but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.”<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Gal. 4:9 cf. Col 2:20

<sup>99</sup> Col. 2:18, 21. There is no ‘drink’ prohibition in YHWH’s Law.

<sup>100</sup> Rom. 14 cf. 1 Ti. 4:3

<sup>101</sup> Isa. 29:10-13a

<sup>102</sup> Isa. 29:13b cf. Mat. 15:1-9/Mar. 7:1-8

<sup>103</sup> 2 Ki. 17:19

## CIRCUMCISIONS

Now YHWH had said to Abram, ‘Get you out of your country, and from you family, and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’<sup>104</sup>

**Y**HWH appeared to Abram while he and his wife were living with his family in the ancient Chaldean city of Ur.<sup>105</sup> He promised Abram he would become a great and reputable nation. In addition, YHWH promised that in him, “all the nations of the earth would be blessed”.<sup>106</sup> This latter promise is repeated in Genesis 22:18. It is also given to his son Isaac<sup>107</sup> and Isaac’s son Jacob, in revised form.<sup>108</sup> The apostle Paul quotes this promise in his letter to the Galatians, and relates it to the Messiah.<sup>109</sup>

When commanded to depart, Abram was faithful and obeyed.<sup>110</sup> YHWH brought him to the land of the ancient Canaanites. He promised Abram that his descendants would be given the Land.<sup>111</sup>

This promise was repeated just after Abram and Lot separated. At this time, YHWH also promised Abram that his descendants will be as numerous as the “dust of the earth”.<sup>112</sup>

Time passed and some eleven years after the initial promises, YHWH appeared to Abram and again promised him abundant offspring; this time comparing them to the stars of the night sky.<sup>113</sup> Despite not yet having any children, Abram trusted YHWH to follow through with this promise. Because of his faith, Abram was considered righteous.<sup>114</sup> To settle any doubts Abram may have had about his descendants inheriting the Land, YHWH cut a covenant with him.

We should notice that by this point, YHWH had now made a number of promises with Abram:

- Abram was to be given a great name and become a great nation.<sup>115</sup>
- All nations would be blessed in Abram.<sup>116</sup>
- Abram’s descendants were to be given the Promised Land.<sup>117</sup>
- Abram’s descendants would be extremely numerous.<sup>118</sup>

About thirteen years later, YHWH again appeared to Abram and promised to give him an

---

<sup>104</sup> Gen. 12:1

<sup>105</sup> Gen. 12:1; 15:7

<sup>106</sup> Gen. 12:2-3

<sup>107</sup> Gen. 26:14

<sup>108</sup> Gen. 28:14

<sup>109</sup> Gal. 3:8, 16

<sup>110</sup> Neh. 9:8; Heb 11:8; Gen. 12:5

<sup>111</sup> Gen. 12:7

<sup>112</sup> Gen. 13:15, 16

<sup>113</sup> Gen. 15:1, 5

<sup>114</sup> Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:21-22

<sup>115</sup> Gen. 12:2

<sup>116</sup> Gen. 12:3

<sup>117</sup> Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7

<sup>118</sup> Gen. 13:16; 15:1, 5

everlasting covenant. At this time, He changed his name to Abraham and promised to make him a father of many nations.<sup>119</sup>

The significance of this promise cannot be underestimated, as it was given in repetition.<sup>120</sup> Abraham's only son at that time was Ishmael, and YHWH promised to make of him a great nation.<sup>121</sup> Abraham was also given a promise to have another son: Isaac.<sup>122</sup> Isaac begat Jacob, whose sons became the nation of Israel. As we can see in this passage, only two nations are represented here. And yet, YHWH promised many nations to Abraham.

Below, we can see the Masoretic text (MT) version of Genesis 17:16 differs from that of the Aramaic Peshitta (AP) and the Septuagint (LXX). Both the AP and the LXX are ancient translations from a Hebrew text that predated the MT by 800 to 1,250 years. In this passage, the more ancient versions agree against the later version. The original reading would thus be:

And I will bless her, and give thee a son of her, and I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations shall be of him.

The same promise YHWH made with Abraham about being a father to many nations was given to his son Isaac. He later gave this promise to Isaac's son Jacob.<sup>123</sup> YHWH later gave it to Jacob's grandson Ephraim, in the form of a blessing.<sup>124</sup>

The phrase used in this blessing is *melo ha'goyim* – “fullness of the nations” or “fullness of the Gentiles”. The apostle Paul alluded to this blessing in his letter to the Romans.<sup>125</sup> The “many nations” promised to Abraham are the Gentiles who come to the faith of Abraham.

The Mighty One knew that Abraham would teach his children the way of YHWH, as we see in this verse:

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the Way of YHWH, to do justice and judgment; that YHWH may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.<sup>126</sup>

The next promise YHWH made with Abraham was to have a relationship with him and his descendants forever. He then repeated (for the fourth time) the promise that his descendants would be given the Land.<sup>127</sup>

Finally, YHWH instructed Abraham to keep this Covenant. The sign of this everlasting Covenant would be that every male descendant was to be circumcised on the eighth day of his birth.<sup>128</sup> Ishmael, along with Abraham, was circumcised on this very day. But it was to Isaac and his descendants that this covenant of circumcision would be given.<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Gen. 17

<sup>120</sup> Gen. 17:4, 5, 6

<sup>121</sup> Gen. 17:20

<sup>122</sup> Gen. 17:21

<sup>123</sup> Gen. 35:11

<sup>124</sup> Gen. 48:19

<sup>125</sup> Rom. 11:25

<sup>126</sup> Gen. 18:19

<sup>127</sup> Gen. 17:7-8

<sup>128</sup> Gen. 17:9-14

<sup>129</sup> Gen. 17:19, 21; Rom. 9:7; Act. 7:8



We can see three promises, in addition to the promises that YHWH had previously made with Abraham:

1. Abraham would be the father of many nations.<sup>130</sup>
2. Abraham and his descendants would be given an everlasting Covenant.<sup>131</sup>
3. YHWH would be a the Mighty One to Abraham and his descendants.<sup>132</sup>

However, a careful analysis of these promises reveals that the three are one:

People from any nation (#1) will be able to have a relationship with the Mighty One of Abraham, the Mighty One of Isaac, and the Mighty One of Jacob (#3). This is the everlasting Covenant (#2).

The everlasting Covenant is promised to Abraham and his descendants.<sup>133</sup> Through his descendants, there are many nations.<sup>134</sup> These nations are the “fullness of the Gentiles”.<sup>135</sup> Thus, this Covenant is promised to the Gentiles. This does not exclude Jews, who are part of Abraham’s descendants through faith in Abraham’s Seed. Therefore, in Abraham’s Seed, all nations of the earth will be blessed.<sup>136</sup>

Since this everlasting Covenant is also called the “covenant of circumcision”,<sup>137</sup> we are given this additional blessing: By circumcising our male children on the eight-day, we recognize this.

Then we can say, “A sign of YHWH’s promise to bring those of any nation to Himself is on my male offspring. Just as I can see the rainbow and be reminded of the Mighty One’s promise not to destroy the earth with water, my baby can teach me that YHWH is faithful to every generation of those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

### **Circumcision of the Heart**

There is another circumcision that is more important than circumcising our children. It comes down to the condition of our hearts.

The Biblical concept of ‘pre-circumcision’ or ‘uncircumcision’ is that of an incomplete nature. When applied to fruit, it indicates they are not ready to be eaten.<sup>138</sup> When applied to lips or ears, the implication is that speech or hearing is lacking.<sup>139</sup> When applied to the heart, it means that the heart is not whole.<sup>140</sup>

When YHWH told Abraham to “be perfect,” He was telling him to make his heart ready to receive the glorious Covenant.<sup>141</sup> Abraham was a man of faith from before he left his hometown of Ur. But up to this point, he was not yet ready for the Covenant. He did’nt trust YHWH

---

<sup>130</sup> Gen. 17:2, 4, 5, 6

<sup>131</sup> Gen. 17:7, 19

<sup>132</sup> Gen. 17:7

<sup>133</sup> Gen. 17:7

<sup>134</sup> Gen. 17:4,5,6

<sup>135</sup> Gen. 17:16; 35:11; 48:19; Rom. 11:25

<sup>136</sup> Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:14; 28:14; Gal. 3:16

<sup>137</sup> Gen. 17:7-19; Act. 7:8

<sup>138</sup> Lev. 23:19

<sup>139</sup> Exo. 6:12, 30; Jer. 6:10

<sup>140</sup> Lev. 26:41; Jer. 9:26; Eze. 44:7, 9; Act. 7:51

<sup>141</sup> Gen. 17:1

entirely. He had to be reminded, time after time, that his descendants were going to inherit the land of Canaan.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, after being repeatedly promised offspring, he tried to take matters into his own hands.<sup>143</sup>

Likewise, Abraham's great-grandchildren and the twelve tribes they formed were Commanded to circumcise their hearts:

“Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”<sup>144</sup>

Except for Joshua and Caleb, the first generation of Israelites failed to enter this covenant by circumcising their hearts.<sup>145</sup> However, their children, the next generation were able to receive the promises of the everlasting covenant the Mighty One made with Abraham:

“You have declared this very day that YHWH will be your Mighty One...”<sup>146</sup>

to enter into a covenant with YHWH your Mighty One and into the oath that YHWH your Mighty One is about to make with you today ...he will be the Mighty One to you, just as he promised you and swore to your fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>147</sup>

This Covenant was different than the one made with their fathers at Mt. Sinai.<sup>148</sup> It was not only made with their fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) but was also open-ended:

“I am not making this covenant and oath with you alone, but [also] with... those who aren't here with us today.”<sup>149</sup>

It was this same Covenant that the promise was made that the Mighty One Himself would circumcise their hearts.

And YHWH your Mighty One will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love YHWH your Mighty One with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live.<sup>150</sup>

This Covenant also spoke of the faith of the Messiah, as quoted by the apostle Paul:

Say not in your heart, who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring the Messiah down from above:) Or, who will descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up the Messiah again from the dead.) But what does it say? The word is near unto you, even in your mouth, and in your heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.<sup>151</sup>

The way the apostle paraphrased Deuteronomy 30:11-14 is significant. He substituted the Word (that is, YHWH's commandments) with the Word (that is, His Messiah).

---

<sup>142</sup> Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7; 17:8

<sup>143</sup> Gen. 16:1-4 cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:1, 5

<sup>144</sup> Deu. 10:16

<sup>145</sup> Deu. 1:32, 35-36; Cf. Deu. 29:4; Jer. 31:32.

<sup>146</sup> Deu. 26:17 cf. Gen. 17:7

<sup>147</sup> Deu. 29:12-13 cf. Deu. 5:3

<sup>148</sup> Deu. 29:1 cf. Jer. 31:32

<sup>149</sup> Deu. 29:14-15 cf. Deu. 5:2-3

<sup>150</sup> Deu. 30:6

<sup>151</sup> Rom. 10:6-8 cf. Deu 30:11-14

This is a clever wordplay because through His Word –that is His commandments, the Mighty One created the world.<sup>152</sup> And through His Word –that is His Messiah, the Mighty One created the world.<sup>153</sup> Neither YHWH’s commandments nor His Messiah can truly be separated from Him. Accepting either is accepting Him. Accepting YHWH is accepting all three. But it must be done in faith. So “the word of faith” (Rom. 10:8) that is “even in your mouth, and in your heart” (Deu. 30:14) is both faith in Yeshua and the commandments in faith.

This generation, to whom this Covenant was made, is said to have had the Law in their hearts.<sup>154</sup> It should be noted that Deuteronomy 29-30 happened before Joshua 5. Therefore, this faithful generation were in Covenant with YHWH before they were circumcised in the flesh.

And Joshua made himself sharp knives and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the reason Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

... but all the people who were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, they had not been circumcised.<sup>155</sup>

This was after the same pattern of their father Abraham, who was circumcised in his heart before being circumcised in the flesh:

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they are not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the Jews only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had when he was uncircumcised.<sup>156</sup>

Because of this order, circumcision of the heart is superior to that of the flesh. Circumcision of the flesh does not, in itself, lead to the circumcision of the heart. The one who sins definitely, while circumcised in the flesh, is still cast away.<sup>157</sup> On the other hand, the one who follows YHWH with a circumcised heart, will not intentionally continue to sin.

However, we must notice, that circumcision of the heart would lead to the circumcision of the flesh; it does not replace it. They are both part of the everlasting Covenant<sup>158</sup> YHWH made with Abraham.

## **In Heart and Flesh**

---

<sup>152</sup> Pro. 33:6, 9

<sup>153</sup> Joh. 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2

<sup>154</sup> Deu. 30:14 cf. Jer. 31:33

<sup>155</sup> Jos. 5:3-5

<sup>156</sup> Rom. 4:10-11

<sup>157</sup> Num. 15:30; Heb. 10:26

<sup>158</sup> The "New" Covenant of Jer. 31/Heb. 8-10 is actually a renewal of the everlasting covenant given to Abraham. It is rightly called “everlasting” (Gen. 17:7, 19) because it has always existed and will exist until the end of time and beyond. Jer. 31:34 cf. Luk. 21:28; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14, 4:30

Some may interpret Genesis 17:14 as saying that circumcision is required to be in covenant. However, this verse cannot be applied to adults who are uncircumcised because the context implies the reading “on the eighth day” (found in both the LXX and the SP).<sup>159</sup> That is to say, only an uncircumcised baby is considered to have broken the covenant. A baby is well under the age of accountability and wouldn’t be expected to be in covenant with YHWH anyways. If the child *were* circumcised on the eighth day, the order would technically be flesh then heart, in contrast to Abraham and the faithful generation of Israelites. Nonetheless, Genesis 17:14 cannot be misused as requiring circumcision as a prerequisite to entering covenant with YHWH.

It is encouraged though, because this is how we can participate in the Passover.<sup>160</sup> This feast captures the wonderful display of the Mighty One’s three-fold redemption story: Egypt, Sin, and Exile.<sup>161</sup> For this celebration, both circumcisions are required for males, while the first is required for all genders.<sup>162</sup>

### Other Meanings

There is a third application of the terms ‘circumcision’ and ‘uncircumcision’. Simply put, it referred to those who were circumcised in their flesh (i.e., the Israelites) and those who were not. The Philistines,<sup>163</sup> the people of Tyre,<sup>164</sup> the Assyrians,<sup>165</sup> and those of all the other nations whom the prophet Ezekiel prophesied against were referred to as ‘uncircumcised’.

This use of the word “uncircumcised” to refer to Gentile nations is also used in the book of Acts.<sup>166</sup> In this passage, the term is contrasted with the term “circumcision.”<sup>167</sup> The term “circumcision” is used frequently in Paul’s letters to refer to Jews.<sup>168</sup>

This leads us to a fourth use of the term ‘circumcision’. This usage is employed exclusively by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians.<sup>169</sup> As previously explained (Gal. 5:1; Act. 15:10; Mat. 23:4), this was in the context of the “yoke of bondage” that the Pharisaic proselytizers were trying to put on the necks of the disciples.<sup>170</sup> The issue was not the act of circumcision itself; instead, it involved conversion into a religious system that was controlled by the Pharisees. Those who wished to “boast in the flesh”<sup>171</sup> of the Galatians, themselves had uncircumcised hearts.<sup>172</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Lev. 12:3

<sup>160</sup> Exo. 12:48

<sup>161</sup> Exo. 15:16; 1 Pe. 1:18-19; Jer. 31:6-8 (LXX)

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Eze. 44:7, 9

<sup>163</sup> Jdg. 15:18; 1 Sa 14:6; 2 Sa. 1:20

<sup>164</sup> Eze. 28:10

<sup>165</sup> Eze. 31:8

<sup>166</sup> Act. 11:3

<sup>167</sup> Act. 11:2

<sup>168</sup> Rom. 3:30, 4:12; Gal. 2:7, 8; 9, 12; Eph. 2:11; Phl. 3:3; Col. 3:11, 4:11; Tit. 1:10

<sup>169</sup> Gal. 5:6, 11, Gal. 6:15

<sup>170</sup> Gal. 5:1, 6:12-13 cf. 2:4

<sup>171</sup> Gal. 6:13

<sup>172</sup> Jer. 3:10; Isa. 29:13; Mat. 15:7-8; Jer. 9:26; Act. 7:51

## TORAH

But He answered and said, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH.”<sup>173</sup>

Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets: I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>174</sup>

The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever [he] bid you observe, that observe and do...<sup>175</sup>

... [judgment, mercy, and faith] ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.<sup>176</sup>

And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.<sup>177</sup>

**O**riginally, the Biblical word for “law” was Torah. This Hebrew word actually means instruction or teaching. It can refer to the five books of Moses<sup>178</sup> or all the Scriptures.<sup>179</sup> YHWH has given us His instruction through all of His prophets and apostles. All Scripture is profitable for instruction.<sup>180</sup>

When Yeshua said “till heaven and earth disappear not one jot or tittle will pass from the law” and “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail”, He was speaking in plain terms. No part of the instructions YHWH gave any of His prophets and apostles are to be replaced, altered, or otherwise discarded. Moses was one of YHWH’s prophets. Hence, the follow-up phrase “whosoever shall break one of these least commandments...” A single commandment, a single word, a single stroke of the pen has the life expectancy greater than that of the heavens and earth in which we now live. Is this not what the prophet Isaiah informs us?

The grass withers, the flower fades: but the Word of our Mighty One shall stand forever.<sup>181</sup>

Drawing from this passage, the apostle Peter likewise wrote:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible –the Word of the Mighty One, which lives and will last forever.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> Mat. 4:4/Luk. 4:4

<sup>174</sup> Mat. 5:17-19

<sup>175</sup> Mat. 23:2-3a

<sup>176</sup> Mat. 23:23b

<sup>177</sup> Luk. 16:17

<sup>178</sup> Luk. 24:44, Act 28:23

<sup>179</sup> Zec. 7:12, Joh. 10:34, 15:25

<sup>180</sup> 2 Ti. 3:16

<sup>181</sup> Isa. 40:8

<sup>182</sup> 1 Pe. 1:23

To think or believe otherwise is not only disobeying Yeshua's clear instruction in Matthew 5:17. It is saying YHWH can change His mind, contrary to the testimony of Scripture.<sup>183</sup> Contradicting the prophet Isaiah,<sup>184</sup> it is making the Words spoken by the Spirit void. It is supposing that the teaching of the Son is different than the teaching of His Father, when nothing could be further from the truth.<sup>185</sup>

That being said, in the instruction YHWH gave the Israelites through Moses, there are certain types of laws that were directed exclusively to either his generation or to the ancient nation of Israel. Two types that demonstrate this would be the laws concerning intermarriage and the laws called 'judgments'.

Examples of the first type are found in Deuteronomy 23:

You shall not allow a dismembered male, a child born of sexual immorality, an Ammonite or a Moabite up to the tenth generation become part of the assembly of YHWH.<sup>186</sup>

The point of these laws was to keep the Israelites pure. The Ammonites and the Moabites committed great abominations and YHWH did not want Israel to learn their ways.<sup>187</sup> This was also the case with other ancient peoples.<sup>188</sup>

We can be certain that this was not meant to be taken as a perpetual decree because King David was a fourth-generation Moabite. This law did not indicate that it only applied to male Moabites with Israelite women. The way Ezra understood it, it applied in either direction.<sup>189</sup> David being allowed into the assembly proves Deuteronomy 23:3 was a temporary statute. The prophet Isaiah also clarified that these laws were not meant to be permanent.<sup>190</sup>

We can find an example of the second type in Exodus 21:

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.<sup>191</sup>

These types of laws were referred to as *mishpatim* –judgments.<sup>192</sup> These judgments represented the judicial system of the Promised Land. For this reason, these judgments are often considered civil law. But they were not just civil law. They were also criminal law. They maintained justice for the Israelites and acted as their judicial system. This can be demonstrated in the following passages:

And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man...You shall not respect persons in judgment;<sup>193</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> Num. 23:9; 1 Sa. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18; Jas. 1:17

<sup>184</sup> Isa. 55:10-11

<sup>185</sup> Joh. 3:34; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10, 24; 17:8, 14; etc.

<sup>186</sup> Deu. 23:1-3

<sup>187</sup> Deu. 23:4 cf. Num. 25:1-3

<sup>188</sup> Deu. 7:1-4

<sup>189</sup> Ezz. 9:12

<sup>190</sup> Isa. 56:3-5 cf. Deu. 23:1

<sup>191</sup> Exo. 21:24-25

<sup>192</sup> Exo. 21:1

<sup>193</sup> Deu 1:16-17

Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments...that ye should do so in the Land.<sup>194</sup>

...to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the Land.<sup>195</sup>

...the judgments, which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the Land.<sup>196</sup>

Now these are the...the judgments...that ye might do them in the Land.<sup>197</sup>

These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the Land.<sup>198</sup>

Without Divinely appointed judges and courts in place, these judgments can no longer be enforced. Most of us no longer live in the Land of Israel. The respective countries in which we currently reside have similar judgments. In the judicial system of the United States, for instance, a convicted murderer is sentenced to either life in prison or death, via an electric chair or lethal injection: “life for life”.<sup>199</sup>

This was misunderstood by certain individuals in the first century.<sup>200</sup> Administering justice was the purpose of the Sanhedrin in Yeshua’s day.<sup>201</sup> However, His teaching indicates he did not intend His followers to imitate this man-made institution.<sup>202</sup> Instead, elders were to humbly guide each flock.<sup>203</sup>

While as a whole, these judgments were about maintaining justice, there were certain instances in which justice was diminished. Some examples of judgments for the ancient Land of Israel that took away justice include:

- Allowing divorce and remarriage<sup>204</sup>
- Allowing polygamy.<sup>205</sup>
- Allowing revenge.<sup>206</sup>
- Allowing the ownership and ruling over other people.<sup>207</sup>
- Allowing a man to defile a virgin.<sup>208</sup>

In all of these cases, the judgments for ancient Israel were suitable for that time. However, when Yeshua returns and reestablishes the Kingdom on earth, it is likely He will update such judgments to better reflect fairness.<sup>209</sup> After all, He will judge with equity.<sup>210</sup> He is certainly

---

<sup>194</sup> Deu. 4:5

<sup>195</sup> Deu. 4:14

<sup>196</sup> Deu. 5:31

<sup>197</sup> Deu. 6:1

<sup>198</sup> Deu. 12:1

<sup>199</sup> Deu. 19:21

<sup>200</sup> Mat. 5:38-39 cf. Lev. 19:18 & Pro. 20:22

<sup>201</sup> Mat. 5:22, 25

<sup>202</sup> Mat. 23:8-12; Luk 22:25-26

<sup>203</sup> Mat. 16:18, 18:1-4, 13, 17-20; 1 Pe. 5:3

<sup>204</sup> Deu. 24:1-4

<sup>205</sup> Exo. 21:10; Deu. 21:15-17

<sup>206</sup> Exo. 21:13; Num. 35:11-15, 26-27

<sup>207</sup> Lev. 25:44-46; Exo. 21:20,12

<sup>208</sup> Exo. 22:16-17; Deu. 22:29

<sup>209</sup> 1 Cor. 15:23-25, 2 Tim. 4:1, Isa. 9:7; Dan. 7:13-14; Rev. 12:10; 20:4b, 6b

<sup>210</sup> Psa. 98:9; Isa 11:4, 42:1; Mat. 12:18



against divorce and remarriage.<sup>211</sup> He is also anti-polygamy.<sup>212</sup> He also taught against taking revenge.<sup>213</sup> The same could be said for the other examples given.

Moreover, we cannot currently follow other laws relating to the Tabernacle, the Aaronic priesthood, and the Levites.<sup>214</sup> Likewise, laws relating to agriculture, and the Shemitah and Jubilee cycles cannot be followed outside the Land. The three annual pilgrimages are also dependent upon the theocracy established in those days, but that does not currently exist.

What is left represents the moral code that teaches us how to love YHWH and deal kindly and fairly with our neighbors. This includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- Reverence laws.<sup>215</sup>
- Laws about idolatry and sexual immorality (omitting the death penalty).<sup>216</sup>
- Dietary laws.<sup>217</sup>
- Laws about rearing children (omitting temple services).<sup>218</sup>
- Laws about weekly and annual feasts (omitting temple services, specific pilgrimages, and the death penalty).<sup>219</sup>
- Cleanliness laws (omitting temple services).<sup>220</sup>
- Fair treatment laws.<sup>221</sup>

It does not matter how they are arranged or classified. These commandments, along with the ones given through all the prophets and apostles, apply to everyone of us who comes to the faith in Yeshua –in every age until heaven and earth pass away. Not everything has to be perfectly understood to obey. But all must be obeyed in faith.

What we need to understand about Paul’s letters is that they are hard to comprehend. If we do not have a solid foundation, laid out in the previous Scriptures, we can easily mistake Paul’s letters as to be encouraging lawlessness:

“...[Paul’s] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort... since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error the lawless”.<sup>222</sup>

Paul himself was aware that his letters were being misunderstood:

“And not rather (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) ‘Let us do evil (sin), that good (grace) may come?’”<sup>223</sup>

---

<sup>211</sup> Mat. 5:32; Mar 10:5-12; Mat. 19:4-9

<sup>212</sup> Mat. 19:4-5; Mar. 10:6-8

<sup>213</sup> Mat. 5:39; 26:52

<sup>214</sup> When Yeshua returns and purifies the sons of Levi (Mal. 3:3-4), offerings, including slaughtering animals, will resume. See also Isa. 56:7, Psa. 51:19; Jer. 33:18, 20-22; etc.

<sup>215</sup> Deu. 6:4-13; Exo. 20:7, 12; Deu. 10:12-16, 20-22; Lev. 19:2, 30, 32; etc.

<sup>216</sup> Exo. 20:2-6; Lev. 19:4, 26-29, 31; Lev. 18; Lev. 20; Act. 15:20; etc.

<sup>217</sup> Gen. 9:4; Exo. 22:31; Lev. 7:23, Lev. 11; Act. 15:20; etc.

<sup>218</sup> Gen. 17:2; Exo. 13:13; Deu. 6:7; etc.

<sup>219</sup> Exo. 16:23; 20:10; Isa. 58:13; etc.

<sup>220</sup> Lev. 12; 15; etc.

<sup>221</sup> Deu. 10:17-20; Deu. 15:1-5; Lev. 19:9-18, 33-36; Exo. 20:13-17; 1 Pe. 3:9; etc.

<sup>222</sup> 2 Pe. 3:16-17 (NIV)

<sup>223</sup> Rom. 3:8



“What shall we say then? Shall we constitute in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!”<sup>224</sup>

“What then? Shall we sin (be disobedient to YHWH's law), because we are not under the law, but under grace? The Mighty One forbid!”<sup>225</sup>

Being “under the law” and being of “works of the law”, are phrases Paul used to refer to being religious without truly putting our trust in YHWH. It is thinking that we can be declared righteous by doing good things.

In the first century, this was what the vast majority of the Pharisees were doing.<sup>226</sup> Today, this is what many Christians do. They follow the rules such as tithing and church attendance as if simply going through the motions could make a person a good Christian. Instead of saying “unless you are circumcised, you cannot be saved,” many say “unless you are baptized, you cannot be saved”. Both outward actions would only come after baptism/circumcision of the Messiah takes place in the heart.<sup>227</sup>

There are many Biblical examples of people who obeyed YHWH’s Torah, but were not “under the law” or of “works of the law”. Examples include Moses, Joshua, Celeb, Esther, Ruth, David, Josiah, Daniel, Peter, and Paul, to name a few. Let us follow the example of these men and women of faith and obey Him wholeheartedly. Let us hold fast to the Torah of YHWH and not get caught up in man-made laws and traditions –whether Jewish or Christian.

Ironically, some traditions carried over from Judaism to the Christianity. For example, the tradition of replacing the name of YHWH with the title ‘Lord.’ This tradition, according to the prophet Jeremiah, will be corrected.<sup>228</sup>

In addition to removing the name of YHWH from the Bible translations, the “Universal” Church also removed the prohibition from making religious images out of the “Ten Commandments”.<sup>229</sup>

Let me be clear. We do not obey to be saved. We obey because we love the Heavenly Father and want to please Him, as these verses express:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”<sup>230</sup>

“He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he is the one that loves me”.<sup>231</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> Rom. 6:1

<sup>225</sup> Rom. 6:15

<sup>226</sup> Phl. 3:9; Rom. 10:3 cf. Luk. 18:9-14

<sup>227</sup> Col. 2:11-12 cf. Rom. 6:3-4

<sup>228</sup> Jer. 16:19-21 cf. Jer. 12:16; 4:2

<sup>229</sup> Exo. 20:4/Deu. 5:8 is skipped over in the Catholic rendering. The images themselves (statues and pictures of saints and Mary, crucifixes, and crosses) are not worshiped as if the images are deities. Hindus would say the same thing about their images. They are only representative. Deu. 4:15-18 explains that no likeness is to be made in association with worshiping YHWH. In addition, Jer. 10:3-4 points out that even a tree, cut down from the forest, fastened to the ground, and decorated with silver and gold can fall into this category.

<sup>230</sup> Joh. 14:15

<sup>231</sup> Joh. 14:21

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”<sup>232</sup>

“I delight to do your will, O my Mighty One: yea, your law is within my heart.”<sup>233</sup>

“For I delight in the law of the Mighty One after my inward man”.<sup>234</sup>

As 1 John 5:3 indicates, we obey because we are in a relationship with Him. The apostle’s statement in the second half of this verse mirrors Deuteronomy 30:11-14. “His commandments are not grievous. They are not far off that we should say ‘who can reach them and bring them to us that we may do them.’ Instead, they are near to us; even in our hearts that we can faithfully obey Him.”

---

<sup>232</sup> Joh. 15:10

<sup>233</sup> Psa. 40:8

<sup>234</sup> Rom. 7:22

## THE WAY OF YAH

But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all my statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live.<sup>235</sup>

**F**orgiveness is at the heart of the prophet's message here. According to this passage, if a wicked person turns from their sins and starts obeying YHWH, they will be forgiven of their past sins and will be given eternal life.

YHWH's forgiveness is not earned by repentance and good works. Rather, due to His merciful nature, He gives it to those who love Him.<sup>236</sup> Contrary to the teachings Martin Luthur and John Calvin (that is, Penal Substitution or Penal Substitutionary Atonement), forgiveness of sins cannot be true forgiveness if the debt is paid by another individual. This simple logic is overthrown by passed-down tradition and mistranslations. It is also confused with the unrelated concepts of redemption and atonement. The latter terms both have to do with a price to be paid, and both can be applied to Yeshua laying down His life to purchase His Bride.<sup>237</sup> They have nothing to do, however, with the forgiveness of a debt. Forgiveness, by definition, cannot be paid for. The person deserving death –the one that does not repent from their sin<sup>238</sup> – dies the second death. No one–human or Divine–can take that person's place.<sup>239</sup>

“Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says YHWH “and not that he should turn from his ways and live?”<sup>240</sup>

This is restated in Ezekiel 18:32, Ezekiel 33:11, 1 Timothy 2:4, and 2 Peter 3:9. Theses Scriptures plainly teach that YHWH does not want anyone to die in their sins. Instead, it is His desire that every human on the planet will repent and be saved.

Ezekiel continued:

“But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them, he shall die.”<sup>241</sup>

---

<sup>235</sup> Eze. 18:21-22

<sup>236</sup> Exo. 20:6; Exo. 34:7; Deu. 5:10; Deu. 7:9; 1 Ki. 8:23; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4; Luk. 3:3; Luk. 24:47; Act. 2:38; Act. 3:19; Act. 8:22

<sup>237</sup> Act. 20:28; Joh. 15:13-14; 8:31-36; Rom. 6:6-7, 10-18; 2 Co. 5:15; 1 Pe. 2:24; 4:1-2; Tit. 2:14; Eph. 2:2-3, 10; 1 Co. 6:20; Heb. 9:14; Rev. 5:9; etc.

<sup>238</sup> Num. 15:30

<sup>239</sup> Heb. 10:26-29; Eze. 18:20. Cf. Deu. 24:16; 2 Ki. 14:6; Jer. 31:30; Eze. 18:4

<sup>240</sup> Eze. 18:23

<sup>241</sup> Eze. 18:24

Conversely, the prophet declares, if a person is initially faithful to YHWH but later turns away, this individual has forfeited their salvation. These two truths are together called the Way of YHWH.

He continued:

“Yet you say, ‘The Way of YHWH is not fair.’ Hear now, O house of Israel, is not My way fair, and your ways which are not fair?

–When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies.

–Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die”.<sup>242</sup>

The people to whom Ezekiel prophesied thought that YHWH was unfair. They supposed that forgiveness can be earned and that salvation cannot be lost.

In chapter 33, YHWH’s prophet provides more clarification concerning the reprobate.<sup>243</sup>

[The term “*reprobate*” is an Old English word translated from a term used by the apostle Paul.<sup>244</sup> Contrary to the Calvinistic doctrine surrounding this term, the word means “rejected” and refers to a person that has proven themselves unfaithful: those who “abide not in Him”,<sup>245</sup> who “live after the flesh”,<sup>246</sup> who “receive the word with joy”,<sup>247</sup> who “draws back”,<sup>248</sup> who “turn from the holy commandment”,<sup>249</sup> who “fall after the same example of unbelief”,<sup>250</sup> who do not “bring forth good fruit”,<sup>251</sup> who “depart from the living Mighty One”,<sup>252</sup> who “sin willfully after having received”,<sup>253</sup>—those who “do not obey the truth”,<sup>254</sup> choose their own destiny: eternal death. On the other hand, there are also those who “enter the narrow gate”,<sup>255</sup> who “run the race”,<sup>256</sup> who “keep the faith”,<sup>257</sup> who “endure unto the end”,<sup>258</sup> who “continue in His word”,<sup>259</sup>—those who “obey Him”,<sup>260</sup> are those who choose life everlasting.]

---

<sup>242</sup> Eze. 18:25-26

<sup>243</sup> Eze. 33:13

<sup>244</sup> Rom. 1:28; 1 Co. 9:27; 2 Co. 13:5, 6, 7; 2 Ti. 3:8; Tit. 1:16; Heb. 6:8

<sup>245</sup> Joh. 15:6

<sup>246</sup> Rom. 8:13

<sup>247</sup> Luk. 8:13

<sup>248</sup> Heb. 10:38,39

<sup>249</sup> 2 Pe. 2:21

<sup>250</sup> Heb. 4:11

<sup>251</sup> Mat. 3:10; Mat 7:19; Joh. 15:2; Rom. 11:22

<sup>252</sup> Heb. 3:12; 2:1,3

<sup>253</sup> Heb. 10:26-27

<sup>254</sup> Rom. 2:8; 2 Th. 1:8; 1 Pe. 4:17; 1 Co. 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8; Rev. 22:15

<sup>255</sup> Mat. 7:13

<sup>256</sup> 1 Co. 9:24; Gal. 5:7; Heb. 12:1

<sup>257</sup> Act. 14:22; 2 Ti. 4:7; Heb. 10:23,36

<sup>258</sup> Mat. 24:13; Heb. 3:6,14; Heb. 6:11

<sup>259</sup> Joh. 8:31; Rom. 2:7

<sup>260</sup> Heb. 5:9; Mat. 7:24; Mat. 19:17; Act. 5:32; Rev. 22:14

“When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die.

Again, when I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’, if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

Yet the children of your people say, ‘The Way of YHWH is not fair.’”<sup>261</sup>

As we can see, the comparison is made between the fate of the self-righteous and the fate of the reformed sinner. One is granted eternal life as a result of their repentance, leading to genuine faith. The other is sentenced to the second death because instead of trusting in YHWH for their salvation, they trust in themselves.

We can find this teaching paraphrased throughout Scripture:<sup>262</sup> “There is no partiality with the Mighty One; He will judge everyone on the same standard: how they lived their earthly lives.”

---

<sup>261</sup> Eze. 33:13-17a

<sup>262</sup> Deu. 10:17; 2 Ch. 19:7; Act. 10:34-35; Rom. 2:6-11; Job 34:11; Psa. 62:12; Pro. 24:12; Isa. 3:10-11; Isa. 40:10; Isa. 62:11; Jer. 17:10; Jer. 32:19; Eze. 18:30; Mat. 16:27; 1 Co. 3:8; 2 Co. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-8; Col. 3:24-25; 1 Pe. 1:17; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 22:12

## THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

**T**he term Christian was first used in Antioch, being given to the disciples there.<sup>263</sup> “In those days”, indicated this took place during the rule of Claudius Caesar (41 CE to 63 CE).<sup>264</sup> Moreover, the phrase “a great famine is about to be throughout all the land” suggests this was before the year 45 CE.<sup>265</sup>

The first recorded use of the term Nazarenes to refer to the followers of Yeshua was by a Roman-Jewish lawyer named Tertullus, in conjunction with a certain high priest named Ananias.<sup>266</sup> Ananias is said to have officiated as High Priest from about 47 to 52 CE. Tertullus made accusations against Saul of Tarsus before Claudius Felix, who was the Roman procurator of Judaea at the time. Claudius Felix is said to have been in office from 52 to 60 CE. This would place the trial recorded in the passage of Acts 24 to the only overlapping year: 52.

The term Christian was used some eight years after this by the Roman procurator Porcius Festus.<sup>267</sup> At this time, both terms were used simultaneously for the disciples and followers of Yeshua. The term Christian is related to the Greek word *Christos* that was translated from the Hebrew word *Mashiach*. The Semitic term Nazarenes is the plural of the word Nazarene, which had previously applied to Yeshua.<sup>268</sup> We can see that the apostle Saul seems to have accepted both terms as they were applied to him.<sup>269</sup>

At this time (c. 60 CE), *Christians* and *Nazarenes* were therefore synonymous terms. Something drastically changed, however, in the decades that followed. This was likely sparked by events that led to “no small dissension and disputation” over the issue of Gentile members in the assembly and their relationship to the “law of Moses”.<sup>270</sup>

This controversy led to what has come to be called the Jerusalem council. The passage indicates the apostle and elder Yaaqob (James) had the final word leading to the elders’ final verdict. His judgment, however, was not what was written and read to the assembly at Antioch.<sup>271</sup> His thought was that abstaining from four common sins at the time was just the beginning. Upon regularly attending synagogue and hearing the Torah being read and explained, they would come to understand how to live righteously.<sup>272</sup> Sexual immorality, one of the four points mentioned, is not fully defined outside of them. It is certainly not defined in this decree. They would need further instruction to keep this prohibition.

---

<sup>263</sup> Act. 11:26

<sup>264</sup> Act. 11:28

<sup>265</sup> Act. 11:28

<sup>266</sup> Act. 24:1-5

<sup>267</sup> Act. 26:28

<sup>268</sup> Mat. 2:23; Mar 10:47; Luk. 18:37; Joh. 19:19; Act. 6:14; Act. 22:8

<sup>269</sup> Act. 24:14; Act 26:29

<sup>270</sup> Act. 15:1-2, 36-39

<sup>271</sup> Act. 15:24-29

<sup>272</sup> Act. 15:19-21

It is later revealed that Saul was being misunderstood as teaching that Jews who come to the faith should stop observing Torah.<sup>273</sup> This corroborates with what the apostle said in his letter to the assembly in Rome<sup>274</sup> and what Peter said regarding his letters.<sup>275</sup>

In Jerusalem, Rome, and all that have “received the precious faith”<sup>276</sup> throughout the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia<sup>277</sup> this misunderstanding had taken root. None so bad, however, as in Antioch—the place where it had all started.<sup>278</sup> Unlike other assemblies, they had no appointed elders to watch over them.<sup>279</sup>

From c. 60 CE, to the time of Ignatius, the assembly in Antioch had all but deteriorated. What emerged in its place bore little resemblance to the one nourished by the apostles. Ignatius, it is presumed, became a bishop here shortly after the turn of the century, some forty-five years later.

In his letters to the Magnesians<sup>280</sup> and the Philadelphians,<sup>281</sup> he affirms the position that the term “Christian” would only be used in the context of a religion that dissociates itself from any form of Judaism. While the term “Nazarene” could still be used to describe a sect of the Jewish faith, by Ignatius’ time –and presumably at the church in Antioch– the religion of the Christianity was officially born. Not only do Ignatius’ letters advocate the church breaking away from its Jewish roots, but they also establish the absolute authority of the Pope.<sup>282</sup>

By the fourth century, Ignatius’ letters had been elaborated upon to express an anti-Jewish sentiment. John Chrysostom, when he was first ordained a priest at the church of Antioch in 386, delivered eight sermons addressing his church members who had been going to the local synagogue on the Sabbaths and feast days.

He viewed this practice as an “illness” that needed a “cure”. He pressed his church to adopt his hateful<sup>283</sup> views on the “wickedness” of the “Christ-killing” Jews and their “demonic” places of worship. He concluded his sermon series by inviting his parishioners to “hunt” for these “Judaizes” and bring them to him. Evidently, Chrysostom’s attitude toward Jews and the Christians who wished to observe the Sabbath and feast day of Scripture was widely accepted at the time. Following these sermons, he was promoted within the Church.

---

<sup>273</sup> Act. 21:20-24

<sup>274</sup> Rom. 2:25; 3:8; 3:31; 6:1; 6:15; 7:7; 7:12

<sup>275</sup> 2 Pe. 3:15-17

<sup>276</sup> 2 Pe. 1:1

<sup>277</sup> 1 Pe. 1:1

<sup>278</sup> Act. 14:26-15:2

<sup>279</sup> Act. 14:23; 20:17,28; Phi. 1:1; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pe. 5:1-3

<sup>280</sup> Chs. 8-10

<sup>281</sup> Ch. 6

<sup>282</sup> Magn. 6:1; Eph. 3:2; Tral. 2:1

<sup>283</sup> Adversus Judaeos, Hom. 5,4

## THE NARROW WAY

**R**ecited three times daily in Orthodox Synagogues is a prayer called the Amidah. The prayer itself is a modern form of the historical “Shemoneh Esreh” (eighteen blessings). Although it was originally eighteen blessings, a nineteenth was added. However, this additional “blessing” was not placed at the end to make it the nineteenth. Instead, it was inserted after the eleventh and before the thirteenth. It was called “Birkat haMinim” (curse of the heretics).

It was introduced under the supervision of Rabban Gamaliel II<sup>284</sup> following the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. As preserved in what is called the “Genizah version” or the “Palestinian recension”, it read:

May the apostate have not any hope and may the empire of pride be uprooted promptly in our days. May the Nazarenes and the Minim perish in an instant, may they all be erased from the book of life, that they may not be counted among the righteous. Blessed are you, o G-d, who brings down the proud.<sup>285</sup>

Some have argued that the “Minim” in this benediction was not specifically a reference to the Nazarenes when first introduced. However, a fourth to fifth-century Christian theologian and historian named Jerome, in a letter to Augustine, expressed opposing thoughts on the matter. He seemed to be of the impression that the “Min” (*minim* in the plural) was in fact a reference to the Nazarenes. In a letter to Augustine, he wrote:

In our own day there exists a sect among the Jews throughout all the synagogues of the East, which is called the sect of the Minei, and is even now condemned by the Pharisees. The adherents to this sect are known commonly as Nazarenes...<sup>286</sup>

Jerome’s witness is important because he had personally met and conversed with the Nazarene community of his day.<sup>287</sup> He was familiar with their commentaries on Isaiah and obtained a copy of their Gospel from them.<sup>288</sup> In Jerome’s day, orthodox Christianity accused these Nazarenes of being heretics because they observed Torah in addition to accepting Yeshua as the Messiah. Augustine later charged them with this same “heresy” and said that they have their origins in Peter’s visit to Antioch, as we can see recorded in Galatians chapter two.<sup>289</sup>

Around the year 377, Epiphanius of Salamis, a Jewish-born Christian bishop, wrote a lengthy discourse he called Panarion. In the twenty-ninth section of book one of this work he wrote:

Today this sect of the Nazoraeans is found in Beroea near Coelesyria, in the Decapolis near Pella, and in Bashanitis at the place called Cocabe-Khokhabe in Hebrew...

Yet these are very much the Jews' enemies. Not only do Jewish people have a hatred of them; they even stand up at dawn, at midday, and toward evening, three

---

<sup>284</sup> Berakoth 28b-29a

<sup>285</sup> Jewish Quarterly Review. Vol 10, No 4. 1898. p 657

<sup>286</sup> Jerome to Augustine, Letter 102. 4:13

<sup>287</sup> On Illustrious Men, 3

<sup>288</sup> Against the Pelagians, 3, 2

<sup>289</sup> de baptism contra Donatistas, 7, 1



times a day when they recite their prayers in the synagogues and curse and anathematize them.<sup>290</sup>

It is important to highlight that Jerome and Epiphanius would have had no reason to each write that the Nazarenes were cursed in the synagogues if this were not a historical fact. If invented at this time, Epiphanius would have been the one to do so as Panarion was written before Jerome wrote this letter to Augustine. As unlikely as it was that he would do so, it would still not explain how Jerome was familiar with the term “min” as a reference to the Nazarenes.

Jerome differentiates this term from the term “Nazarenes” as a reference to Christians.<sup>291</sup> Therefore he, in this phrase: “May the Nazarenes and the Minim perish in an instant”, identified the term “Nazarenes” as Christians (as is fitting, because this is the Hebrew term for Christians), and the term “Minim” as the Nazarene sect whom he did not consider to be Christians. In his understanding, both groups were cursed. Moreover, Epiphanius's testimony shows his intimate knowledge with the proto-Amidah prayer being a standing prayer that is recited three times daily.

We can see that the witnesses of these two men fit well with what earlier witnesses say concerning the hatred of the Nazarenes among the orthodox Jewish communities from Jerusalem to Rome in the first century.<sup>292</sup>

Unlike the Ebonites, the Nazarenes accepted the virgin birth,<sup>293</sup> that Yeshua was both the Son and the Word of the Mighty One,<sup>294</sup> and accepted the apostle Paul.<sup>295</sup> In their understanding, the apostle helped free people from the “yoke” of rabbinic tradition.<sup>296</sup> The Nazarenes were given a special curse in the daily prayer of rabbinic synagogues for this very reason. Echoing Yeshua's rejection on this basis,<sup>297</sup> the Pharisees and their rabbinic offspring did not want to relinquish their authority.

In the writings of Justin Martyr, both he and a Jewish man he was speaking with acknowledged that there were people in their day who both observed Torah and accepted Yeshua.<sup>298</sup> In this conversation, Justin also seemed to be aware of the Birkat haMinim.<sup>299</sup> At this time, although Justin disagreed with the Nazarenes, he, nor the greater Church, considered them heretics. However, over time, this would change.

We can see the first indication of this change taking place was near the year 190 CE, when the Roman bishop Vicor I moved Passover from its Biblically mandated date (14th of Aviv) to the following Sunday. From this time, and with the circulation of the teachings of Pseudo-Barnabas, Melito, Irenaeus, and the later Athanasius letters, is when the church at large was changing its attitude towards those who continued to practice Torah. Then a final blow came in c. 365 CE, with the passage of the twenty-ninth canon of the Council of Laodicea, outlawing Sabbath observance among Christians.

---

<sup>290</sup> Panarion 29:7,7; 29:9,1

<sup>291</sup> Jerome On Is. 2.51; 13.21; 14.17 cf. 3.26

<sup>292</sup> Act. 24:14, 5; 28:22

<sup>293</sup> Jerome to Augustine, 112, 4:13a

<sup>294</sup> Jerome, On Is. 9.13

<sup>295</sup> Jerome, On Is. 3.30

<sup>296</sup> Jerome, On Is. 3.30

<sup>297</sup> Mat. 23:1-4; 27:18

<sup>298</sup> Dialogue with Trypho, 47,3; 46,1

<sup>299</sup> Dialogue with Trypho, 47; 16; 96

By the early fifth century, the church, with the help of Christians leaders such as John Chrysostom and Epiphanius of Salamis, and also later by church authorities Jerome and Augustine, had effectively forced the Nazarenes –who could indeed trace their origins to the Apostles– underground. They were now deemed heretics by both Judaism and the Christianity, they had no place to go but straight ahead.<sup>300</sup> Excluded by the right and the left, they had to stay on the narrow road that leads to life. They could now hear the words of their Master: “many are called, but few are chosen.”<sup>301</sup>

---

<sup>300</sup> It is possible that many found sanctuary in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. At least they would be able to continue circumcising their male children and keep the Sabbath and Kashruth.

<sup>301</sup> Mat. 20:16; 22:14



## ONE FAITH

And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which the Mighty One had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Master. And they said to him,

“You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs”.

What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore, do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you, yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.<sup>302</sup>

Upon his visit to James and the elders in Jerusalem, Paul informed them of the work YHWH had been doing through him. When they heard his testimony, they gave thanks. Then they informed him of a rumor that had been circulating concerning his teaching. The thousands or tens of thousands of Jewish disciples who lived in the surrounding territories were under the impression that he had been teaching them to discontinue circumcising their children and walking in the Biblical instructions they were brought up in.

The elders then devised a plan for Paul to dispel this misunderstanding concerning his teaching. They told him to purify himself with four men who had taken a Nazarite vow and pay for their offerings and present them to the priest in the Temple, according to the Torah.<sup>303</sup>

They understood that he was not teaching the Jewish disciples to discontinue the circumcision of their sons. This brings us to verse 25.

The phrase “observe no such thing except” was added to the later Greek manuscripts of Acts 21:25. It is not found in the Syriac or Greek Byzantine manuscripts. The New International Version, and other modern English translations, actually reflect this and correctly read: “As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and sexual immorality.”

---

<sup>302</sup> Act. 21:17-25

<sup>303</sup> Num. 6:13ff

The question now becomes, were there two different standards for those who come to the faith in the Messiah; one for Jewish members and one for the Gentile members?

Are there two bodies of the Messiah? Shall we let Paul himself answer this question? “There is one body”<sup>304</sup> comprised of both “Jews and Gentiles”.<sup>305</sup>

How then, could there possibly be two different standards?

The council of James was that the non-Jewish nations should begin their walk in the faith by abstaining from four sins that at the time, were commonplace.<sup>306</sup> His rationale was that more explanation would be given to them gradually as they assembled each Sabbath.

This is the only explanation that makes sense. No one would say that these four things were meant to be the only things Gentiles who come to the faith should avoid. If that were the case, no other instruction would need to be given. Even within these prohibitions, additional instruction is required. How would one even know what sexual immorality is if someone did not explain it to them? For instance, homosexuality, a common practice in the Greek and Roman cultures, would have to be specifically addressed by someone who knew it was wrong.

YHWH treats everyone –both Jew and Gentile– equally.<sup>307</sup> There is one Mighty One, who is not a man that He should change His mind.<sup>308</sup> Therefore, there can only be one Way of YHWH. In the words of the apostle Paul: “It is one Mighty One who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? The Mighty One forbid! Yea, we establish the law.”<sup>309</sup>

Yeshua told a parable that explains His purpose for being sent by His Father.<sup>310</sup> A man a planted a vineyard and entrusted its management with some hired farmers. The man then left town. Upon harvest season, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect fruit. Instead of fruit, however, he received news that the farmers had killed his servants. The vineyard’s owner then sent more servants, with the same mission. After discovering that the farmers had done the same to these servants, he sent his son. The owner had hoped that the farmers would respect his son. Instead, the farmers killed him too, with the thought that they would receive the son’s inheritance.

He ended this parable with the question: “When the master of the vineyard comes, what shall he do to those farmers?”

Five verses later, we are told that the chief priests and Pharisees understood that this parable was targeted at them.<sup>311</sup> From this, we can see that the “farmers” of this parable were the scribes and Pharisees. Elsewhere, Yeshua accused the scribes and Pharisees of being the descendants of those who killed the prophets.<sup>312</sup> Moreover, we are told that the high priests and Pharisees were responsible for killing Yeshua.<sup>313</sup>

---

<sup>304</sup> Eph. 4:4; Rom. 12:5; 1 Co. 10:17; 12:20; Col. 3:15

<sup>305</sup> Eph. 2:16; Rom. 11:1-7, 17-21; Eph. 2:11-14; Gal 3:28; Eph. 3:6; Col 3:11; 1 Co. 12:13; Rom. 10:12

<sup>306</sup> Act. 15:19-21

<sup>307</sup> Rom. 2:6-11; Act.10:34-35

<sup>308</sup> Num. 23:19; 1 Sa. 15:29 cf. Heb 6:18; Tit. 1:2; Jas. 1:17; Mal 3:6

<sup>309</sup> Rom. 3:31

<sup>310</sup> Mat. 21:33-40

<sup>311</sup> Mat. 21:45

<sup>312</sup> Mat. 23:29-31; Luk. 11:47-48

<sup>313</sup> Mat. 26:14-16, 47; Joh. 18:3; Mat 27:6; Act. 5:30

We can understand that the “servants” of this parable represent the prophets, and that the “son” represents Yeshua. It doesn't take much to realize that the man who planted the vineyard is YHWH. This parable of the vineyard is also given through the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.<sup>314</sup>

For the vineyard of YHWH of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.<sup>315</sup>

Here we see that the vineyard represents the houses of Israel and Judah, and the fruit represents justice (or righteousness) and judgment. This was the same fruit that Abraham taught his descendants to live by.<sup>316</sup> It is walking faithfully with the Mighty One.<sup>317</sup>

Therefore, we can understand the parable completely: YHWH entrusted Israel's management to her religious leaders. He sent them prophets to bring “fruits worthy of repentance.”<sup>318</sup> Instead, they persecuted and killed them.<sup>319</sup> He then sent His Son. If we compare it, Yeshua's life and death followed the same pattern as that of the ancient prophets. [The only ones at fault were those whose hearts were turned away from YHWH.] This would make Yeshua the Prophet whom the Spirit spoke of through Moses.<sup>320</sup> This would also make Him Shiloh, whom Jacob prophesied; The One to whom all teaching authority rightfully belongs.<sup>321</sup>

Yeshua made it abundantly clear, however, that He only spoke on behalf of His Father.<sup>322</sup> His “Law” is therefore His Father's Torah. There is no difference. The perceived difference is really the difference between the Sinai Covenant and the Everlasting Covenant. In one instance, the Torah is written on stone tablets; and in the other, it is written on our hearts.<sup>323</sup> This is why He looks at our hearts to determine if we follow Him with our actions.<sup>324</sup> Our outward works follow our innermost desires. This is also why love and obedience have always been interconnected.<sup>325</sup>

If we are willing, the Spirit of truth “writes” the Word of truth in our hearts, so that we are able to walk in His commandments.<sup>326</sup> They are not a burden because He is the one working in us, empowering us as we walk after Him in love.

Just as He and His Father are One, so we must become. “I in them, and You in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” This can only be possible if we collectively follow His Word: Genesis through Revelation.<sup>327</sup> As He earnestly prayed for our unity, He uttered these words:

---

<sup>314</sup> Jer. 12:10

<sup>315</sup> Isa. 5:7

<sup>316</sup> Isa. 5:7 cf. Gen. 18:19

<sup>317</sup> Mat. 3:10, 7:19; Mar. 4:20; Joh. 15:8, 16

<sup>318</sup> Jer. 7:25; 11:7; 35:15; 44:4; 2Ch. 36:15; Luk. 3:8

<sup>319</sup> Dan. 9:10; 1 Ki 19:10, 14; Neh. 9:26; Heb. 11:36-38; Mat. 5:12; Luk. 13:34; Act. 7:52; 1 Th. 2:15

<sup>320</sup> Deu. 18:15, 18

<sup>321</sup> Gen. 49:10; Eze. 21:25-27

<sup>322</sup> Joh. 7:16; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10, 24; 17:8, 14; 18:37

<sup>323</sup> 2 Co. 3:3 cf. Jer. 31:31; Isa. 51:7; Psa. 37:31; Deu. 30:14

<sup>324</sup> Jer. 17:10

<sup>325</sup> Exo. 20:7; Deu. 5:10; 6:6; 7:9; 11:1, 22; 19:9; 30:16, 20; Jos. 22:5; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4; Joh. 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; Psa. 40:8; 1 Jo. 5:3; 2 Jo. 1:6

<sup>326</sup> 2 Co. 3:3; Eze. 36:27. Cf. Deu. 30:6, 8

<sup>327</sup> 2 Ti. 3:16-17

“Sanctify them in Your truth; Your Word is truth.” <sup>328</sup>

---

<sup>328</sup> Joh. 17:17

## A FALLING AWAY

“For there shall arise false messiahs and false prophets and will show great signs and wonders so as, if possible, to deceive the very elect.”<sup>329</sup>

**T**he Word tells us that false messiahs and false prophets will deceive, if possible, the very elect. False prophets who are able to show “signs and wonders” can be exposed if they attempt to cause YHWH’s people to stray from following Him.

If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other mighty ones’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet...<sup>330</sup>

According to this above passage, YHWH allows these false prophets to come to test His people.<sup>331</sup>

If an individual or individuals come along posing as prophets and says “let us go after other mighty ones,” will they be able to deceive, if possible, even those that are called and chosen? Would they not be more crafty than this?

Speaking of a coming lawless individual, the apostle Paul had this to say:

Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deception of unrighteousness among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason, the Mighty One will send them a strong delusion that they should believe the lie...<sup>332</sup>

Like the adversary, this individual is cunning and is able to trick people into believing a lie. Not an outright or obvious lie, but one that involves elements of truth: the best kind of deception.

What is the “strong delusion” YHWH sends to cause those who did not receive the love of the truth to believe the lie? What is the truth? What is the lie?

During the days Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Micah, and Zechariah, false prophets were in ample supply. More than forty times throughout the eras of the prophets, false prophecy is

---

<sup>329</sup> Mat. 24:24/Mar. 13:22

<sup>330</sup> Deu. 13:1-3

<sup>331</sup> Deu. 13:3

<sup>332</sup> 2 Th. 2:9-12



addressed.<sup>333</sup> In nearly half of these occurrences, the term “false/lying prophet(s)” is used.<sup>334</sup> In Elijah’s lifetime alone, there were eight-hundred-and-fifty false prophets.<sup>335</sup>

As it turned out, the true prophets were rejected and the false prophets were honored.<sup>336</sup> Just as there was an abundance of false prophets in ancient times, Kepha warned that there would be false teachers in his day and in those coming.

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the WAY OF TRUTH will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words...<sup>337</sup>

Given this comparison, we can be certain of two things:

1. False teachers will be persuasive in their false teaching so as to trick their listeners.
2. In popularity, they will lead many astray from following YHWH with our entire heart.

These false teachers are said to “even deny the Master who bought them.”<sup>338</sup> Love should be the ultimate driving factor for obedience. This being said, there is another, unpopular side to the story. Simply put, those whom the Master buys with His blood belong to Him.<sup>339</sup> He owns them.<sup>340</sup> His redemption releases us from our previous bondage to sin, so that we can truly serve and obey Him.<sup>341</sup> We become slaves to YHWH.<sup>342</sup> The Old English word ‘Lord’ has lost its original meaning. We can find more of this in Luke 6:46 and 17:9-10.

The comparison is made between the Father and His Son, the Son and His assembly, and a husband and his wife.<sup>343</sup> The assembly must voluntarily submit to Him, just as He voluntarily submitted to His Father.<sup>344</sup> The Hebrew root word for ‘husband’ or ‘marry’ is ba‘al.<sup>345</sup> This word also means ‘master’ or ‘rule over’.<sup>346</sup> Genesis 3:16, then, ultimately points to our relationship with the Messiah.<sup>347</sup> Our submission to Him is not motivated by fear of punishment. Instead, we

---

<sup>333</sup> Isa. 9:5; Jer. 2:8; Jer. 5:31; Jer. 6:13; Jer. 8:10; Jer. 14:14; Jer. 20:6; Jer. 23:13; Jer. 23:25; Jer. 23:26; Jer. 23:32; Jer. 23:26; Jer. 26:7; Jer. 26:11; Jer. 26:16; Jer. 27:9; Jer. 27:10; Jer. 27:14; Jer. 27:15; Jer. 27:16; Jer. 28:1; Jer. 28:5; Jer. 28:10; Jer. 28:12; Jer. 28:15; Jer. 28:17; Jer. 29:1; Jer. 29:8; Jer. 29:9; Jer. 29:21; Jer. 29:23; Jer. 29:31; Jer. 37:19; Lam. 2:14; Eze. 13:2-9, 16-17; Eze. 22:28; Mic. 2:11; Mic. 3:5, 11; Zec. 13:4

<sup>334</sup> Jer. 6:13 LXX & AP; Jer. 8:10 AP; Jer. 23:16 AP; Jer. 23:16 AP; Jer. 23:26 AP; Jer. 26:7 (X2) LXX & AP; Jer. 26:11 LXX & AP; Jer. 26:16 LXX & AP; Jer. 27:9 LXX & AP; Jer. 27:14 AP; Jer. 28:1 LXX & AP; Jer. 28:5 AP; Jer. 28:10 AP; Jer. 28:12 AP; Jer. 28:15 AP; Jer. 28:17 AP; Jer. 29:1 LXX & AP; Jer. 29:8 LXX & AP; Zec. 13:4 AP

<sup>335</sup> 1 Ki. 8:19

<sup>336</sup> 1 Ki. 22:26-27; Isa. 30:10; Jer. 5:31; Dan. 9:10; 2 Ch. 36:16; Luk. 6:23, 26

<sup>337</sup> 2 Pe. 2:1-3

<sup>338</sup> 2 Pe. 2:1

<sup>339</sup> Act. 20:28; 1 Pe. 1:18-19; 2:24; 4:1-2; Rev. 5:9

<sup>340</sup> 1 Co. 6:19-20; 7:23

<sup>341</sup> Joh. 8:34-36; Rom. 6:1-14; 2 Co. 5:15; Eph. 2:2-3, 10; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:14; Joh. 15:13-14; etc.

<sup>342</sup> Rom. 6:16, 18, 22; 1 Pe. 2:16

<sup>343</sup> 1 Co. 11:3

<sup>344</sup> Joh. 15:10; Eph. 5:24 cf. Joh. 5:30; 6:38; 14:31; 17:3-4

<sup>345</sup> Gen. 20:3; Deu. 24:1

<sup>346</sup> 1 Ch. 4:22; Isa. 26:13

<sup>347</sup> Jer. 3:14; Isa. 54:5

should pray honestly like this: “Not my will, but yours be done.”<sup>348</sup> When we have this attitude, His Spirit can work in us to help us walk in newness of life.

Correcting the false prophets/teachers, the prophet Ezekiel made it clear that our salvation depends on our sincere repentance.

Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life.<sup>349</sup>

The apostle Paul said that the wicked one<sup>350</sup> will come after a “falling away”.<sup>351</sup> The term used here is only used in one other location in the writings of the apostles: Acts 21:21. In this passage, the elders of the Jerusalem assembly informed Paul of a rumor circulating concerning his teaching. The “falling away” in this case, was a forsaking of the Torah. It is no surprise that we should find Paul use the term “mystery of lawlessness” in 2 Thesalonians 2:7. The term *anomia* is defined in the Strong’s Concordance as well as in 1 John 3:4. “Whoever sins transgresses the law, for sin is transgression of the law.”<sup>352</sup>

The two characteristics of the historic Nazarenes of the first to early fifth centuries are the same characteristics of John of Patmos and the assemblies “of the East”<sup>353</sup> to whom he wrote.<sup>354</sup>

1. Faith in Yeshua
2. Keeping the Commandments of YAH

Jeremiah prophesied that a time would come when the Nazarenes would cry out to the remnant of His people, who are dwelling among the nations, saying “let us return to the mountain of YHWH.”<sup>355</sup>

---

<sup>348</sup> Luk. 22:42

<sup>349</sup> Eze. 13:22

<sup>350</sup> 2 Th. 2:8

<sup>351</sup> 2 Th. 2:3

<sup>352</sup> Cf. Mat. 7:22-23

<sup>353</sup> Jerome to Augustine, 102. 4:13 cf. Rev. 1:4

<sup>354</sup> Rev. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 12:11, 17; 14:12; 20:4 cf. Isa. 8:16, 20

<sup>355</sup> Jer. 31:6-7 (Heb.) cf. Isa 2:3; Mic. 4:2; Psa. 133:3b; Joh. 12:50

## TWO WITNESSES AND A FALSE PROPHET

**H**ere, we will look at three individuals: Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius. Clement of Rome and Polycarp of Smyrna are both important witnesses to the correct interpretations of the apostolic teachings. Clement, who is mentioned in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians, wrote a weighty letter to the Corinthian assembly near the end of the first century. Polycarp wrote a short letter to the Philippian assembly at the beginning of the second century. Both letters have slight issues, no doubt. Clement's twenty-fifth chapter and Polycarp's ninth or thirteenth chapters may represent later interpolations.

1 Clement was ultimately denied Canonical status. However, we can consider the letter as a rich source of expository teaching. Like the apostolic writings, it makes heavy use of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is evident that Clement was extremely well versed. The way he seamlessly crafts Psalm 118:18, Pro 3:11-12, Psalms 141:5 & Job 5:17-26 together in chapter fifty-six displays an incredible knowledge of Scripture.

Likewise, Polycarp, in his short letter, shows himself to be an informed disciple. On average, he quotes Yeshua or the apostles about every other sentence. The contents of his letter are valuable in gaining a better understanding of the apostle's teachings. He stresses obedience and righteous living,<sup>356</sup> while clarifying that this does not earn one's salvation.<sup>357</sup> In addition, he recounts the apostles' teaching concerning the future resurrection and judgment.<sup>358</sup>

Judging from their respective letters, Clement and Polycarp do not seem to have been in alignment with their contemporary Ignatius of Syria. Polycarp and Clement both align with Scripture on two issues, whereas Ignatius drastically drifts.

First of all, we can see that both Clement and Polycarp held that each assembly is to be governed by a body of elders<sup>359</sup> who are also called bishops, or overseers.<sup>360</sup> Clement, in chapters one, forty-seven, fifty-four, and fifty-seven, demonstrated his understanding of the apostles' teaching that there should be elders [presbyteros] who, in humility, rule over the flock. Clement understood that elders were to be overseers<sup>361</sup> and that he, himself was subject to his fellow elders/bishops.<sup>362</sup>

If we compare this with Polycarp's letter, we can see that Polycarp also understood that the elders were to be responsible for watching over the "wandering" flock.<sup>363</sup> Likewise, he saw himself as one of the elders of his assembly.<sup>364</sup>

Conversly, we see that Ignatius promotes the idea of a supreme head of the church. This head is called the Bishop and is an office held by one individual. In his letter to the Magnesians, he

---

<sup>356</sup> Polycarp to the Philippians 2:1-2; 4:1; 5:1

<sup>357</sup> Polycarp to the Philippians, 1:3

<sup>358</sup> Polycarp to the Philippians, 2, 5, 7, 11

<sup>359</sup> Act. 14:23; Tit 1:5; Phi. 1:1

<sup>360</sup> Act. 20:17-18, 28; Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Pe. 5:1-2

<sup>361</sup> 1 Clement 44:4-5; 42:4

<sup>362</sup> 1 Clement 54:2

<sup>363</sup> Polycarp to the Philippians, 5:3; 6:1

<sup>364</sup> Polycarp to the Philippians, 5:1

writes that the bishop presides after the “likeness of God.”<sup>365</sup> In the same letter, he writes that the assembly should not do anything “without the bishop” in the same way “the Lord did nothing without the Father.”<sup>366</sup> The hierarchy he lays out in his letter to the Smyrnaeans is clear: “follow your Bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father.”<sup>367</sup> In the same letter, he writes “he that does anything without the knowledge of the bishop renders service to the devil.”<sup>368</sup>

Ignatius stresses this in six out of his seven letters. In his letter to the Ephesians, he even writes “plainly, therefore, we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself.”<sup>369</sup> It is not hard to see how the Bishop of Rome could justifiably be called the “Vicar of Christ”. Finally, contradicting the apostles and Clement, Ignatius separates and elevates the office of the bishop from that of the elders.<sup>370</sup>

These three men also differed in their understanding of the Gospel. Both Clement and Polycarp dedicate their letters principally to advocate Scripture and encourage living according to its instructions. On the other hand Ignatius, while sprinkling a few Scripture references (about two per letter), spends most of his time on other matters. He promotes things like the necessity of the bishop’s approval in the sacraments (baptism, marriage, the Eucharist), and maintaining church doctrine. Additionally, there is another element to his letters that displays his misunderstanding of the Scriptures’ teaching concerning grace, faith, and works.

We should mention that Clement speaks of Moses favorably in five chapters.<sup>371</sup> He calls him “blessed Moses” and “the Mighty One’s servant” (three times). He honors him for his example of humility and commends him for his love for his people. Other points Clement makes in his letter include:

1. In chapter seven, he stresses the importance of repentance and that this invitation has always been open to the nations.
2. In chapter 15, he applies Isaiah 29:13 to every one of every age, not just to Jews of the first century.
3. In chapter 29, he expresses his understanding that we can be partakers in His people Israel.
4. In chapters 31-33, he exhibits a correct understanding of the Apostle Paul’s writings: grace and faith have always been the means for justification and that our “works” follow as a result.
5. In Chapter 35, he applies the latter half of Psalms 50 to sinners in general, rather than applying it to the sinners of Israel only.
6. In chapter 40, he talks about being blessed for obeying the Almighty in bringing offerings to the altar in Jerusalem. He specifically mentions the Aaronic Priesthood and Levites in the context of the church members being commanded to bring offerings and perform services at specific times.
7. In chapter 42, he retells the story of Aaron’s rod being chosen to establish his unique role in the priesthood. We can see instead of calling it old and obsolete, he

---

<sup>365</sup> Ignatius to the Magn. 6:1

<sup>366</sup> Ignatius to the Magn. 7:1

<sup>367</sup> Ignatius to the Smyr. 8:1

<sup>368</sup> Ignatius to the Smyr. 9:1

<sup>369</sup> Ignatius to the Eph. 6:1. Translations are taken from J.B. Lightfoot and Roberts-Donaldson.

<sup>370</sup> Ignatius to the Phil. 4; Ignatius to the Smyr. 8

<sup>371</sup> Chs. 4, 17, 42, 52, & 53

relates the story to ordained leadership in the assembly. In this chapter, he calls the books of Moses “sacred”, being followed and confirmed by the prophets that followed him. He repeats this in chapter 53, where he calls the commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai “Sacred Scriptures”.

According to Polycrates, Polycarp celebrated Passover on the very day in which it was ordained in Scripture.<sup>372</sup> Polycarp, being with Polycrates on this matter, would disagree with Eusebius in that instead of just “the Jews” putting away leaven on this day, “the people” did also.<sup>373</sup> The existing “Jewish” feast was supplemented in light of the Messiah’s ransom.<sup>374</sup> The origin of the paschal fast was likely inspired by 1 Corinthians 11:27-30.

But this Passover was certainly not Easter, as an honest read of the Gospels would reveal that the resurrection happened days later. The separation of the weekly “Eucharist” feast from the annual Passover was likely invented by Ignatius,<sup>375</sup> possibly inspiring the later work *Didache*. In apostolic times, the Greek word *eucharisteo* was not unique to the “Last Super”.<sup>376</sup>

As previously noted, Clement and Polycarp both had ties to the Philippian assembly. One is mentioned in Paul’s letter to them and the other wrote them himself. Paul, after spending time here, is said to have left after the feast of Unleavened Bread.<sup>377</sup> The inference, therefore, is that Paul observed this feast with the Philippian assembly. It follows that Clement and Polycarp, in their respective assemblies, also observed this feast.

Conversely, Ignatius appears to have had a distaste for Judaism and even for non-Jews who partook of the practices inherited from Moses’ era. In his letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius demonstrates his intentional ignorance of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>378</sup> Throughout his entire letter to Rome, Ignatius pleads with them to let him die a martyr to prove himself worthy.

This would explain why in four of his letters he said that he did not see himself as worthy to be counted among those of his homeland.<sup>379</sup> And also why he wrote:

- The same of the Magnesians<sup>380</sup> and of the Ephesians.<sup>381</sup>
- To Polycarp: “If indeed by means of suffering I may attain to God.”<sup>382</sup>
- To the Trallians: “That I may not be found reprobate.”<sup>383</sup>
- To the Ephesians: “By martyrdom, I may indeed become the disciple of Him.”<sup>384</sup>

It is clear from his letters, therefore, that Ignatius had a warped view of the Gospel. To others—the Philadelphians<sup>385</sup> and Magnesians<sup>386</sup> in particular—he taught to abandon the Pharisaic

---

<sup>372</sup> Eusebius, *Church History* Book 5, 24:4-6

<sup>373</sup> Eusebius, *Church History* Book 5, 24:6 cf. 23:1

<sup>374</sup> 1 Co. 5:7-8; 11:20-26 cf. Luk. 22:8,13,15,19

<sup>375</sup> Ignatius to the Phil. 4; to the Smyr. 7

<sup>376</sup> Mat. 26:27 cf. 15:36; Joh. 6:11; Act. 27:35

<sup>377</sup> Act. 20:6

<sup>378</sup> Ignatius to the Phil. Chs. 8-9

<sup>379</sup> Smy.11; Tral. 13; Mag. 14; Rom. 9

<sup>380</sup> Ch. 12

<sup>381</sup> Ch. 8

<sup>382</sup> Ignatius to Polycarp, 7:1

<sup>383</sup> Ignatius to the Tral. 12:3

<sup>384</sup> Ignatius to the Eph. 1:2. Translations are taken from J.B. Lightfoot and Roberts-Donaldson.

<sup>385</sup> Ch.6

<sup>386</sup> Chs. 8-9

fallacy concerning works and justification.<sup>387</sup> However, he seemed to be of the persuasion that he, himself, could attain it by his own actions. Unlike Clement and Polycarp, Ignatius misunderstood the teaching of Moses, the rest of the prophets, and the apostles.

Subsequent influential Christians, from Pseudo-Barnabas and Justin Martyr to Jerome and Augustine, perpetuated Ignatius' misunderstandings. The two hallmarks of these false teachers remained the same: their episcopal polity stance and their supersessionist views. Knowing his words would be twisted, the apostle Paul foresaw this falling away and called it "the mystery of lawlessness".<sup>388</sup> It is no coincidence that the word used in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is used nowhere else in the "New Testament" other than Acts 21:21. The only difference is that in one case it is used as a verb and in the other, it is used as a noun.

Since the Protestant Reformation, things have improved within the religion of the Christianity. Progress has been made concerning at least one of these two points. However, in direct contrast to the apostle Paul's teaching,<sup>389</sup> supersessionism, or "Replacement Theology", is still the dominant view among Protestants. Another view called "Dispensationalism" has since arisen.

However, even in this framework, the Gospels, apostolic Letters, and Revelation are still called the "New Covenant/Testament" whereas the preceding Scriptures are called the "Old Covenant/Testament". Moreover, both views maintain, with small exceptions, that the Sabbath and most of the instructions given to Israel through Moses do not apply to the church. Whether or not the church replaces Israel, in the vast majority of the Christianity, the "Law of the Lord"<sup>390</sup> can be broken.

---

<sup>387</sup> Giving Him the benefit of the doubt

<sup>388</sup> 2 Th. 2:7, 3

<sup>389</sup> Rom. 11:1-7, 17-21

<sup>390</sup> Luk. 2:23, 24, 39

## Fragments of an Ancient Nazarene Commentary on Isaiah<sup>391</sup>

3.26 (Isa 8:14) The Nazarenes, who receive the Messiah in such a way that they do not set aside the observation of the old law, interpret the two houses as the two families of Shimmei and Hillel. From these families the scribes and Pharisees arose. Akiba took over their school, whom they assert was the teacher of Aquila the proselyte...up to the captivity of Jerusalem. Shimmei and Hillel therefore arose in Judea not long before the Master was born. The former name means “destroyer”, the latter “profane”, because he destroyed and defiled the precepts of the law by his own traditions, and parables [cf. Tit. 1:14]; and these are the two houses that did not receive the Savior, who was made a ruin and a stumbling block to them.

3.29 (Isa. 8:19-22) The Nazarenes have explained this passage as follows:

Although the scribes and Pharisees tell you to listen to those who do everything for the sake of their “belly”, and who shriek in their incantations in the manner of magicians, so as to deceive you, you should answer them this way: It is not surprising that you follow your traditions, when each nation consults its own idols; therefore, we too should not consult from you dead [Rabbis] concerning the living. Instead, the Mighty One gave us a law and the testimonies of the Scriptures [cf. Mat. 15:3], which if you will refuse to follow, you will not have light, but mist will ever oppress you, which will pass through your land and teaching.

Consequently, when those who have been deceived by you have perceived themselves to be in error and to be enduring a famine for the truth, then they will be “grieved” or angry and curse you. They were thinking of you as their mighty ones and kings, and in vain do they look back to heaven and earth. For they are always in darkness and cannot fly away from your treachery.

3.30 (Isa. 9:1-4) The Nazarenes...try to explain this passage as follows:

When the Messiah arrives and his preaching flashes forth, the first land Zabulon and the land of Naphtali was delivered from the errors of the scribes and Pharisees, and it shook off from its neck the extremely heavy yoke of the Jewish traditions [cf. Act. 15:10; Mat. 23:4]. But afterward, it was weighed down through the gospel of the Apostle Paul, who was the latest of all the apostles; that is, the preaching was multiplied [cf. Gal. 2:4; 5:1] and the gospel of the Messiah became resplendent unto the limits of the Gentiles and the way of the entire sea. Finally, the whole world, which previously walked or sat in darkness and was being held fast by the chains of idolatry and death [cf. Rom. 7:23; 8:2; Gal. 5:17], saw the bright light of the gospel.

9.13 (Isa. 29:20-21) The Nazarenes think they have been set against the scribes and Pharisees, because the teachers of oral tradition failed, who previously were scorning the people by the very bad traditions, and they stayed awake night and day to deceive the simple [Mat. 23:15; Bk. of

---

<sup>391</sup> St. Jerome. 2015. *St. Jerome: Commentary on Isaiah: Including St. Jerome's Translation of Origen's Homilies 1-9 on Isaiah*. Translated by Thomas P. Scheck. Vol. 68. Ancient Christian Writers. New York; Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press.

Galatians]. They caused men to sin against the Word of the Mighty One so that they denied that the Messiah is the Son of the Mighty One.

10.6 (Isa. 31:6-9) The Nazarenes understand this passage thus: “O sons of Israel,” who have renounced the son of the Mighty One by an evil Sanhedrin, return to him and his apostles. For if you do this, you will cast away all the idols that were for you to sin, and the devil will fall down before you, not by your own strength [Rom. 10:3; Phl. 3:9], but by the mercy of the Mighty One; and his young men, who before had fought for him, they shall be the tributaries of the assembly; and his entire strength and rock will pass through.

Moreover, the philosophers and every perverse doctrine will turn their backs at the sign of the [Messiah’s] suffering [cf. Gal. 6:12]. For it is the Master’s decree for this to happen, whose fire is a light in Zion, and whose oven is in Jerusalem.

(Isa. 49:6)<sup>392</sup> And the Nazarene [cf. Isa. 11:1] shall restore the tribes of Jacob to the teaching of their father Abraham [cf. Gen. 18:19]. His message will go to the ends of the earth and He will call all nations to His name, Yeshua the Nazarene of Israel.

(Isa. 60:21) In the end of days, when He returns to earth, the promises will be completed. My people, who are called by name [Isa. 49:6], will inherit the Land forever. This is my doing, that I may be glorified.

---

<sup>392</sup> A modern paraphrase based on the Hebrew text



## Scriptural Index

- All Our Heart  
Deu. 4:29; 30:2, 10; 2 Ch. 6:38; Psa. 119:2; Jer. 24:7, 29:13; Joe 2:12
- Baptism (of the Messiah)  
Luk. 12:50; Mat. 20:22-23; Joh. 12:24; Rom. 6:3-6, 16-18; 8:13; 2 Co. 5:15-17; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11-12/Eze. 36:27/Deu. 30:6, 8; 1 Pe. 2:24
- Bondage (to sin and artificial religion)  
Joh. 8:31-36; Rom. 6:6, 12, 16-18; 7:23, 25; 8:2; Gal. 2:4, 19; 3:13, 23; 5:1, 17, 24-25
- Bride (of the Messiah)  
Eph. 5:30-32; Gen. 3:16; Jer. 3:14; Isa. 54:5; Rev. 19:7-8
- Circumcision (of the heart)  
Lev. 26:41/Num. 33:11/Jer. 31:32; Gen. 17:1; Deu. 10:16; 30:6, 14/Jer. 31:33; Psa. 37:31; 40:8; Isa. 51:7; Rom. 2:15, 26, 29
- Commandments (in relation to love)  
Joh. 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; Psa. 40:8; Rom. 7:22; 1 Jo 5:3; 2 Jo. 1:6; Exo 20:7; Deu. 5:10; 6:6; 7:9; 11:1, 22; 19:9; 30:16, 20; Jos. 22:5; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4
- Covenant (as eternal)  
Gen. 17:7, 13, 19; Deu. 7:9; 29:14-15; 30:6; 1 Ch. 16:17; Psa. 105:10; Isa. 24:5; 55:3; Heb. 13:22; also Lev. 26:44; Deu. 4:31; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:25-26
- Faithfulness (as obedience)  
Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Heb. 11:8; Hab. 2:4/Rom. 1:17/Gal. 3:11/Heb. 10:38/Rom. 2:13/3:31/9:32/Heb. 4:2; Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 2
- False (prophecy/teaching)  
Mat. 24:24/Mar. 13:22; Deu. 13:1-3; 2 Th. 2:3/Act. 21:21; 2 Th. 2:7/ Rom. 3:8/Act. 6:13; 2 Pe.

- 2:1-3; Eze. 13:22; Mat. 7:13, 21-23
- Justice (above religious ceremony)  
Isa. 1:11-17; 58:3-9; Jer. 7:6-10, 21-23; Hos. 4:1-2; 6:6; 14:2; Amo. 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8; Zec. 7:9-10; Pro. 21:3; Mat. 23:23
  - Love (towards YHWH and others)  
Deu. 6:5; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; Deu 13:3; 19:9; 30:16, 20; Deu. 10:19; Lev. 19:18, 34; Mat. 22:37-40; Mar. 12:28-29; Luk. 10:28
  - Mercy (as His eternal nature)  
Exo. 20:6; 34:6-7; Num. 14:18; Deu. 5:10; 7:9; 2 Ch. 30:9; Neh. 1:5; 9:17; Psa. 51:1; 86:5; 103:8-10; Isa. 43:25; 55:7; Jer. 3:12; Lam. 3:22; Dan. 9:4, 9; Mic. 7:18-19
  - Nazarene(s) (as a title)  
Isa. 11:1(Heb.); 49:6(Heb.); 60:21(Heb.); Mat. 2:23; Mar. 1:24; 14:67; 16:6; Luk. 4:34; Jer. 31:6(Heb.); Act. 24:5
  - Passover (as Yah's three-fold redemption story)  
Exo. 6:6; 12:5-7, 13; 15:13, 16; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pe. 1:18-19; Isa. 31:4-5; Jer. 31:6-8 (LXX)
  - Repentance (from our ways to His)  
Zec. 1:3/Mal 3:7; Hos. 5:15; Isa. 1:18-19; 44:22; 55:7; Jer. 3:12; 36:3; Eze. 18:32; 33:14-16; Hos. 6:1; 14:1-4; Mat. 3:2/Mar. 1:4/Luk. 3:3; Mat. 4:17/Mar. 1:15; Mar. 6:12; Luk. 13:3, 5; Act. 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20
  - Sabbath (as a blessing)  
Gen. 2:3; Psa. 133:3/Exo. 20; Mar. 2:27
  - Sexual Immorality (as instruction)  
Lev. 18:6-23; Mar. 10:5-12; Mat. 19:4-9; Rom. 7:3; 1 Co. 7:10-11

- Truth (as unchanging)  
Joh. 12:49-50; 17:17; Num. 23:19; 1Sa. 15:29; Psa. 119:89; Isa. 40:8; 55:11; Mal. 3:6; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:12; Jas. 1:17; 1 Pe. 1:25; Mat. 4:4/Luk. 4:4; Mat. 5:17-19; Luk. 16:17, 21:33; 2 Ti. 3:16; Jer. 31:33/Heb. 8:10/10:16
- Universal Calling (as His non-discriminatory favor)  
Gen. 17:2, 4, 5, 6, 16; 35:11; 48:19; Rom. 11:25; Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 26:14; 28:14; Gal. 3:16; Exo. 12:38; Isa. 56:3, 6-7; Job. 42:17B-D (LXX); Deu. 10:17; 2 Ch. 19:7; Act. 10:34-35; Rom. 2:6-11; Job 34:11; Psa. 62:12; Pro. 24:12; Isa. 3:10-11; Isa. 40:10; Isa. 62:11; Jer. 17:10; Jer. 32:19; Eze. 18:30; Mat. 16:27; Rom. 2:6-11; 1 Co. 3:8; 2 Co. 5:10; Gal. 6:7-8; Col. 3:24-25; 1 Pe. 1:17; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 11:18; Rev. 22:12
- Vengeance (as belonging to Him only)  
Lev. 19:18; Deu. 32:35; Pro. 20:22; Mat. 5:38-39; Rom. 12:17-20; 1 Th. 5:15; 1 Pe. 3:9
- Way (of YHWH) (of Rightousness) (of Truth)  
Gen. 18:19; Exo. 18:20; 32:8; Deu. 4:9; 5:32; 8:6; 9:16; 10:12; 11:13, 16, 22, 28; 13:3-5; 19:9; 26:17; 27:18; 28:9, 14; 30:16; 31:29; Jos. 1:7; 22:5; 23:6; Jdg. 2:22; 1 Sa. 12:20; 1 Ki. 2:3; 8:48; 2 Ki. 21:22; Psa. 1:6; 25:9; 103:7; 119:1, 3, 14, 27, 30, 32, 33, 35; 125:5; 139:24; 143:8; Pro. 2:20; 4:11, 25-27; 6:23; 8:20; 9:6; 10:17, 29; 12:28; 13:6; 15:10, 19, 24; 16:31; 21:16; 22:6; 23:19; Isa 2:3; 26:7; 28:7; 30:21; 40:3; 42:24; 43:19; 48:17; Jer 5:4, 5, 6; 6:16; 21:8; 29:13; 42:3; Eze 18:25, 29; 33:17, 20; Mic. 4:2; Hab 3:6; Mat. 2:8; 3:1, 3; 7:14; 21:32; 22:16; Mar. 1:3; 12:14; Luk. 1:76; 3:4; 20:21; 21:34; Joh 1:23; 14:6; Act. 9:2; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; Rom. 3:12; Heb. 5:2; 12:13; 2 Pe. 2:2, 15, 21.