

Finding the Truth

Updated and Expanded

Farther Down
the Path to Abundant Life

www.emetministries.com

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

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Which Bible is Right?

Truth about the Scriptures

Visit any bookstore or search online for a good Bible and your eyes will be flooded with various translations and versions. There's the NIV, the Student Bible, the New Living Translation, the NASB, the Life Application Bible, study Bibles, and of course the King James Version. Each Christian Pastor or denomination seems to have a specific version that is favored above others. Joyce Meyer uses the Amplified Bible and the Southern Baptist Convention has recently printed its own Holman Christian Standard Version. There are even those that proclaim the authority of the 1611 KJV as if God Himself speaks Old English. With so many translations and revisions, it is hard to know for sure, if the Bible you are reading is totally accurate. Do the translations we use give us the best understanding of the holy words found in Genesis to Revelation?

To answer this question, let's first consider the difficulty in communicating with someone who speaks a foreign language. Imagine ordering food at a drive thru window and realizing that the person on the other end of the loud speaker doesn't understand English. You order a hamburger, but you get a fish sandwich. Much is lost in a translation! The same is true for the words of the Bible. To best understand the messages of the Scriptures, one should study and learn the language, customs and culture of which the Bible was written. This, of course, is Hebrew.

The entire Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew tongue. We also know that the Savior Himself spoke Hebrew. In Luke 2, He is found at the Temple, teaching the teachers. There is no doubt that He spoke Hebrew to these people. In Luke 4:16, the Gospel records that He stood and read from the scroll, which is always written

in Hebrew. The Savior even spoke Hebrew when He appeared to the Apostle Paul. “And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Acts 26:14.

The disciples and even, the Apostle Paul spoke and wrote their letters in Hebrew, as well. Today, some of the oldest existing copies of New Testament texts are Greek. But, that doesn’t mean these were originally written in Greek. Most scholars would agree that each author of New Testament originally wrote their books in Hebrew texts, from a Hebrew mindset. Thus, these documents must be studied that way.

The Bible was written by approximately 40 people over the course of 1500 years. Despite this huge time frame, the Bible does not contradict itself nor does it contain any errors. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that the Bible was "breathed" by the Almighty. Each person used their own writing style, but they recorded exactly what the Creator intended. The Scriptures were copied by hand through an amazing system of scribes who developed an intricate method to ensure that no errors were made.

Most English Bibles are based upon a Greek translation of the Hebrew text. This Greek document is called the Septuagint or LXX. Other English Bibles rely upon the Latin Vulgate which is also a translation from the Hebrew. Error occurs when man translates the Scriptures from one language to another. The Bibles we have today have mostly been translated from Hebrew to Greek and THEN, to English! Consider trying to get driving directions from a person who speaks Hebrew. That Hebrew speaker gives the directions to a person who speaks Greek. You then are literally lost, as you try to figure out what that Hebrew speaker spoke to the Greek!

The translations sold online or at Wal-mart are works of man that each contains errors and problems. The more times a text is simplified for the masses, the more that text loses its original meaning. Such is

the case with numerous new translations or paraphrases that are promoted as “easy to read.” The Bible was never meant to be “easy to read.” Instead, it was meant to be studied, learned, and applied to life.

So, how does a person come to the most accurate understanding of the Bible? The answer to this question is found in 1 Timothy 3:15. This verse says to, “Study to shew thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” This verse is the basis for every true believer who seeks to walk in the truth of the Scriptures. In the next verse, Paul wrote that “All Scripture is inspired and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” Take note that when these verses were originally penned by Paul there was no New Testament. The Apostle was confirming that the Old Testament was to be considered the instruction book for life and faith. Paul was speaking specifically that a person must have a strong foundation in the Old Testament Scriptures. Understandably, this foundation should center on the Hebrew language.

Hebrew is a powerful language that has deep meanings for each and every letter. A good concordance and Hebrew dictionary helps the student discover the original words used in the text, without having to be fluent in Hebrew. Keep in mind that there are certain linguistic nuances that don’t translate well into English. So, don’t depend on the translators for accuracy. The only way to ensure that your Biblical understanding is correct is to go to the source of the original document which is in the Hebrew language and culture. For example, consider the Savior’s comments about an evil eye. “The light of the body is the eye; If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness,” Matthew 6:22-23a, KJV.

The people who heard the Messiah speak these very words immediately recognized what He meant when he talked of the evil eye. This idea was, and is, common in the Hebraic culture. Yet, just pick up

any different Bible translation and in it will be a quagmire of different words used to express this hidden Hebrew idiom. Each translation seems to deal with the issue differently. A few examples include, eye be whole, eye be simple, eye be sound, eye be plain, eye be healthy, sincere, clear, honest, or eye be good. This is very confusing! What did the Messiah really mean? Hebraically and Biblically, what is an evil eye?

First, consider the context. The very next verse after the evil eye quotation, explains exactly why the evil eye squints. "But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both god and Money," Matthew 6:23, 24 NIV. When the Messiah spoke of the bad eye, He wasn't talking about bad eyesight or the need for Lasik surgery! From the context it is easy to grasp that He was using a Hebrew expression to comment on people's greed. Each time Messiah spoke of the eye being good or evil, or "plucking out the eye," he was speaking of the issue of greed. An evil eye is a greedy eye. A person with an evil eye is controlled by the desire to receive for self.

The Bible explains this issue further. "He that has a good eye shall be blessed; for he gives of his bread to the poor," Proverbs 22:9. Again, if your eye is good, then you are not greedy. The opposite is also true. If your eye is evil then you shall not be blessed because you withhold from the poor. Traditional Judaism agrees with this. "A good eye and a humble spirit and a lowly soul, those who have these are disciples of Abraham our father," Mishnah Aboth 5:19.

From a Hebraic viewpoint it is now easy to grasp the difficult words of the book of Matthew. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire," Matthew 18:9. The Savior was not literally suggesting his followers mutilate themselves. Such a literal teaching would be a direct contradiction and

violation to the Scriptures. “Do not cut yourselves,” says Deuteronomy 14:1. The verse in Matthew was suggesting that we run away from greed and idolatry. We should take precautions to guard and protect ourselves from the evil eye of want, to get rid of the evil eye of desire. Such meaning is only discovered when one looks past the English and into the Hebraic history and culture.

The best way to know your Bible is to know your Bible! The New Testament is explained in the Old Testament. Open the Scriptures; pray for understanding; question traditional teachings; and compare the messages you hear from the pulpit to the whole of Scripture. Begin to look past the English words, to view the Hebrew text. Bible translations are great for casual reading but they are far from perfect. To gain the most from your Bible, simply study to prove all things true. As you consider the context and culture of the Scriptures, you may begin to question some of the traditional teachings of the Church. You might also agree with Martin Luther, who once said, “If I were younger I would want to learn Hebrew, for without it one can never properly understand the Holy Scriptures.”

That's NOT in the Bible?

Truth about popular statements

The Bible has affected mankind in countless ways. It is the best selling book of all time. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton once based their curriculum upon the Scriptures. For many years Webster's Dictionary predominately defined words from their usage in the King James Version. The message of the Bible has sparked wars like the Crusades, changed lives of horrible sinners like Jeffrey Dahmer, and become part of everyday speech. Phrases like "cleanliness is next to godliness" are repeated over and over as coming from the good book. But, do many of the popular sayings we attribute to the Bible actually originate from the Scriptures?

"God helps those who help themselves" is just one example of a quote that doesn't have Biblical origin. This statement was actually first made by Ben Franklin in the Poor Richard's Almanac of 1757. This isn't a bad idea, but it isn't Scriptural. How could the man on the cross next to the Savior actually help himself?

When problems plague a person the popular Christian catch phrase "this too shall pass" is often repeated. This statement can't be found in the Bible. Yes, pain is only temporary compared to the eternal glory of Heaven but you won't find this "verse" in your Bible. To read this quote, try opening the Jewish Talmud.

"Once saved, always saved" is a popular Baptist citation that isn't from the Bible either. The theology of eternal security can easily be argued as Revelation 3:5 speaks of blotting someone's name OUT of the book of eternal life. Don't be mistaken about this declaration.

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

Is money the root of all evil? Not according to the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the “love of money is the root of all evil.” Money is a tool that can be used for good or bad. The love of money is greed. This desire to receive for self alone is indeed the force that drives all wickedness.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” is a phrase from a newspaper in 1833. And “beggars can't be choosers” was first used in a 1546 book of proverbs.

Perhaps the most used unbiblical phrase derives from a hymn written by William Cowper. He wrote that “God moves in a mysterious ways.” Today, this statement is repeated over and over by believers and unbelievers alike. The truth is that the Almighty is not mysterious whatsoever. The Creator can be known and understood through His word. We are the ones with a problem of understanding the infinite. For a Bible believer, nothing about the Creator should be mysterious as EVERYTHING can be for the good. Everything that occurs is not good but can work for our benefit. Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for the good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

Error brings more error. We delude ourselves when we erroneously attribute man's ideas for Biblical wisdom. The only way to know if what we think is in the Scriptures is to study and know the Bible. The truth of the Bible will set us free from error and misunderstandings.

Can the Bible Be Trusted?

Truth about translations

Many Christian teachers erroneously proclaim their Bible to be the “inspired infallible word of God.” The error of such a statement is easily proven when any translation is compared to the ancient texts of the Scriptures. English translations fall short time and time again.

Take for example the beloved New International Version (NIV) that has ripped literally thousands of comments out of the Bible. Compared to the King James Version, the NIV has a shortage of words equal to the entire text of 1 and 2 Peter combined. Many verses in the NIV also run contradictory to other translations. In Isaiah 9:3, the King James Version (KJV) says, “Thou hast multiplied the nation and not increased the joy.” The “Nearly Inspired Version” NIV says, “You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy.” Which is the case? The following verses are just some of the many that appear in the KJV but not in the NIV: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14, Mark 7:16, Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4, Acts 8:37; 28:29, Romans 16:24 and 1 John 5:7.

The King James Version has its own set of problems as well. This popular Bible is named after the openly homosexual King James I of England. King James fell madly in love with his male cousin Esme Stuart whom he made Duke of Lennox. In 1582 James was kidnapped and forced to issue a proclamation against his lover and send him back to France. The original KJV contained 80 books instead of the 66 books of Genesis – Revelation. It wasn’t until the end of the 19th Century that the 14 books of the Apocrypha were removed from the KJV.

Also removed from KJV is the true meaning of many verses as translators actually added hundreds of thousands of words to the Biblical text. These additions were italicized when printed to indicate

the addition. Most readers don't know this and therefore assume the doctrine being propagated is correct. Just imagine an opinionated editor adding words to a book by President Obama to understand the depth of this travesty. One definite error of translation is in Matthew 23:24. The KJV has 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.' But the Greek has 'strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.' This mistake can not be ignored as it shows the work as fallible.

The Bible was written over a period of approximately 1500 years in three languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Therefore, English is not one of the original languages of the Bible. All English translations of the Scriptures will suffer from differences in languages and culture. This is expounded by the move of modern translators to render a thought for thought based work as opposed to a text that literally translates each word. In the book, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* by Bruce Metzger, the author shows how "Revelation 2:23 contains the Greek word *nephros*, which literally means "kidneys." However, the English sounds pretty weird when Y'shua says, "...I am He who searches the kidneys and hearts..." The word refers to the deepest emotions and affections of man, and is more understandable in our culture when translated as "thoughts" or "mind." Such changes cloud the original intention and prove that no English Bible is neither inspired nor infallible.

The solution to this problem is first stop trusting the translations. Dig deep for the original meaning of a verse by understanding the culture, context, and language first used. Then discover how a verse was originally intended to be kept and then observe it in the same manner.

Global Cooling or Global Warming

Truth about iniquity

For over 41 years, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day. This is a worldwide holiday that is recognized to build awareness of environmental and climate change issues.

Former Vice-President Al Gore claims global warming is to blame for the looming climate crisis. Gore has said that the glaciers in Antarctica are melting and that sea levels will rise to cover parts of Florida and New Orleans. "Is it only terrorists that we're worried about? Is that the only threat that is worth our attention? We are witnessing a collision between our civilization and the Earth," Gore has said. Global Warming seems dangerous. Yet, "Global Cooling" is a much larger threat to the world.

Global Warming is predicted by scientists; Global Cooling is prophesied in the Bible. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," Matthew 24:12. While temperatures are on the rise, the heart of man is beginning to freeze. From road rage to impurity and strife, people are acting on their impulses and placing another layer of ice upon their cold heart. This is Global Cooling and it is triggered by the smog of what the King James Version calls "iniquity." The New King James Version and the New American Standard use the word "lawlessness" to describe the cause of the cooling. The terms are identical as iniquity is law-less-ness.

"And because law-less-ness increases in the world, the love of many will grow cold," Matthew 24:12. The Greek word translated "lawlessness" in this verse is "anomia." This word, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Dictionary*, means "illegality, i.e. violation of law, wickedness, iniquity, unrighteousness." Likewise, *Thayer's Greek*

Lexicon defines anomia as "the condition of one without law - either because ignorant of it, or because violating it, contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness." Anomia is exactly the same Greek term used in Matthew 7:23 where the Savior said, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (anomia).'" Ouch!

Iniquity can be understood as law-less-ness or having no regard towards the Law of Moses. Iniquity causes the heart to grow cold to the arena of faith. 1 John 3:4, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." To sin is to violate or break the law of the Almighty, called "torah" in Hebrew. This law is the eternal commandments that were given to Moses and then recorded in the first five books of the Bible. Today, the Torah is the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Torah reveals the expectations for all mankind. A person sins when the law is not kept. Sin is having lawlessness - having less of the law.

Blessings and purpose abound when a person walks in obedience to the whole of Scripture. On the contrary, violating the Torah dulls the heart. Like slow changes in the weather that go unnoticed, iniquity grows slowly in the hearts of many believers. Many act like super-market shoppers, picking and choosing what should be followed in the Bible while casting much of the "Old Testament" aside.

The opposite of law-less-ness is law-plus-ness, or having more of the Torah in life. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart, for out of it flows the issues of life." Though iniquity increases in the world, believers have been called to not be affected by this chill factor. The Torah should clearly be studied, learned and become a part of every day life.

Beware of Spiritual Identity Theft

Truth about the Scriptural lifestyle

The FBI has recognized identity theft is the fastest rising crime in America. Each day the personal information of thousands is compromised and used by thieves. A spiritual identity theft also robs people of blessing and purpose. The criminals of society and religion have stolen the identity of millions.

Life is shaped by past experiences and surrounding culture. The language spoken, the food eaten, and the holidays celebrated are all predetermined by the culture a person lives within. For Bible believers, this is identity theft. People think they are American, Lutheran, or Baptist but they are not. They are more.

A person's true identity is found within the pages of the Bible. The Scriptures state, "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Galatians 3:29. The original word for "seed" in this verse is "sperma," which means a "physical seed or descendant." Christians are not just spiritual heirs of salvation but direct physical descendants of Abraham.

Abraham had a special relationship with the Almighty, which led to him being blessed above all people. He would be given special land in the Middle East and have physical descendants "as numerous as the stars in the heavens." These blessings were passed to Abraham's son, Isaac and then given to Isaac's son, Jacob. "Be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body," Genesis 35:11.

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, fathered twelve sons. These twelve sons and their families became known as the twelve tribes

of Israel. Israel isn't just a small sliver of land in the Middle East. *And Israel isn't just the Jewish people!* Israel is the family of Abraham. This family's bloodline has been scattered all over the world. As Romans 2:29 states, the identity of all disciples is Israel.

History proves that shortly after the rule of King David, the nation of Israel was tragically split in two. In 586BCE the two tribes that made up the Southern Kingdom were taken captive by the Babylonians. 70 years later many of these people returned to the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, and rebuilt the Temple. They kept the Law and sought to worship as prescribed in the Scriptures. Today, the descendants from Judea are known as the "Jews."

In 722BCE the Northern Kingdom, comprised of 10 tribes from Ephraim, were scattered by the Assyrians. These Israelites mixed into the nations. Thus they lost their identity and forgot their Hebrew heritage. They continued to grow and multiply, spreading their bloodline all over the world. A recent NBC News article estimates over a tenth of today's population is directly descended from this group. Today they are known as the "lost 10 tribes of Israel." Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Messiah Y'shua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah."

The Jewish people began their return to the Land in 1948. As fulfillment to Biblical prophecy in Ezekiel 37 and elsewhere, the lost tribes are slowly returning to their identity as people recognize they are Israel. Acts 2:39 and many other verses in the Bible indicates that the scattered tribes are found throughout the world. "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself," Acts 2:39. The brother of Jesus knew that the restoration of Israel was of utmost importance. He wrote his to this group, "James, a bond-servant of God, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings," James 1:1.

One website makes this message easy to understand:

1. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possibly number in the many millions (Genesis 22:17; 35:11; Deuteronomy 1:10-11), and there are many more physical Israelites on Planet Earth than are given credit.

2. Ancient Israel was divided into two separate Kingdoms or Houses: Judah and Israel/Ephraim, the latter's descendants becoming the fullness of the Gentiles/nations (Genesis 48:19; Romans 11:25).

3. In the end, all who have faith in Messiah are part of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:17; cf. Romans 9:6). God's plan of regathering Israel is a part of His plan to take the message of salvation to the entire world as His Kingdom is restored (Isaiah 49:6).

The Savior said in John 4:22, "Salvation is of the Jews." This doesn't mean that a person must convert to Judaism. This means the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. All of the promises in the Bible made to Israel are for today. All of the commandments in the Bible that were given to Israel are also for today. Being Israel isn't about being Jewish, but recognizing the identity theft of the world and the Almighty's true plan for man.

Firm Foundation?

Truth about the Torah

In 1173 construction began on a building that would later receive worldwide attention. A foundation was laid and workers started to labor with the best marble. As the eight-story structure was being completed several architects began to notice a slight problem. Somehow, this beautiful bell tower in Italy seemed to lean just a few inches. Precautions would have to be taken to stop this monument from falling. Today the “Leaning Tower of Pisa” tower stands tall and slanted as a sign to the world about the importance of a well-built and secure foundation.

The Messiah spoke of this concept through a parable about a wise man that built his house upon a rock in Matthew 7:24-27. The rains came down, the floods went up, and only the house on the rock stood firm. If a bad foundation can cause a building of solid stone to crumble, then surely having a bad spiritual foundation can cause a believer to fall.

The scriptures are clear that a person’s spiritual walk should be based upon the first five books of the Bible. These are the teachings of Moses upon which the whole of the Bible is built. They were not replaced with the Gospels and the Messiah did not do away with these teachings. 2 Timothy 2:19a, “A solid foundation stands firm.”

Many Christians start their faith by turning directly to the middle of the Bible for instruction and inspiration. New believers begin reading the Gospels without any prior knowledge of what is required of man or how the Most High relates to humanity. Without Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy it is impossible to correctly understand the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Suppose a person walks into an Algebra class with no prior knowledge of math. The teacher starts the class by instructing everyone to turn to the middle of the book. The new student would be lost. Well, that is exactly what happens when people lay a foundation of the New Testament without knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament teachings and way of life.

In Hebrew, the first five books of the Bible are called the “Torah.” Torah is often translated as “law” in most English Bibles but the word actually means “teaching and instruction.” Torah is more like an instruction manual than a rulebook. Found within the Torah is a blueprint for living, with information on pretty much every part of life, from what to eat, to how to dress, and when to worship. The Torah is the revelation of the Creator’s eternal will for mankind. It is the Bible the Savior read and used.

The Messiah based His complete life and ministry on the Torah. He did not violate, negate, nor abolish it. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished,” Matthew 5:17 & 18. The issue seems pretty plain doesn’t it? Heaven and earth are still here, so the Law/Torah must be too! What was wrong to do during the times of Moses is still wrong. What was commanded during the time Moses is still commanded today. The Torah is the true foundation for the Biblical faith.

Don't Stumble On Your Journey

The truth about sin

Imagine all the obstacles a person might have to overcome if he were to walk from New York City to San Francisco. One man who accomplished this rare achievement mentioned a surprising difficulty when asked to tell of his biggest hurdle. He said that the toughest part of the trip wasn't the steep slopes of the mountains or barren stretches of desert. Instead, he said, "The thing that came the closest to defeating me was the sand in my shoes." It's not the "big" sins like murder and adultery that cause most people to stumble. Instead, the "little" sins of gossip and "lust" easily entangle. Does the Bible distinguish between levels of sin? The definition and the remedy for sin are both discussed in 1 John 3:4-7, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous."

If a person violates God's laws then a person is sinning. Sin is not obeying the laws or commands of the Bible. To be "sin less" a person must be "law full." Sin is a life without the law. The Law is the Law of Moses as presented in the first five books of the Bible. What was wrong to do during the days of Moses is still wrong today. The word "law" is an ill interpretation of the Hebrew word "Torah." The word "torah" is Hebrew for "teachings." Torah was given for the benefit of mankind as Torah is the loving instructions and guidelines for living as the Almighty's chosen people.

The Torah explains exactly how a believer should eat, live, worship, treat other people, and marry. According to the Holman Bible

Dictionary, a Baptist publication, “the Old Testament has a rich vocabulary for sin. The Hebrew word “chata” means “to miss the mark.” The word could be used to describe a person shooting a bow and arrow and missing the target with the arrow. When it is used to describe sin, it means that the person has missed the mark that God has established for the person’s life.” The Torah is the Almighty’s bull’s eye for obedience. The penalty of committing just one sin is physical and spiritual death says Romans 3:23. Though a person misses the mark and sins, forgiveness is granted if one repents, turns from their ways, and trusts the Savior.

Jesus is the Torah or Law alive. “And the Word was made flesh,” John 1:4. The Savior walked fully in the Torah commands and never broke the law. Jesus kept the Torah in its entirety and therefore was sinless. To follow Jesus, man must follow the Old Testament Law. A life patterned after Jesus will be a life patterned after the Torah! Jesus kept the seventh day Sabbaths, celebrated the feasts, ate kosher, and was circumcised all according to the Creator’s Torah. Jesus did not come to “do away with the Torah” (Matt.5:17-20) but to present to the world an example of a perfect life.

What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. What is the law? It is the loving instructions and guidelines given by the Almighty in the Torah. Deuteronomy 27:26 says, “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” Can you say “Amen” to these ideas?

America: Land of the Law?

Truth about freedom and the law

Patriotic anthems declare America to be the “land of the free and home of the brave.” Indeed, the United States is the sweet land of liberty which guarantees religious and political freedom. These freedoms are protected from abuse through various legislation. Congress passes and revises thousands of laws each year. Each state, county, and city has their own rules which govern everything from taxes to parking. Violation of such laws results in fines, jail time and even capital punishment. Some have speculated that America has more laws in place than any other country in the world. Isn’t it strange that the land of the free is in reality the land of the law?

The law could be viewed as a binding list of do’s and don’ts. The law could also be accepted as a fence that regulates behavior. That same stop light that irritates the morning drive to work actually stops wrecks from occurring throughout the day. Truth be told, the law is not for the criminal but for the free person. The law protects from abuse or anarchy by ensuring an orderly society. In these ways, the laws of the United States are much like the Laws of the Bible. The Mosaic Law teaches the believer how to serve and worship the Creator (Psalm 19:7-9, Acts 13:13-15.) The Law, or “torah” in Hebrew, also gives instructions on how to treat one another (Leviticus 19:18, Galatians 6:2.) The Torah of Moses is a school master that defines sin and leads a person to the Messiah (Romans 7:7, Galatians 3:21-2.) The Law is the viable standard of the Almighty’s will. “So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good,” Romans 7:12.

Consider the Bible to be a type of constitution for the saints. It is a law of liberty that leads to freedom and blessing. The founding father’s Bill of Rights and the Torah are still in affect today. There are over 613

commandments in the first five books of Moses and over 1,100 commands in the four Gospels. Many verses are specifically given to only certain groups of people or individuals for that very moment. For example, Leviticus 15 reads that women are to separate themselves during their menstrual cycle. Some of the controversial commandments, like stoning a person or sacrificing animals, are regulated in the Scripture to only occur “in the Land” of Israel or only when the Temple is functioning. For each command of the Law there are spiritual insights and practical applications.

It isn't legalism when a person obeys the law, its righteousness! The Law should be followed through heart-felt devotion. The Savior said, “If you love me then keep my commandments,” John 14:15. Here, the Messiah is referencing the commandments found in the Old Testament. Not a single word in the US Constitution or the Bible has become outdated or unimportant.

“It is sometimes taught that no one can keep the Law of Moses because it is too difficult. The Bible says otherwise (Deuteronomy 30:11–14). To say that we cannot keep Torah diminishes both the truth and the potential of the new life planted within us. Christians have been given a job to do! Christians are to display His majesty, holiness, righteousness, mercy, and goodness. We are commanded to be holy, to be set apart for God. This means being faithful to His instructions on how to be holy. We can do it through faith in His Son, our Savior, and the life that He now lives in us,” wrote Bible teacher Boaz Michael.

Church History in a Nutshell

Truth about the faith

A short drive through any small town in the Bible-belt of the United States will reveal an iconic “church on every corner.” Lutheran, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches offer contemporary, traditional or Spanish services. There may be Catholic congregations, charismatic outreach centers, or even Unitarian Universalist churches.

Worldwide, there are over 1,900 different denominations of Christianity. Each differs in their own ways. For example, Lutherans sprinkle, Baptists immerse and the apostolic faith baptizes only “in the name of Jesus.” Is this division really what the Savior envisioned when He prayed in John 17:21, “Father, may they be one?”

History recognizes Christianity as originally a small sect of Judaism. The first followers observed the Law of Moses and didn’t change their behavior when they accepted the Jewish Messiah. As the good news began to spread many believers faced harsh persecution.

Christianity changed in 313AD when the Edict of Milan granted Christians the right to openly practice their religion. Roman Emperor Constantine the Great had supposedly converted and now showed kindness to the church. This affection came with many strings attached. As time went on, many Roman laws were passed to establish the Roman Catholic Church as supreme. Constantine declared himself the “Potinfex Maximus” and set up the hierarchy of archbishops over bishops.

In 321AD the first council of Nicea was held by the emperor to rid the Christian church of “Jewish” identity. Church leaders who failed to attend this meeting faced the death penalty. During the council, the

idea of a Trinitarian godhead was mandated and Passover was replaced with the pagan Ishtar/Easter celebration. This was just the start of changes that were made by Constantine.

In 325AD Constantine decreed the first day of the week as “Dies Solis” or “the day of the sun.” It just so happened that Sunday was the official day off for the Roman civil government. Changing the Biblical Sabbath was an easy trade as Sun’sday became the “Lord’s day.”

The acts of Constantine propelled the world into the dark ages when the church had supreme authority over science, learning, and government. For hundreds of years, only the Catholic priests were allowed to read and interpret the Scriptures. In 1517 Martin Luther started the protestant reformation as he led a theological rebellion against the Catholic Church. Various groups later split from Luther as they discovered aspects of the faith that had been forsaken. The past 2,000 years have seen a great struggle within Christianity. The original faith of a small group of Jewish believers has now become the popular religion of celebrities. To be accepted by the masses, the American church has adopted contemporary music and feel good sermons. Mega-churches throughout the country boast weekly attendance of more than 5,000 while local groups offer everything from gymnasiums to modern-style dance troupes. Is today’s model of church the most accurate as compared to the Scriptures? Should the message and the method of the Bible change with the times? “The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him,” Proverbs 18:17.

There has always been a small group in the church who would fight for the fullness of truth. This remnant continues to escape the latter day apostasy and experience the restoration of Biblical worship. One can discover the original faith of the apostles by knowing church history and studying the ancient language, culture, and words of the Bible. Jude 1:3 explains that one must “contend for the most holy faith that was delivered to the saints once for all time.”

Religion is Wrong

Truth about the Savior

Is there really a difference between the message of the Bible and the faith of today? Have you ever considered if what is being taught in the local church or on the television is how the faith was meant to be?

Perhaps part of the problem with organized religion is how they view the Savior. Some people see Him standing at the door to the church with free flowing blond hair and baby blue eyes. While others view him with dark hair and black skin wearing an African robe. Millions consider him to be Islamic. For some he is yet to come. Are these pictures realistic of the Savior who walked the face of the earth 2,000 years ago?

This might surprise you, but the Savior of the Bible did not speak English. He did not worship on Sunday. He did not have blond hair or black skin. Neither did He ever ask someone to join His church. And, the virgin born Redeemer was not named Jesus. Sadly, what most people know as the Savior is a fabrication far from the truth.

History and the Bible reveals that the Messiah was born a Jew, spoke Hebrew, ate kosher foods, went to the synagogue, and kept perfectly the Father's will as revealed in the first five books of the Bible. This savior was given the Hebrew name of "Y'shua." Perhaps you have heard this name on Mel Gibson's film, "The Passion of the Christ." Sadly, He Messiah was never called "Jesus" nor did he ever hear this word while he walked the earth. The name "Jesus" is actually a poor English translation that some suggest has pagan roots. A case could be made to indicate that the name of "Jesus" points not to the Biblical Savior but to Zeus and Greek mythology. All of this is shocking, but can

be validated with a little research using encyclopedias, dictionaries, the Internet, and a Bible.

The Savior Himself said that “Salvation is of the Jews,” in John 4:22. This doesn’t mean that you must convert to Judaism to be saved. What Jesus was teaching is that the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. The Jewish people make up just a small portion of the greater Israel family that has been scattered all over the world. This nation of Israel is being regathered as millions of people around the world are recognizing their Hebrew roots. Multitudes are rejecting false worship and returning to the ancient path set by Messiah. Y’shua, the “king of the Jews,” came teaching, healing, and proclaiming a message of repentance. A message that said “the kingdom of heaven is here.” A message that included the words, “think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets,” Mathew 5:16.

The true Savior came as a teacher, a Rabbi. He did not come to start a new religion, but to “seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Matthew 15:24. To truly follow the Messiah is to reject the deception of the religious system and return to the truth of the Bible and the facts of history. When it comes to the savior, you must realize that there is a difference between the Jesus of the world and the Y’shua who died for all mankind. Accept no imitations – Y’shua is Savior.

Church Changes

Truth about the original faith

The first followers of the Savior never “went to church.” The original faith in Messiah was originally just a sect of Judaism. They were called “Nazarenes” or “Followers of the Way.” In the Apostle Paul’s trial before Felix, the lawyer for the prosecution said, “We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ring leader of the Nazarene sect,” Acts 24:5.

The word “church” originally comes from an Old English term “kirke,” which means circle. Long ago, the Anglo-Saxons referred to their pagan places of worship as “kirkes.” When the Anglo-Saxons accepted Christianity, they simply continued to call their worship centers “kirkes,” which eventually evolved into “churches.” The word “kirke” is also the root of the English term “circus.” The “kirke/church” is where the term “three ringed circus” originated.

Catholics proclaim that the church began when the Savior commissioned Peter to become the first Pope. They believe the Apostles were the original Catholics who started the new religion of Christianity. Catholics reason that God turned his attention to the rest of the world since Jesus was killed by the Jews. After the crucifixion, the apostles passed the faith to the Early Church Fathers. Later, the masses followed as emperors and monarchs accepted the creed. It was Roman Emperor Constantine “the Great” who mandated Christianity to be the universal religion. However, before he did this, Constantine made huge changes in the faith. Constantine gave several edicts that would separate the church from Biblical Judaism. These decrees mandated that ancient pagan practices, like Christmas, Easter, and Sun day worship, should be considered as “Christian.”

The original building program was developed by Emperor Constantine as well. The first “church” buildings were placed over the tombs of popular martyrs. The cathedrals were also named after patron saints, much like the pagans who named their temples after various gods. These buildings were patterned after the Roman basilica which served a similar function as college auditoriums do today. Rowed seating was provided for passive crowds to watch a performance. “The professional clergy performed the acts of worship while the laity looked on as spectators,” wrote John White in *Protestant Worship and Architecture*.

Stained glass was first used in the sixth century as an attempt to represent the beauty of heaven. And the “steeple” was born when pagans who “converted” to Christianity insisted a pagan obelisk be used at all church buildings. The Almighty expressed His contempt for such in Leviticus 26:30, “And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.” Additionally, the New Testament never calls a four walled building the “church.”

Before these changes, the first followers of Messiah met at local synagogues (Acts 15:21; 21:26; James 2:2; Luke 4:16) and in their homes for worship (Acts 20:20; Romans 16:3). Their meetings were open, participatory, and included the working of Spiritual gifts. Paid pastors, ministers of music, pulpits, collection plates, communion wafers, and altar calls were not part of the original faith handed down from the Apostles. Such a pure faith *does* exist today in the hearts and homes of those willing to forsake manmade traditions and seek truth. This type of “church” is one that meets spiritual and physical needs through honest practices set forth in the Scriptures. “Let us contend for the most holy faith that was delivered to the saints once for all time,” Jude 1:3.

Who's Your Daddy?

Truth about the father's name

Mark Twain once wrote that “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.” The wisdom of a father is an unmatched wealth of experience and advice. It is interesting that people with devoted dads usually have an easy time relating to God the Father. “Daddy” is a title that lovingly describes relationship. Earthly fathers may be named Jerry or Tom, but does the Heavenly Father have a name? People sing “blessed be the name of the Lord” yet seldom know the identity of this blessed name. The Son’s name is clear and many are familiar with the Holy Spirit. What about the Father?

A careful reading of Exodus 3 reveals more than just the story of a burning bush. Here, one can learn the true name of the Father. At the burning bush, Moses learns that the Almighty wants to use him to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh. It’s been many years since Moses left Egypt and he’s doubtful the people will even accept him as the legitimate deliverer sent from above. For the people to follow him, Moses needs a miracle. He needs a higher authority to vouch for him.

Here on Mt. Horeb the Almighty passes before Moses and “the LORD said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” Here in Exodus 3:15 the LORD reveals His name as the four Hebrew lettered tetragramatron yod-hey-vav-hey or “YHWH.” Some pronounce this name as “Yahweh” or “Yahuah.”

Throughout the Bible, YHWH is used over 6,000 times exclusively as the name of the Father. This name is usually explained in the preface or introduction of most Bibles and hidden behind translator's techniques. The King James Version capitalizes the words "LORD" or "GOD" in an effort to alert the reader that "YHWH" is the Hebrew word behind the English. The KJV sometimes uses the poetic form of "Jah" to reference the mighty name of YHWH. This can be seen in Psalm 68:4. YHWH says emphatically in Exodus 3 that "this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." This name was not intended to be hidden by scribes and translators; rather YHWH Himself gave it to man as a sign of His existence and as a means of personal relationship. This is the Father's name. The Bible puts a lot of emphasis on this name, even the Savior said, "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name," Matthew 6:9.

Traditionally, this name is not used by observant Jewish people as many believe the name is too holy to be uttered. Judaism has replaced the sacred name with "Adonai" or "HaShem." Christianity as well has ignored the name of YHWH by substituting generic terms like "God" in English or "Dios" in Spanish. These words are not specific to the deity of the Bible and can easily reference Allah or Buddha. "God" or "Gad" in Hebrew is the false Babylonian deity of good fortune or luck and not of the Bible. This is according to Strong's Concordance #H1407-1411. This can also be referenced to Genesis 30:11. *The Oxford Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* agrees. It teaches that 'god' comes to our English language from the ancient Sanskrit language meaning - to invoke by incantation, sorcery, magic. The Encyclopedia Americana says under this topic that "god is a common Teutonic word for personal object of religious worship, formerly applicable to super-human beings of heathen myth." While further research reveals that the Druids called the sun 'Gud, Gudh, Goth, or Gott' which were later translated into English as "gawd" or "god." In most English Bibles, the term "god" is a poor

translation from the Hebrew term “elohim.” The word “elohim” literally means “mighty one, judge, or deity.”

Using such replacement terms is in direct opposition to Isaiah 42:8 which states, “I am YHWH, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another.” One can say the true name of YHWH in prayer, praise, study, and witnessing. By using the Sacred Name a believer can experience the power of spiritual intimacy. The Father’s name is not God or Billy Bob, it is “YHWH.” YHWH has given us His personal name so we could approach Him with intimacy.

From this point forward in this book, all references to the God of Israel will be made as “YHWH Elohim.”

Assorted Bible Verses About the Name of YHWH

- Isaiah 12: 2, "Behold, Elohim is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Master YHWH is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."
- Isaiah 43: 3, "For I am YHWH your Elohim, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."
- Isaiah 43:11, "I, even I, am YHWH, and there is no savior besides Me."
- Proverbs 18: 10, "The name of YHWH is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe."
- Joel 2: 32, Acts 2: 21, and Romans 10: 13, "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of YHWH will be saved."
- Exodus 3: 13-15, "Moses then said to Elohim: "Behold I am going to address the Israelites saying to them: 'The Elohim of your ancestors sent me to you.' When they ask me: "What's His Name!?" then what should I respond to them?" And Elohim said to Moses:"I am that which I am becoming!" And He continued: "Thus shall you say unto the Israelites: "I AM sent me to you." But then Elohim spoke once again unto Moses: "Thus shall you say unto the Israelites "YHWH the Elohim of your ancestors, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob sent me to you. This is my name for eternity and this is My Remembrance from generation to generation."
- Psalm 135:13, "YHWH is Your name forever; YHWH is Your Remembrance from generation to generation."

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

- Psalm 116:13, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call out in the Name of YHWH!"
- Psalm 122:4, "For there (i.e. in Jerusalem) the tribes ascended, the tribes of Yah, a testimony for Israel, giving thanks to the Name of YHWH."
- Psalm 105:1, "Give thanks to YHWH, call out in His name, make known among the peoples His deeds."
- Psalm 124:8, "Our help is through the Name of YHWH, Maker of heaven and earth."
- Psalm 33:21, "In Him our heart rejoices! In His holy name we trust!"
- Jeremiah 3:17, "At that time they will call Jerusalem "The Throne of YHWH" and all the nations will be gathered unto her for the Name of YHWH and for Jerusalem and they will no longer walk in the stubbornness of their evil heart."
- Jeremiah 10:25, "Pour Your wrath on the nations who knew You not, and on families who called out not in Your Name --for they consumed Jacob and ate him up completely and laid waste his habitation."
- Deuteronomy 18:5, "For in him (i.e. the Levite) YHWH your Elohim chose from all the tribes to stand and to serve in the Name of YHWH, he and this children for all days."
- Deuteronomy 28:10, "Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the 'Name of YHWH' is called upon you, and they will reverence you."
- Malachi 1:11, "For from the shining of the sun and its going down, My Name is great among the nations and in every place there is incense and contribution to My Name and pure poor offerings - for My Name is great among the nations has said YHWH Creator of all."

- Malachi 2:2, "If you continue to refuse to listen and if you continue to not place it on your heart to give honor to My Name, says YHWH of all Armies, then I will send to you the curse and convert your blessings into the worst curses because you are not paying attention!"
- Isaiah 43:7, "All who are referred to by My Name, for My honor I created them, reformed them, also remade them."
- Isaiah 42:8, "I am YHWH, that's My Name, and My honor I will not assign to any other, neither transfer My praise over to human inventions."
- Isaiah 52:5-7, "'Now what am I doing here?' declares YHWH, 'for My people are dismissed as nothing, their conquerors celebrate obscenely, declares YHWH, and My Name is constantly being despised.'"
- Zachariah 14:9, "Then YHWH will be Sovereign over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and His Name one."
- Deuteronomy 8:3, "For not on bread alone can man live but on each utterance of the mouth of YHWH shall man live."
- Deuteronomy 6:16, "Don't test YHWH your Elohim."
- Deuteronomy 6:13, "Fear only YHWH your Elohim, and serve only Him, and in His Name only shall you swear."

The Ever Changing Name of Jesus

Truth about the Savior's name

When it comes to naming a baby, many parents are very picky. Sometimes a name is chosen in honor or memory of a loved one. Other names are inspired by movies, friends, or just the sound. Recently, the names Ethan, Emma, Noah, and Isabella were recognized as some of the most popular monikers in 2009.

Over two-thousand years ago a little boy was given a special name by direction of heavenly messengers. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:21. Of course, this verse has been translated into English. Originally, the angels spoke the language of Hebrew to this Jewish couple. The baby was actually given a Hebrew name. (English wasn't spoken for thousands of years later!) The child was named "Yahoshua" or "Y'shua" for short. The Savior never heard the name "Jesus" while He walked the earth.

The name "Jesus" is a modern invention and has only been used for a few hundred years. History shows that around the third century BC, a group of Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, the name Joshua is rendered in Greek as "Iesous." The early church was heavily influenced by the Greek culture and depended upon the Septuagint for reading the Old Testament. As the Gospel began to spread throughout the world the Hebrew name of "Yahoshua" was exchanged for a Greek name "Iesous." Catholicism later implored the use of Latin and "Iesous" became "Iesus." As English emerged, the "I" sound was changed to the letter "J" and "Iesus" became "Jesus." (Linguists prove that the letter "J" is the youngest sound in the English language.) Under the subject "J," the *Encyclopedia Americana* contains the following: "The form

of J was unknown in any alphabet until the 14th century. The symbol was first used generally had the consonantal sound of Y as in year. Gradually, the symbol (J) acquired consonantal force and thus become regarded as a consonant. It was not until 1630 that the differentiation became general in England.”

The original KJV that was printed in 1611 called the Savior by the Latin influenced “Iesus.” Later, as the “j” became a sound, the Messiah’s name was changed to “Jesus.” The modern name “Jesus” is at best a transliteration from the Hebrew to the Greek then to Latin and then English. The changing of the Savior’s name is very troubling as proper names are not translated from one language to another. For example, when George W. Bush would visit Spanish speaking countries his name wasn’t changed to “Jorge.” Regardless of where a person goes or what time in which they lived, it is customary to call someone by their original name. Plato is still Plato and Shakespeare is still Shakespeare. The Savior’s name was never meant to be changed.

“Y’shua” is the exact Hebrew word for “salvation.” Every time someone uses His name, they are actually calling out the word “salvation.” This is easy to miss as most people read English Bibles that have mistranslated and changed the name from Greek and Hebrew texts. Yet, using His true Hebrew name puts Yahoshua back into Hebrew context, which helps a person understand His actions and words better. “Wherefore the Almighty also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Yahoshua every knee should bow... and every tongue should confess that Yahoshua the Messiah is Master, to the glory of the Father,” Philippians 2:9-11. Finally, Acts 4:12 gives a compelling argument to use the true name. The verse reads, “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Obama Inauguration Issues

Truth about the Messiah's name

There has been a lot said and written about the inauguration oath gaff by Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts and President Obama. First, the wording was terribly mixed up. Then President Obama didn't use a Holy Bible when the vows were taken for a second time. Perhaps the greatest problem with the swearing in was not Obama's actions but the prayer spoken by Christian Pastor Rick Warren.

Warren, who is the pastor of a mega-church in California, gave a stirring invocation that quoted the Torah, New Testament, and Quran. He ended the prayer in a very Christian manner. He said, "I humbly ask this in the name of the one who changed my life, Yeshua, Isa, Heysus, Jesus, who taught us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come..."

The plea from the Pastor was dangerously inclusive. He used four different names of the Savior from four different languages - Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, and English. This name calling effectively proclaimed that the one true name of the Messiah doesn't matter. This prayer suggests that the Messiah's name, and therefore his character, changes for each culture. Such an idea couldn't be farther from the truth.

The Islamic Quran uses the phrase "Isa" as a derogatory name for the Messiah. The Isa of Islam and the Savior from the New Testament are very much opposites. The Quran states that "Isa was simply a created human being, and a slave of Allah," An-Nisa' 4:172; Âl 'Imran 3:59. The Muslim holy book says that "Isa did not die, but ascended to Allah," An-Nisa' 4:158. On the day of Resurrection, "Isa himself will be a witness against Jews and Christians for believing in his death," An-Nisa' 4:159. Can Isa and the Messiah really be the same person?

Many Catholics view the Spanish Savior Heysus as the son of the sinless Mother Mary. Others picture Jesus with dark skin and dread locks or blue eyes with blond hair. Do these descriptions accurately fit the Biblical Jewish Messiah? The Bible states that the Savior of the New Testament was given a Hebrew name by the direction of angels. "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:21. Of course, this verse has been translated into English. Originally, the angels spoke the language of Hebrew to this Jewish couple. The child was named "Y'shua," which is the exact Hebrew word for "salvation." Y'shua is the name that the Savior used, heard, and answered to during His life. He never heard the name "Jesus" or "Heysus" while He walked the earth. The sacred name of Y'shua was never meant to be changed to Isa, Heysus, Bob or Jesus.

A name reflects character and meaning. Therefore, names do not normally change from culture to culture or from language to language. President Obama does not change his name when he visits Islamic or Hispanic countries. So, why would the Savior's name be different?

Rick Warren used the true name in His prayer BUT he equated this name to other titles. We must be careful not to follow Warren's sin of creating God in our own image. Names do matter. The Savior's true name is the Hebrew "Y'shua" and not "Isa" or "Heysus." Acts 4:12, "There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved."

The Name Game

The truth about the name of Jesus

A name is powerful. Each name is connected to feelings, memories, and ideas that represent something. The brain is filled with a myriad of thoughts, even as a name is mentioned.

What comes to the screen of your mind when you hear or read this name: "Barack Obama"?

What does your mind highlight, at the mention of "Elvis Presley"?

What image comes to mind with "Tom Cruise"?

Now, consider the name, "Moses". Do you envision a bearded guy, with tablets in his hands?

What about "King David"?

Now, think of "Jesus Christ"?

Surely these last three names bring to mind some of the main elements of the Bible. The problem is that these names are not historically accurate. Nor are they correct, scripturally.

The truth is that Moses was never called "Moses." David wasn't really "David." Jeremiah wasn't "Jeremiah"! Shockingly, Jesus Christ never addressed as, nor referred to as, nor answered to, nor heard the name "Jesus." No. Not ever. Not even once.

How can this be? When scholars penned our English Bibles, they translated words to form complete phrases or thoughts. Names, however, weren't carried over properly. Rather, they were

"transliterated," replacing ideas with English phrases, to convey a similar idea.

The translators totally changed the names of each person to an "acceptable" English equivalent: The Hebrew name "Moshe" became Moses. The prophet Yesha'yahu had his name changed to "Isaiah." Likewise, the Hebrew name given to the Messiah by the angels in Luke 2 was changed from "Y'shua ben Yosef" to "Jesus" in Greek and then, to "Jesus Christ" in English.

With the result, today, our English-language Bibles contain poor substitutes for the true names used in Biblical times. This is frightening due to the result of such error. In Philippians 2:9, the name of the Savior is described as the "name above all names". We are told in the New Testament, that every knee will "bow" and every tongue will "confess" the name of the Messiah. At the end of time, will people bow to the original eternal name of Y'shua or to the modern moniker?

A name has power and meaning. Such meaning is lost when the true name is replaced with a nickname or something totally different. "Yahoshua" or shortened to "Y'shua" is the Hebrew name of the Savior. This is what His mother and called Him. The name "Y'shua" is the Hebrew word for "salvation." The name "Heysus / Jesus" is one of the most popular names in the Latino culture, yet it carries no etymological meaning. History records that the name of "Jesus" has been used for less than 500 years by Christianity.

Does it matter what name a person uses? In today's world, a person's name doesn't change because they travel to another country. Regardless of the language or culture in the world, John McCain is John McCain. John's name isn't changed to "Jorge" because he visits Spain. DaVinci has been dead for hundreds of years but we still honor him by correctly using his real name.

Why should Bible believers willingly accept substitutes for the truth? Some would argue that this issue isn't valid because of grace. We must understand that grace is forgiveness and mercy given by the Almighty because of sin. Therefore, to say that grace is needed to cover the use of a wrong name would admit that error has occurred. If your name is "Lester" or "Joan", why would you answer to "Don" or "Maggie"? The Almighty knows who we are talking about when we refer to His Son as, "Jesus", but it's a lot more honoring to call Him by His given Name.

From this point forward in this book, all references to the Messiah will be made to the Hebrew name "Y'shua."

Sunday Morning Blues

Truth about Sunday worship

During colonial times, several states enacted “blue laws” to enforce the observance of Sunday as a day of worship. Many people were arrested for playing cards or fixing wagon wheels on Sunday. In the Palmetto State of South Carolina, these laws forbid people from shopping on Sunday morning or purchasing alcohol. In Virginia it is still against the law to hunt on Sunday. A person who watches pornography on Sunday can receive a five year jail sentence for violating the “blue laws” of Connecticut. Many of these laws are still binding. Should the state enforce a mandated Sunday Sabbath on all people?

History records the first blue law was passed by Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. In 321AD an edict forbids work on the first day of the week for everyone but farmers. It said, “Let all judges and all city people and all tradesmen rest upon the venerable day of the sun. But let those dwelling in the country freely and with full liberty attend to the culture of their fields; since it frequently happens that no other day is so fit for the sowing of grain, or the planting of vines; hence, the favorable time should not be allowed to pass, lest the provisions of heaven be lost.”

Note that Constantine made this decree in honor of the SUN and not the Biblical Sabbath. Don’t be mistaken! This edict wasn’t given to push people towards true worship. The emperor was an absolute pagan who murdered those who disagreed with him and refused baptism until he took his last breath. Constantine set aside SUNDAY to unify his empire for one common day to worship the sun. In doing so, Constantine passed the very first “blue law.”

Until then, the first church kept the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week as eternally commanded in the book of Genesis. “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day Elohim had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And Elohim blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done,” Genesis 2:1-2. The importance of a specific day for worship is repeated with the giving of the Ten Commandments as well. The specific day of our worship and rest does indeed matter to the Almighty.

The modern calendar clearly shows what day is what. Plus, in the latest edition of *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, the definition for ‘seventh day’ references: “Saturday, the seventh day of the week.”

The Sabbath wasn’t changed in the New Testament. Messiah Himself, kept the true Sabbath, “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read,” Luke 4:16. Even the Apostle Paul kept Saturday as holy. “And Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks,” Acts 18:4. Notice that Jews and Greeks were worshipping together. Saturday isn’t the “Jewish” Sabbath, but the Biblical one. Seventh day Sabbath observance is intended for all Bible believers.

History shows that the day of worship wasn’t changed by the Creator, but by man. The first “Blue Law” was enacted by a Roman empire. Such laws continue in South Carolina to erroneously promote a false day of worship. Believers must make the choice to keep the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath.

Protestant and Catholic Confessions about the Sabbath

"But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify." - James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of our Fathers*, 88th ed., pp. 89.

"Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"Answer: Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her-she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority." - Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* 3rd ed., p. 174.

"Some theologians have held that YHWH likewise directly determined the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Law, that He Himself has explicitly substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. But this theory is now entirely abandoned. It is now commonly held that God simply gave His Church the power to set aside whatever day or days she would deem suitable as Holy Days. The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week, and in the course of time added other days as holy days." - John Laux, *A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies* (1936), vol. 1, P. 51.

"Question: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

"Answer. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, and therefore they fondly contradict

themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same Church.' - Daniel Ferres, ed., Manual of Christian Doctrine (1916), p.67.

"Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church change the seventh day -Saturday - for Sunday, the first day? I answer yes . Did Christ change the day'? I answer no!

"Faithfully yours, J. Card. Gibbons" - James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore (1877-1921), in a signed letter.

"The Catholic Church, . . . by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday." - The Catholic Mirror, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

"For example, nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible." - Catholic Virginian Oct. 3, 1947, p. 9, art. "To Tell You the Truth."

"Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday." - Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine (1957), p. 50.

"Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that worship should be changed from Saturday to Sunday Now the Church ... instituted, by God's authority, Sunday as the day of worship. This same Church, by the same divine authority, taught the doctrine of Purgatory long before the Bible was made. We have, therefore, the same authority for Purgatory as we have for Sunday." - Martin J. Scott, *Things Catholics Are Asked About* (1927), p. 136.

"Regarding the change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday, I wish to draw your attention to the facts:

"1) That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe the Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man.

"2) We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say, this Church, instituted by Christ to teach and guide man through life, has the right to change the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages and a thousand other laws.

"It is always somewhat laughable; to see the Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible." - Peter R. Kraemer, *Catholic Church Extension Society* (1975), Chicago, Illinois.

"I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic

Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church." - T. Enright, C.S.S.R., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884.

"And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church has enjoined it." - Isaac Williams, Plain Sermons on the Catechism , vol. 1, pp.334, 336.

"There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters.... The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands exactly on the same footing as the observance of Sunday." - Canon Eyton, The Ten Commandments , pp. 52, 63, 65.

We have made the change from the seventh day to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy Catholic Church." - Bishop Seymour, Why We Keep Sunday

"There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament absolutely not.

"To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years' intercourse with His disciples, often conversing with them upon the Sabbath question . . . never alluded to any transference of the day; also, that during forty days of His resurrection life, no such thing was intimated.

"Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history But what a pity it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!" - Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, a paper read before a New York ministers' conference, Nov. 13, 1893, reported in New York Examiner , Nov.16, 1893.

"There was never any formal or authoritative change from the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath to the Christian first-day observance." - William Owen Carver, The Lord's Day in Our Day, p. 49.

". . . it is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath - . . 'Me Sabbath was founded on a specific Divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday." - Dr. R. W. Dale, The Ten Commandments (New York: Eaton &Mains), p. 127-129.

". . . the Christian Sabbath [Sunday] is not in the Scriptures, and was not by the primitive Church called the Sabbath." - Timothy Dwight, Theology: Explained and Defended (1823), Ser. 107, vol. 3, p. 258.

""But,' say some, 'it was changed from the seventh to the first day.' Where? when? and by whom? No man can tell. No; it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance, or respect to the reason, can be changed! It is all old wives' fables to talk of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws ex officio - I think his name is Doctor Antichrist.' - Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, Feb. 2, 1824,vol. 1. no. 7, p. 164.

"The first day of the week is commonly called the Sabbath. This is a mistake. The Sabbath of the Bible was the day just preceding the first day of the week. The first day of the week is never called the Sabbath anywhere in the entire Scriptures. It is also an error to talk about the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is not in any place in the Bible any intimation of such a change." - First Day Observance , pp. 17, 19.

"We have seen how gradually the impression of the Jewish Sabbath faded from the mind of the Christian Church, and how completely the newer thought underlying the observance of the first day took possession of the church. We have seen that the Christians of the first three centuries never confused one with the other, but for a time celebrated both." - The Sunday Problem , a study book of the United Lutheran Church (1923), p. 36.

"They [Roman Catholics] refer to the Sabbath Day, a shaving been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath Day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!" - Augsburg Confession of Faith art. 28; written by Melanchthon, approved by Martin Luther, 1530; as published in The Book of Concord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Henry Jacobs, ed. (1911), p. 63.

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic Church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday." - Dr. Augustus Neander, The History of the Christian Religion and Church Henry John Rose, tr. (1843), p. 186.

"But they err in teaching that Sunday has taken the place of the Old Testament Sabbath and therefore must be kept as the seventh day had to be kept by the children of Israel These churches err in their

teaching, for Scripture has in no way ordained the first day of the week in place of the Sabbath. There is simply no law in the New Testament to that effect." - John Theodore Mueller, Sabbath or Sunday , pp. 15, 16.

"Take the matter of Sunday. There are indications in the New Testament as to how the church came to keep the first day of the week as its day of worship, but there is no passage telling Christians to keep that day, or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to that day." - Harris Franklin Rall, Christian Advocate, July 2, 1942, p.26.

"But, the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, he [Christ] did not take away. It was not the design of his coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other." - John Wesley, The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., John Emory, ed. (New York: Eaton & Mains), Sermon 25, vol. 1, p. 221.

The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word 'remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?" - D. L. Moody, Weighed and Wanting (Fleming H. Revell Co.: New York), pp. 47, 48.

"The Sabbath is a part of the Decalogue - the Ten Commandments. This alone forever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the institution Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath." - T. C. Blake, D.D., Theology Condensed, pp.474, 475.

From Saturday Mail to Saturday Worship

Truth about the sabbath

The United States postal service has once again renewing its effort to drop Saturday delivery in effort to stop a projected \$7 billion annual loss. Such a drastic measure would cut expenses accrued by the postal service and give thousands of workers an extra day off work. Taking a break on Saturday isn't a new idea. Since creation, the seventh day (and not Sunday) has been set apart as holy.

In the beginning YHWH chose the seventh day as a day of rest. The very first thing that Adam and Eve experienced after their creation was the joy of the Sabbath. The seventh day was reaffirmed in the Ten Commandments and throughout the Prophets. Luke 4 shows that it was the custom of Y'shua to "enter the synagogue on the sabbath." Even the Apostle Paul kept Saturday as holy. "And Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks," Acts 18:4. Notice in this verse that Jews and Greeks were worshipping together on the seventh-day Sabbath. Saturday isn't the "Jewish" Sabbath, but the Biblical one. Seventh day Sabbath observance is intended for all Bible believers.

Romans 14 states that any day can be a time of worship, yet there is only one Sabbath day that YHWH chose for His people. The Bible never grants man the authority to choose his own Sabbath day. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the YHWH your Elohim. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it," Exodus 20:8-11. Practically all churches recognize that Jesus rose from the grave on Sunday - the first day of the week. These same

churches admonish their members to break the third commandment by worshipping on the very same first day of the week!

How do we know that Saturday is the Biblical Sabbath and not another day of the week? Well, for thousands of years the Jewish people have kept track of the days and regarded the true Sabbath. Even through the Holocaust, the millions of Jewish people didn't forget the seventh day from creation. History records that in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII made some calendar changes and actually dropped ten days from the year. It was Thursday, October 4, 1582, and the next day, Friday, should have been October 5. But Gregory made it October 15 instead. The same seventh day remained and the weekly cycle wasn't disturbed at all.

Many Christians believe that they keep the Sunday Sabbath by going to church, cooking a large meal or eating out at a restaurant, and then spending the day with family. This isn't Biblical Sabbath keeping. First, there is absolutely no command in the Bible to attend church on Sunday. Worship with others is fine, but Sunday was never kept as the Sabbath in the New Testament. Indeed, the word "Sunday" can't be found anywhere in the Bible. Exodus 16 prohibits elaborate food preparation or heavy cooking on Saturday. And work is strictly forbidden on Saturday. The Sabbath should be a day to rest, worship, and do good. Perhaps Bible believers should follow the example of the Postal Service and begin to set Saturday apart.

Various Bible Verses on the Sabbath

- "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.
- 'Y'shua said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15.
- "Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed," Exodus 23:12.
- "Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest," Exodus 34:21.
- "There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to YHWH," Leviticus 23:3.
- "Fear YHWH, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man," Ecclesiastes 12:13.
- "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled," Matthew 5:18.
- "Faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead," James 2:17.

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

- "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law," Romans 3:31.
- "He that says, 'I know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," 1 John 2:4.
- "The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness," Psalms 111:7, 8.
- "For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all," James 2:10.
- "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness," 1 John 3:4.
- "By this we know we love the children of YHWH, when we love YHWH and keep His commandments," 1 John 5:2.
- "If you will enter into life, keep the commandments," Matthew 19:17.
- "My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of my lips," Psalms 89:34.
- "Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of YHWH and the faith of Y'shua," Revelation 14:12.
- "Speak you also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am YHWH that does sanctify you. Six days may work be done; but in the Seventh is the Sabbath of rest, Holy to YHWH:

whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, and on the Seventh day he rested, and was refreshed," Exodus 31:13-17.

- "And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am YHWH your Elohim," Ezekiel 20:20.
- "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read," Luke 4:16
- "When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts," Nehemiah 10:31.
- "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?" Nehemiah 13:15-19.
- "Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his

hand from doing any evil. For this is what YHWH says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant-- to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to YHWH to serve him, to love the name of YHWH, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-- these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," Isaiah 56:2-7.

- "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YHWH, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shall you delight thyself in YHWH," Isaiah 58:13-14.
- "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning," John 2:7
- "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins." One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of

Elohim, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath," Mark 2:22-28.

God's Bail Out Plan?

Truth about the rapture

The sign outside the church read "God's Bailout Plan is the Rapture." This statement is eye catching but is it Biblical?

To find the truth of this subject, simply do a Bible search for the word "rapture." Flip through the entire Bible and look for that word. No luck? This term just can't be found in the Scriptures. It isn't in the Bible. Anywhere. The idea of Christians being suddenly taken to heaven comes from preachers who misinterpret the timing of 1 Thessalonians - "For YHWH himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of YHWH: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet YHWH in the air: and so shall we ever be with YHWH. Wherefore comfort one another with these words," 4:16, 17.

Today, this popular doctrine asserts that the saints will suddenly disappear at the beginning of a seven-year period of Tribulation. The time of the anti-Christ will then begin, until the visible Second Coming of the Savior. This theology is fairly new when compared to the major tenets of the Christian faith. The Messiah, the Apostles, and the early church fathers did not teach a pre-tribulation catching away of the saints. Proverbs 10:30. "The righteous shall never be removed: the wicked shall not inhabit the earth."

In fact, the idea of a bailout before the bad times first surfaced around the 1830's. It was then that a thirteen-year old Catholic girl had a vision that those baptized in the Spirit would be raptured before the antichrist came to power. She also saw that a second group of believers would be raptured at the end of the tribulation. About the same time, a book was written by John Darby about the Savior coming first to rapture

His church and then, again to defeat the anti-Christ. Bible publisher C.I. Scofield heavily promoted these ideas in his study Bible and the church hasn't looked back since. From movies to TV preachers and church signs, many are convinced of the pre-tribulation rapture. Too bad the Christian Savior didn't teach such an idea.

Matthew 13:49, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." This correlates exactly of how the righteous remained on the earth while the wicked were destroyed by Noah's flood. "People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man returns," Luke 17:27-30.

The Messiah indicates that the second coming occurs after the events of the Great Tribulation as seen in Matthew 24 and elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Bible does not teach a pre-tribulation catching away where unbelievers are "left behind." Man teaches this idea. Don't get caught up in this false hope. Strengthen your faith for whatever the future holds. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world," John 16:33. There is NO verse in the Bible that says, "Verily verily, before the Great Tribulation and the beginning of YHWH's wrath, the end-time Christians will be miraculously air evacuated off of Planet Earth."

Revelation 20 verifies that during tribulation people will make a choice to take the mark of the beast or face persecution. There will be many Saints who refuse the mark and therefore are murdered. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of YHWH, and which had not worshipped the

beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection,” Revelation 20:4-5. According to this passage, the rapture does not and can not take place before the mark of the beast!

The Savior clearly states when He will return in regards to the rise of the anti-Christ and the time of Jacob’s trouble. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” Mathew 24:29-30. It is critical that one understands the timing of the Messiah’s return. Numerous signs have been given to warn believers of when the great tribulation will begin and how to prepare for such trouble. Don't be misled by a funny church sign and don't hope for a bail out program. Be ready for the hard times ahead by strengthening your faith for whatever the future holds.

Baptism Basics

Truth about immersion

A drunk staggered upon a baptismal service one Sunday afternoon. He proceeded to walk down into the water and stood next to the Preacher. The minister turned and said to the drunk, "Mister, are you ready to find the Savior?" The drunk looks back and says, "Yes, Preacher. I sure am." The minister then dunked the fellow under the water for at least 30 seconds. The preacher asks, "Have you found the Savior yet?" The old drunk wipes his eyes and replies, "Are you sure this is where he fell in?" It is easy to see that this fellow didn't know what he had gotten himself into. This drunk is not alone. There are many people who don't understand what baptism is all about.

Christian denominations vary from the Bible and from each other with their views of Baptism. Some churches sprinkle infants while others suggest that full body immersion should take place after conversion. For many evangelical churches, a person goes down into the water to recall the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior. "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Romans 6:4.

The word baptism comes to the English language from the Greek word "baptizos," which means to "wash or immerse." This Greek concept is derived from the Hebrew terms "t'vilah" and "mikvah." Before John the Baptist came preaching "repent and be baptized," immersion was already an accepted practice in the life of the Hebrew people. This is verified in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, "Moreover, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact that all our fathers were under the cloud, and that all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"

“T’vilah” is the physical act of immersing into a body of moving water, called a “mikvah” in Hebrew. The “mikvah” is the ritual washing by immersion that was common in Biblical times and still practiced today by religious Jewish people. Biblical mikvah differs from Christian baptism in formula, style, and occasion.

The Encyclopedia Judaica says that a mikvah is a, “a collection of water, a pool or bath of clear water, immersion in which renders ritually clean a person who has become ritually unclean through contact with the dead (Num. 19) or any other defiling object, or through an unclean flux from the body (Lev. 15) and especially a menstruant. It is similarly used for vessels (Num. 31:22–23).” Immersing totally in a “mikvah” before a holy day or after becoming unclean has long been a practice in Judaism. The ritual carried over to the New Testament and Christianity as a means of symbolizing faith in the Messiah.

Every single baptism, from Acts to Revelation, was done “in the name of Y’shua” and never “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Acts 19:5 verifies the proper method, “Upon hearing, they were baptized into the name of the Master Y’shua.” Notice what name the new believers were baptized into. The Trinitarian formula was never used in the Scriptures! There is only one verse in the entire Bible that alludes to a baptism in the trinity. Matthew 28:19: “Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” People misunderstand this verse and therefore misapply the waters of mikvah. “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” aren’t names but titles. Even more, notice that the verse uses the singular “name” and not the plural “names.” Biblically speaking, there is one name that a person should be baptized in. The words spoken at baptism are just as important as the method.

Worship through full body water immersion started in Old Testament times and continues today. Baptism in the one true name of the Savior should be more than just a one time salvation experience. It

is a process in which a person can say to the Creator and to the world that one does not want to live under the power of sin. Y'shua said, "Most assuredly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the kingdom of YHWH," John 3:5. The Master Himself was baptized and believers should follow His example.

Additional verses for further study:

- Acts 2:41, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."
- Acts 8:12, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of Elohim and the name of Y'shua Messiah, both men and women were baptized."
- Acts 8:36-37, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Y'shua Messiah is the Son of Elohim.""
- Acts 9:17-18, "And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Master Y'shua, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized."
- Acts 10:45-46, "And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify Elohim. Then Peter answered"

- Acts 16:14-15, "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped Elohim. YHWH opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Master, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us."
- Acts 16:31-33, "So they said, "Believe on the Master Y'shua Messiah, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Master to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized."
- Acts 18:8, "Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Master with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."
- Acts 19:4-5, "Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Messiah Y'shua." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Master Y'shua."
- Acts 22:16, "'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Master.'"
- Galatians 3:27, "For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah."

More proof about the name and baptism:

1. "They acknowledge that the original formula for baptism was in the Name of the Savior, but the Pope changed it." *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913 edition, volume 2, page 256.
2. "The baptismal formula was changed from the Name of the Savior, to the words Father, Son and Holy Ghost by the Catholic church in the second century." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, volume 3, pages 365-366.
3. "The early Church always immersed in the Name of the Savior, until the development of the trinity doctrine in the second century." *Canney Encyclopedia of Religion*, page 53.
4. "The Christian baptism was administered using the Name of the Savior. The use of the Trinitarian formula of any sort was not suggested in the early church history. Baptism was always in the Name of the Savior." *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion*, volume 2, pages 377-379.
5. "Moreover, there is no mention in the New Testament of any one being immersed into the name of the trinity." *Dictionary of the Bible*, by Hastings, volume 1, page 242, 1906 edition.
6. "The term 'trinity' was originated by Tertullian, a Roman Catholic church father." *New International Encyclopedia*, volume 22, page 477.
7. "The New Testament knows only one baptism in the Name of the Messiah, which still occurs even in the second and third century." *Schaff Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, volume 1, page 435, 1906 edition.

8. "The formula used was in the Name of the Savior. There is no evidence for the use of the trinity name." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, volume 2, page 384, 1958 edition.
9. "With the early disciples, generally, baptism was in the Name of the Messiah." *A History of the Christian Church* by Williston Walker, page 87, 1959 edition.
10. Under Formula: "In the name of Y'shua. The former expression is used in Acts 2:38 and 10:48. The latter is used in Acts 8:16 and 19:5. See also Acts 22:16... From these passages, and from Paul's words in the 1st Corinthians 1:13

Cupid's Dangerous Darts

Truth about valentine's day

According to the National Retail Federation, billions of dollars are spent each Valentine's Day to continue the tradition of spending more to spread love. Popular gifts like candy, flowers, jewelry, and cards cost the average man \$163.37, compared to an average of \$84.72 spent by women. (Doesn't this seem a little ridiculous?) Children of course send Valentine's cards to their classmates. And Americans purchase more than 46 million heart shaped boxes of chocolate in celebration of cupid. Valentines Day is so sweet! Sweet and toxic.

The holiday seems harmless and wonderful but dangers lurk in this pagan love feast. The Encyclopedia Britannica explains, "This holiday has its origin in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, held in mid-February. The festival, which celebrated the coming of spring, included fertility rites and the pairing off of women with men by lottery." Thousands of years ago, On February 15, Romans celebrated Luperclia, honoring Faunus, god of fertility. Men would go to a grotto dedicated to Lupercal, the wolf god, located at the foot of Palatine Hill. Here, the Romans believed that the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were suckled by a she-wolf. These men would sacrifice a goat, wear its skin, and run around, hitting women with small whips, an act which was supposed to ensure fertility.

The *Encyclopedia Americana* states the custom of exchanging valentines was "handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated on the 15th of February, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed."

Later, the Catholic Church replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day. History shows that early church policy was to incorporate pagan

celebrations. Instead of just banning these ancient satanic religions, the Catholic Church adopted evil practices into the Christian faith. A story was fabricated about a martyred Catholic priest who would sign his letters, "with love from St. Valentine." Today, we have the mixture of a Roman festival, savvy retail marketing, and a false story of a patron saint. Valentines Day is no longer part of the liturgical calendar of any church. This day was dropped from the Catholic calendar in 1969 and not surprisingly has returned to its original pagan roots of unbridled love making. The Bible says to "take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them," Ephesians 5:11.

Mythology teaches that Venus was the mother of Cupid, whose name means "desire." Nimrod's mother, Venus desired / lusted after her own son. That is why she is called the goddess of sexual immorality - she had relations her own son. Their twisted sexuality is the object of Valentine's Day as their relationship was consummated on February 14. Cupid can also be traced back to the evil man Nimrod, who built the tower of Babel in Genesis 10. Nimrod / Cupid was a mighty hunter with bow and arrows. His vicious rebellion against the Almighty continues with Valentine's Day.

The history and origin of modern practices and holidays should be an issue to Bible believers. Pagan holidays, like the love feast Valentine's Day, should be avoided. Zephaniah 1:8 says, "On that day of judgment," says YHWH, "I will punish the leaders... and all those following pagan customs." Love is wonderful but Valentine's Day is like a tainted candy with deadly poison. "Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out," 1 Corinthians 7:3.

Passover Today

Truth about passover

The holy day of Passover is a Biblical worship experience that celebrates the deliverance of the Hebrew people from the harsh slavery of Pharaoh. Passover recalls how ten horrible plagues pronounced judgment upon Egypt and pagan gods. On the night of the final plague, the Israelites were commanded by the Almighty to take the blood of a lamb and smear it on the doorposts of their home. The death of the firstborn would “pass over” the houses marked with blood. This of course foreshadows the Lamb of YHWH, the Messiah, whose blood would be shed to cover the sins of the world on a future Passover.

Since that dark night in Egypt, the Jewish people have faithfully kept the Passover. John 2:13 shows that from His childhood, the Savior celebrated the festival. Much can be learned as a person follows the Savior’s examples of life and culture. “For here unto were ye called; because Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow his steps, **1** Peter 2:21. In the Gospels, the disciples participate in the iconic “Last Supper,” which was actually a Passover teaching.

Even today, the Passover story is told through an interactive meal called a “Seder.” The Seder menu includes bitter herbs, unleavened bread called “matzah,” wine, and lamb. These foods have specific meaning to convey the divine message of slavery, liberation, sin, and blood sacrifice. The meal is then followed by a 7 day fast of all food products that contain yeast. “That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast,” Exodus 12:8.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the importance of commemorating Passover when he wrote, “Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the festival (of Passover),” in 1 Corinthians 5:8. History shows that the commandment to keep Passover was repealed by the Roman Catholic Church in 325AD. The Bible never abolishes this memorial.

Many dismiss Passover as an outdated Jewish festival. Yet to do so is to reject a set apart time of blessing and rich meaning. It was during a special Passover meal the Savior said, “This is my body which is given for you: This do in remembrance of me,” Luke 22:19.

On the night before his death, that the Savior commemorated the Passover with His disciples as seen in Matthew 26:17-24. During this meal the Savior said, “This bread is my body,” and “this cup is the new testament in my blood,” Luke 22:7, 19-20. The Messiah wasn’t instituting the service of “communion” at this point. These words were spoken during *and* about the Passover meal. Bible believers are to keep Passover in remembrance of the Messiah.

The bread and the wine were later removed from the Passover and developed into the weekly Eucharist by the Roman church. The idea of transubstantiation was then adopted into communion to appease the nations that were accustomed to offer goblets of human blood to acquire the virtues of the dead person. Christians everywhere now partake of wafers and wine without truly recognizing the meaning behind the service. Sadly, the message behind the meal is lost as communion is accepted and Passover is ignored. The main point of Passover is for each Bible believer to actively reflect upon their faith and seek true holiness. The communion table is only part of the meal, which is often taken at the wrong time.

Give Up Lent for Lent

Truth about the lenten season

Many people celebrate the season of Lent by fasting certain foods or other physical pleasures. These people give up specific sins or bad habits to prepare themselves for resurrection Sunday. Such a practice seems noble, yet history reveals the festival of Lent is a Biblical comprise that can actually lead to sin.

Each year the Lenten season starts after the great debauchery of Mardi Gras. The French term “Mardi Gras” literally means “Fat Tuesday,” which commemorates the last day to get “fat” and eat before the lent fast begins. The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday, as on this day believers mark their foreheads with ash to symbolize the start of a solemn fast. Many suggest that Lent is kept to remember the Savior’s 40 day fast in the wilderness and to prepare for the celebration of Easter. Historians suggest that Lent is like other pagan practices that are not found in the Scriptures yet were adopted into the Church from the surrounding culture and ancient history. Lent can actually be traced back to the forbidden worship of Tammuz.

"The forty days' abstinence of the Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent was held by the pagan Mexicans, in honor of the sun and was observed in Egypt as well. This Egyptian Lent of forty days was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god. Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz," wrote Alexander Hislop in the Two Babylons, pages 104 and 105.

A pagan connection between Tammuz and Lent is clear. During ancient times the death of the god Tammuz was commemorated through weeping and fasting. The Bible condemns such practices. “And He said to me, ‘Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.’ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of YHWH's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz,” Ezekiel 8:13-14. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary states, “Mourning for the god was followed by a celebration of resurrection.”

Popular Bible commentator John MacArthur agrees, “The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis’s mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek. 8:14) before his alleged resurrection—another of Satan’s mythical counterfeits.” (John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; 1 Corinthians*, Chicago: Moody, 1984).

Neither the Messiah, the Apostles, nor the first church leaders spoke of Lent as an accepted practice. Lent officially became a “Christian” celebration at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 360. Even the famed Catholic Saint Abbot John Cassian, the monk of Marseilles, admitted in the fifth century, “Howbeit you should know that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist.” Today Lent is celebrated by most Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and some Presbyterians who desire to be closer to the Almighty. Many unknowingly observe Lent without knowing its history or acknowledging its pagan past.

YHWH hates *all* pagan observances. Study these verses to understand the danger of participating in pagan practices: Jeremiah. 10:2-3; Leviticus 18:3, 30; Deuteronomy. 7:1-5, 16.

According to tradition Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod the King of Babylon, claimed she had been supernaturally impregnated by the Sun

god and gave birth to Tammuz. One day while hunting, Tamuz was killed by a wild boar. Semeramis mourned for 40 days, at the end of which Tammuz was supposedly brought back from the dead. She proclaimed herself Queen of Heaven, founded a celibate priesthood to worship her son and declared its chief priest infallible, and memorialized her mourning in an annual 40 day period of denial. It was the world's first counterfeit of the Biblical story of the Redeemer and grew into a mother-child cult that was duplicated in almost every pagan mythology.

Holy Week Hoax

Truth about the resurrection

During the Holy Week, the entire world pauses to reflect upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Banks close on Good Friday and churches are filled to the maximum for Easter sunrise services. Obvious questions of the Holy Week's Biblical accuracy are ignored as people are busy with egg hunts and Spring activities. An honest study of the New Testament will reveal that Y'shua didn't die on Good Friday nor did He resurrect on Easter morning.

The Holy Week is flawed from the start with Palm Sunday error. Palm Sunday is taught to be the day that Y'shua was lauded with palm branches as He rode a donkey into Jerusalem. The Bible never indicates that this took place on Sunday.

"Good Friday" is when Y'shua is believed to have been crucified. The idea of a Friday crucifixion is problematic if compared to the time and date of the resurrection. Y'shua Himself said, "for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matthew 12:40. There are not three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. From this passage one must conclude that either the Bible is wrong or the traditions of a Good Friday death and Sunday morning resurrection are in error. No stretch of the imagination can create three nights between Friday and Sunday morning.

Easter is always after the full moon of the Spring Equinox. The date was originally set by the Roman Catholic Church to coincide with a yearly festival of worship to the fertility goddess named "Ishtar." For 1,730 years the resurrection has been celebrated on Easter Sunday, but that doesn't make the date correct. To understand when the Messiah

was raised from the dead, one must recognize when a Biblical day begins and ends.

From creation, the Almighty considers a day to begin and end at evening. "And the evening and the morning were the first day," Genesis 1:5. Even today the Jewish people regard Friday evening to Saturday evening as the seventh day Sabbath. The Biblical week begins and ends on Saturday night. Leviticus 23:32, "from evening unto evening, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath."

John 20:1 reveals the truth concerning the resurrection, "The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher," KJV. The word [day] is in parenthesis as the translators added this word to the Bible. The verse accurately reads that Mary came to the tomb as the first day of the week began, near 8pm on Saturday night. The Savior had already risen from the dead before dark! Matthew 28:1-2 shows two women visiting the tomb shortly after sundown on Saturday night. Again, the tomb was empty at the end of the Sabbath on Saturday night.

The scriptures are clear that Y'shua spent three days and three nights in the tomb before rising from the dead slightly before sundown on Saturday night. This means that Y'shua's triumphant entry in Jerusalem occurred on a Saturday and that the Savior was killed on a Wednesday afternoon. So much for Good Friday!

Celebrating the resurrection on Sunday morning is at best bad timing and at worst a violation of Ezekiel 8:15-18. If the timing of the death of Messiah is incorrect, then what other errors can be found within traditional Christianity? "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Colossians 2:8.

Evils of Easter

Truth about Easter eggs

What do rabbits, eggs, and the resurrection of the Savior really have in common? The Easter story that most of the world knows is one of hope, joy, and an empty tomb. The Easter story of history is quite different. Like many other popular holidays, Easter is actually a mix of ancient occultic practices and Biblical ideas. From the name of the holiday to the use of baskets and bunnies, many evil customs of idolatry have been fossilized in Easter. Thousands of years before 33AD the fertility goddess “Ishtar” was worshipped as people died eggs and arose early for sunrise services.

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1934) states: “Easter, Ostara, or Ishtar was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess.”

The true origin of Easter is more about fertility and mother earth than the Bible. “The egg was a sacred symbol among the Babylonians. They believed an old fable about an egg of wondrous size which was supposed to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates River. From this marvelous egg - according to the ancient story - the Goddess Ishtar (Semiramis), was hatched. And so the egg came to symbolize the Goddess Easter,” The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 9, p. 309. Three month old infants were sacrificed to Ishtar and their blood was used to dye eggs in honor of the false god. To imbue fertility upon their growing season, Pagans would roll these eggs on their fields. The eggs were then hidden from evil spirits to later be collected in baskets.

The word “Easter” appears only once in the King James Version of the Bible (and not at all in most other translations). From this one appearance a true concern arises. Here, the King James translators mistranslated the Greek word for Passover as “Easter.” Acts 12:4: “And when he [King Herod Agrippa I] had apprehended him [the apostle Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” The Greek word for “Easter” in this verse is “pascha.” This term is properly translated over 28 times in the Bible as “Passover.” Passover is a yearly festival that recalls Israelite’s exodus from Egypt. This holy day was given to mankind (and not just the Jewish people) as an everlasting commandment. Passover was part of the original faith of the Apostles and the Savior. Sadly, the mistranslation in the book of Acts is just one example of how the true festival of Passover has been replaced with the idolatry of Easter.

Neither the apostles nor the Messiah commemorated Easter. “Constantine the Great, Roman emperor, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox,” says the History Channel. For the first 300 years after the Savior’s crucifixion, the early church kept the festival of Passover as commanded in Leviticus 23.

The holiday of Ishtar/Easter is problematic for a person who seeks undefiled worship. The mixture of bunnies, baskets, and the Bible believer certainly is perplexing. “YHWH is spirit and those that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth,” John 4:24.

The Easter Math Problem

Truth about sunrise services

Even school children can easily recognize the Easter math problem of Y'shua being in the tomb for three days if he died on Good Friday and resurrected on Easter Sunday. Y'shua Himself said, "'A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,'" Matthew 12:40-41. There are not three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. From this passage one must conclude that either the Bible is wrong or the traditions of a Good Friday death and Sunday morning resurrection are in error. No stretch of the imagination can create three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

John 20:1 reveals the truth concerning the resurrection, "The first of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher." Mary came to the tomb when it was dark and the Savior had already risen from the dead. This teaches us that Easter Sunrise services are not proper worship because the resurrection occurred before the sun rose on Sunday morning.

For the Messiah to be in the tomb three nights and resurrect before the sun rose on Sunday, then he must have been crucified on a Wednesday. Mark 15 recounts how Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Y'shua in a linen shroud and placed him in a borrowed tomb before sundown Wednesday night. He was buried late in the afternoon on

Wednesday and then resurrected three days later about Saturday evening.

History reveals why people celebrate on Easter Sunday despite these Scriptural truths. Thousands of years before 33AD the fertility goddess “Ishtar” was worshipped as people dyed eggs and arose early for sunrise services in the Spring. The Encyclopedia Britannica (1934) states: “Easter, Ostara, or Ishtar was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess.” Worship of the sun was a common practice of pagans who worshipped a pantheon of gods.

Neither the apostles nor the Messiah commemorated Ishtar/Easter Sunday. “Constantine the Great, Roman emperor, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox,” says the History Channel.

Indeed, the date of Easter has nothing to do with the Biblical account of the resurrection and everything to do with ancient earth worship. Easter always occurs on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. Sunrise services were actually held over a thousand years before Christ walked the earth as pagans would wake early to watch the sun ascend on the exact same date of Easter today. *The New Book of Knowledge* (1978) declares, “The custom of a sunrise service on Easter Sunday can be traced to ancient spring festivals that celebrated the rising sun.” The accepted Christian teaching that Jesus died on Good Friday and resurrected three days later on Easter Sunday is really bad math that only leads to more error. Don’t be misled by these vain traditions that actually glorify pagan gods and not the resurrected Savior.

Crucifixion Facts

Truth about the death of messiah

Fact #1: Crucifixion is an ancient method of execution that caused extreme pain as the body was tortured to death. The Romans perfected this technique, which was used only upon the most hideous criminals. One foot would be pressed backwards against the other while a nail would be driven through the arches. Iron nails were also driven deep into the skin near the person's wrists. With each breath, the body would painfully flex up and down upon the nails. This motion created excruciating agony as the weight of the body was pressed upon the muscles and nerve endings. Cramps, fatigue, and knotting would lead to the pectoral muscles being paralyzed. The victim's heart would eventually stop due to a loss of blood and the buildup of carbon dioxide in the lungs.

Fact #2: The crucifixion of the Messiah is prophesied throughout the Old Testament. Many verses speak vividly about His passion. For example, Psalm 22:16 read, "For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet."

Fact #3: The Roman method of crucifixion used during the time of Jesus was not upon a cross but most likely straight stake or tree. "Messiah hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Galatians 3:13. History records that the few times a cross shaped beam was used for an execution, the shape resembled the capitalized letter T and not the lower case t shape.

Most English Bibles poorly translate the term "cross" to continue this error. In the New Testament, the word translated for "cross" is the

Greek phrase “stauros.” According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, this term literally means “stake” or “upright beam.” The popular cross shape was imported by the Catholic Church from neighboring pagan religions. This fact renders the cross as an incorrect symbol and virtually insignificant during Biblical worship.

Fact #4: The hands/palms of Y’shua were not nail scarred. The Romans could not have placed the nails into the hands of a criminal as the palms were not strong enough to support the weight of the body. Instead, nine to twelve inch nails were driven deep into the arms of the sufferer. The space between the small bones of the wrists, *radial and ulna*, were strong enough to allow the body to hang for hours in agony. A nail in the hand would have broken many bones. Psalm 34:20 and John 19:36 state that not a single bone was broken in His body; therefore He could not have nail scarred hands. Some archeologists actually believe that ropes, not nails, were used to hold the Messiah to the tree.

Fact #5: The Jews did not kill Y’shua. Nor did the Romans. No one took the Savior’s life from Him. The Bible clearly shows that He gave up His life freely for all mankind. “I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again,” John 10:17-18. Because the wages of sin is death, the Savior gave His life upon a tree. He became cursed to pay the penalty of sin. The death and eventual resurrection of the Savior provided hope for all mankind. “For YHWH so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him would not perish but have everlasting life,” John 3:16.

Don't Forgive and Forget on Mother's Day

Truth about forgiveness

If Mothers Day is such a wonderful time of celebrating the best of motherhood, then why do so many families allow unforgiveness to ruin the remembrance? Well, even though mama always said, "life is like a box of chocolates and you never know what you are gonna get" we can certainly know that life is full of drama. Family spats and issues between siblings are as old as the Garden of Eden. Such disagreements often lead into people holding grudges against one another which breed bitterness, stress, and even sickness. These problems of family pain can't be ignored for the sake of Mother's Day.

Unforgiveness is a deadly trap that stops people from experiencing the joy of a peaceful family and the power of a fruitful spiritual life. Unforgiveness can block prayers from being answered and sins from being forgiven. To free the family from unforgiveness, the person who sinned must be separated from the hurtful action. It is simply impossible to forgive and forget as scars of past altercations will always remain. Don't focus on forgetting what has happened! Instead, apply that same efforts to separating what has happened from the person who did it. The Heavenly Father did not allow sin to stand in the way of His forgiveness. Ephesians 1:3-6 shows how the Almighty let go of the pain of sin and made believers "blameless in His sight." This is a spiritual principle from above that can be applied horizontally to relationships here on Earth. Let go of the hurt caused by the family, spouse, church, boss, supposed friends, or whoever. Separate the sin from the sinner just as the YHWH does.

It is said that forgiveness is "giving up your right to hurt someone because they hurt you." This simple statement is indeed profound but it does not go far enough. Biblical forgiveness is based on a revelation on

what YHWH has done, and not on what another person has done. It is actually “giving up your desire to hurt someone because they have hurt you.” When a person shows true forgiveness, the right and the desire to exact judgment are lost and replaced with love and mercy.

The scriptures teach that personal forgiveness from the Creator is directly equal to the forgiveness shown to family, friends, and strangers. “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins,” Matthew 6:14-15. The scriptures even indicate that sometimes the answer to prayer is connected to the unforgiveness shown other people. Mark 11:22-24 is a verse that has been used to justify a “name it and claim it” approach to prayer.

Read in context, these verses explain that faith in the YHWH must be accompanied with forgiveness towards man; otherwise prayer will not be answered. “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins,” Mark 11:22-26. Receive “whatever you ask for in prayer” if and only if “you will “forgive” the sins that are held against others.

Letting go of the past offenses commands blessing and release answers to prayer. Family trouble must be dealt with and love must be showed on all sides for mom to be truly honored this week or, for that matter, anytime.

Pentecost Power

Truth about the feast of weeks

The Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA) suggest that Christians should celebrate Pentecost exactly seven weeks after Easter Sunday. Lutheran churches commemorate the day through special prayers and adorning their sanctuary with bright red colored vestments, signifying the fiery tongues of Acts 2. Pentecost, or Whitsunday, is considered to be the birth of the church as it was on this day that the Holy Spirit filled those gathered in the upper room.

The *Holman Bible Dictionary*, a Baptist publication, states that “Pentecost is a Jewish festival at which the Holy Spirit came on the early church.” Judaism remembers Pentecost, or “Shavuot in Hebrew, as the exact day that Moses received the first five books of the Bible (called the Torah) on Mount Sinai. Observant Jewish people keep the day holy by attending special worship services, eating dairy products, and conducting an all night vigil dedicated to study. On this night, it is said that the Holy Spirit will visit those waiting in worship to sweeten their tongues.

Celebrating Pentecost was nothing new for the first disciples of the Savior. They had regularly kept the “feast of weeks” in accordance to the Torah. The word “Pentecost” is from the Greek language as “pente” is a reference to a 50 day interval that starts with Passover. In Leviticus chapter 23 Bible believers are instructed to count 50 days until Shavuot. The traditional Jewish calendar starts this counting after the Sabbath day of Passover. This results in Shavuot occurring exactly fifty days after Passover, which could be on any day of the week. (Some Torah keeping groups wait until the seventh-day Sabbath after Passover to begin counting. This choice results in Pentecost always falling on a Sunday.) “You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat, from the

day when you bring the Omer of the waving seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall count, fifty days... You shall have a holy convocation for yourselves on this very day; you shall do no laborious work; it is an eternal decree for all generations,” Leviticus 23:15-16, 21.

At His ascension into heaven, the Savior instructed his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1 finishes with a small group of believers in the tiny upper room of a house. Then in Acts 2 the counting of 50 days was completed and the day of Pentecost had fully come. One hundred and twenty people were filled with the Spirit and began to speak in diverse tongues. The Bible clearly indicates that this did not take place in the upper room but at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Acts 2:2, “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” The upper room isn’t mentioned. The phrase “house” is an idiomatic expression that indicates the “house of worship” or “temple.” 120 people could not have fit into the tiny attic space of a first century house!

Acts 2 then shows that many people at the temple heard the disciples speak in tongues as 3,000 accepted the Jewish Messiah. Such events taking place at the temple site further validates that Christianity was originally a sect of Judaism and was never intended to become a separate religion. Since that first century Shavuot, Mainstream Christianity has argued over the validity of tongues and the Pentecostal experience. The ELCA and many in Christendom ignore the correct date and history of Pentecost found in Leviticus 23, Exodus 19, Acts 2, and Deuteronomy 9. By celebrating the Feast of Shavuot you will come into the joy of obedience and the revelation of YHWH’s spirit.

Finding Relevance in the Holy Days

Truth about the fall festivals

A recent Time magazine cover story listed the "Re-Judaizing Jesus" as one of the "Ten Ideas That Are Changing the World." According the editors of Time, the Hebrew roots movement will have more impact on the future than money and politics. The article explains that to properly understand the Savior of the New Testament one must accept the precepts and customs of the Old Testament. Such a return to the Rabbi Y'shua leads many people to begin celebrating what are mistakenly called the "Jewish Festivals." These are days of worship that were not given only to the Jewish people but for all who call upon the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Leviticus 23:2 explains, "Concerning the feasts of YHWH, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are MY feasts." The Biblical festivals are holy days that the Almighty has chosen. They are HIS feasts, which include Passover and Pentecost in the Spring and several festivals that usually occur in September or October.

The Feast of Trumpets is most easily recognized as Rosh Hashanah, though the Bible never makes this distinction. It is a commanded time to gather for celebration and the blowing of trumpets, which occurs on September 19th this year. During Temple times a set of twin silver trumpets were sounded along with a ram's horn called a "shofar." This day is also considered the first of the "ten days of awe" that lead up to and include the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Trumpets is symbolic of the return of Messiah to the world to set up His kingdom. "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound..., " 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

The next special day of worship is Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. It was on this day, during Temple times, that the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies and present a special once a year sacrifice. Atonement was granted if the people were truly repentant of their sins and the priest was obedient in his actions. Today, Yom Kippur is observed by fasting for a period of 25 hours. “It shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before YHWH your Elohim,” Leviticus 23:27-28. Yom Kippur is prophetic of the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20.

The last festival of the Fall season is the joyous Feast of Tabernacles or “Sukkot.” During this seven-day celebration believers are commanded to remember the wilderness journey of the nation of Israel by dwelling in tents. “Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto YHWH thy Elohim in the place which YHWH shall choose; because YHWH thy Elohim shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful,” Deuteronomy 16:15. Prophetically, the four sided sukkah pictures the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven in Revelation 21.

The fall festivals of YHWH are opportunities to experience true Biblical worship as the Creator intended. Many Christian leaders, from John Haggee to Joseph Falwell, are advocating the celebration and relevance of the Leviticus 23 festivals. When a person begins to keep the Festivals of Elohim their eyes are often opened to a greater understanding of the Scriptures and end times prophetic events.

Happy Birthday Jesus

Truth about the savior's birth

How would you feel if your friends and family celebrated your birthday at the wrong time each year? Well, though the world recognizes December 25th as the birth date of the Messiah, the Bible actually alludes to His birth taking place in the fall. The Scriptures and historical records do clearly indicate that the Savior was most likely born during the Festival of Tabernacles, which occurs in September or October.

The Festival of Tabernacles, called “Sukkot” in Hebrew, recalls the wilderness voyage of the Israelites towards the Promised Land. For forty years the Hebrew people dwelt in tents and were fed heavenly manna. To remember the exodus journey, the Israelites were instructed in Leviticus 23 to hold an annual seven day celebration. “You shall dwell in tents seven days, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt,” Leviticus 23:42-43.

The story of John the Baptist proves that the birth of the Savior took place during Sukkot. Elizabeth (John's mother) was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Y’shua conceived (Luke 1:24-36). John's father was a priest serving in the Jerusalem temple during the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). Nine months from the temple service would have been about the month of March for the most likely time for John's birth. Adding another six months (the difference in ages) brings us to the end of September as the most likely time of the virgin birth.

Y’shua the Redeemer was born in the town of Bethlehem, in order to fulfill a prophecy found in Micah 5:1-2. This Bethlehem birth occurred because of a Roman census that was taking place. For tax

purposes, King Herod and the Romans were known to take their censuses according to the prevailing customs of the occupied territories. Each Hebrew male journeyed to Jerusalem three times a year, at Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The towns around Jerusalem (like Bethlehem) would fill to capacity as the observant Hebrews made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There was no room at the inn because the vacancies were filled by the travelers.

John the Baptist was born at Passover and Messiah was born 6 months later during Sukkot. He was given the circumcised and then given the Hebrew name “Y’shua” on the eighth day. The puzzle of the Messiah’s birth date comes together with the knowledge of this festival. The birth of the Savior was not an independent event that could have occurred on any date. The Sukkot birth was a prophetic picture of “Emmanu-el” or “god with us.” John 1:14 says that the “word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The Greek term for “dwelt” in the oldest manuscripts is the exact same Greek word used to reference the Old Testament “tabernacle.” So, this verse could actually read – “the word became flesh and tabernacle among us.” The manifest presence of the Creator was the message of Sukkot during the times of Moses, the birth of Y’shua, and today.

With just a little investigation, the Feast of Tabernacles can be established as the time that the Messiah was born of a virgin. Y’shua celebrated Sukkot in John 7, thus putting His stamp of approval upon this feast day. Sukkot is not a “Jewish holiday,” but rather a Biblical festival given to all believers for joy and spiritual growth. Happy birthday Y’shua!

Luther and the Supposed Reformation

Truth about the 95 thesis

Christians throughout the world celebrate the last Sunday in October as "Reformation Day." This is in remembrance of how Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517. Luther's actions exposed the Catholic Church as full of false doctrine, superstition, and ignorance. His main disagreement centered on salvation by grace through faith. After Luther's courageous acts, the Protestant movement gained popularity. Luther changed the Sunday worship service to focus on preaching instead of the Eucharist, but he left other Catholic traditions intact. The "new" Lutheran worship style differed little from the Catholic Mass. "Luther retained the basic order of the medieval Mass along with the ceremonial aspects of lights, incense and vestments," Maxwell, Outline of Christian Worship, page 77.

Luther talked much about the "priesthood of all believers" but did not allow the reformation to affect the services of worship. Luther said, "It is not now nor ever has been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely," Luther's works, LII, 20. Accordingly, the pulpit and not the altar table is the central element in most contemporary churches. Many similarities still remain between the Catholic Church and most Christian denominations like Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist. Did Luther go far enough? Was the Reformation the needed resistance of evil and the complete return to righteousness?

Sadly, Luther's actions did little to change church worship. Yes, Luther led a drastically needed reformation of doctrine BUT the Protestant movement has continued to mirror many Catholic traditions. It's been almost 500 years since the first Reformation Sunday but the

church is still stuck in incorrect Catholic practices. Here are a few examples:

"Is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify, " said Cardinal James Gibbons.

History shows that Christ-mass is a leftover holiday with symbols of Madonna and child which were borrowed from Egyptian worship of Isis and Horus. This is in violation of Exodus 20:3. On June 29, 2008 the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments banned the sacred name of "Yahweh" from being used in liturgy or music. This is in violation of Exodus 3:30.

Catholicism and much of the modern church teaches that the Pastor or Minister acts as a mediator for confession, sin, or learning of doctrine. This is in violation of 1 Timothy 2:5.

Luther participated in a reformation that continues until this day. Many people are laying aside unbiblical practices and searching for the truth. This movement will continue until the return of the Messiah. The Savior will make His second coming when the truth faith is restored completely. He will return when there is a full reformation. "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of YHWH; and He shall send Y'shua Messiah, which before was preached unto You: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which Elohim hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began," Acts 3:17-21.

Behind the Mask of Halloween

Truth about all hallow's eve

A pig may wear lipstick, but it's still a dirty farm animal. The pig will return to its ways of rolling in the mud and eventually smear the Mary Kay paint. Like this proverbial pig, we can reason excuses for Bible believers to celebrate Halloween but the argument does no good. Does it matter that this holiday is evil? Should it concern us that the customs involved in Halloween were once used to worship demons? "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil," 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22. Halloween practices, from dressing in costumes to bobbing for apples, were once part of pagan worship. These actions are repeated today by people who are unaware or simply don't care about their true meaning. Time may have passed but their origins and true purpose remains the same.

The history of Halloween as an evil day of satanic worship can't be denied. It is a historical fact. "The observances connected with Halloween are believed to have originated among the ancient Druids, who believed that on the evening, Saman, the lord of the dead, called forth hosts of evil spirits, New Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, p. 152.

"The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Britain, believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and elves came out to harm people. They thought the cat was sacred and believed that cats had once been human beings but were changed as a punishment for evil deeds. From these Druidic beliefs comes the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween festivities. The Druids had an autumn festival called Samhain, or summer's end. It was an occasion for feasting on all the kinds of food which had been grown during the summer," The World Book Encyclopedia, volume 9, page 25.

Is Halloween really an evil celebration? "During this time interval on October 31 the normal order of the universe is suspended, the barriers between the natural and the supernatural are temporarily removed, the sidh lies open and all divine beings and the spirits of the dead move freely among men and interfere sometimes violently, in their affairs," *Celtic Mythology*, p. 127. Clearly, Halloween is an ancient religious holiday that over time has evolved into a secular celebration.

Today ancient customs that were once used to conjure up spirits have been adopted by the modern world of entertainment and profit. Some cultures call it the "Day of the Dead" or "All Saint's Day" but the holiday is still the same.

Dressing up children for trick-or-treating or walking through a haunted house may be fun, but such actions are inherently immoral. The Scriptures tells us to "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

How did Halloween become part of the current society? What does church history teach? "The celebration of All Saints' Day is attributed to Pope Boniface IV, who dedicated the Roman temple, the Pantheon, to St. Mary and the Martyrs on the thirteenth of May, 610. Boniface set the day aside as a memorial to early Christians who died for their beliefs without official recognition of their sanctity, so that 'the memory of all the saints might in future be honored in the place which had formerly been devoted to the worship, not of gods but of demons'. The clergy encouraged their flock to remember the dead with prayers instead of sacrifices. People were taught to bake 'soul cakes' - little pastries and breads - to offer in exchange for blessings rather than trying to appease the spirits with food and wine. Villagers were also encouraged to masquerade on this day, not to frighten unwelcome spirits, but to honor Christian saints. On All Saints' Day, churches throughout Europe and the British Isles displayed relics of their patron saints. Poor churches could not afford genuine relics and instead had processions in which parishioners dressed as saints, angels and devils. This religious

masquerade resembled the pagan custom of parading ghosts to the town limits. It served the new church by giving an acceptable Christian basis to the custom of dressing up on Halloween. In addition, the Church tried to convince the people that the great bonfires they lit in homage to the sun would instead keep the devil away - God's mortal enemy in the new Christian religion, *Halloween, An American Holiday, An American History*, by Lesley Pratt Bannatyne. Thanks to Pope Boniface, new Christian meanings were given to ancient pagan practices. Is this acceptable to the Almighty?

The only thing worse than blatant outright Satanic worship is secret homage to demons that is disguised behind seemingly normal practices of society. Bible believers have been called to be "in the world but not of the world." Halloween is an excellent opportunity to take a stand for righteousness and be a light to society. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Romans 12:2.

In Matthew 10:5 the Savior said, "do not go in the way of the pagans." Paganism is practices and principles that are not Christian or Biblical in origin. Many Pagan practices, like Halloween and other holidays, have been borrowed by the contemporary Church and thus polluted much of the faith. Christians should sway from such practices and prove create a distinction in the world.

Some churches compromise with Halloween alternatives like harvest festivals or Biblical costume parties. Again, such compromise is not allowed by the Scriptures. Pagan practices can not be transformed into holy deeds. Paganism can not be redeemed. Paganism can only be avoided. The truth about Halloween can be found in encyclopedias, Internet searches, and even the on History Channel television network. This holiday is evil and should be avoided by those who claim to worship the Almighty of the Bible. Lipstick on a pig doesn't change the pig and nothing can change Halloween.

Turkey Talk

Truth about thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is more than just a time to gather with family to enjoy a good meal. It is a religious holiday that calls Americans to reflect upon their life, examine their ways, and give thanks for their blessings. History records many lessons that can be learned from Thanksgiving. In 1621 a group of religious Puritans left England to seek a land that would allow them religious freedom. Persecution pushed them to make a “pilgrimage” to America. It is from this journey that they became known as the “pilgrims.”

These Christian Puritans were conservative Bible believers who kept much of the Law of Moses. They were similar to the “Quakers” in that they promoted separation from pagan influences that still remain in Protestant Christianity. The Puritan’s desire was to achieve and preserve simplicity or ‘purity’ of faith that they felt had been lost amid Christianity. They came to America in order to continue the reformation away from Catholicism and the Church of England. The Pilgrims very likely kept a kosher diet and celebrated the feast days of Leviticus 23 like Passover or Sukkot. “The pilgrims based their customs on the Bible,” says Gloria Kaufer Greene, a food and holiday expert. “They knew that Sukkot was an autumn harvest festival, and there is evidence that they fashioned the first Thanksgiving after the Jewish custom of celebrating the success of the year’s crops.”

When the Pilgrims settled in America they were greeted by the Wampanoag Indians. History records about 90 Indians and 50 Puritans shared a meal of thanksgiving together sometime between September 21 and November 9. Based on the numbers, it was probably the Indians who brought most of the food. And let us not be mistaken, it was the Pilgrims who were the visitors and not the hosts to this meal.

For that first and historic Thanksgiving there was no football and there was most likely no turkey. The only written eye witness account of the first meal was by colonist Edward Winslow to his friend in England. In this letter he states that they ate “wild fowl and venison.” He doesn’t specify if there was deep fried turkey or not.

Corn might have been a plenty but the cornucopia was surely missing. The Puritans would have never allowed this now popular centerpiece. The cornucopia, which dates back to the 5th century BCE, is a pagan symbol of Greek mythology and fertility. Its origin and meaning is directly opposed to the personal holiness kept by the Puritan Pilgrims.

When they first gathered, the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving was not a scheduled event. It became an American ritual 200 years later. President George Washington declared November 26, 1789 a day of thanksgiving and prayer in honor of the establishment of the new government. Washington wanted this holiday to be renewed yearly but faced harsh criticism from Thomas Jefferson, who stated the government had no authority to observe a religious holiday. It was in the midst of the civil war that President Abraham Lincoln declared the final Thursday in November as a national day of gratitude. Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln all agreed that Thanksgiving is a spiritual holiday for worship and appreciation.

This year, millions will bow to their television and pay homage to sports. Most will gorge with the gods of appetite and gluttony. Some will recognize the spiritual significance of this day, reflect upon their blessings and give thanks. May we all desire to be like the Pilgrims and return to a purity of faith that has been lost over the years.

Outlaw Christmas? Bah Humbug!

The truth about christmas

Can you imagine America without Christmas? The idea seems preposterous as the jolly holiday has become engrained in the American culture. A recent poll shows that 92% of Americans, including atheists and Muslims, celebrate Christmas. This holiday brings people together with the hope of love and peace on earth. Right? Well, history records a different perspective.

The first settlers understood the dangers of Christmas. The yuletide was actually outlawed in America during the 1600s. In Boston from 1659 to 1661 those who exhibited the Christmas spirit were fined five shillings. In England Sir Oliver Cromwell led the ban as a means to rid the society of mistletoe, nativity scenes, and eggnog. Why ban Christmas? Beside the obvious lies about Santa Clause, is there something wrong with the holiday?

“The traditional customs connected with Christmas have developed from several sources as a result of the celebration of the birth of Christ mixed with the pagan agricultural and solar observations at midwinter. In the Roman world Saturnalia was a time of merrymaking and exchange of gifts. December 25 was also regarded as the birth date of the Iranian mystery god Mithras, the Sun of Righteousness,” Encyclopedia Britannica. Mithras worship started before Messiah was born and continues unchanged to this day. "Do not learn the practices of the heathen... For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not," Jeremiah 10:2-4.

Followers of the Savior have been called to be “in the world but not of the world.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” The principle is that one should abstain from all practices of evil origin. This would include Christmas.

However, there is a winter holiday for believers who want to follow the example set by the Savior.

The world celebrates Christmas. The Messiah celebrated Chanukah in John 10:22-23, “And it was at Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication, and it was winter. And the Messiah walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.” Chanukah isn't just a Jewish holiday. It is a set apart time of rejoicing and reflection for all followers of the Bible. Believers are to follow the Savior's every example. Remember that the Savior was a Hebrew-speaking Jew. What Jew would be at the Temple during Chanukah and not join the celebration? John 10 clearly indicates that He rejoiced at Chanukah and thus put his seal of approval upon this day.

The Hebrew word “Chanukah” literally means “dedication.” Chanukah is an eight day celebration that commemorates the dedication of the Temple, after it was desecrated by the Greek army. Christmas has a pagan past but the account of Chanukah is historical fact. Chanukah is based upon an actual military battle won by a small group of Hebrews. The Maccabee family led victory over the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanies, in the 2nd century B.C. Chanukah is NOT the “Jewish Christmas,” but an altogether separate celebration of victory over paganism. There are games, songs, and traditions that recall the miracle of Chanukah without pagan roots. Today, some organizations seek to ban Christmas as a means of political correctness. Perhaps the founding fathers were right when they outlawed Christmas for spiritual correctness.

Don't Let Santa Fool You

The truth about december 25th

Children may be fooled, but most adults know that December 25th is not exactly when the Christ-child was born. Just a little research into this date reveals that the Church Fathers simply used an already pagan festival celebrating the re-birth of the sun to commemorate the birth of the Savior. It may be Christmas time but it's not time to celebrate the birth of Messiah.

The World Book Encyclopedia clarifies, "The first mention of December 25 as the birth of Jesus occurred in A.D. 336 in an early Roman calendar. The celebration of this day as Y'shua' birth date was influenced by pagan unchristian festivals held at that time. The ancient Romans held year-end celebrations to honor Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light... As part of all these celebrations, the people prepared special foods, decorated their homes with greenery, and joined in singing and gift giving. These customs gradually became part of the Christmas celebration," Volume 3, Christmas.

For many years the Eastern Church commemorated the Epiphany on January 6. The 12 Days of Christmas would begin on December 25 and then count forward. The Bible doesn't give a specific date for the Messiah. The Scriptures do state that some shepherds were present when Mary gave birth. Luke 2:7-8 states that the shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks when an angel appeared. One problem with a December 25th is that winter is extremely cold and rainy in Israel. The weather forces shepherds to find shelter for their livestock during the colder months. It is highly unlikely that the shepherds were outside in the middle of December.

The modern nativity scene is misleading as well. The Bible never says that the Wiseman visited Y'shua at the manger. According to Matthew 2:11, the wise men didn't arrive on the scene until Y'shua was a young child.

The story of John the Baptist points us to the true date of the birth of Messiah. Elizabeth (John's mother) was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Y'shua was conceived (Luke 1:24-36). John's father was a priest serving in the Jerusalem temple during the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). Nine months from the temple service would have been about the month of March for the most likely time for John's birth. Adding another six months (the difference in ages) brings us to the end of September as the most likely time of Y'shua's birth.

There is no possible way that the Messiah was born in December. The modern date of Christmas is incorrect. Could other Christmas traditions be full of error as well? Some say to "put Christ back into Christmas." But, can believers conquer the pagan influences of ancient times, by giving these customs Christian religious meanings? Consider Jeremiah 10:2-4 which was written six centuries before the Savior came: "Do not learn the practices of the heathen." What did the heathen do that was so despicable? What practices are believers to stay clear from? What custom was so horrible that it should never be repeated? "Do not learn the practices of the heathen... For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not," Jeremiah 10:2-4. The incorrect date and origin of customs implies that Christmas is simply paganism wrapped with a Christian bow.

Santa Claus Worship: Naughty or Nice?

Truth about saint nicholas

Spoiler alert: this article will examine the deception and history of Saint Nicholas. Only the strong of heart should read further.

Adults know the classic, “Yes, Virginia” reply first given to a girl who wrote a letter to the *New York Sun* in 1897, was an ingenious lie. But, most adults do not know that St. Nicholas was once the most popular symbol of worship for Christians worldwide. In fact, more churches in Europe are named after St. Nicholas than any of the Apostles.

Christianity claims that legend of Santa Claus dates back to a fourth century Turkish monk. Stories abound about this man of kindness who reportedly gave away his wealth and even walked on water to save the life of a drowning sailor. He also supposedly rescued three sisters from a life of prostitution by sliding bags of gold down their chimney. Because of his piety he became known as the patron saint of schoolchildren and sailors. The Christmas Almanac states, “By the height of the Middle Ages, St. Nicholas was probably invoked in prayer more than any other figure except the Virgin Mary and Christ Himself” (The Christmas Almanac. New York: Random House, 2004, p. 131)

For almost 1,000 of years, the “Feast of Saint Nicholas” was held on December 6th with merry-making and gift giving. The Feast of St Nicholas is still celebrated in several countries, including Holland and the Netherlands. (Here St. Nicholas or Sinter Klass travels from Spain instead of the North Pole to bring gifts to children.) The popular idea of a chubby St. Nick with red priestly robes and white beard was created by author Washington Irving around 1809. Just a few years later reindeer were introduced by Clement Moore in the poem ‘*Twas the Night Before Christmas*. This poem also promoted the idea of St.

Nicholas delivering presents on the night before Christmas and not on December 6. Together Moore and Irving morphed the legendary Catholic bishop into an elf that would travel the world spreading holiday cheer. The Coca-Cola Company solidified the idea of a standard image of Santa through years of advertising.

Today, the religious undertones involving Santa Claus are obvious. He is known as a carpenter/toy-maker with God-like powers. He records naughty or nice behavior in his giant book and is all knowing. Children pray to him through wish lists of toys and then wait in line to ascend his throne to sit on his lap. Like a thief in the night he distributes rewards and punishment. His crown of holly thorns, white beard, red robes, and feet that do not burn by the furnace all mimic the appearance of the Savior in Revelation 1:14-15, Isaiah 63:2, and Mark 15:17.

The fantasy of Santa Claus is real to children who are often led astray by parents who see no problem in St. Nick taking the place of the Almighty. Satanist Anton LaVey, author of the Satanic Bible and founder of the First Church of Satan, has written that "fantasy plays an important role in any religious curriculum. The subjective mind is less discriminating about the quality of its food than it is about the taste. Thus, fantasy is utilized as a magic weapon in Satanism." (Anton LaVey, *The Satanic Rituals*, p. 15)

For centuries, the legend of Santa has changed to match the whims of the world. It is quit puzzling how anyone who claims to know the Elohim of the Bible can also encourage gullible children to believe in Catholic Monk-Elf figure named Saint Nicholas. Perhaps this Christmas more parents will not mislead their children and abruptly stop the worship of Santa Claus.

Avoiding the Black Friday Crisis

Truth about holiday shopping

The Friday after Thanksgiving has become known as the official start of the holiday shopping season. The date is called “Black Friday” to illustrate the fact that Christmas sales help many retail outlets climb out of the financial “red” of debt and into the “black” of profit. This holiday shopping simply shifts the responsibility of debt from the retail market to the consumer’s credit cards. And although the United States is in the midst of one of the worst economic downturns in modern history, billions of dollars will be spent in stores this weekend. Does this really help the economy?

The Gallup Research Group estimates that American adults spend at least \$639 each on holiday gifts for Christmas. That’s over \$1,200 spent by a family of two! Much of this money will be used on gifts given to other adults who would have been much happier to have pocketed the expense and not simply exchanged money with others. Dads will get neck ties that they will never wear. Many children will spend more time playing with the box their toy was wrapped in than with the toy itself. These same children are in essence taught that greed is an acceptable attribute when they make their tremendous toy lists for Santa Claus. And many parents will take out loans, work overtime, or run up credit card bills just to try to satisfy the insatiability of teens and toddlers. Doesn’t the \$450 billion dollar price tag of Christmas seem a bit much?

History tells us that the term “Black Friday” originates with several economic crashes that paralyzed our country. The phrase “Black Friday” was first used in 1869 to reference the day the United States stock market tumbled under the Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant. During the civil war, the government issued large amounts of cash that was

only backed with government credit. A few gold investors manipulated the market and down the stock market crumbled. Sound familiar? The 1929 “Black Friday” was when the European markets reacted to the fall of the New York Stock Exchange and the entire world was plunged into the Great Depression.

Some people suggest that gift giving at Christmas is supported by Scripture. That is not what the Bible teaches. Matthew 2:10-11 talks about the Wise Men following the star and arriving “at the house” and presenting their items to the “child.” The Wise Men arrived several years later and were not at the manger!

Today, the term “Black Friday” speaks of the day when retail stores advertise huge discounts in hopes to woo the Christmas crowd. Supermarkets go out of debt and individuals go into debt, all in order to celebrate the season of giving. Such spending is ironic as Christ himself said, ““Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions,” Luke 12:15. Christmas shopping doesn’t have to result in personal economic problems. Make a decision today to not spoil children or grandchildren with toys that they will soon forget. This year, do something as a family to help the needy instead of buying your grown siblings a gift they could easily live without. Use that same money, time, and effort to help others less fortunate. . Give the gift of charity by supporting a loved one’s favorite cause. Or create lasting memories with the family by doing something out of the ordinary. “Black Friday” is aptly named. This season can be a time to go farther into debt or to learn from past financial crashes and stop the greed.

The Ghosts of Christmas Past

Truth about christmas

Christmas is haunted with a ghostly past that has nothing to do with the Bible or with the true faith. History shows that long before the manger scene birth of the Savior, the date of December 25th was already set aside as a high holy day of worship for a pantheon of gods. For example, a Phrygian god named “Attis” predated Christ by at least two hundred years and was worshipped at Vatican Hill. The Greeks would celebrate his birth to the Virgin Nana on December 25th of each year. Then on March 22nd a pine tree was brought into the sanctuary of Cybele for two days of mourning until the resurrection of Attis occurred on the third day at sunrise. Priests of Attis were sworn eunuchs who devoted their time to the preaching of his gospel. Author Henry Chadwick wrote in the book “The Early Church” that there were ongoing clashes between Christians and pagans over the remarkable similarities between the Christ and Attis. Truth be told, Attis wasn’t the only god with connections to Christ.

The ancients worshipped the celestial beings like the sun and the moon. During the winter solstice, the sun is at its farthest point south from the equator. This time has become known as the birthday of the sun. The Romans taught the unconquerable sun (Mithras) was born on December 25. Followers of Mithras worshipped weekly on the Sun’s day, and recognized his birth by bringing a tree into their homes during the winter. “This is what the LORD says: “Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them. For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter,” Jeremiah 10:1-4.

The International Encyclopedia states, "Mithras seems to have owed his prominence to the belief that he was the source of life, and could also redeem the souls of the dead into the better world ... The ceremonies included a sort of baptism to remove sins, anointing, and a sacred meal of bread and water."

Before Mithras was worship of Krishna. Before Krishna was Horus. Even before the Egyptians worshiped Horus, history tells of a man-god named Osiris that healed the sick, raised the dead, and was even born in a cave on the date of (you guessed it) December 25th.

The Church Father Tertullian argued that the many parallels with Attis and other pagan gods were simply coincidences that should be ignored. But, these facts of mixed worship are absolutely too glaringly obvious for anyone who desires to have a faith of purity. The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church says, "December 25 was the date of the Roman pagan festival inaugurated in 274 as the birthday of the unconquered sun. Sometime before 336 the Church in Rome, unable to stamp out this pagan festival, spiritualized it as the Feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness."

Today, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. Too bad Exodus 23:2 says "thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." As hard as it may be to fathom, Bible believers do not have to continue in Christmas error. There is a better way to worship. Understand that life is shaped by past experiences and surrounding culture. The holidays celebrated, the language spoken, and the food eaten, are all predetermined by the culture a person lives within. For Bible believers, this is identity theft. People think they are Christians, Americans, Lutherans, or Baptists but you are not. You are more.

A person's true identity is found within the pages of the Bible. The Scriptures state, "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Galatians 3:29. The original word for "seed" in this verse is "sperma," which means a "physical seed or

descendant.” Christians are not just spiritual heirs of salvation but direct physical descendants of Abraham.

Abraham had a special relationship with the Almighty, which led to him being blessed above all people. He would be given special land in the Middle East and have physical descendants “as numerous as the stars in the heavens.” These blessings were passed to Abraham’s son, Isaac and then given to Isaac’s son, Jacob. “Be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body,” Genesis 35:11.

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, fathered twelve sons. These twelve sons and their families became known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel isn’t just a small sliver of land in the Middle East. *And Israel isn’t just the Jewish people!* Israel is the family of Abraham. This family’s bloodline has been scattered all over the world. As Romans 2:29 states, the identity of all disciples is Israel.

History proves that shortly after the rule of King David, the nation of Israel was tragically split in two. In 586BCE the two tribes that made up the Southern Kingdom were taken captive by the Babylonians. 70 years later many of these people returned to the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, and rebuilt the Temple. They kept the Law and sought to worship as prescribed in the Scriptures. Today, the descendants from Judea are known as the “Jews.”

In 722BCE the Northern Kingdom, comprised of 10 tribes from Ephraim, were scattered by the Assyrians. These Israelites mixed into the nations. Thus they lost their identity and forgot their Hebrew heritage. They continued to grow and multiply, spreading their bloodline all over the world. A recent NBC News article estimates over a tenth of today’s population is directly descended from this group. Today they are known as the “lost 10 tribes of Israel.”

The Jewish people began their return to the Land in 1948. As fulfillment to Biblical prophecy in Ezekiel 37 and elsewhere, the lost tribes are slowly returning to their identity as people recognize they are Israel.

The Savior said in John 4:22, “Salvation is of the Jews.” This doesn’t mean that a person must convert to Judaism. This means the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. All of the promises in the Bible made to Israel are for today and are for you! All of the commandments in the Bible that were given to Israel are also for today and also for you. Being Israel isn’t about being Jewish, but recognizing your heritage the Almighty’s true plan for man. Such recognition will also lead you to forsaking forbidden practices, like Christmas, and accepting commanded worship days as found in the Scriptures. Christmas doesn’t have to haunt you anymore.

The Immaculate Deception

The truth about mary

No immaculate conception? Just the thought of such sounds blasphemous and wrong. However, no where does the Bible teach the doctrine of Immaculate Conception. Search the scriptures or read the Gospels and find absolutely nothing about the Immaculate Conception. Yes, one can see that the Savior was born of a virgin named Mary. The virgin birth is prophesied in Isaiah and came to pass in Luke 2. But the virgin birth and the Immaculate Conception are two distinctly different doctrines.

Believe it or not, the theology of the Immaculate Conception teaches that for the Messiah to be born sinless, that his earthly mother was sinless. This Catholic teaching has crept its way into Protestant churches who claim to believe in the Immaculate Conception without exactly knowing what it is. The Immaculate Conception actually regards the birth of Mary who was “without any stain of original sin, in her mother's womb: the dogma thus says that, from the first moment of her existence, she was preserved by God from the lack of sanctifying grace that afflicts mankind, and that she was instead filled with divine grace. It is further believed that she lived a life completely free from sin,” says encyclopedia.com. The Catholic Encyclopedia states Pope Pious IX defined this dogma in 1854. This edict also stated that Mary was the second Eve, totally sinless, and absolutely pure.

Clearly, the deception concerning the conception leads to an unhealthy recognition of Mary. It also leads to a wrong understanding of the Messiah. Error leads to error. It is taught that Mary had to have been sinless in order to give birth to a sinless Savior. The Pope teaches that since Mary was sinless then she is due homage and worship.

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

Mary was a normal human, affected by the sinful nature of Adam. “By one man sin affected the world,” Romans 5:12. We know that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of YHWH.” This “all” includes “all” of humanity and mother Mary! “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one,” Romans 3:10.

The subject of the Savior’s birth is important to consider as it reveals the facts about His nature. The Messiah did NOT inherit his humanity from Mary. The scriptures show that Mary was sinful; therefore if Y’shua had a “normal” conception then she would have passed her sinful nature onto Him.

Mary was a willing servant but she wasn’t sinless. She agreed to carry and care for the baby in her womb. Thus, she acted as a surrogate mother of the Messiah. A surrogate mother is a woman who agrees to bear a child for a couple who are childless, usually due to wife being infertile or unable to carry a baby. The child grows inside the surrogate mother but has not biological relationship with the mother. This is exactly what we see with Y’shua and his earthly mother. The Almighty passed human sperm and egg and implanted a heavenly body within Mary. Hebrews 10:5 states that this was a “body prepared” in Heaven before the Savior came to earth.

Mary agreed to enter into covenant with YHWH to carry the baby in Luke 1:38. This doesn’t make Mary sinless. She was nothing more than a vessel.

Mary was not sinless or anything special. There was no immaculate conception of her body. The Savior came with sinless flesh to offer His life as a ransom for humanity. Put your trust in Him and not in religion or fables. Get to know the real Savior and worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

What Time Is It Anyway?

The truth about the calendar

With the New Year comes fireworks, champagne, and the purchase of an updated calendar. The calendar industry reports sales in the billions with designs featuring comedy, landscapes, and of course swimsuit models. You can choose a desktop or wall chart of days but you can't choose to use the most accurate telling of time. Historians agree that the calendar of today has been through so many changes that it is almost impossible to know exactly what year it is.

Most of the world uses the error-filled Gregorian calendar that was made popular by Pope Gregory XII. This calendar shows the year to change on January 1. Yet before this dateline, several countries celebrated the New Year at different times. The Romans recognized March 1 while the Byzantine Empire held September 1 as the start of the year. The Jewish people still change their calendar in mid September.

The Gregorian calendar is a supposed improvement upon the model created by Julius Caesar. When Caesar created his monthly calendar, he named each period of days after a different Greek god. January was named for Janus, the Roman mighty one of portals. May was named for Maia, the female deity of fertility. July was given its title after Julius Caesar himself. This isn't the only pagan connection to the modern calendar.

The Romans and Greeks had their pantheon of gods to honor. So, they developed a system of unified worship based on the calendar. This pattern continues today. Each day of the week actually retains its original name, given by the Romans, to signify the time to worship a different god. Monday is the day to worship the moon. Thursday is

Thor's Day. Sunday is honored as "solis dias" - the venerable day of the sun.

Using these titles for the days and months is in direct opposition to a Biblical principle to not pronounce the names of false gods. Exodus 23:13, "And in all things that I have said to you take heed: and make no mention of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth."

Perhaps we should return to the Biblical reckoning of time? Throughout the Scriptures there is only one day that is given a specific name. The Seventh day is called the "Sabbath" or "Shabbat" in Hebrew. All other days were counted off from the Sabbath. The months were also counted from the spring time of Passover and the month of "Aviv" as seen in Exodus 12:1-3.

The dating of our modern calendar is also incorrect. We are told that there have been 2009 years since the birth of Messiah. The term "AD" is short for "Anno Domini" or "in the year of our Lord." The problem is that Y'shua couldn't have been born in the year 1AD. The gospels show that the Savior's birth occurred during the reign of Herod the Great. Well, Herod's died in the spring of 4BC. Therefore, Messiah's birth had to take place at least four years before the traditional date! (Herod's death is recorded by Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in the Antiquities of the Jews, Book 17, Chapter 8.)

These calendar errors make a startling point. If we are mislead concerning the actual dating of the year or naming of the days, then what other parts of our life and culture also contain error? Much time has passed since the events of the Bible took place. Sadly, as the calendars have changed so has mankind. The Almighty is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Amazing Grace and God's Law

Truth about the age of grace

The hymn “Amazing Grace” is probably the most well known anthem of Christianity. The song was written by the captain of a slave-trading ship named John Newton. After his conversion, Newton left the horrible seas and eventually joined forces with a member of the European parliament to end slavery. Newton was successful, as a bill written by his partner William Wilberforce was passed to outlaw slave trade in 1807. Heavenly amazing grace had taken the wretch of a sinner like John Newton and transformed his life.

“Grace” is unmerited or undeserved favor. Though “grace” is often the subject of Sunday sermons, the term is usually misunderstood and misrepresented. Psalm 89:2 states that the world was formed upon the foundation of grace. The Hebrew word used in this verse and throughout the Old Testament for “grace” or “mercy” is “chesed.” This term appears over 240 times in the Old Testament to explain how the Creator relates to His creation. Grace is not a New Testament idea! Somehow, it has become a mainstream Christian belief that God has changed to now accept people through grace when they were once accepted by obedience to the Law of Moses. The Elohim of grace has been incorrectly portrayed as dealing with people differently at different times. This demonic idea insinuates that what was wrong to do during the “dispensation of the law” is no longer a sin because Christians are now “under grace.” The doctrine of “dispensationalism” was made popular by the Scofield Reference Bible and is now ingrained in the mind of most church leaders. The word “dispensation” appears only four times in the KJV and never to infer that there are different periods of YHWH’s temperament. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* says, “The modern theological use of the term is not in

Scripture.” There is no such thing as an “age of grace” or the “dispensation of grace.”

Noah, Abraham, Moses and others all found “chesed” or “grace” in the eyes of YHWH. Their belief was accredited to them as righteousness. From creation, salvation has always been “by grace through faith,” Ephesians 4:23. Those who put their trust in the Mighty One of Israel during Old Testament times were granted eternal life through chesed. The Law of Moses was not given as an instrument of salvation. Obedience to the Biblical commands cannot redeem anyone. The Law of Moses was given by the Almighty to explain how a person should relate to Him and other people. The Law defines sin and sets a standard for righteous behavior. According to Romans 3:23, a person who sins is under the death penalty of sin until the gift of amazing grace is accepted. This means that the entire world is “under the law” until they accept the Creator’s chesed and are then placed “under grace.” A person is saved by grace through faith in the shed blood of Messiah and then should live a life of obedience to the Law. “Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Heaven forbid!” - Romans 6:14-15.

Grace doesn’t replace the Law. The Law doesn’t replace grace. The two work together to transform lives. The amazing grace that changed the life of John Newton is still available today. The lost can be found and the blind can see if a person will accept grace and then live in righteousness.

Prophecy and Hamas

The truth about the end of days

Over the years, various people have made some pretty bad predictions of the future. Some of history's all-time prophetic goof records that King George II said in 1773 that the American colonies had little stomach for revolution. In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn't have time for it. These folks were inherently wrong. Can a person tell the future? Well, through the words and prophecy of the Scriptures we can get an idea of future events and even a time line of when the battle of Armageddon may occur.

The 24th Chapter of Matthew provides many insights into the end of days. "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," Matthew 24:4-13. Notice that the Messiah doesn't mention a 'rapture' but insists that "he that endures until the end shall be saved."

In this same chapter the Savior compared the wickedness of the last generation to the days of Noah. “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man,” Matthew 2:37. Here, the Savior was giving mankind a hint regarding the timing of His return. To understand this prophecy we must look to the original Hebrew used in the account of Noah in Genesis 6.

“The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually,” Genesis 6:5.

“The earth was corrupt and filled with violence,” Genesis 6:12

“The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and I will destroy them,” Genesis 6:13.

The increase of wickedness prompted the great flood cleansing. In these verses, the Hebrew word translated as “violence” and “wickedness” is a message from beyond. The actual word in the Hebrew is “*hamas*.” The world was destroyed because sin/violence/*hamas* increased. The Savior was speaking of the growth of “*hamas*” when He said, “as it was in the days of Noah so it will be when the Son of Man returns.”

Today, “*Hamas*” is the name of the Islamic terrorist organization that uses negative propaganda and military might to wage war against Israel. The Savior prophesied the exact name of the group that would oppose Israel and bring forth the time of Jacob’s trouble. Perhaps, we indeed are living in the time that will see the violence/*hamas* increase until the return of Messiah.

The Unsolved Mystery of Hell

The truth about eternal death

In the fall of 1988 a television series debuted that focused on lost loves, UFO sightings, fugitives and homicides. “Unsolved Mysteries” was hosted by a trench coat clad Robert Stack and was an instant hit. By the end of its eighth season, it was responsible for 87 reunions, capturing 140 criminals, and solving over 300 cases.

One unsolved mystery that would interest even the late Robert Stack is the subject of “hell.” The Scriptural understanding of such a place is very different than the notion of everlasting flames as seen in the literary classic “Dante’s Inferno.” Hell is referenced in the Old Testament with the rebellion of Korah against Moses in Numbers 16. The Bible actually says, “the earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all the men who were with Korah and all their property. They and all they possessed descended alive into Sheol.”

The Ancient Hebrew word “Sheol” literally means the “underworld of the dead.” The term speaks of an abode, thought to be deep within the earth (Psalms 88:6, Amos 9:2). Strong’s Exhaustive Dictionary calls it a “subterranean retreat, grave, hell, or pit.”

Korah rebelled and was swallowed alive by sheol/hell. The same is true for those who rebel against the Almighty’s Law today. Romans 6:23 states that the “wages of sin is death.” Spiritual death is separation from the Creator, which comes as a result of a lifestyle of sin.

The New Testament calls “hell” a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” where the “worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.” In the Bible, the word most often translated as “Hell” is derived from the

Greek word “gehenna” or the “valley of Hinnom.” The Messiah often referenced “gehenna” as He spoke about the eventual punishment for the wicked. His listeners understood exactly what and where He was referencing. The valley of Hinnah was the trash dump for the nation of Israel. In Gehenna there was constant burning of waste, dead bodies, and trash until the items were totally consumed. Gehenna is a picturesque term used to describe the harshest of conditions for those who do not accept the gift of eternal life. Perhaps the only thing worse than eternal burning is being totally annihilated like burnt trash?

The Bible teaches that only those people who are “born again” will inherit eternal “life.” All others will experience eternal “death” and cease to exist. This is worse than eternal burning! There will come a time when the lost souls will be annihilated. This is called the “Second Death” and is referenced throughout the book of Revelation.

Ezekiel 18:20 enforces this idea, “The soul who sins is the one who will die.” In Matthew 10:28 the Messiah said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can *destroy* both soul and body in hell.”

Finally, in John 3:16 the Greek word used for “perish” illustrates this point clearly. The verse says, “For YHWH so loved the world that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.” This Greek word translated “perish” literally means “to destroy, put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end, to kill.” The idea of eternal punishment is not supported by the most popular Evangelistic verse! Those who do not accept the Messiah will face a time of torment in Hell/Sheol/Gehenna and will then be utterly destroyed along with Hell itself. Mystery Solved. Hell exposed. Robert Stack would be proud.

Swine Flu and Swine Food

Truth about unclean foods

The swine flu has sparked fear in the entire world as dangers of an outbreak spread from Mexico City to Hong Kong. Thousands of years before the H1N1 virus scare, the Bible classified the pig as an unclean animal and unfit for human consumption.

Noah was told fill the ark with seven pairs of all clean beasts and two pairs of the unclean in Genesis 7:2. Biblically, a distinction was made between clean animals, like chicken and cows, and unclean animals. The need for more clean animals on the ark shows that these would have been used for food and sacrificial worship. The need for less unclean animals on the boat was because these animals reproduce quickly in litters and wouldn't have been considered as "food" for Noah and his family.

A pig is unclean for many reasons including the fact that it will eat anything, yet the animal lacks the proper digestive system to release poison from its body. Thus, the swine's sickness can be easily transferred to the person who eats the animal. Worms, called enzymes, also live inside the blood stream of swine and can be easily passed to humans. Such is also the case for shrimp, lobsters, vultures, and other scavengers. It is true that swine produce very little sweat from their skin. The inability to perspire keeps waste stored inside their body. The Center for Disease Control states that H1N1 can not be caught from eating swine. Yet, there are no less than seventy different types of diseases including trichinosis that can be caused by eating pork.

The scriptures call many unclean animals "abominations" whose carcasses that should not even be touched. Mainstream Christianity teaches that the dietary laws of the Old Testament have been

superseded by the New Testament. One misunderstood passage about this subject is Acts 10:9-19. In these verses Peter is said to have been extremely hungry. He is also confused about the acceptance of the Gentile believers. He then has a vision about various four-footed creatures. Peter is told to slaughter and eat as all are now made clean. When the vision concludes, Peter doesn't eat barbeque pork. Instead, he understands that the vision is not about unclean foods but unclean people. He proclaims, in Acts 10:28, "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 YHWH has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Another verse of confusion is found in the New International Version of Mark 7:19, "For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") Here, the Savior is speaking about the tradition of religious hand washing. The words in parenthesis are found in most modern translations but not in the King James Version Bible. Nor are the parenthetical words found in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament. This commentary was added by Bible translators in an attempt to free people from the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Regardless of such confusion, the precepts of the Bible are eternal. With or without the H1N1 virus, the pig was unclean for Noah and is still unclean today.

The Bible Healthcare Plan

Truth about universal healthcare

The debate over healthcare reform in the United States is a needless argument of partisan politics. Americans would not need universal coverage if Bible believers simply followed the Scriptures in regards to health and charity. The followers of the Savior should be a shining example of fitness and generosity to the needy. The Bible has much to say in regards to physical, emotional, and spiritual well being. ""Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from YHWH? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor YHWH with your body," 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Each person has been "fearfully and wonderfully made" to enjoy the best of life. Laziness and disease stop people from experiencing true abundance. This is not the Almighty's will! The Bible clearly indicates that YHWH wants His children to be healthy in spirit and in body. 3 John 1:2 "Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit."

Sadly, the church is just as obese and just as sick as the rest of the world. Physical and spiritual corruption has continued to fester since perfection was lost in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given a diet from the best of the earth which included fresh fruits, vegetables and no meat. The couple was tempted to eat the forbidden as the original sin came in the form of food. The wrong diet was chosen and the result of their disobedience brought sickness, pain, and death into the world. In Genesis 7, Noah is permitted to eat the meat of certain animals that were designated as "clean." Later in Leviticus 11, Moses reviews which animals are to be considered "food" and are fit for human consumption. And though mankind is allowed a lifespan of 120

years in Genesis 6:3, this potential for a long vibrant life is seldom experienced. Unhealthy personal choices and dangerous habits rob people of the physical fullness the Bible offers. "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags," Proverbs 23:20-21. Most sickness can be attributed to overeating, consuming unhealthy items, and not having enough physical activity. "One who is lazy in his work is a brother to one who destroys," says Proverbs 18:9.

The Bible indicates that the assembly of believers were to be an example to the world in all areas of life. From their abundance, believers should be caring for the needy and unfortunate. There would be no need for Government welfare or healthcare if the Church cared for the poor and regularly taught personal responsibility. "Religion that YHWH our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world," James 1:27

President Ronald Reagan was right when he said, "government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." The answer to the current healthcare dilemma isn't more government involvement, but religious involvement by those who profess to follow the Savior. For if the people of YHWH would rise up in holiness to cleanse their bodies and commit themselves to providing for the needy, the government handout lines would soon turn to places of faith that can offer more than a meal or a prescription.

Heaven: It's Not What You Think

Truth about the new Jerusalem

Each day 150,000 people across the world pass away. To answer the questions of life after death, every major religion offers the promise of heaven in one form or another. Strict followers of Islam are told that they will have 70 virgins waiting on the other side of martyrdom. Mormonism speaks of ruling planets and Hinduism teaches reincarnation as different beings. The Christian view of heaven is a curious mix of Biblical fact and folklore. Biblically, heaven is not a place where people will spend eternity singing hymns, floating around on clouds, or listening to non-stop sermons. Heaven is not even a Bible believer's final destination!

The pearly gates or doorways into Heaven are each named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Revelation 21:12, "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." To enter into the gates, one must associate with a tribe of Israel. The Scriptures clearly indicate that there is not a Baptist, Lutheran, or even a Christian door to Heaven.

The picturesque mansion over the hill top is really the Holy Temple on the mountain top of Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem (mistakenly called "heaven") is the realm in which YHWH's presence is manifest. It is more magnificent than any person can imagine and is the place where the angels and all believers who have departed because of death now live, Hebrews 12:22-24. In the New Jerusalem, people will be occupied with living and enjoying the best things in life. Believers will recognize loved ones and fellowship with others, Luke 23:42-43.

The Messiah is now in Heaven preparing the place for future events according to John 14:2. At the end of the Great Tribulation there will be a 1,000 year reign of YHWH upon the earth. Isaiah 66 states that during this time, all nations will keep the Law of Moses, celebrate the seventh-day Sabbath and New Moons. Then, the universe will be transformed as Heaven descends to earth. Revelation speaks of a huge squared city of the New Jerusalem that will come down from the sky to rest upon the planet. Clearly, heaven is not some place in a far away galaxy but is actually very earthly. Revelation 21:2, "And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from YHWH out of heaven." The New Earth will have no sea, sun, or moon. The paradise of the Garden of Eden will also be restored. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and YHWH Himself will be with them and be their Elohim. And YHWH will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away," Revelation 21:3-4.

The final destination for those who put their trust in YHWH and His Messiah isn't an eternal church service, but the New Jerusalem. Such knowledge of Heaven demands a paradigm shift in the mind of the believer. For if Jerusalem and Israel will be important in the world to come; perhaps it should be a priority today. The promise of Heaven is in reality the promise of the restoration of the nation of Israel. "On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem. The YHWH will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one YHWH, and his name the only name," Zechariah 14:8-9.

Understanding Hebrew Idioms

Truth about hebrew phrases of speech

Comments like “a bull in a china shop” and “when the cows come home,” fill the English language. These terms are called “idioms.” An idiom is a phrase that can’t be taken literally and doesn’t always stick out like a sore thumb. It’s a manner of speaking that is natural to native speakers and can be confusing for others. Every culture has its own collection of sayings that suggest thoughts. When a teen says something is “off the chain,” the teen is actually giving their seal of approval. Such an age-specific phrase doesn’t cross the culture barrier very easily as our minds take in foreign information word-for-word, instead of thought-for-thought. A person who is new to English would be easily confused if he heard the phrase “absent without leave.” There are also many Hebrew idioms that are hidden within the Scriptures which can be easily misunderstood.

The Scriptures were originally written in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages. For hundreds of years, Hebrew idioms have been literally translated into English. The problem is, many times, the words are translated correctly, but the original Hebrew thought is lost. The words are there, but the meaning is missing. To understand this, just imagine writing that someone “kicked the bucket” and imagine your reader actually thinking a bucket was physically kicked.

When idioms are hidden behind literal reading, confusion sets in. Most people don’t recognize the hidden Hebrew idioms that they read in the Bible. One such statement was used by the Savior in the Gospel of Matthew. “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle shall pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled,” Matthew 5: 17-18. For most modern-day

Christians, the previous verse means that the Torah and the other books of the “Old Testament” have been fulfilled, or done away with. They say that, “all was fulfilled” when Y’shua said, “it is finished.” Is this really what the Jewish Messiah meant? Just consider the Master’s own words. Has heaven and earth passed away? Of course not! Then, the Law and the prophets remain necessary and essential to living the Almighty’s will.

The Messiah quoted a Hebrew idiom when He said He came not to destroy the Law or the prophets. He was using a rabbinical phrase that was familiar to His audience. During Biblical times and today, if someone heard a Bible teaching and didn’t agree, they would say that the Teacher was “destroying the law.” If someone heard a heard a teaching they thought was the right interpretation they would then say, “yes, this is fulfilling the law.” These are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. Read in context, the Savior had been accused of misinterpreting the Law, yet He said that He was actually rightly and correctly teaching it. Traditional Jewish writings support this idiom, “Should all the nations of the world unite to uproot one word of the Law, they would be unable to do it,” Leviticus Rabbah 19:2.

Hundreds of idioms are found throughout the Scriptures such as “if your eye is evil” or “heap burning coals.” The changes occur when the idioms and phrases of speech are taken out of the Hebrew language can really mix up the truth. We should not gloss over the confusing “contradictions” in the Scriptures. Nor should we mix up the modern and the ancient. To best understand the Bible, one should learn to study, and to live the Biblical culture.

Say Hello to Shalom

Truth about peace

For every language in the world there is a particular way to say “hello.” For example, “hola” is ‘hello’ in Spanish. “Ni hao” is Chinese for ‘greetings.’ “Bonjour” is how the French say ‘good day.’ And, “shalom” is ‘hello’ in Hebrew.

Like saying “aloha” in Hawaii, wishing someone “shalom” carries many meanings. Shalom is used in Israel for “hello” and “good bye” and “peace.” Isn't it amazing that in Israel, a country plagued by terrorists, the term most-often used is Shalom? Regardless of settlement pullouts and suicide bombers the desire and aspiration of every Israelite is peace. This hope to live in peace is the desire of all mankind worldwide. In this quest for peace, soldiers have died and kings have conquered. Yet true shalom is greater than just the absence of war and it is more than a friendly greeting. It is better than a fleeting feeling of happiness. Shalom is the central message of the Bible, the reason the Messiah came, and the answer to the all of the problems in the universe.

By using the phrase “peace” so loosely in the modern world, the true Biblical understanding of the word has been lost. “Peace” in English doesn't adequately describe the Hebrew term shalom. Genuine Shalom is the presence of the Holy One. This Shalom is literally His “wholeness” manifest.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines “shalom” as, “to be well, happy, complete, in good health, prosperous, to be whole, and wholly.” The events of Luke, chapter 8 shed some interesting light on this.

“But as He went the people thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon

physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. And Y'shua said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, 'Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest thou, Who touched Me?' And Y'shua said, 'Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.' And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, 'Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made the whole; go in shalom,'" Luke 8:42-48.

In this story, the woman with the issue of blood received her healing as she touched the Tzitzit (fringes) upon the garment of the Messiah. Her faith led her to reach out for the Savior, and the end result was healing. Not only did the flow of blood stop; she was also completely made whole. Don't miss this. She was healed and made whole. She had found the Messiah. The void in her soul was now overflowing with shalom. Her life was now filled with Him. The woman had come face to face with the Prince of Peace and she would never be the same.

By the power of Shalom a person can walk in faith amidst the troubles of life. Through His Shalom one can make it though a bad day or a string of terrible events. The book of Ephesians proves how this is possible. "He is our Shalom, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us," Ephesians 2: 14. A person's shalom is the presence of the Master. It is Him. Nothing more. Nothing less. Do you have a relationship with Y'shua Sar HaShalom – the prince of peace?

Rise of the World Ruler

Truth about the antichrist

The Bible speaks of the rise of a leader who will unite the world in an effort to establish peace and financial stability. This man will have a charismatic ability to powerfully influence people. The scriptures give him several names like “son of perdition” or the “man of lawlessness.” Like the plot of a Stephen King thriller, the Bible lays out end time events which center upon the evil Antichrist.

His coming will climax a strong delusion of error. “For this reason YHWH sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness,” 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12. The man of sin will speak great things as he conquers the world through peace. Many will accept him as the Christ, the Messiah, sent from heaven to rescue the world from pain. His words and deeds will promise hope as he establishes himself as “anti” or “in the place of” the true Messiah.

Daniel 8:23-25, “In the end time, when evil men are at their worst state, a ruler with a fearsome face and who is able to understand mysterious sayings, shall rise up. And he will have very great power, but his power is not from himself: and he shall destroy terribly, and shall be successful, and accomplish, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall spread deceit; and he shall exalt himself in his own heart, and in the name of peace he shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against Messiah; but he shall be destroyed by Him and not by human hands.”

We can learn from Daniel 9:27 that the Antichrist will broker a peace agreement with Israel for seven years. This agreement will include the start to the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and a

promise to end war. This is indeed the start of the “Great Tribulation.” Half way through this peace deal, the Antichrist will be empowered by demons. “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws,” Daniel 7:25. The Antichrist will use demonic powers with lying signs and wonders as he leads a final world war.

The phrase “antichrist” is only found in two chapters of the entire Scriptures. Here, Bible writers emphatically declare his presence. “The spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard is coming, is now already in the world.” 1 John 4:3. Who is this man of sin? Some have suggested that he is Prince Charles of Wales, President Barack Obama, or even the Catholic Pope. His identity will be made known only to those living in truth. All others will believe his lies. Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life will not fall prey to the deception.

Prepare now for the rise of the antichrist by living a faith of truth. Compare your beliefs to the whole of scripture and question tradition. Don’t believe the strong delusions of humanism or religion. As you follow the truth you will know exactly who the man of sin is while the rest of the world follows after the beast of Revelation. In Luke 21:8 the Savior said, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them."

Sacrifices are for Today

Truth about the sacrificial system

The Bible speaks of many end time events including wars, pestilence, famine, and the rise of an evil character called the "Anti-Christ." One apocalyptic event occurred in 2009 as a Jewish group, called the "Temple Mount Faithful," transported a thirteen ton stone through the city of Jerusalem. This stone will be used as the holy cornerstone for the soon to be built Third Temple in accordance to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. It is at this Temple that animal sacrifices will be made in accordance to the Law of Moses.

Indeed, sacrificial worship is mentioned in Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 in connection to the rebuilt temple. Though PETA may not be in agreement, Jewish people pray three times a day for the reinstatement of the service to the Holy of Holies and the sacrifices of Israel. With the rebuilding of the Temple will come a return to the offering of animals.

Many people get confused regarding sacrifices. The commandments concerning the sacrifices remains and have not been abolished. "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our MASTER remains forever," Isaiah 40:8. The truth is that since the temple is not standing, one actually obeys the Law of Moses by not offering animal sacrifices.

The Old Testament has hundreds of commands regarding Temple worship and sacrifice. The detailed commands surrounding the temple and tabernacle show us how meticulous we should be when coming before YHWH. Each of the sacrifices commanded in the Scriptures, from the red heifer to the Passover lamb, points to the Messiah's sacrifice.

The sacrifices before the Savior's death pointed to His coming. However, they did NOT stop when He died. The sacrifices continued being made until the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE. The book of Acts shows that the early believers continued to make sacrifices at the Temple. Paul also made sacrifices and took vows at the Temple AFTER the Messiah's death! Just as the sacrifices before His coming pointed to Him, the sacrifices AFTER His coming pointed BACK to Him.

Churches have "altar calls" every Sunday. This is a time for believers to come forward with their sins and problems to find solace through prayer. Today's altar calls do not involve death or sacrifice but repentance and prayer.

When Y'shua surrendered His life, He set the prime example for us to follow. May we pray, "not my will, but thine will be done." This is the whole issue of the sacrifices and the binding of Isaac. Y'shua gave up his very life and has called us to do the same. We are to climb upon the altar and offer ourselves to Him. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to YHWH, which is your act of reasonable worship. And be not conformed to the pattern of this world: but be transformed by the ongoing renewing of your mind, that you may discern what is the good, acceptable, and even the perfect, will of YHWH," Romans 12:1,2.

Even if sacrifice looks like losing, it is actually about receiving. When a person gives an offering, they are emptying their hands to be filled again. It is better to give than receive. Just picture a person clenching a lamb that is to be offered, and then releasing that lamb to be killed. Only after the animal is sacrificed can the blood be applied.

Need for End time Gloom and Doom?

Truth about the end of days

A 2009 *Newsmax* magazine cover story featured a lengthy discussion about the return of Y'shua and possible apocalyptic events. According to the feature, "public buzz about the Biblical last days is at its highest level since 9/11." The Pew Research Center found that 79% of American Christians believe in the Second Coming of Christ. Today the doomsday prophet is not some bearded man with a placard proclaiming "the end is near." Instead, gloom and doom seems to be the message of newspapers, the Internet, and television. News headlines read like Bible prophecy. "And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven," Luke 21:11.

On any given day, there are wars in 30 to 40 nations in the world. Rumors of wars swarm about Israel, Iran, and Korea. Over seven million people have died since 1970 due to war.

Pestilence continues to grow as new "super bugs" are becoming resistant to drug treatment. The H1N1 swine flu spread faster than the Center for Disease Control can track. And the HIV Aids virus has killed more than 25 million since 1981. HIV is at pandemic levels in many areas including China, Asia, and Africa.

Famine as well is wide spread throughout the planet. The World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the world is under-fed while another one-third is starving. Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger. Such horrible news isn't new. The world has always had false messiahs, wars, ethnic violence, starvation, disease, and earthquakes. The Savior said that the last days would see such events increase in frequency and size. "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom

against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of birth pangs," Matthew 24:7-8.

Perhaps the surest sign that time is short is the return of the nation of Israel to the Middle East. To Israel the Almighty said, "I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land," Ezekiel 36:24. Many prophecy teachers consider the reestablishment of Jerusalem as the capital city as THE sign of an impending apocalypse. "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled," Luke 21:24. The Messiah promised that the generation that saw such a miracle would certainly behold His return. (Matthew 24:34)

Does this mean that the return of Y'shua is imminent? Well, many sorrows have begun, but there is still more that must occur before the eastern sky splits. To state that "Jesus could return at any time" is to ignore numerous statements in the Scripture about the rise of an anti-Christ leader and a huge world war against the tiny nation of Israel. How can a person prepare for the coming of Revelation? What should someone do about the mark of the beast? Some believers are storing food while others are learning survival skills. Many are buying gold in anticipation of the collapse of the dollar. The Savior addresses such a dilemma when He said, "Watch and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things and stand before the Son of Man," Luke 21:36. The world will come to an end one day. Between now and then, it's important to focus on Spiritual growth. The pursuit of holiness will guide the believer through whatever the future holds. Listen to the voice of the Spirit. If you are led to take certain precautions then do so. But, don't allow fear of Armageddon stop you from living an abundant life.

Star Trek and the Bible

Truth about the priestly blessing

Star Trek is one of the most recognizable film franchises in the world. The original television series launched the entire sci-fi genre and the careers of many Hollywood stars. The characters of Captain James T. Kirk and Spock have become engraved into the American culture. Statements like “beam me up Scotty” and “live long and prosper” are well known to both the young and old. The Vulcan hand salute of parted fingers has an interesting Biblical origin.

It was 1968 when William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy were filming a Star Trek episode that called for Spock to give a special greeting. The original Star Trek novel by Alan Dean Foster had the human-alien hybrid kneeling before others. However, the idea of such a strong character bowing in reverence seemed uncomfortable. Shatner and Nimoy drew upon their Jewish roots and knew exactly what symbol should be used. The Vulcan hand salute was then transferred from the memories of the Holy Temple to the television screen.

For thousands of years, the “w” shaped symbol of parted fingers has been used by the genealogical descendents of Jewish priests called “Kohanim” and other spiritual leaders. The Vulcan gesture is a picture of the windows of heaven and the Hebrew letter “shin.” It is raised high as a special blessing from Numbers 6 is proclaimed. The phrase “live long and prosper” could be considered a paraphrase of this special prayer. “May YHWH bless you, and keep you; May YHWH make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; May YHWH lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace,” Numbers 6:24-26.

For Christianity and Judaism this is the final benediction of many worship services. It is a prayer of mercy, protection, substance, and

peace. This blessing calls for the Creator's favor and holy name to be upon all who follow the Scriptures. It is not some magical practice on the part of the priests, as they have no power over the divine. The text makes it very clear that while the priests may pronounce the words, it is the Almighty who does the actual blessing.

The Jewish people have a rich faith that is full of symbolism and Spiritual power. Such traditions have great meaning that can be lost if one is totally closed to the Hebrew roots of Christianity. "What advantage then has the Jew? Much in every way; chiefly as they were entrusted with the very oracles of YHWH," Romans 3:1-2. Judaism isn't all bad. Judaism isn't all good either. One must earnestly search for the true path of faith that hangs between the balance of our ancestor's practices and the Almighty's divine will.

The Almighty chose the Jewish people to preserve the Scriptures from error. Many of the traditions that surround their devotion, like the Vulcan hand symbol, bring added significance to life. Such traditions can be adopted by Bible believers if they are void of pagan origin, not prohibited in the Scripture, and if the action does not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible never bans tradition but it does speak against actions that make void the word of YHWH. There are many customs of Judaism and Christianity that are beneficial for the Believer.

Leonard Nimoy wrote of this in his autobiography, "The special moment when the Kohanim blessed the assembly moved me deeply, for it possessed a great sense of magic and theatricality."

To Tithe or Not to Tithe: that is the question

The truth about giving ten percent

Tithing is a perplexing issue for churches that proclaim that the Old Testament covenants have been done away and superseded by the New Testament. This is because there is not a single command in the New Testament to pay tithes to the church. Regardless of this fact, many preachers suggest that tithing equals blessing and those who withhold gifts will be under a curse. Verses on this subject are often taken out of context and used against believers to persuade them to give more. What does the Bible really say in regards to tithing?

Tithing is an Old Testament idea that first appears in the book of Genesis. Abraham is visited by a priest named Melkizadek in Genesis 14. As an act of servitude and respect, Abraham gives Melkizadek ten percent of all his belongings. This is the one and only time that Abraham is seen giving a tithe. Years later, as the tabernacle camp was set up, the Israelites were commanded to bring the first fruits of their harvest and livestock to the priests. This ongoing tithe was accompanied by an annual tithe of 10% in Deuteronomy 14:22 to the Levites. An additional 20% gift to the poor every third year is actually mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:28! These tithes and offerings supported the priesthood, the work of the tabernacle, and provided a type of “welfare” system for the needy. Deuteronomy 14:25 gives instructions for converting harvest into money, which could be used in developing civilizations. Overall, the combined tithes of those living during Biblical times was close to 24% of their harvest or income.

At the time of the Savior, tithing to the Levitical Priesthood was a well established practice. In Matthew 23:23, the Messiah rebukes a group of leaders who tithed properly but didn’t show mercy to their fellow man. The followers of the Apostles met regularly on the first day

of the week to collect an offering for those who spread the Gospel. (They wouldn't carry money on the seventh day Sabbath as buying or selling on this day is forbidden in Nehemiah 13:9.) When the Temple was destroyed in 70AD the giving of sacrifices and tithes stopped for the Jewish people.

Later, as Roman Catholicism spread, tithing was similar to a tax. The doctrine of giving 10% to the church was canonized at the Synod of Macon in 585AD and the Council of Trent provided punishment of excommunication if anyone withheld a tithe. During the seventh and eighth centuries, the church increased its ownership of land in Europe. The ten percent rental fee for land was transferred from the secular world of business to the Christian realm. Such actions ensured the Roman church collected its tithes from the poor and the rich. In 1285, tithing was sanctioned by English statute law which led to mandatory tithes being collected by secular governments for hundreds of years.

Today, tithing is obligatory of church members and leaders. The offering plate is passed at most services as the church is considered the "storehouse." The church's modern plea to give 10% does not stem from Biblical precepts but from tainted tithing history. If the Law of Moses has passed away, then tithing has been abolished as well. Those who suggest the abolishment of the Mosaic Law and still teach tithing, are continuing the errors of history and possibly deceiving their followers for financial gain. Perhaps during these times of economic woe, Christians will reconsider this subject and either accept the Law of Moses or reject the principle of the tithe.

The Untruthful Trinity

The truth about the godhead

There is one specific Christian doctrine that puzzles both clergy and lay people. When asked about this idea, some pastors explain that the mystery is so great that it can not be comprehended. Few seminary professors can point to specific Bible verses on the subject and no one can find the word “trinity” within the pages of the Bible. The scriptures never use this term. So, should a person in blind faith accept the trinity as true?

The Trinity was first introduced to the faith to appease polytheistic converts during the Nicean Council of 325AD. The Egyptians had their trinity of Osiris, Horus, and Isis and the Babylonians used the triangle to symbolize their triune deity. Early church leaders Tertullian and Origen spoke of the trinity and the notion formally became part of church doctrine in the fourth century. It was then that the Catholic Church first began teaching god as being in three separate persons. The New Catholic Encyclopedia says, “the Trinity is not directly and immediately the word of God. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not taught in the Old Testament.”

Many different Trinitarian ideas exist, which generally present the Godhead as three distinct persons yet each equally “god.” Those who defend the trinity will often take segments of Scripture, of an incident, or of a text and try to make them say what the entire Bible refutes.

One major problem with the trinity is that leads to a separation of the godhead. People envision Jesus the Son being sent to rescue the world from an angry Old Testament God the Father. The Holy Spirit is considered to be a flighty personality that rests on some but not on others. Such ideas could not be farther from the truth. Paul wrote that

“YHWH is only one,” in Galatians 3:20. Even the 10 Commandments state, “I am YHWH your Elohim; you shall have no gods except me,” Exodus 20:2. The Hebrew word “elohim” is a plural word that is often translated as “god” in English Bibles. For example, Genesis 1:26 reads: “Elohim said, ‘Let us make man in our own image. Many people erroneously interpret the plurality of the title “Elohim” as indicating the three Persons of the Trinity. Though this word is plural, that doesn’t mean that there are plural gods. By using the word “elohim” the Hebrew authors are stating that YHWH is plural in majesty. He can’t be put in a box or encompassed in human terms.

What the Bible does teach is “unity.” This is the idea that there is one Elohim who may choose to be revealed in various ways such as the burning bush or the voice from heaven. The Messiah alluded to this when He quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 as He was asked which commandment was the greatest. “Hear, O Israel; YHWH is our Elohim; YHWH is One: And thou shalt love YHWH thy Elohim with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment,” Mark 12:29-30. Notice that He didn’t say that YHWH is three!

The original Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:4 reads “shema yisrael YHWH eloheynu; YHWH echad.” The Hebrew word “echad” is the word for “unified, unique, and special.” This is also the numeric word for one.

The Bible says that even the demons know better than to believe in a triune god. James 2:19 says, “you believe that there is one Elohim, good! Even the demons believe that and shudder.” For the most compelling evidence against the trinity, simply consider the many words spoken by the Messiah on this subject. The Savior often said of doing only what the Father commanded. In John 10:30 He stated, “I and the Father are one.” Truly, there is only one divine will. There is only one divinity. The Trinitarian idea of “god in three persons” doesn’t pass the litmus test of the Scriptures. There exists the Father or “YHWH” as

revealed in Exodus 3. The Messiah is certainly 100% divine yet is subject to the Father. The Holy Spirit is the Almighty's power at work.

The trinity doesn't have to be a mystery as it can certainly be understood as untruthful. "Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true YHWH, and Y'shua whom you have sent," John 17:30.

The Test of Holiness

The truth about lashon hara

The spiritual life to be holy and blameless before the Almighty can be frustrating at times. Yes, with so many books, articles, conferences, interpretations, doctrines, theologies, and creeds flooding the believer, just trying to walk in faith can be a challenge. “We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell,” James 3:2-11. Controlling the tongue is a great starting place to begin if you truly desire to walk in holiness.

The purpose of the spoken word is to express the emotions of the heart, to build up or tear down. Proverbs 18:21, “The power of life and death is in the tongue.” Words are thoughts verbalized. Y’shua said in Matthew 12:34, “The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart.” What we think, what we believe will eventually manifest through the mouth. Herein lies the battle of the ages, we must choose to speak either life or death. For in a split second our innermost thoughts can become our outermost expressions. We must choose our words carefully. Washington Irving once said, “The tongue is the only tool that grows sharper with use.” While, the Psalmist prayed, “Set a guard of YHWH over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips,” Psalm 12:4.

We must constantly be on guard against “lashon hara or “evil speech.” This includes any negative communication like gossip, slander, slur, lying, or perverse speech. We all know people who claim to be super-spiritual believers yet their witness is destroyed by a tongue full of gossip. Well, lashon hara hurts three people: “he who relates it, he who accepts it, and of whom it is said.” The basis against speaking lashon hara is found in Leviticus 19:16 & 17, “Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life.” Exodus says, “do not spread false reports,” and in Titus 3:2 the word tells us to “speak evil of no man.” Truly, these verses are speaking against more than just lying. Lashon hara is negative or perverse speech – even if it is true. A biblical example of lashon hara is the twelve spies who were sent to inspect the Promised Land. The ten fearful spies who brought a negative report were spreading lashon hara while the two spies whose report was made in faith spoke words that glorified the Creator. Either our words are full of faith or fear, life or death, blessing or curses.

Biblically, the expressions of the mouth prove who we are. The words we speak are indications of the state of our heart. For example, the Bible divides people into two categories; first there are the wise whose words are full of encouragement, truth, love, and inspiration. Second there are the wicked or foolish, whose words are many and whose expressions are often evil.

The wise person speaks blessings continually. “The tongue of the wise brings healing,” Proverbs 12:18. The scriptures also say in Proverbs 15 that a wise or righteous person speaks the right things at the right times and these words are pure and pleasant.

The Bible often speaks of the wicked in reference to the terms of their speech. The wicked are full of violent words, which are of little value. The wicked pour forth curses like a sewer and “the advice of the wicked is deceitful,” Proverbs 12:5. To the wicked Y’shua said, “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of

the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks,” Matthew 12:34. While the righteous pray that Yahweh will use their tongue for good, the wicked say “our lips are our own, who is lord over us,” Psalm 12:4.

The old cliché is true, “garbage in, garbage out.” But, what if you fill your mind with good things? “Good in, good out” works just the same! Just ask the Messiah, who said, “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him,” Matthew 12:35. Like a super computer that just needs to be programmed correctly, your tongue’s output will equal your mind’s input. This could be why we are told in Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” From thinking on things that are of good report we ourselves will become of good report. The tongue is our true test of holiness. If you truly want to be holy, you need to start with watching your words. “You will have to give an account for every idle word you have spoken,” Matthew 12:36.

The Bible's Response to Illegal Immigration

Truth about the foreigners

Though the Bible was written thousands of years ago, it speaks with vivid clarity about many of the modern issues that face America like abortion, welfare, and illegal immigration. The United States was founded upon the millions of immigrants who came to this land looking for hope, and today is indeed sustained by immigrants who work, pay taxes, and contribute to the whole.

The Bible explains that these foreigners should not be mistreated or forsaken. To make this point, the Almighty spoke to the nation of Israel to remember that they were once aliens and sojourners in a foreign land. Leviticus 19:33-34, "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your Elohim." This verse is complemented with the Deuteronomy 10:19 passage, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." These verses are not taken out of context of the Bible, nor are they applicable only to the Jewish people. Instead, they reinforce the Biblical message of love and acceptance of those who are less fortunate.

The plaque on Ellis Island that reads "give me your tired, your poor" should be remembered as the beckon call of our nation. Immigrants should simply not be blamed for social and economic problems, as everyone's ancestors were an immigrant at one time or another. Immigrants who agree to cooperate with civil laws should be allowed to become part of America. This is not just a governmental issue that should be solved by secular humanistic thinkers in the legislature. Bible believers should express love and concern for their neighbors (legal

citizens or not) and therefore create a tidal wave of care that reaches to the steps of the White House.

One section of scripture that must be discussed is Romans 13:1-7 that insists that believers should obey the laws of the government. While illegal immigration may be the law of the land of the USA, it is also a set of laws that have become almost impossible to enforce. It is true that while in Egypt, the Hebrew people had to obey and respect the commands of Pharaoh. Today, the American law books are full of antiquated rules about this subject that provide little funding or clarity for enforcement, resulting in states choosing to take up their own laws as Arizona has recently done. The cost of removing those in America illegally would be insurmountable to a country trying to climb its way out of recession. It has been estimated that the cost of deporting 12 million people, housing them in camps, processing and shipping them overseas or across a border would be in the billions of dollars. Wouldn't this same money be better used a stimulus to the economy by providing tax cuts on gasoline or income?

Perhaps illegal immigrants should be granted citizen status if they obey the principles of American law by living at peace and contributing to society. Conservative Christian leader Chuck Colson recently wrote that "we ought to remind our fellow citizens who are so angry about immigration that it is our desire for cheap labor that has contributed to the problem. It's bad enough that illegal immigration is a "no-win" issue; it should not be a "no-truth" issue, as well. And in the end, we must, as Christians, treat everyone in our midst with godly compassion." The Torah should instruct us on how to live in every area of life – including politics and how we treat other people.

Oil Spill or Not, Shrimp is Still Unclean

Truth about food

The fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico came to a halt as fishermen and scientists awaited the affects of the huge spill of oil that gushed at least 210,000 gallons a day into the sea. The South's shrimpers were particularly hit hard as shrimp are bottom feeders that eat the ocean waters' waste and trash.

Shrimp, like pig, and catfish are the garbage disposals of the world's ecosystem. The uncleanliness of such animals is just one reason why the Bible forbids their consumption as food.

From the beginning pages of Genesis, one can read of a specific diet given to mankind. First, Adam and Eve are given every tree, herb, and seed bearing fruit in the Garden of Eden except one. They, of course, chose what was bad for them and fell from perfection. When Noah assembled the animals for the ark he made a distinction between the species and they did not come two by two as commonly believed. Genesis 7 shows how Noah set apart certain animals when they boarded the big boat. The "clean" animals came in pairs of seven while the "unclean" animals came in pairs of two. The "clean" animals were needed in abundance as they would have been used for food and sacrifice by Noah and his family.

After the flood the Almighty told Noah, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb I have given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat," Genesis 9:2-4. Of course, this verse doesn't suggest that every plant or animal is fit for consumption as there are many poisonous items throughout the world. This is explained in Genesis 6:21 which states only that which "is edible" was to be used for food - "and

as for you, take for yourself some of all food WHICH IS EDIBLE, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them." Noah knew which foods and plants were not edible and deemed unclean.

Moses later clarified exactly which animals were considered "clean" and fit for consumption in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. All land animals must "chew the cud" and have "cloven hoofs" to be eaten by mankind. Birds may not be scavengers and sea animals must have both fins and scales to be called "clean." Shrimp, scallops, lobster, and pig are all unclean and were never considered "food" in the Bible.

In the New Testament, one can not find a single verse that shows Peter, Paul, or Y'shua eating a ham sandwich or a shrimp dinner. The Messiah believed so firmly in the laws of clean and unclean meats that he destroyed a whole herd of swine being raised for food, in violation of the Almighty's law.

The Apostles explained in Acts 15:29 that the laws of clean and unclean animals extended to "gentile" converts who were coming into the faith. This verse suggests that new believers were to "abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, and things strangled." Spiritually and physically, it does matter what a person eats. Sea animals without fins and scales were never created to be considered food and should not be eaten. The oil spill was indeed unfortunate as it did affect the world's ecological systems. Perhaps the oil in the water caused more people to consider the eternal words of the Bible and shy away from unclean bottom dwellers or other forbidden animals.

Why Israel Still Matters

Truth about the holy land

Constant disagreements between the Israeli Government and the Obama administration on nuclear weapons and land settlements have created a tremendous rift between two of history's greatest allies, leading Americans to wonder if the Holy Land still matters.

The Obama Administration's disoriented foreign policies have fundamentally changed the way our nation relates to other countries. It is confusing that President Obama would apologize to its European Allies as he did on April 3, 2009 and even bow before the Japanese Emperor on November 14, 2009. But what is even more bewildering is the fact that Obama seemingly refused to have dinner or even his picture taken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington during the week of March 24, 2010. Go ahead and check these facts and you will be amazed. Is this really the type of relationship that America should have with the Jewish state? The Bible gives clear benefits to the nations that support the chosen people. In Genesis 12:3 YHWH says, "I will bless them that bless thee and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The Messiah said these words about his Jewish brothers, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren (Israel), ye have done it unto me."

Clearly, these spiritual and physical advantages will stop flowing to America if our nation continues its disdain towards Israel. In Isaiah 60:12 the Bible warns us: "For the nation that will not serve you (Israel) will perish; it will be utterly ruined." The restoration of the nation of Israel in 1948 was a miraculous event and fulfillment to prophetic scripture. Isaiah 66:7-8, "Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard

of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children."

And, as prophesied in Scripture, the enemies of Israel have surrounded the nation with threats, war, and terrorism. Within hours of Israel's declaration of independence the Muslim countries of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon invaded Israel in 1948. The Jewish nation swiftly defeated these enemies. Then in 1967 Israel defended itself during the six day war and regained control of Jerusalem. In 1973 Israel was once again attacked by Egypt and Syria but the Hebrew people won that battle and even extended their borders further. To these victories Leviticus 26:3, 7-8 says, ""If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands... You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you."

Because of the tactics of our peace-loving President, America, once considered a Christian nation, turned its back on Israel. The Scripture commands Bible believers to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee," Psalm 122:6. Believers are to speak out for Zion's sake (Isaiah 62:1), to be watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem (Isaiah 62:6) and to bless the Hebrew people (Genesis 12:3). The Biblical obligation to defend Israel in their time of need is being ignored by our President, who seems to have contempt for the home of Christianity and Judaism. The Holy Land matters in Scripture and it should matter to our nation today.

Learn from Tiger Woods and Master Sin

Truth about sin

The hidden dangers of sin can be learned from Tiger Woods' rise to fame as a professional golfer, fall from grace because of infidelity, and returned to the game at the Master's tournament in the Spring of 2010. Tiger became a role model for many because of his athletic abilities and charity work. But, his success in golf didn't guarantee his own personal integrity. Quite possibly, his position before millions placed him on a pedestal that was sure to result in his fall. What goes up must come down. Anytime we look to man for inspiration we will eventually be disappointed, as imperfections will always become prevalent. Sin comes natural to humanity. Or does it?

The mighty Tiger's problems illustrate the power that sin has to confuse the mind and blind the heart. Sin comes from the temptations that barrages people daily. These temptations originate from an outside spiritual source. While most people believe that Adam committed the first sin because of his "sinful nature," the Bible doesn't teach such. (In fact the phrase "sinful nature" never appears in the King James Version Bible.)

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve were tempted with desires and thoughts by an independent force called the "serpent." It was not their own idea to violate the Almighty's commands. Nor did the first couple bring sin into the world. The Scriptures record that the original sin was actually committed by an angel that led a rebellion against the Most High. Since creation the accuser (satan in Hebrew) and his minions have led a spiritual war against mankind. The adversary comes as an angel of light and tempts through desires and thoughts that may at first seem pleasing, but in the end will result in disaster. Big sins (like adultery) and

little sins (like stretching the truth) both welcome the presence of the kingdom of darkness.

Just ask Tiger Woods, and he would agree that simply because something seems good and feels good, doesn't mean it is for the good. Plus, when a person agrees with satan to disobey the scripture, a door to the enemy is opened. With rebellion, the entity of sin is empowered within the flesh to act as it independently desires. The Apostle Paul wrote of this when he said, "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do and if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me," Romans 7:14-17. Sin is more than just an act. It is a living spiritual power that can actually overcome individuals. Sin has influence, but it doesn't have to win.

Tiger could have prevailed over his lusts, and not allowed the sin in his flesh to manifest, if he would have applied the principle of James 4:7. This passage teaches that the enemy is defeated when a person submits to the Words of the Bible and then resists and renounces the tempting thoughts of sin.

Henry Wright of "Be In Health Ministries" teaches these steps to freedom from the power of sin:

- Recognize - You must recognize what it is
- Responsibility - You must take responsibility for what you recognize
- Repent - Repent to YHWH for participating with what you recognize
- Renounce - You must make what you recognize your enemy & renounce it
- Remove - Get rid of it once and for all
- Resist - When it tries to come back, resist it
- Rejoice - Give YHWH thanks for setting you free
- Restore - Help someone else get free

Tiger Woods is still an example for anyone who seeks to live a life of victory over sin and holiness unto YHWH. For whether Woods wins or loses the Masters doesn't really matter to the millions that have been affected by his story. What matters the most is that we can learn from this sports god's fall, that no one is immune to the living spiritual force of sin.

Communion is Only Part of the Story

Truth about the eucharist

The sacrament of communion is a man-made tradition that has been ripped from the context of the New Testament to actually detract from the true Gospel message. Most believe that communion is in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ, but this meal really copies a tradition that was in place long before the Savior walked the earth. The idea of "god-eating" was practiced by followers of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and other pagan gods of mystery religions as a way to bond worshippers to their supreme being. Today, churches everywhere continue the error of long ago when they administer the small wafer and juice. The modern Eucharist is never what the Savior intended when he "took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me," Luke 22:19.

On the night before his death, Y'shua commemorated the Passover with His disciples as seen in Matthew 26:17-24. During this Passover meal the Savior said, "This bread is my body," and "this cup is the new testament in my blood," Luke 22:7, 19-20. The Messiah wasn't instituting the service of "communion" at this point. These words were actually spoken during and about the Passover service. With the cup and unleavened bread, the Savior was placing His seal of approval on the Passover Seder. He was in essence saying, "when you keep the Passover, do it in remembrance of me."

Since the time of Moses, the Hebrew people have celebrated the exodus from Egypt through a commemorative meal. This meal traditionally includes wine, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and lamb. According to Leviticus 23 and Exodus 12, Passover is a commanded remembrance for all Bible believers. "And ye shall observe this thing

(Passover) for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever,” Exodus 12:2:24.

Y’shua kept Passover before His death and Paul celebrated the Passover after the resurrection of Christ. Luke 22:8 explains, “And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat.” Here, Y’shua was instructing his disciples to remember Him when they took the Passover once a year. Paul said, “For Christ is our Passover also has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” 1 Corinthians 5:7-8.

Passover was observed by the early church until the Roman Catholic leaders separated the bread and the wine to create their own sacrament to mirror surrounding religions. The idea of transubstantiation was later adopted into communion to appease the nations that were accustomed to offering goblets of human blood to acquire the virtues of the dead person. Though the Protestant Reformation brought many changes, Christians everywhere now partake of wafers and wine without truly recognizing the Passover meaning behind the service. The error of communion continues. This should not be. Instead of Easter and communion, the Bible teaches Passover as a commanded practice. Communion is a fabrication that often stops people from experiencing the holiness of Passover. Don’t be misled by settling for only part of the Passover meal with communion. Keep the feast of Passover and experience the joy and freedom it brings.

Remove the Controversial Cross

Truth about the execution stake

In 2010 the Supreme Court gave a ruling that allowed a Christian to stand atop a precipice in the Mojave dessert. A few weeks later the cross was stolen and it never been recovered. The cross had been the center of religious debate since a former government employee sued because it was permitted, but a Buddhist shrine was not allowed on the same land. The symbol of the cross, though beloved by millions, is indeed controversial for many reasons.

History shows that the cross was already a religious symbol hundreds of years before Y'shua walked the earth. It was often used as a sign of phallic worship by the Egyptians, Babylonians, Druids, and Greeks. Those who worshipped the god Tammuz would write or wear the mystic Tau, cross shape, in reference to the initial of their god's name. Interestingly, Tammuz was a god-man hybrid that was supposedly born of a virgin and whose shed blood brought new life. To worship Tammuz, a forty day period of fasting was held each year that would culminate with the retelling of the resurrection of Tammuz from the dead. These similarities between Tammuz and the Christ made the transition to using the cross as a symbol of Christianity an easy compromise for new believers. "In the Egyptian churches the cross was a pagan symbol of life borrowed by the Christians and interpreted in the pagan manner," The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, vol. 14, p.273.

To make matters worse, it is highly doubtful that the Messiah was crucified upon a cross. The most popular Roman method of crucifixion used during the times of Y'shua was actually a straight stake or tree as prophesied in Deuteronomy 21:23. Historical texts prove that the few times a cross beam was used by the Romans for an execution; the shape

resembled the capitalized letter T and not the lower case t shape. In the New Testament, the word translated for “cross” is the Greek phrase “stauros.” According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, this term literally means “stake” or “upright beam.” The Messiah Himself made such a reference to crucifixion on an upright pole in John 12:32, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness; even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” The Old Testament shows in Numbers 21:8-9 that after a horrible plague, Moses took a brazen serpent on a pole and raised it as a symbol of healing. (This is where the modern medical symbol originates.)

Later in the Scriptures, the Hebrew people were guilty of offering incense to this same bronze serpent. They, like people with their crucifixes today, were looking to a symbol for miracles and healing. King Hezekiah destroyed the pole in 2nd Kings 18:1-6 and rebuked the people for exalting a symbol over the Almighty.

Through the centuries, the cross has become a major stumbling block. There are scores of unbelievers who remember that Christians stood in the shadow of the cross as Muslims and Jews were murdered during the Crusades. Even Hitler used his own version of the cross as he killed millions in the Holocaust. Today most people will deny that they worship their crosses, but these items certainly carry an emotional attachment. A little research will verify that the cross simply can not be justified as an acceptable symbol in the Bible or the history books. Perhaps in an effort to return to a historically and scripturally accurate representation of the faith, the cross should be removed churches in America. What could it hurt?

The Right Way to Say “I’m Sorry”

Truth about repentance

Our modern culture seems to have lost the art of offering an apology. After getting caught in infidelity professional golfer Tiger Woods said in a press conference that he was “sorry” for ruining his marriage and career. In 2010 the Toyota Company took full-page ads in major Japanese newspapers to apologize for massive vehicle recalls. And the list goes on and on. From these examples, it would seem that a proper apology includes having a press conference, advertising, or using social media. Is this really how a person should say, “I’m sorry?”

The Bible makes a clear distinction between the simple regret of getting caught and truly making changes to amend behavior. According to the Bible, it is not enough to just ask for forgiveness. True repentance is sorrow expressed through change. This is called "teshuvah" in Hebrew. This ancient word is used throughout the Bible to describe the process of totally abandoning an evil act and taking direct efforts to correct the wrong. Teshuvah includes regret and sorrow but does not stop there. It doesn't just promise to do better next time; it rights the wrong and really does do better next time. “Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices,” Ezekiel 14:6. Notice this verse includes repenting and turning from sin. The word for “repent” and “turn” in this passage is “shuvah.”

Thousands of years ago, the Creator gave all mankind specific and direct instructions on how to live a life that is both spiritually and physically fulfilling. This set of loving instructions, much like a blueprint for living, is what the Hebrew people call “Torah.” 1 John 3:4 states that sin results when a person chooses to disobey the Torah. Sin can only be forgiven when a person changes their heart and changes their actions. Its not enough to just apologize.

The Bible suggests a four step path of teshuvah that begins with stopping the action. Acknowledge the sin area and stop the destructive behavior. If, for example, you are stealing, you must stop. You simply cannot continue in sin if you want forgiveness. Then express regret. You should indeed feel regret for your error. It's wrong to steal. Theft is breaking Torah and hurting others. You should be sorry for the harm you have caused. There should be absolutely NO excuses for the sin – take responsibility and understand how what you have done has caused pain.

Next, verbalize the regret. This doesn't have to be done at a worship center; it can be done in the confines of your home. Tell the Almighty YHWH that you are sorry for whatever you have done wrong. If you need help overcoming the sin or addiction, now is the time to tell someone and seek advice or help. There is power in confessing out loud, as the book of James says, "Confess your sins to one another that you may be healed."

Finally, make a plan. How can you be sure the mistake or sin won't happen again? Make a practical plan of action. This last step is helping you "make no provision for the flesh" as spoken of in Romans. If you know that certain subjects are sources of conflict or areas of temptation, simply avoid these places. Your plan might include memorizing scripture verses to combat the evil desire.

Real repentance can be regained through looking into the pages of the Bible, following the path of teshuvah, and ignoring the bad examples given by today's fallen.

Here are a few Bible verses to consider on this subject

- Leviticus 26:40-42, "'But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers--their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward

them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies-- then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land."

- Luke 5:32, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
- Ezekiel 18:21-22, "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."
- Acts 2:38, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Y'shua HaMoshiach for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"
- Joel 2:12-13, "Even now," declares the YHWH, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to YHWH, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."
- Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of YHWH is at hand: repent and believe the gospel."

The Olympics: Not All Fun and Games

Truth about the olympics

In 2010 the Winter Olympics snowballed into the death of one athlete, the worship of pagan gods, and the continuation of Adolf Hitler's dreams. The Olympics are clearly pagan. Any student of history can figure this much out. Greek gods and goddesses adorn the gold medals, as the remnant of ancient games once held in honor of the god Zeus. Originally, only men were allowed to compete and clothing was seldom worn by athletes. Women were eventually given the opportunity to contend as the pagans wanted to honor Zeus' wife Hera. The early Olympic Games were called the "total pagan entertainment package" by author Tony Perrottet, author of *The Naked Olympics: The True Story of the Ancient Games*.

Because of the tainted history of the Olympics, the games were actually banned for over 1500 years. History records that the ancient Olympics ended around the year 400AD when the Roman Emperor Theodosius tried to eliminate all pagan rituals and Greek temples. Christianity was considered the "state religion" of Rome and the religious leaders of the day considered the Olympics harmful to the faith of true believers. It wasn't until the 1890's that the games resurfaced in popularity. The Winter Olympics began only in 1908 with figure skating competitions.

The 1936 Berlin games gave rise to many popular Olympic customs that never took place in Greece. These are counterfeit practices that were adopted into the games to promote the agenda of Nazi Germany. For example, the Hitler Olympic gave use of the ringed Olympic flag, the torch relay, and the lighting of the flame. Hitler insisted that a torch be lit to pair the Nazi country to the classical glory of ancient Greece. From that fateful day in Germany, the torch race has continued the beacon of

Berlin by becoming a symbol of world unity. Plus, the five interlocking rings flag, designed by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, once proudly featured the Nazi Swastika. The Berlin games were a huge success as they garnered respect of the world by holding the most lavish Olympic event ever. After that event, the games were cancelled for twelve years as the world was fighting a war that Adolf Hitler had already planned. Hitler's propaganda to create and celebrate the "Aryan master race" reached a peak during the Berlin games and now continues every four years through Olympic competition.

The games have in recent years been corrupted by unfair judges and other scandals. The 2008 Beijing games were held in China despite the country's human rights violations and a partial ban on Bibles during the event. In pursuit of popularity and pride, athletes have been known to violently attack others (think Nancy Kerrigan) and take performance enhancing drugs (think steroids.) At every level, the Olympic brand has become commercialized for greed. At best the Olympics encourage physical fitness. At worst, these games are actions of forbidden worship with underlying themes of hatred. In 2010, NBC broadcast 3,700 distracting hours from the Winter Olympics as money and time were totally wasted for entertainment and prideful purposes. Even the Olympic anthem, sung throughout the event, honored praise to Zeus through the various competitions that test the skills of mankind. Perhaps we should remember the origins of the games, recall the actions of Emperor Theodisious, and not be consumed with the Olympia mania. Sure, the competition can be justified as just fun and games but about such the Messiah said in Luke 16:15, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but YHWH knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in YHWH's sight."

“God” Doesn’t Love You

Truth about true love

From the classic tale of Romeo and Juliet to today’s blockbuster movies, the world is in love with love. People sing about it, dream about it, and write books about this most natural of all feelings. Everyone has two basic emotional needs: the desire to feel loved and the desire to show love. A major malfunction in humanity occurs when these desires are mixed up, and when love is not properly received or given.

People say that they “love the New Orleans Saints.” Girls fall in and out of love all through high school. Mankind is searching for true love, but as one classic Country music song puts it, the world is “looking for love in all the wrong places.” The fact is that true love is not found in receiving love from others. Being the center of your mate’s attention isn’t all you need. Love isn’t about getting some feeling or fix, it is about giving devotion and time. It is better to give than receive.

In modern thought love is often confused with lust and is usually considered an emotion that can be turned on and off like a light switch. The concept of love in the Bible is very different. Love or “ahava” in the Hebrew means “to give.” The word “ahava” is usually used in the Scriptures as a verb. This means that love is something you do and not just what you feel or believe.

Biblical love is more concerned about giving than receiving. Giving is the vehicle of love. “For YHWH so loved the world that He gave His only Son,” John 3:16. True love is not even based on feelings, as feelings can actually stop someone from giving love to others. We treat people the way we feel. Therefore, if we feel loved of the Almighty then we will treat other people with that same love. When you treat others rudely,

it's simply because you are not feeling loved. Feelings are symptoms of thought. The problem is that most of people think that they are unlovely. Masses think that God doesn't love them. When we have these thoughts we then are inclined to act unloving to others. Understand that if you are not feeling the love of the Almighty, then it is your emotions that are stopping His ahava from filling your life. But, if you meditate, think, sing, or pray about YHWH's ahava then your emotions and actions will reflect His love. Your actions go along with what you think about. "Beloved, if YHWH so loved us; we also should love one another," 1 John 4:11.

Don't allow bad problems or emotions to convince you that YHWH doesn't feel compassion towards you. Regardless of what you have done in the past, YHWH loves you and you are special to Him. His love is unconditional because it is His nature to love. "But anyone who does not love does not know YHWH, for YHWH is love," 1 John 4:8.

A person of faith should overflow with the love of Messiah; a love that constantly gives to others. "He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me," John 14:21. Notice the pattern in this verse – first you do love and then you feel it and receive it. For faith to be effective, each religious action, each prayer, and each good deed must be from the motivation of showing love. Biblical love is an unconditional gift that is freely offered from the heavens. The Savior said, "My command is this: love each other as I have loved you," John 15:12.

Here are a few Bible verses to consider about YHWH's love:

- For YHWH so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. - John 3:16
- I have been crucified with Messiah and I no longer live, but Messiah lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in

the Son of YHWH, who loved me and gave himself for me. -
Galatians 2:20

- Know therefore that YHWH your Elohim is Elohim; he is the faithful Elohim, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. - Deuteronomy 7:9
- For YHWH loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. - Psalm 37:28
- I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. - Proverbs 8:17
- This is how YHWH showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved Elohim, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since YHWH so loved us, we also ought to love one another. – 1 John 4:9-11
- And so we know and rely on the love Elohim has for us. Elohim is love. Whoever lives in love lives in YHWH, and Elohim in him. - 1 John 4:16
- We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love YHWH," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love YHWH, whom he has not seen. – 1 John 4:19-20
- This is how we know who the children of YHWH are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of YHWH; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. - 1 John 3:10

- So be very careful to love YHWH your Elohim. - Joshua 23:11
- The Savior replied: "'Love the YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' – Matthew 22:37-39

Should the Faith be Color Blind

Truth about race

When it comes to racism and the Bible, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had some things right and some things wrong. The famed civil rights leader and pastor shared the truth of the Scriptures when he said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'" The Bible never makes a distinction between races and indeed never uses the word "race" in its pages.

What the Bible does teach is that all of humanity was formed in the image of the Almighty. The Creator didn't form white man from the sandy ground and then black man from some dark dirt. Scientists call our kind the "homo sapien" species and do not distinguish between different cultures or people groups. So, how can some Bible believers justify their name calling and hatred of people with different colored skin? Why is it that the worship hour on Sunday is still the most segregated time in America? Shouldn't the Biblical faith be color-blind?

The Bible states that the sons of Noah repopulated the entire world after it was destroyed by the flood in Genesis 6. It is from the account of Noah and his sons, that many so-called Christians have justified their racist views that black people and white people are different races. This idea states that Noah's son Ham was cursed with black sin and given the place of inferiority in society. Noah's story was warped for hundreds of years to justify slavery and hatred by Christians. Read in context, Ham was never cursed and no reference is made to any color of skin.

There are still people that believe that the Tower of Babel incident was all about separating the "races" and that inter-racial marriage should not take place. Such an argument totally misses the point of

many Scripture passages that teach unconditional love. 1 John 4:20, "If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love Elohim, whom he has not seen." There are various commands in the Scriptures against intermarriage for strictly spiritual reasons. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" says 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. The Hebrew people were forbidden to marry the Canaanites, not because of their skin color, but because of their pagan religion. (Do you ever see many "white" Israelite people on the news?)

During Martin Luther King's popular "I Have a Dream" speech given at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, Luther said that now is the "time to make justice a reality for all of God's children." He ended his message with the famed sentence, "When we let freedom ring... we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last." It is with these statements that King misspoke. Every person on the face of the earth is not one of Elohim's children. Humanity isn't basically good natured. Each person is born into the kingdom of darkness and therefore guilty and separated from Elohim. This shows the need to be "born again" into the family of Elohim. It is only those who are born into His family that have the right to be called His children.

Biblically, there is one race – the human race – and this group is in dire need of the love. The true family of the Almighty, full of born again believers, is a multi-colored group that should have no hatred in their hearts for those of different culture, color, or background.

Unplug that American Idol

Truth about idolatry

The title of the nation's most popular television show correctly describes most people's place of worship. For over a decade, *American Idol* has attracted millions and millions of viewers that watch ordinary folks compete to become the latest pop sensation. The show itself has become an intrinsic part of American culture and introduced singers like Kelly Clarkson, Jordan Sparks, Carrie Underwood and Adam Lambert. America loves its idols!

The Random House Dictionary describes an idol as an "image or other material object representing a deity to which religious worship is addressed." This definition fits this popular television show exactly, as record audiences watch weekly and then pay money to vote for their favorite singer. Households gather together around the TV altar to bow before the screen and pay homage to the gods of the various judges like Randy Jackson.

What's wrong with a little TV entertainment? Television, in and of itself, is not evil but it does ascend the pedestal of idol worship in many homes. According to the A.C. Nielsen Company, the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day (or 28 hours/week, or 2 months of nonstop TV-watching per year). In a 65-year life, that person will have spent 9 years glued to the tube. That is more time each day than most people spend in an entire week reading a book, volunteering at charities, or conversing with their spouse. In ancient times an idol was made of wood or stone. Today, idols are flat screens with the names of Samsung, Panasonic, or Sony. And though most people would never pray to the cable gods, the game console or the HDTV commands the time and attention of the masses. This would have alarmed Darryl Zanuck, one of 20th Century Fox's most successful movie producers,

who in 1946 said, "Television won't last because people will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."

Over the years, what is acceptable to show on the tube has now reached the extreme. Some of today's commercials would have never been broadcast twenty years ago as their content is simply too racy. Additionally, the line of decency is constantly crossed by the amount of sex and violence on television. Studies show that by the time a child finishes elementary school he has already seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 violent acts on TV.

Throughout its pages, the Bible warns against dangerous idols that steal time and attention away from what is most important in life. The book of Romans speaks against those who would look to the creation more than the Creator. "Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal Almighty for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. They exchanged the truth of the Creator for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised," Romans 1:22,23,25.

Few people who lay on their death bed wish they would have watched the second episode of season nine's *American Idol* contest. That being the case, what type of changes would occur if Americans would unplug their idols for just an hour a day and spent that time discussing the Bible or helping those in need? If it really matters who is on *The Tonight Show* or who wins *American Idol*, then perhaps worship is misplaced and needs to be guided back to Savior of the Scriptures.

Will the Second Coming Be Soon?

Truth about the end of days

An honest survey of the Bible will reveal that Y'shua isn't returning this year or any time soon. Ironically, while the Bible tells us to pray for His soon return, the Bible doesn't agree with the idea of the imminent return. The idea of an "imminent return" is a theory that states that the Messiah could return at any moment. This theory of an anytime parting of the sky and return of Y'shua totally ignores many events that are yet to come on the prophetic calendar of the Bible. Here are just a few reasons that His Second Coming can't happen this year.

Before the Messiah can return, at least according to most commentators, either Elijah or the Two Witnesses (or both) would have to be physically present for three-and-one-half years. Yet since these persons are not here yet, we know the Messiah cannot return any time before 2013. This destroys most commentator's belief that the Messiah will return in 2012 or 2017.

Further, Daniel 12:11, Revelation 11 and Second Thessalonians 2:4 tell us that Before the Messiah can return, the holy temple in Jerusalem must be totally rebuilt, and must be fully functioning. Some end times teachers have tried to get around the idea of a fully functional temple by stating that only a corner portion of the temple will have to be rebuilt, and that this will accomplish the task. This is in a vain effort to make their timelines work for an upcoming apocalypse. Sorry, but the Scriptures are clear that the red heifer, priesthood, holy menorah and all elements must be functioning during the end of days. Today there are many efforts being made to restore the holy of holies but one big problem stands in the way: sitting on the exact spot of where the temple should be is the Muslim Dome of the Rock. Perhaps the Al Aqsa Mosque will be destroyed as part of the seven year peace treaty with

Israel that is yet to come? Even if that is the case, it will take many years to build the next Temple according to the specifications given in Ezekiel 40-46, perhaps even decades. According to Scripture, the Messiah cannot return before this is done.

Another clear indication that the eastern sky isn't parting this year is the fact that the true gospel of salvation by grace through faith has not been preached to the entire world. Mark 13:10 states this must occur before Y'shua can return. The joshuaproject.net, a ministry on worldwide evangelism, suggests that over 6,600 people groups, representing 2.75 billion people, have still not had an opportunity to hear the good news in any form. Plus, too many people have heard a cheap version of the good news that simply preaches grace as cushion into heaven. Too many preachers have focused on the love of Messiah without expressing the pain and suffering caused by sin. Converts to this type of faith often fall away and never return to the Bible. A true convert will acknowledge the power of the Scriptures to convict them of their sin and change their evil ways. The true Hebraic Good News, not just of salvation, but also of obedience, must be taken throughout the uttermost parts of the earth before the Messiah can return to earth. With so far to go, how can that possibly happen this year, even with the cheapened, non-Hebraic form of the Good News?

One of the most significant events that absolutely must occur before the Second Advent is the restoration of the nation of Israel. Yes, a portion of the Promised Land has been restored and the Jewish people have set up a nation, but Israel is more than just the Jews. Many passages of Scripture, including Ezekiel 37 and Zechariah 12, speak of the restoration of all twelve tribes in the Land. Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the Southern Kingdom) must become one before the return of Y'shua. Acts 15:16 states, "After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it." This isn't a spiritual return but a physical return to all of the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The borders of the nation of Israel must be enlarged to hold people of Israel before the second

coming! Israel must be regathered and allowed to worship and dwell in all of the Land. Acts 3:21 states that Y'shua "must remain in heaven until the time comes for YHWH to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." The prophets spoke of the reunion of the people of Israel. Study the book of Hosea to learn more about this coming move of YHWH.

The sun, moon, and stars are still in place, which is an obvious sign that the end isn't near. Luke 21:25-33 states that the heavenly bodies will fall from the sky when the Savior returns and the Day of YHWH comes. The Bible also states that there must be a great falling away from the truth and the unveiling of the anti-Christ. "Concerning the coming of our Master Y'shua and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Messiah had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition," 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. Some will say that mainstream Christianity is the Great Falling Away, but the Anti-Messiah is not yet revealed. Sorry, but Obama is not the Anti-Christ. Nor is he Prince Charles or Bashar Al Asad. Scripture tells us Anti-Christ can't come on the scene until after the temple is functioning.

Many who believe in the "any day" return of Christ, also teach that the rapture will occur before the Great Tribulation. Such is blatant error. There will not be rapture or catching away in the sky and then a second coming. That would equal three comings of Christ, which is never spoken of in the Bible. It's not until after the tribulation that the Savior comes. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds,

from one end of the heavens to the other,” Mathew 24:29-31. Yet we have already seen so many things that must happen before that can take place, this is at a very minimum decades away.

Finally, anyone who suggests that time is short should remember Mark 13:32 which says “of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” Don’t be misled into fear regarding the appearing of Y’shua in 2010 or 2012. And don’t allow yourself to be captivated by the innumerable conspiracy theories regarding the soon end of life as we know it. Study the Scriptures for yourself and find that there are many more prophecies that must be fulfilled before the Savior’s return. Our mission as believers is to be a light to the nations through our love of YHWH and each other. An unhealthy focus on apocalyptic events stops this type of devotion from flowing properly. Instead of spending hours on eschatology so we can argue with those who do not agree with us, perhaps we should each be seeking to walk in Spirit and share the gospel of the Kingdom. And the, when things really begin to happen we can “we can stand up and lift up our heads, because redemption draweth nigh,” Luke 21:28.

The Treachery of Tattoos

Truth about inking the skin

Tattoos have grown in popularity since state after state in America have ignored the precepts of the Bible and legalized the trade. Beyond the obvious health risks, marking or cutting the flesh is strictly forbidden in the Scriptures, and dangerously disconnects the believer from the Almighty's perfect will. The book of Genesis states that mankind has been made in the image of Elohim. The body is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and is comparable to the very temple of Elohim. Tattoos mar the original design of the skin and desecrate the body. These abominations insult the Almighty and are akin to screaming at the Heavens, "I don't like the way you made me so I will improve the design!"

The Smithsonian Magazine reports that tattoos have been found on ancient cavemen and mummified Egyptians. Tattoos were commonly used by worshippers as a sign of commitment to their deity. As Christianity began to spread throughout the world, less and less people accepted this custom. "Whenever missionaries encountered tattooing they eradicated it," wrote Steve Gilbert in *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 101.

Even though inking the skin has been around for millennia, the Scriptures never indicate that Abraham, Y'shua or Paul had tattoos. Having such doesn't better a person's life or bring them closer to Elohim. In fact, they may actually push a person away from the Elohim of the Bible as the origin and meaning behind the tattoo is occultic pagan demonism. "Tattooing is often a magical rite in the more traditional cultures, and the tattooist is respected as a priest or shaman. When the designs are chosen with care, tattoos have a power and magic all their own. They decorate the body but they also enhance the

soul," wrote Michelle Delio, *Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration*, page 13.

The Law of Moses speaks against coloring the skin in Leviticus 19:28 "you shall not etch a tattoo on yourselves." Y'shua didn't need to specifically address this issue as his listeners already understood the dangers. Besides, what is written in the Old Testament doesn't have to be repeated in the New Testament to apply to believers today. What was wrong to do in the times of Moses is still wrong. This includes defacing the skin with images of bunnies or skulls or whatever. A religious symbol doesn't justify the ink, and may be a bigger slap in the face of Elohim when one of His children has a cross or Star of David imbedded within their epidermis.

Tattoos are also offensive to many Jewish people. Millions of Jews were tattooed with prisoner numbers on their arms when they were taken hostage during the Holocaust. So, when Holocaust survivors view a tattoo that has been willingly placed on the body they have no other choice but to think the person has no respect for their own body, or for what occurred during the Holocaust.

For many, the tattoo becomes the mark of regret. According to the American Society of Dermatological surgery, over 50% of everyone receiving a tattoo wants it removed. Those who already have these spiritual imprints on their body should be aware of the dangers and take appropriate actions. Anyone interested in a new tattoo or piercing should seriously study and pray about this issue. "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May YHWH himself sanctify you wholly. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless," 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23. Just because it is legal and popular to get a tattoo doesn't make it the right thing to do.

The Musical Mess in Christianity

Truth about church music

As baby boomers age and traditional hymns become a thing of the past, Christianity faces a crisis of music and worship. To be more culturally relevant, many churches now hold contemporary services with live bands, drama, and even dance. Such a dramatic shift in style makes one wonder where such changes will end. If Baptist churches that fifty years ago discouraged people against the sounds of Elvis Presley are now featuring full drum sets and electric guitars, what will church music be like in the next fifty years?

The first followers of Messiah attended synagogues and home meetings that allowed and encouraged spontaneous participation of songs and prayer. History shows that things changed when only trained choirs were allowed to sing in worship services. Congregations were made spectators in 367AD when the Council at Laodicea forbade all others to sing in church besides canonical singers. Children's choirs were soon instituted in the church by those who worshipped Greco-Roman gods because it was believed that the voice of young boys possessed special spiritual power. And organs were first used in Catholic churches during the sixth century.

The Protestant Reformation included the promotion of congregational singing and the use of instruments during worship. The Wesleyan revival during the late 1800's promoted the use of hymns to bring people to joy during offerings and repentance during altar calls. In the 1950's gospel music began to spread to the church from radio and live concerts. After the Charismatic renewal of the 1970's the contemporary Christian music movement began its growth in popularity. Today, contemporary Christian music is the fastest growing segment in the music industry with annual sales over one billion dollars.

Slowly the church has replaced the organ with the praise band and moved towards a more “worldly” sound of music. While the style of songs has changed, the lyrics have remained somewhat consistent over the years. Such lyrics make the type of rhythm and melody inherently spiritual. This establishes the fact that there is no such thing as “Christian music.” Any order of notes on sheet music can be spiritual. One variety of melody is no more holy than another. Heavy metal, rap, gospel, or middle-eastern flavored songs can certainly praise the Almighty if the music is paired with the right intentions and the right lyrics. A song is given spiritual meaning through the lyrics used and not by the style. The words of song can inspire joy, worship, praise, reflection, and community. A person can worship with the hymn “How Great Thou Art” or with the Bob Marley tune “Don’t Worry about a Thing.” Such variety is a good thing. Remember that there were twelve tribes of Israel who each had their own unique style and dialect! All music does not have to sound the same.

The major problem with church music is that it is mostly intended as songs for an audience to listen and watch as entertainment to hopefully inspire worship. This is wrong. The worship service was never meant to be taken hostage by paid professional preachers and ministers of music. The Bible teaches that worship should be participatory with an audience of only One. Ephesians 5:19 says to “speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”

While many churches argue over which type of music is more spiritual or appealing, the main issue of participation is usually ignored. The church has confused entertainment with worship, opting for concert styled performances over open services during which anyone could lead a song or share a testimony. Hopefully, the ministry of music will return as an outlet for all believers and not just the worship leader or choir director. It’s not the style of music but the freedom of worship that’s most important.

Is Michael Jackson in Heaven or Hell?

Truth about false religions

The entire globe was shocked when pop icon Michael Jackson died on June 25, 2009. His body went through two autopsies and was finally buried after more than sixty days. The spirit of Michael Jackson lives on through his music and influence, but where is his soul?

Beyond the obvious questions of his promiscuity with children and crazy behavior, Michael Jackson seemed to be an amazing individual who cared about others. His creativity with song and dance allowed him to funnel millions of dollars to the deprived. In 1985 Jackson wrote and performed “*We Are the World*” with Lionel Richie and an all-star cast to raise money for Africa. All proceeds from his record “*The Man In The Mirror*” were donated to the Ronald McDonald Camp for Good Times. Even the Guinness Book of World Records recently acknowledged him as the “pop star who supports the most charity.” Did Michael Jackson’s good deeds and kindness earn him a place in heaven? Is Saint Peter learning the moon walk from the king of pop?

As a child, Michael Jackson was raised a Jehovah’s Witness. This group teaches that there is no hell and there is no life after death until Christ comes back to earth to resurrect the dead. Jehovah’s Witnesses are known for their door to door preaching and distribution of the “Awake!” magazine. They use the name “Jehovah” in place of the sacred name YHWH, deny the deity of Messiah, and insist that their church is the only path to heaven.

During a 2005 trial for molesting a child, Jackson turned to Kabbalah for solace. Kabbalah is a type of Jewish mysticism that tries to shortcut a path to heaven through good deeds, meditation, and esoteric wisdom. While learning Kabbalah, Jackson consulted an Orthodox Jewish rabbi

and Guru Deepak Chopra for advice. His fascination with New Ageism ended in 2008 when the king of pop visited many Muslim Gulf nations. News outlets stated that he, like his brother Jermaine, had converted to Islam. Michael reportedly changed his name to "Mikaeel" after taking the "shahada," which is a pledge of allegiance to Allah and Mohammed's prophecy. Islam is the world's fastest growing religion with one out of every five people professing to follow Allah. This anti-Christian religion teaches that to attain paradise, a person's good deeds must outweigh their evil actions. They believe that the only sure way to make it to heaven is for a Muslim to die in a jihad or "holy war" against the infidels.

Internet rumors claiming that Gospel singer Andre Crouch lead Jackson to accept Messiah as his personal Savior weeks before he passed were proven false soon after they began spreading. The various religious conversions through his life show that Jackson was searching for spiritual truth. Indeed, the fruit of his life was mixed of both good and bad. And even though some doctors have called his death a homicide, the Bible states that he died of sin. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of YHWH is eternal life," Romans 6:23. It is appointed unto man once to die and then the judgment. Michael Jackson stood before the Almighty, and had to answer for his actions and his faith. Truth be told, no one knows what was in Michael's heart when he passed. What we do know is that even though he had fame and fortune, Michael did not have Spiritual peace. Whether Michael Jackson is in heaven or hell is a question that should cause each person to search their own life to ensure they are in right standing with the Almighty through His Son.

The Bible states that a person who commits one sin is guilty of breaking the entire Law. Disobedience to the law renders a person unclean and in need of rescue. The Messiah Y'shua paid the death penalty of sin by giving his life and being buried. He resurrected three days later to prove His power over death and the grave. He extends eternal life to all who would acknowledge their sinfulness call upon him in belief. "If you confess with your mouth, "Y'shua is Savior," and

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

believe in your heart that YHWH raised him from the dead, you will be saved,” Romans 10:9.

A Present Day Exorcism

Truth about the adversary

American consumers spend over five billion dollars on costumes, candy, and decorations for Halloween each year. Is Halloween and scary movies just good clean fun, or is there really a spiritual realm of disembodied spirits? Does the occult have power? The Bible answers these questions and clarifies much about the devil.

In the spiritual realm is the Creator and His angelic messengers. There are also fallen angels or demons. The word devil comes to the English language from the Greek “diabolos,” which means “liar, thief, accuser, and enemy.” The devil sure is real but he isn’t some little red guy with a pointy tale and pitch fork. This idea and, indeed, much Christian doctrine regarding the devil and hell is derived from Mesopotamian folklore and the classic book, “Dante’s Inferno.” The Bible never says that satan rebelled with a third of the angels or that satan is omnipotent or omnipresent. Satan exists but he’s not what most people think.

The word “satan” is an ancient Hebrew word that is now used in the English language. The adversary’s name was NOT changed from the Hebrew. Normally in English Bibles, the names for people and places were transliterated and transformed into a new term. For example, the Hebrew “Moshe” is rendered “Moses” and the name “Y’shua” is “Y’shua” in English. Though every other name from the Hebrew scrolls was changed for English Bibles, the translators kept the hideous name of the adversary the same. In Hebrew, he is called “ha satan” which literally means “the accuser” or “the adversary.” Ha satan is like a prosecuting attorney that confronts and accuses believers in an effort to belittle them and render them powerless.

The enemy comes against the saints daily to wear them down. He accuses and he lies. He is active in every type of rebellion yet he is NOT responsible for sin. Flip Wilson was wrong when he said, “the devil made me do it.” Satan’s part is to simply temp, pry, and appeal to man’s fleshly desires. He knows that most people are not going to murder, rob banks, and commit heinous sins. So, he comes as an angel of light and then attacks people at their points of weakness.

Though Hollywood portrays the enemy with unlimited power and strength, the Bible shows that deception is ha satan's ONLY power. This is how he attacks. He comes as a harmless idea or action and then misleads the masses. He deceived Adam and Eve in the garden and hasn’t stopped since. Deception is tricky because a person doesn't know that he is being deceived. The Scriptures declare that ha satan has deceived the entire world – including ALL Christians. 1 John 5:19 says that the “whole world is under the influence of the evil one.” This deception reaches the Baptists, Lutherans, and Pentecostals. Masons and Muslims are deceived as well. The enemy has deceived the entire world regarding his power and faith in general.

It doesn’t take holy water or a powerful exorcism to be free from demons and deception. It only takes the words of truth. The adversary’s grip is loosened by the truth. The Savior said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Don’t be deceived, Satan is real and his power is in deluding the world. Deception ends as a person seeks to know and live the truth. “Submit yourselves therefore to YHWH. Resist ha satan, and he will flee from you,” James 4:7.

Rude is the New Normal

Truth about evil talk

The Bible says that the power of life and death is in the tongue. Words can build up or words can tear down. Words, truthful or not, can hurt when spoken in at the wrong time or in the wrong way.

The purpose of the spoken word is to express the emotions of the heart, to build up or tear down. Words are thoughts verbalized. The Messiah said in Matthew 12:34, “The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart.” What we think, what we believe will eventually manifest through the mouth. Herein lies the battle of the ages, we must choose to speak either life or death. For in a split second our innermost thoughts can become our outermost expressions. We must choose our words carefully. Washington Irving once said, “The tongue is the only tool that grows sharper with use.” While, the Psalmist prayed, “Set a guard over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips,” Psalm 12:4.

We must constantly be on guard against evil speech, called “lashon hara” in Hebrew. This includes ANY negative communication like gossip, slander, slur, lying, or perverse speech. We all know people who claim to be super-spiritual believers yet their witness is destroyed by a tongue full of gossip. Such religion is a farce according to James 3:2-11. Evil speech is dangerous as it hurts three people: “he who relates it, he who accepts it, and of whom it is said.” The basis against speaking lashon hara is found in Leviticus 19:16 & 17 “Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life.” Exodus says, “do not spread false reports,” and in Titus 3:2 the word tells us to “speak evil of no man.” Truly, these verses are speaking against more than just lying. Lashon hara is negative or perverse speech – even if it is true. A biblical example of lashon hara is

the twelve spies who were sent to inspect the Promised Land. The ten fearful spies who brought a negative report were spreading lashon hara while the two spies whose report was made in faith spoke words that glorified the Creator. Either our words are full of faith or fear, life or death blessing or curses.

Like a super computer that just needs to be programmed correctly, your tongue's output will equal your mind's input. This could be why we are told in Philippians 4:8, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." From thinking on things that are of good report we ourselves will become of good report. Sadly, such an idea is foreign to many in the modern culture. "You will have to give an account for every idle word you have spoken," Matthew 12:36.

Do the Black Panthers Really Matter?

Truth about priorities

In a world engrossed with politics, war, sports, and box office entertainment, it is very difficult to determine what matters most. Today it seems the average American's god is not from ancient times but from the here and now. Does it really matter what team Kobe Bryant chose to shoot basketball hoops for? Is today's Dow Jones Industrial average eternally important? Shouldn't life be more than entertainment or politics?

When the Messiah was asked what matters most, his reply was a direct quote from the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy. "The most important commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel, YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one. Love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these," Mark 12:29-31. In this passage the Savior clarified that man's priority should be to recognize and accept the one true Elohim of Israel. A person's devotion to an unseen Creator is expressed through actions and attitudes towards other people. Loving or having a relationship with YHWH is not more important than loving and having a relationship with other people.

Many of today's racial and social issues could be easily solved if attention was focused on "loving your neighbor as yourself." A neighbor is anyone who is near, this includes the person who lives next door, a coworker, or the clerk at the local convenience store.

Love, not entertainment or sports, is what gives meaning to life. In the Biblical language, the Hebrew word for love is "ahava." This word is an action verb in the original Hebrew as love is something done and not

just felt. The “feeling” of love may come and go. Such is not for true love that is based on the Biblical commandment to serve and sacrifice. The Hebrew word ahava, like most Hebrew words, can be broken down to a three-consonant root word which contains the essence of the word's meaning. The root word of ahava is "ahav." The term ahav in Hebrew means, "to give." True ahava, true love, is more concerned about giving than receiving.

Being the center of someone's attention isn't love. And love isn't about getting some feeling or fix. Ahava is about giving devotion and time. Giving is the vehicle of love. For Elohim so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Meaningful relationships have mutual giving. Lust focuses on receiving. A person can show ahava by sharing a meal with someone, writing an encouraging note to a spouse, talking with a friend, or helping a stranger. Think about a way to express care to neighbor and then act on that desire to share true love.

It's not just enough to have a relationship with an unseen Almighty. The Bible calls believers to love/give/serve those near by. Sacrificial love that reaches out to meet the needs of others is what brings fulfillment and joy in life. It is this type of love, expressed through service and care that equals spiritual worship of loving Elohim.

It's a farce to claim a faith in Y'shua and hold on to hatred of others who may have different colored skin or personal religious beliefs. “If anyone says, "I love god," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love YHWH, whom he has not seen,” 1 John 4:20.

Movie stars and amazing athletes will come and go. Love, and only love, is what should be life's priority.

Is Dancing Dirty?

Truth about biblical dance

Dance is a forgotten element of Biblical worship that is slowly being restored to Christianity today. The sister of Moses, named Miriam, danced as she crossed the Red Sea after the exodus. King David danced as the Ark of the Covenant was moved to Jerusalem. Even Y'shua (Hebrew name of Jesus) spoke of how dance accompanied the return of the prodigal son in Luke 15:25. The book of Psalms is full of references to dance and highly active movement. Psalm 149 says to praise the Almighty with "dancing and making melody."

So, if dance is such a good idea, then why don't churches do the electric slide or the hokey pokey during Sunday services? Well, history indicates that dance was once practiced by New Testament believers. In the book, *Dance in Christian Worship*, the author suggests that in the first five centuries of the faith, "dance was still acceptable because it was planted deep in the soil of the Judeo-Christian tradition." After the rise of the Catholic Church through Roman Emperor Constantine, the dance as a type of worship was performed only by the priests. During the Dark Ages the priestly theatrical dance morphed into liturgical processions. And by the time of the reformation, Martin Luther and others had totally removed dance from the order of service. The statutes of the synod of Lyons prohibited dancing in 1566 and imposed the punishment of excommunication upon those who led dances in church.

For over 1500 years, religious consensus seemed to indicate that dance belongs to the heathen nations or bars, and not to those who seek to follow the Messiah. Such continued to be the prevailing thought until recently when modern media instigated the popularity of dance through radio, television, dance clubs, reality competitions, and even worship centers.

A survey of the Bible explains how dance, like singing or preaching, can be used for the glory of the performer or the glory of the Almighty. King Solomon said “there is a time to dance” in Ecclesiastes 3:4. The Bible uses over 50 different Hebrew and Greek words to describe the various types of dance movement. Dance can also be accompanied with flags and banners raised high in celebration. “We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners,” Psalm 20:5. The waving of flags is symbolic of the wave offerings given during Temple times.

The Scriptures do seem to suggest an approval of dance while in the right context. Provocative dancing was indeed involved with the sin of the golden calf and the beheading of John the Baptist. The Apostle Paul in his letters often speaks of the need to stray from fleshly behavior. So, what’s a believer to do about dance?

No where in the Bible is dance considered to be sin. It was practiced during Biblical times and definitely has a place in true scripturally accurate worship settings. Those wishing to take the next step in this restoration would do well to study the subject in depth, learn traditional congregational moves, begin choreographing their ideas, and discuss this subject with church leadership. More churches should allow interpretive dance, waving of hands, and congregational dance or “Davidic dance” that takes place in circles and does not encourage lasciviousness. The circle dances that are making their ways back into the church actually mirror the steps that were performed during the Second Temple.

According to Matthew 11:17 and Luke 7:32, dancing represents one’s joyful response to the good news of salvation. This type of praise should be openly accepted by all church leaders who want to worship in spirit and in truth.

Six Reasons Prayer is Not Answered

Truth about getting through to heaven

The Bible gives several reasons why prayer is often ignored by YHWH. If words said to the heavens seem to bounce off the ceiling then perhaps there is something standing in the way.

Psalm 66:18 gives the most obvious explanation of unanswered prayer. This passage says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The term "iniquity" literally means "lawlessness." This phrase indicates a total disregard to the precepts of the Bible. Iniquity is sin at a higher form of disregard. A person who dismisses the Bible as irrelevant or not binding for today will not receive from YHWH.

The second reason why YHWH does not answer some prayer is doubt. Matthew 21:22 says, "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." It takes belief to have a positive result. Prayers that are spoken while doubts are held will be ignored because the doubt will negate the urgency for an answer.

Many people think that YHWH is motivated by need and therefore will answer the needy person's plea first. This is not so. The Almighty is not moved one iota by need. If He was, then each person with a desire would be instantly fulfilled. Prayers are answered solely on the basis of faith. Faith is the force that activates the spiritual realm to satisfy the needs and faith works through love. "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered," Proverbs 21:13.

Unforgiveness can also delay good things. The Savior said in Matthew 6:14-15, ""For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their

trespasses, neither will your father forgive your trespasses." A person's attitude to other people directly affects the grace they receive from YHWH. Prayer is not unconditional! Certain conditions must be met for the right solution to come. A grudge of unforgiveness will paralyze even the smallest plea.

Believe it or not, but even repetition can stop prayers from being answered. "In praying, don't use vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their much speaking. Therefore don't be like them, for your Father knows what things you need, before you ask him." Matthew 6:7, 8. This passage shows that YHWH's arm can not be twisted to act by a person who begs and pleads for an answer. It takes more faith to simply say a prayer once and believe it has been answered than it does to petition over and over again for the same thing. Repetition actually hurts the prayer process. Pray for daily bread and then believe that the dough is in the bakery and getting ready to be served. Don't beseech and entreat - just believe!

Family matters that are not resolved can also hinder the heavens. "You husbands, in like manner, live with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7. The family unit must be in order or a domino effect in the spiritual realm will wreck havoc. Disunity between spouses destroys a marriage and impedes spiritual growth.

Finally, selfishness must be overcome. James 4:3 shows that a prayer made with the wrong motive will return void.

The Almighty wants to bless His people by responding positively to prayer. This can only be done when a person deals with these issues and stops the six blocks to blessing.

STOP When Making Decisions Big or Small

Truth about decisions

All of life's decisions can be filtered through a simple four step Biblical process called STOP. This method, for both major and minor issues, reveals the most beneficial choice from an eternal perspective. When faced with a tough choice, simply remember the term STOP.

The letter "S" in the word "STOP" is symbolic of being selfish or selfless. Being selfish is having the desire to receive for self alone. Selfishness is all about feeling good or stroking the ego. Getting what you want and when you want it may bring instant gratification, but it will also lack lasting fulfillment. The Bible tells the story of two brothers who made their own personal decision to be selfless or selfish. Genesis 4 explains that Cain brought "some of fruits of the soil as an offering to YHWH" while his brother Abel brought "fat portions of the firstborn of his flock." Cain offered leftovers while Abel gave his absolute best. Abel was accepted because he was selfless. Cain acted selfishly and had his offering rejected. The selfish brother was angered by such an outcome and struck out in jealousy to kill Abel. Selfishness and anger caused Cain to spill the blood of his brother. This was a bad decision by Cain that can be traced back to Cain's first choice to be selfish with his offering. Cain was marked by YHWH and had to live with his selfish decisions every day of his life.

Cain should have stopped to think about the short term and long term results of his actions. Thinking is the second step to the STOP method and can be remembered through the "T" letter. When faced with a choice, first stop to consider and think about what may or may not manifest. If Cain would have stopped to think before acting, he might have reconsidered his motives of giving a lousy offering. Then he might not have killed his brother. Too bad Cain didn't STOP to think.

Abel honored the Almighty through giving his best. Decisions that bring about good results honor the Savior and his word. The letter “O” in stop stands for “honor.” Does the suggested action or idea bring honor to man or to the Messiah? Who gets the praise for the end result? James 4:10 says to “humble yourself in the sight of YHWH and He will lift you up.”

Honor YHWH with what is said, emailed or watched on TV. Honor Him through dress and diet. Honor the faith in everything! Remember to consider the end result and ask “does what is being considered facilitate love, joy, and peace?” Truly good decisions will produce truly good results. Cain’s choice to hold back brought a manifestation of darkness. Choices that honor the Heavenly Father will produce life and positive results.

Finally, the “P” in the word “STOP” is for both “pray” and “press on.” Pray and ask the heavens for advice before you act. Be honest and confess the confusion. Seek a higher wisdom and take time to listen for some answers. Then as the answer becomes clear, “press on” and don’t give up. Make the right choice and don’t look back. Cain should have prayed for control of his anger and then made the righteous decision to stop his anger.

Like the story of Cain and Abel, the Bible is full of principles and precepts that illustrate which choices are best. Regardless of what has happened in the past, better decisions can be made in the future by remembering to STOP.

The Power of Positive Thinking

Truth about thoughts

The power of positive thinking can easily be seen through the function of a battery. The term “battery” was first coined by Benjamin Franklin who understood the concept of energy but wasn’t knowledgeable of the cellular makeup.

Franklin originally used the terms “positive” and “negative” power as he tried to discern the direction in which electricity flowed by watching sparks. He discerned a consistent direction that sparks appeared to jump, and labeled the terminal that seemed to be the source as “positive” and the terminal to which they seemed to jump as “negative”.

From the simple function of a battery, we can learn a great spiritual principle called “The Battery Affect. “ This is a powerful force that has the ability to bring positive or negative results in a person’s life.

The Battery Affect states that for every action there is a corresponding positive or negative reaction.

Small and large actions cause similar changes nearby. What we personally think and how we individually act affects ourselves and others. Our environment changes when power is released. This power can be either positive or negative. The Battery Affect states that everything done is either positive or negative and brings more of the same.

A person who is upbeat and in a good mood will influence others to feel good. The opposite is also true as the old adage states, “misery loves company.” Attitude, either great or poor, is contagious.

Galatians 6:7-8, "Be not deceived; YHWH is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

A positive mind will be expecting happiness, joy, health, a positive outcome and then since the mind is expecting it, those positive results will actually manifest. Those who fill their mind with problems and pain will only bring more dark clouds their way.

The first step to overcoming in life is awareness. Recognize the negativity around you and stop feeding it by thinking on it. If you can identify what is happening, you can make good choices about handling it. Think about what you want in life and do not think about what you don't want. As thoughts are focused, it is only natural for actions and results to follow suit.

When a small battery is placed in an electronic device, the connections must be matched up positive to positive and negative to negative. A positive connection produces positive energy. Negative brings negative. Proverbs 17:18, "Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house." There is no denying this principle of life.

The Christian Nation Myth

Truth about america

The notion that the United States of America is a Christian nation, founded upon Christian principles is an incorrect idea that falsely promotes a blending of church and state. Many of the founding fathers, like Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and James Madison, were staunchly opposed to the organized religion of Christianity and took special precautions to ensure the government never legislated morality.

Most of the Founding Father's writings may seem to be from a Christian perspective but further investigation reveals that these leaders were deists and not necessarily Christian. For example, Thomas Paine in his book "The Age of Reason" wrote, "I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church." Whatsmore, John Adams made the same alarming point as he once said, "The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion."

One major reason for the revolutionary war and the events of July 4th was that the colonies wanted a nation that would not dictate a religious creed. The Founding Fathers remembered that for over 1,000 years, including much of the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic Church ruled millions of people with government edicts sent straight from the Pope. Even England had theocratic tyrants who used the "calling of God" to mandate taxes and increase the influence of government. In response to such abuse, the First Amendment instituted the Establishment Clause which stops the power of religion from controlling individual's rights and the government from controlling issues of faith.

There were many believers involved with the founding of our nation, yet that doesn't justify calling America a "Christian Nation." The founders of our country wanted the United States to be a place where all were free to worship as they chose, without governmental restriction or regulation.

President Abraham Lincoln wrote that "The only assurance of our nation's safety is to lay our foundation in morality and religion." He also said, "Christianity is not my religion and the Bible is not my book. I have never united myself in any church because I could never give assent to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine and dogma."

President Thomas Jefferson was so anti-Christian, that he wrote his own Bible that did not include many of the New Testament miracles of Y'shua and even ended with the burial of Y'shua. Jefferson and others promoted the deists theology that God created the world to operate by natural law and then left it totally in the hands of mankind. George Washington wrote in Article 11 of the Treaty with Tripoli that "the government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion..."

Today, many political conservatives speak of the Judeo-Christian values of our Founding Fathers. These commentators are absolutely wrong in their assumption that America is a Christian nation. The United States is a place where Christians, Muslims, and others are free to worship how they chose. Those who seek to re-write history by focusing on the Christian foundations of America should remember that religious freedom was one of the reasons that the colonies separated themselves from the mother land. A separation of church and state protects both entities and should be upheld. During an address to the Army in 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant said, "Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church and the private school supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and state forever separate."

Is Jesus Really Welcome at Your Church?

Truth about the messiah

The Savior would be totally shocked if He left the pages of the Scriptures and attended most modern church services. Would the real Y'shua be welcome at your Sunday morning worship? Before you emphatically shout "yes" please consider your answer. There are many modern church practices that would be completely foreign to the Messiah.

The Savior's custom was to meet each week on Saturday at the Synagogue. This is found in the 10 Commandments as well as Luke 4. Do you keep the 7th day of the week as holy?

The Messiah spoke Hebrew and possibly Aramaic. Do your worship services include a dialect of the Hebrew language? (Luke 3:21-22 & Zephaniah 3:9)

He never attended an Easter morning sunrise service or Christmas cantata. Easter wasn't commemorated until sun worship invaded true Christianity with the Nicean council in 321AD. Choir music wasn't a part of church services until the Pope Gregory allowed such in the 6th century.

His skin was not black or white. He didn't have blond hair and blue eyes. Instead, this Middle Eastern man was probably a man of color with dark skin and red hair like His ancestor King David. Does your church welcome people of different races? (1 Samuel 16:12 & Isaiah 53:2)

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

Biblical accounts show him disrupting worship services to cast out demons, heal the sick, or perform miracles. When was the last time a person was instantly healed during your church hour? (Mark 1:23-27)

If the Savior gave the sermon, he would only quote from the Old Testament as He did while He was on the earth. He would clear up any misconceptions about obedience to the Law of Moses. How often does your Preacher teach the commands of the Law? (Matthew 5:17 & Luke 4:8)

Y'shua would have never eaten pork or shellfish. He a strict kosher diet as commanded in the Bible. Do potluck dinners at your fellowship hall only consist of Biblically clean food? (Leviticus 11 & Matthew 15:1)

He wore a beard, blue tassels on His garments, and covered His head at all times. Well? (Isaiah 50:6, Matthew 9:20, Hebrew 5:1-10)

The real Y'shua would never discuss the trinity as this word can not be found in any Biblical text. The Messiah did say, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our Elohim is one Lord," Mark 12:29.

The Messiah would prefer to sit with the outcasts of society instead of those dressed in business suits or high heels. He would welcome the prostitutes and the sick. (Matthew 9:10)

The real Y'shua celebrated Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, and Unleavened Bread as commanded in Leviticus 23. Are there any Christian denominations that follow the Savior's example here? (Luke 2:41 -50 & John 2:13; 7:10)

He would not recognize the name "Jesus Christ" as He never heard this phrase while He walked the earth. The name "Jesus" is a modern invention of linguists. His true name was given in Hebrew to his Jewish parents as Y'shua Ben Yosef. (Luke 2:21).

The Danger of Anger

Truth about getting mad and murder

Murders are on the rise. Violent crimes happen everyday. The events that are featured on the nightly news are just a small inkling of the violence lurking inside every man that is often expressed through anger. 1 John 3:15 says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." This means that anger, left unchecked and unbridled, is equal to the heinous murder and abuse of another person.

The Ten Commandments clearly state "thou shalt not murder." Most people would never willingly take the life of another. However, the Messiah made it clear that wishing someone dead is as bad as physically killing them. This was the original intention of the command to not murder. "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother without cause will be subject to judgment," Matthew 5:22. This comment by the Savior expounds upon the true heart of the Law of Moses that goes way beyond the letter of the Law. There is a depth of application below even the most basic commandment in the Bible.

Anger is a sin that takes control until more pain occurs. Genesis 4:5-8 shows how Adam's son "Cain became very angry and rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." Anger causes families to divorce, churches to split, and people to have high blood pressure. The Journal of the American Heart Association has said that "anger-prone people are more likely to have heart attacks." Man's anger works in rebellion to the Holy Spirit. "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice," Ephesians 4:31.

It has been taught from the pulpits that "holy anger" is an acceptable way to deal with spiritual problems. This is a lie. "The anger

of man does not achieve the righteousness of Elohim," James 1:20. The Bible never uses the phrase "righteous indignation." Nor is anger justified by the account of an upset Y'shua turning the tables on the unfair money-changers in the Temple. A careful reading of Matthew 21 shows that Y'shua was never angry. Instead, he was full of "zeal for the house of Elohim." Y'shua never let anger take control as His actions were motivated by love. Everything the Savior did showed that he was gentle and humble of heart. The Gospel of Luke records that "the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging upon His words." The actions of Y'shua in the Temple show us that zeal and passion for righteousness is perfectly ok but all anger is wrong.

Ephesians 4:26-27 in the New Living Translation says: "And don't sin by letting anger gain control over you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a mighty foothold to the Devil." The Greek word for "anger" in this verse literally means "impulse." So, how does a person deal with this deadly emotion? "The best way of dealing with the anger habit is to prevent it occurring in the first place. This means getting to know the triggers that evoke angry feelings and systematically defusing each trigger situation's ability to affect you," wrote Ernest H. Johnson in the book *The Deadly Emotions*. Anger must be avoided and prevented before it leads to pain or even death. Proverbs 29:11, "A fool vents his feelings, but a wise man holds them back."

Faith With Strings Attached?

Truth about tassels

From 'buy now and pay later programs' to the morning after pill, the world is full of ways to shun commitment. "Just confess your sins to me and you'll be forgiven," says the priest. And the mailbox is full of ways to get rich quick or acquire a new credit card for an easier lifestyle. These concepts are quite opposite to the Bible, which teaches a life of obedience in which strings ARE attached. "Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels ('Tzitzit' in Hebrew) on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at so you will remember all the commands of the Almighty, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your YHWH," Numbers 15:38-40.

This section of Scripture is not alone when it comes to speaking of the tassels or fringes that are to be worn by all Bible believers. The Israelites and even the Messiah were clothed with these bands of blue. Remember the woman who was suffering from chronic bleeding? Mark 5:25-34 records that she was healed when she touched the "hem of the garment" that Y'shua was wearing. The original word for "hem" indicates that she touched a specific fringed corner of his garment that held his Tzitzit. Mark 6:56 states that wherever the Messiah went, "they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged Him that they might just touch the border of His garment and the many that touched Him were made well."

"The Messiah observed this Old Testament requirement," says the Holman Bible Dictionary, a Baptist publication. Many people wear modern WWJD bracelets, but the Tzitzit is the original spiritual

reminder. The Hebrew term “Tzitzit” means to “appear in visible form.” Luke 9:26, “For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and in His Father's glory.” These twisted cords are to be a constant reminder of the Almighty and His promises. They serve as an outward sign of the covenant much like a wedding band. Tzitzit speak to the believer, and the world, that YHWH's word is still valid today.

Nowhere in the Bible is the command to wear fringes rescinded. In fact the Scriptures say just the opposite; they are to be worn “throughout the generations to come.” Saints should follow the Messiah’s example and dress with strings attached to their outer garments. The Bible doesn’t specifically say how these strings are to look, except they must contain a cord of blue and be visible. “Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak you wear,” says Deuteronomy 22:12.

Tzitzit are often worn by Jewish people on the ends of a four-corned shawl called a “tallit.” They can also be attached to belt loops, t-shirts, or any other garment. A common thread is for the Tzitzit to be tied with white string to make the blue stand out. The point is that the Tzitzit are worn, and that the commandments of the Bible are remembered.

People tie a string around their finger to remember important information; well the Creator says to tie tassels to remember His Word. The Biblical belief system is one of obedience, responsibility, and commitment. When it comes to a faith based upon the Bible there should be strings attached.

Pray the Old Testament Way

Truth about the lord's prayer

The Lord's Prayer is an amazing prose that gives an outline for heavenly conversation from an Old Testament perspective. The Gospel of Luke in chapter 11 illustrates how the disciples asked the Messiah to teach them to pray. The response given was a prayer based on quotes from the Old Testament. These concepts further illustrate that there should be no distinction to the believer between the Old Testament and the New Testament, as both are the inspired word of YHWH.

The Lord's Prayer begins with "our father which art in Heaven holy is your name." Some Bible teachers have supported the anti-Semitic idea that Jewish people consider it blasphemy to call YHWH their "father." Well, this simply isn't true. For millennia, the Israelite people have called the Almighty their "father" or "avinu" in Hebrew. Y'shua taught that prayer should be directly to the Father and start with recognition of the holy name of "Yahweh." The name YHWH is the Sacred Name of the creator that is used more than 7,000 times in the Bible. It is often hidden in the Bible behind the capitalized letters "GOD" or "LORD." This name was given at the burning bush for all mankind as a "memorial unto all generations." The Lord's Prayer recognizes that true holy name.

The kingdom of heaven being manifest on earth was of utmost importance to the Messiah as it was his first request in the model prayer. Many New Testament parables centered on the kingdom of heaven and the disciples often preached "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is paired with the request for "thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." The concepts here are explained in Psalm 40:8 that says, "to do Your will Oh YHWH is my desire, Your law is within

my heart." This shows us that the Father's will is His Law as revealed in the first five books of the Bible. Y'shua was reinforcing the idea that the kingdom of heaven comes as the law of heaven is followed.

The appeal to "give us this day our daily bread" is an actual quote from Proverbs 30:8 which says "give me neither poverty nor riches, grant me only my share of daily bread to eat." Again, there was nothing new in the Lord's Prayer.

Forgiveness of sins is also included in the Master's petition. He said, "forgive us of our debts as we forgive our debtors." The Old Testament teaches a forgiveness of personal debts every seven years by debtors and a release from sin by the Almighty when a person shows true repentance. Forgiveness is indeed an Old Testament concept. "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil" is an incorrect translation that often leads people to think that the LORD is tempting them. A person is delivered from evil when they flee temptation as explained in Psalm 58:1.

Finally, the Lord's Prayer often includes the doxology "for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory." This is found almost word for word in 1 Chronicles 29:11, "Yours, Oh Yahweh, is the greatness, the power, and the glory, the victory, the majesty, for all that is in the Heavens and on the Earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom."

Today people often repeat the "Old Testament Lord's Prayer" during Sunday services or before ball games without knowing its true origin. When Y'shua gave this model prayer he was in essence saying to read, study, and pray the words found from Genesis to Malachi.

A False Gospel Produces False Converts

Truth about the gospel

A recent Pew Research survey shows that over 70% of Americans believe in a literal place of eternal punishment, yet because of the popularity of a false gospel, most of these same people do not think hell will be their final destination. Roman Catholicism and mainstream Christian denominations have misled the masses with an unbiblical plan of salvation that takes many forms and often hinges upon a person repeating a “sinner’s prayer” or confessing faults to a priest. The incorrect evangel can also include reliance upon being a good person, having church membership, or simply believing that Y’shua is the son of YHWH. The false gospel that “Jesus loves you, so just accept him into your heart” has produced untold false converts and spurred unfathomable spiritual rebellion. The prayer of repentance is not some magical incantation that grants access to heaven. Too many people think that they can continue in sin because they once made a decision to follow Christ or were once baptized. There must be more than just vain words for a soul to be transformed.

No doubt, those who have accepted the popular paths to heaven are sincere in their desire to escape the flames of hell, but sincerity doesn’t guarantee salvation. The message that John the Baptizer, Y’shua the Christ, and the apostles proclaimed was a message of repentance and obedience. “Y’shua came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of YHWH, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of YHWH is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel,” Mark 1:14-15.

Y’shua never told anyone to “accept him into your heart and you will be born again.” When asked about eternal life, the Savior once

replied, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments," Matthew 19:17.

The Messiah taught that true spiritual conversion begins with a proper use of the Law of Moses to point out the errors of sin. The wages of sin is death unless people repent of their lawbreaking sins, trust the Almighty for forgiveness, and turn from their wicked ways. The Law of Moses, or Torah, is the instruction book for mankind that is found in the first five books of the Bible. These pages describe the righteous straight and narrow path a person should walk once they accept the Savior. The Torah also acts as a mirror to reflect mankind's sinfulness as compared to YHWH's high standards. The Torah defines sin but it itself is not sinful. A single violation of just one of the Old Testament commandments rendered a person sinful and deserving of eternal death. This strict death penalty was placed upon the Savior when he died at Golgotha. Those that confess their sins, change their behaviors, and submit to the Bible are born again through the Holy Spirit. Luke 24:46-47 states, "It is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

A person who has accepted the true gospel will bear the spiritual fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. A lack of this good spiritual fruit is a telltale sign that a person has accepted a false gospel and is perhaps a false convert. "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Y'shua is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?" 2 Corinthians 13:5. The full gospel of Y'shua is a message of repentance that produces real change.

The Oxymoron of Gentile Christianity

Truth about gentiles

Perhaps one of the most confusing subjects for Bible students is the identity of just who is a gentile. Most non-Jewish people who have accepted Jesus as the Messiah consider themselves to be “Gentile Christians” and since they aren’t Jewish they shouldn’t have to follow the “Jewish Law” in the Old Testament. Such a classification and the prevailing thought are fundamentally erroneous. The idea of a “gentile Christian” is an oxy-moron, just like the idea of “congressional ethics” or “holy war.”

This error of identity is fed by the fact that English Bibles don't always accurately represent the original thoughts of ancient writers and their culture. For example, the Greek word used throughout the New Testament for "gentile" is "ethnos." This word describes a gentile as ethnically different than other people on the basis of their religion, and not just their family tree. An ethnos gentile is an unbeliever who is a foreigner from YHWH and has not been adopted into the people of YHWH. Noah Webster’s Dictionary agrees by defining a "gentile" as “one neither a Jew nor a Christian; a worshiper of false gods; a heathen or belonging to the nations at large, ethnic; of pagan or heathen people.”

The Hebrew words found throughout the Old Testament, "goy" and “ger,” are used in the Law and the Prophets to describe a heathen who would not accept the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A goy is considered to be spiritually unclean and separated from the Biblical faith. According to the Bible, there is absolutely no such thing as a “gentile Christian!”

Romans chapters 9 and 11 explain that a person is "grafted into the common wealth of Israel" when they are born again. This means that at salvation, a sinful gentile unbeliever is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Being part of the common wealth of Israel doesn't mean that people become "Jewish" or that they have to convert to Judaism to be saved. Rather, being grafted into the nation of Israel spiritually and physically places a person into the people group that YHWH has chosen to take His message of love to the world. "If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise," Galatians 3:29.

The Apostle Paul understood this mystery as he was a missionary to the gentile (heathen) people. He proclaimed that "the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Y'shua through the gospel," Ephesians 3:1, 6. Paul knew that Christians are born again into the family of Israel and there is now neither Jew nor gentile. He even called the believers former gentiles in Ephesians 2:11-12, "remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without YHWH in the world."

The way in which a person describes themselves is important as it leads to resulting thoughts and actions. Gentiles are absolutely no different than Jewish people as they both need to be reconciled to the Creator through faith in His son. Once born again, all believers should accept entire Bible (including the Law of Moses) as instructions for keeping on the straight and narrow path of righteousness. It is impossible for a person to be both a believer and an unbeliever (a gentile and a Christian) at the same time. Don't fall for the oxymoron of being a "saved Gentile" as it only leads to confusion and rebellion.

The Terrible Twos of Spiritual Growth

Truth about maturity

For some reason, between the age of 2 and 4 many children begin to act crazy. That cuddly baby is now becoming a toddler and all of sudden learns that throwing a temper tantrum is a way to get attention. We've all seen how the terrible twos can be - happy one minute and then bursting with tears the next minute. Not fun.

Sometimes kids going through the terrible twos simply shout "NO" to everything that is asked. Others bite, hit, or refuse to be potty trained. All in all, when the twos are terrible, it's not a fun time for the parent or the child. Why is this occurring? Well, mostly because the child is learning that the world does not revolve around his or her wants. Around two years of age, a child becomes more keenly aware of her surroundings and her desires. When that kid doesn't get what it wants, the child begins to act loudly and aggressively in order to manipulate and control the situation. Those little ankle-biters are smarter than we think!

In a similar fashion we go through spiritual terrible twos as well. How? That's simple. We face the same dilemma as a toddler does as we are being conformed into YHWH's image and being changed from "glory TO glory." Here's a passage to consider, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of YHWH, are changed into the same image from glory TO glory, even as by the Spirit of YHWH," 2 Corinthians 3:18. Did you see the terrible "TO" in this verse? This shows that the spiritual life is all about being changed from one type of glory to another. We have our own selfish glory that first only wants to seek its own pleasure. We glory in our wants. We glory in our accomplishments. We glory in our education. We glory in our homes and belongings. We glory in our knowledge. We glory in our whatever.

This type of self-centered glory must change to focus not on whom we are or what we have BUT who Y'shua is in us. This is called being changed from "glory TO glory" and it's not necessarily a fun experience.

Our flesh and our mind are used to life that is centered on self. We are accustomed to pleasing self first and then others. When we go through the spiritual terrible twos we change as we begin to put others first or lay down our own personal desires and agendas. It's something we all must constantly go through as we move towards maturity with the Messiah.

The "terrible twos" from one type of selfish glory to a spiritual self-less glory can be stressful and strenuous process. There is no one time prayer that happens and then "poof" we are made glorious and righteous. Being changed into his image is an ongoing daily experience that causes us to daily lay down our selfish ways and accept the ways of love. And then just when one area is conquered another will quickly pop up to be dealt with.

Consider this story...there was once a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village who walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?" The old man replied, "Nope, only babies." A frothy question brought a profound answer. Growth takes time. But, growth can not be equated with time. Just because a person has been born again for 20 years doesn't mean that they have grown in their faith and walking in spiritual maturity. There are many seasoned saints that are stuck in their own "terrible twos" and they don't seem to want to move on. Are there areas in your life that you refuse to submit to the Messiah?

The spiritual terrible twos can manifest in many ways. People can be adamant about their doctrine and not willing to change - terrible twos are awfully opinionated. Other people can be totally self-centered and think that only their needs or only their problems matter - that's a

temper tantrum just waiting to happen. And even some people just struggle with accepting the love of YHWH - cranky, cranky, cranky.

So, how do you know WHEN you are in the midst of being changed from "glory TO glory?" That answer is a simple - "always." We never exactly arrive. Once we get one part of our lives figured out another area pops up in rebellion. The secret is to navigate through the terrible twos without staying stagnant in any certain area of offense or hurting people in the process.

As with childhood, it's natural to experience times of struggle. That's just the "TO" phase from glory to glory. The author of Romans said that this process is actually what reveals the righteousness of our Heavenly Father. "For in it the righteousness of YHWH is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'but the righteous man shall live by faith,'" Romans 1:17. As we go from faith TO faith and glory TO glory we actually manifest the power of Heaven here on earth.

Take Peter, or "Kefa" in Hebrew, for example. He quickly accepts the Messiah and begins to literally follow after Him. Then in the Newer Testament we see him falling and flailing and making a mess of himself. One time Peter says that he believes Y'shua is the Messiah and then minutes later the Messiah is rebuking the enemy from working through Peter. Looks like a terrible two tantrum to me. Yet, Kefa made it through these times of testing. He grew spiritually and became a leader and author of two books in the Bible. He was changed from glory TO glory and from faith TO faith. How about you? Which areas in your life are you struggling to overcome? How does being in the spiritual terrible twos allow your faith to grow and reveal the righteousness of YHWH?

The truth is that YHWH loves us TOO much to leave us as we currently are. He wants us to press forward and reveal His love to the world. The terrible twos might not be fun but they do lead to a type of maturity that is greatly needed in the body of Messiah. As you go

through this phase be confident that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Messiah. Trust Him to work in you and through you for the good.

Did God Judge Haiti or Japan?

Truth about mercy and judgment

Many have wondered if the devastating earthquake that struck the poor nation of Haiti on January 12, 2009 was an act of judgment by God. Such a question has spawned harsh comments by televangelist Pat Robertson, who said the quake that potentially killed half a million people was because Haiti made a "pact with the devil" and have been "cursed" ever since. Radio host Rush Limbaugh joined into the controversy, by stating that Americans didn't need to donate to any Haiti relief funds. Limbaugh told a caller on his radio show that "we've already donated to Haiti - it's called the U.S. income tax." Was the 7.0 magnitude quake an act of God? Should believers out to help those in need?

Similar questions have been asked about the earthquake and tsunami in Japan that occurred in March of 2011. Some have stated that the events happened because Japan supported a two state solution to the Palestinian problem in the Middle east. While it is indeed tempting to look at this horrible disaster as the hand of an angry God, such an idea is totally wrong. Do not be deceived. The Almighty has not judged Japan's actions of forsaking Israel. Nor has He struck them for any other sin. If judgment was being poured out then San Francisco or Las Vegas deserved being hit before Japan! If Israel's enemies were on the bull's eye then surely Iran should have been destroyed first. But it wasn't.

Many describe the "God of the Old Testament," as an angry judge of the world that sent His son to save mankind from the religion of Judaism. This is not so. Such an idea of a bearded man with lightening bolts and a huge throne relate more to Greek Mythology than the Bible. The Scriptures state that "YHWH did not send His son into the

world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved,” John 3:17.

Part of Y’shua’s ministry was to restore the mercy and grace of the Law that was given by Moses. He did not come to start a new religion, or write a second portion of the Bible called the “New Testament.” John 1:17 states, “The Torah was given by Moses and its unmerited favor and truth were revealed by Y’shua.” The Law of Moses explains that when bad things occur, such as natural disasters, it is not YHWH in Heaven enacting judgment on mankind. If this were so, no city could stand. San Francisco, Las Vegas, or New York would have been destroyed long ago. The God of the Bible is a Elohim of mercy.

The Almighty has physical and spiritual laws in place that administer justice and punishment of sin. He also has laws that send blessings to the person who obeys the precepts of the Bible. People and nations do reap what they sow, but it is not YHWH cursing them. Sometimes things happen because people have cursed themselves. Other times, natural events just occur! YHWH isn’t up in heaven pouting because he didn’t get to kill everyone in Haiti. No, He perfectly balances justice and mercy. Perhaps it was YHWH’s mercy that the earthquake hit Haiti, and not Miami? Or maybe it was his mercy that the quake was a 7.0, and not a 10 on the Richter scale?

Billy Graham once said that “If God doesn’t judge America, then God will have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.” This is NOT true! If YHWH does judge America then, He will have to apologize to Y’shua! “YHWH was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Messiah’s ambassadors, as though YHWH were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to YHWH. YHWH made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of YHWH,” 2 Corinthians 5:19-21.

When Y'shua died, He paid the price for forgiveness of all sins past, present, and future. His death was the judgment for all sin, including Haiti's rebellion and Japan's mistakes. Bible believers should be praying for those in Haiti, and helping meet the needs of the less fortunate. Robertson, Limbaugh, and Graham can say what they want. Y'shua said, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy."

Such an understanding does NOT give us a license to sin; to do so would be just stupid. Sin opens the door to the adversary. Romans 6:16, "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" When an individual or a country continues to walk away from the Word of YHWH they are giving the adversary control in their lives. Such service to the flesh allows the enemy to steal, kill, and destroy. It's not YHWH who is destroying... it is the enemy. Y'shua came that we might have life, says John 10:10!

Sin brings curses upon us. These curses are NOT sent by YHWH but by ourselves. The emet / truth is that if we've been born again and follow Y'shua then His blood has been applied to ALL our sins - past, present, and future. We have been made one with His spirit and when YHWH looks upon us He sees the Son.

Perhaps the events in Japan are a picture of YHWH's mercy. What if the earthquake epicenter would have been in Tokyo? Have you considered how much worse this event could have been? Maybe the natural disaster was just that, a natural disaster?

The message of mercy isn't easy to the ears. The full sacrifice of Y'shua is a startling message to those that are used to a doom's day message of YHWH showing forth His wrath upon Japan or America through natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. Too many people would much rather hear bad news and picture the judgment of the sinners. But, YHWH is showing mercy. He didn't send Y'shua to

condemn the world but to save it. And He didn't send an earthquake to destroy Japan.

All judgment was placed upon Y'shua. He isn't sitting in Heaven counting down the days until tribulation. Instead, He is moving within the hearts of men and calling us to repent!

The book of James chapter 2 states that "mercy triumphs over justice." The flood gates of Heaven are open to us as we walk in His ways. When we obey we put His blessings into motion. When we disobey we actively stop his blessings from reaching us and release curses to have power upon us. The angels were right when they said in Luke 2:14, "Glory to YHWH in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Blessed is the man who values the sacrifice of Y'shua and extends mercy for those in pain. May we pray for those suffering in this natural disaster and may we never belittle what our Messiah has done for us and in us.

Pride and Personal Convictions

Truth about doctrine and dogma

Imagine you are drifting alone in the sea. Your boat has crashed and you are stranded with nothing but the view of ocean water for miles and miles. The waves pound your body. Sharks and other creatures surround you. You have been alone and adrift for days. Finally, out of nowhere a helicopter descends and offers you a rope to climb to safety. This helicopter is part of a worldwide rescue mission seeking people just like you. Your heart jumps at the possibility of being saved! But as the rope falls from the sky you notice the rope is tied with knots. The colors are mixed in the twine. The knots look safe but the tying isn't perfect. This is not good. It's not your choice of tying. You don't care for the colors. The helicopter isn't as large as you would like. Something looks "fishy" so instead of climbing to safety, you swing the rope away and wave off the rescue mission. You'd rather be lost at sea than rescued by an imperfect vessel. Sound ridiculous? Well, this is exactly one huge problem that plagues the faith today.

Instead of joining the worldwide rescue mission to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel many individuals choose to focus on differences of opinion. These folks choose division over unity and shame the entire faith. The issue of the day doesn't matter. Just pick any topic and the problem will arise. People have their tight-nit ideas on calendars, diets, home schooling, music, moons, and marriage. Sway from a certain belief and be labeled a "heretic" or "cult." If you don't measure up to a certain standard or hold a different doctrine then you may be considered worse than a heathen. Can't you hear the voices now?

Throughout the world, there are many agents working against the truth which we teach. Sadly, the largest battle we seem to face comes from similar 'believers' who choose to push their personal convictions

onto others. A personal conviction is just that - an unique and individual area in which a person is convinced to do or not do something. These are the "grey" areas of the scriptures that the Bible leaves open for believers to make their own decision. These are not commandments or areas of sin. These issues can become sin if they are pushed on to others as binding and necessary. Woe unto the man that pridefully exalts personal convictions as truth.

If YHWH leads you to not drink water on Tuesday then you should not do so. Nor should you push that belief on to other people. Envy and strife occur when you are so convinced that yours is the best way, that you condemn others who do not agree. The longer you have had this personal belief the harder it is to allow others freedom in that area. Have you ever done this?

Today, many individuals would rather choose the path of division by exalting their personal choices upon other saints. Many people of faith become judge and jury because others do not measure up to personal standard. Have you taken one point of disagreement to offense, and forgotten about the other areas in which to agree? If so then you may be guilty of exalting your pride above the body of Messiah. The truth is that there should be very few "fellowship breakers" or issues that separate us from other like minded believers. If and when there is separation it should be over the weightier matters of Torah and not personal choices. Much of what is included in this book is fact. There are a few personal convictions mentioned and you should pray about these and decide on whether or not to apply these to your life.

In view of how we seem to devour each other with emails, blogs, chat rooms, and personal networks one MUST ask, "where is the love?" It is through our "ahava" or "love" that the world should tell that we are disciples of our Master. Ahava should offer acceptance and compassion to those with different doctrines, ideas, and convictions. If we can't love and accept our brother with whom we disagree then how can we love a "kadosh" or holy YHWH? 1 Corinthians 13 says that "if

you speak with the tongues of angels but have not love then you are a clanging cymbal." The "tongue of angels" is the Hebrew language. What this verse teaches us is that even if our faith is so perfect that we speak angelic or flawless Hebrew, if we don't have love then our religious actions are in vain.

You will never find a ministry that is 100% doctrinally correct. Nor will you ever find a person that you agree with on every issue of Torah. It takes a mature believer to accept differences and strive for unity in the body. Immature believers find one issue of disagreement to focus, discuss, debate, and divide. Sadly, the Nazarene faith is full of clanging cymbals who make a lot of noise but show little acceptance or love. Selah.

Perhaps we should call these "personal condemnations" instead of "personal convictions." Take head coverings, wearing a tallit, drinking alcohol, the correct pronunciation of the name of YHWH, or even marriage for example. There is Biblical freedom in these issues. Let's discuss marriage. According to the Bible, each person has the choice to marry or remain celibate. This is your personal choice. There are unique blessings and challenges for either decision. While the Torah specifically addresses homosexuality, sex before marriage, bestiality, and promiscuous relationships, the Torah also allows for much freedom IN marriage. We should not judge or criticize those who make their own decisions on this or any other "grey area" of Torah. However, we must love and accept those who may choose to have a different marriage relationship.

Instead of being judgmental, we should love and celebrate the differences in each other. When we join to worship we should lay aside our personal convictions or opinions and support the leadership totally. There is no place for disunity in the body of Messiah. There is no place for personal attacks in the kingdom of YHWH. 1 Corinthians 13 also says that "When I was a child I acted as a child and spoke as a child. When I became a man, I put away childish things." It's time this

movement grows up in the faith and puts away childish pushy personal convictions. We must mature towards love and acceptance. Please don't be like a man who was lost at sea. He drown all alone because he focused on the details of the rope rather than the rescue mission. We have a mission to rescue the lost sheep of Israel. It's time to stop focusing on personal convictions and work towards what is most important - the love of YHWH.

The Truth Will Set You Free

Truth about the emet

Have you ever been to a restaurant, ordered a steak and had the whole cow served to you on a platter? Of course not. Just the idea of eating a humungous cow sounds ridiculous. No one could chew that much meat. No one could stomach that much food. When you eat out and order a steak the server brings you just a slice, just enough to satisfy your hunger for that moment. With a good steak, the savory taste lingers in your mouth for days, making you hungry for another piece of steak cooked to order and prepared to perfection. As steak is to the stomach so truth is to the soul.

You see, the truth is much like a choice cut of beef. You digest a little at a time, which just makes you hungry for more. Like craving a favorite dinner, when a person tastes real truth, the desire for more just grows greater. The problem is most people have been on a vegetarian diet of lies instead of the meat of truth.

Though the Bible says to “seek and you will find” a vast majority live as the Bible teaches to “sit and the truth will come to you.” Most people are happy with the life they have, never questioning the status quo or searching if what they have been told is really so. Yes, the average Joe is happy trusting the government, the television reporters, his preacher, and his parents. What about you? Are you happy with your life of faith or do you feel a spiritual void deep down inside? Have you allowed your culture or family to dictate your holidays and beliefs? Do you take what people tell you at face value or do you research to find out what is right? You can’t be free until you know the truth. “Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free,” says John 8:32.

Finding the Truth: Updated and Expanded

In its essence, truth is unwavering, undeniable, and totally honest. Truth is. It is not always pretty nor is it flattering. And as the old saying goes, 'the truth hurts.' The truth brings pain because it shocks our senses and our perception of the world. Though we might try to argue, the truth remains. It wakes us up from our slumber and causes us to examine further. And truth does not change. It is not relative but universal. Though the professor may say that truth is plural and subjective to each person, it is not. Our understanding of truth may be relative to circumstances and events; however truth remains the same no matter how we try to twist it to our own desires. Truth is not plural but absolute and infinite. It distinguishes between right from wrong, fiction and nonfiction, and facts and lies. From the news reporter to the earnest spiritual seeker the pursuit of truth can reveal some startling information.

In Hebrew the word for truth is "emet." This word literally means 'stability, trustworthiness, establishment, and certainty.' Truth is emet; it is forever established as fact. Emet is an action-oriented term, therefore truth is something you do and not just believe. Emet communicates faithfulness and leaves no room for variance or lies. And emet is all about trusting. Because emet is an action word it creates friction in the world when someone tries to decipher emet from untruth. Emet cuts the strings that tangle the world in deception and lies.

Consider the story of Rosie and her roast...

Rosie always makes the most tender and juicy roast for dinner. The recipe is a family tradition passed down from generation to generation. On special occasions the family knows to expect their favorite dish of Rosie's roast. Oddly though, before she puts the meat in the pot to cook, Rosie always cuts the largest end off of the hunk of meat. She's done this for years and it seems to work. One day as she was cooking the roast, her husband asked her why she would cut off the biggest and best end of the meat before cooking it. The best part of the dish was

being thrown away. She responded, “Well, I’m not really sure, my mother taught me to do this so let’s ask her.” Rosie then telephoned her mother for the answer to this perplexing question. But, her mother wasn’t much help. She simply stated that she saw her mother do the same, so they needed to ask her. Rosie and her husband then set off for the nursing home to pay a visit to Rosie’s grandmother. As the couple spoke with grandma they found the surprising answer to their question. Grandmother laughed as she said, “One day while I was preparing the roast I realized that my pot was too small for such a huge piece of meat. So, I simple cut off one end. I guess your mother saw me do this and has done it ever since!”

Sadly most people treat their convictions the same way Rosie treated her roast: never having reservations about their beliefs, never searching for the reason behind traditions, and never doubting if what they have been handed down is the truth. Then there are people like Rosie’s husband who noticed something was amiss and simply asked a question. It seems just asking the question of “why?” and being open and receptive to the truth can advance a person’s life and faith. What about you? In the story of Rosie roast who do you most resemble? Are you like Rosie who just does what everyone else does? Or are you similar to Rosie’s husband who questions the status quo?

Many in the society of faith encourage people not to question and research the facts concerning what is presented from the pulpit. Churches are looking for spectators, not participators. The majority of church leaders would be insulted if a member of their group doubted a point made during a sermon. While in the Dark Ages people were not allowed to have copies of the Bible to study for themselves, today’s problem is that we have many copies of the written Word, yet our Bibles lay on dusty shelves while our minds totally accept whatever is taught as the truth. Just think about it. When was the last time your pastor encouraged you to check out what he was teaching?

Though the world is full of lies, the truth is out there. However, the truth does not just come to people sitting on pews. Knowing and living the truth takes involvement and desire to live the abundant life spoken of in the Bible. For the Messiah himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” To know the truth is to truly know Y’shua and have a personal relationship with the Bible. The word “emet” is spelled with the Hebrew letters aleph-mem-tav. It is simply amazing that these are the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The truth is the emet. The emet is found in the Hebrew language. This further illustrates that hidden truth can be found in the Bible when the Scriptures are viewed from a Hebrew perspective. To know the truth a person must dig, research, study, and pray. And to know the truth a person must begin to question and query. It is time to get serious about living the truth. Its time to be more like Rosie’s husband who questions rather than Rosie who copies. Who knows, you may find out you’ve been missing the best part of your dinner.

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