

# QUICK TOPICAL STUDIES IN MESSIANISM

## (Hebrew Roots Moments/Messianism 101)

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### HEBREW ROOTS VS. CHRISTIAN LINGO:

#### •MEANING AND ORIGIN OF THE WORD CHURCH

First question: Did the first-century Messianic believers call themselves *a church* or meet in *a church*? Emphatically, no! In the Apostolic Writings, the Greek word translated in our English Bibles as *church* is the word *ecclesia* which means *a gathering of people called out from their homes to either a secular or a religious gathering in a public place*. It does not mean *a building*, but rather *a group of people*. So according to biblical definition, you do not meet in a church, you are the church!

Second question: If the first-century believers in the Book of Acts did not call themselves *a church*, what did they call themselves, then? They called themselves simply *the called out ones*. Called out from what? From the world and a pagan or heathen lifestyle.

Third question: Do you know the roots of the word *church*? Do you really want to know? Well, stay tuned. According to the dictionary the word *church* originates from the German word *kirche* and the Old English word *circe*. *Circe* is of Greek origination and is the name of the sorceress and enchantress goddess daughter of Sol or Helios, the pagan sun god. Some authorities claim that *Circe* and *Kirche* were the same individual who was the Babylonian moon goddess. The word *circe* is related to the common words *circle*, *circus* and *circumference*. Just as the sun is circular, and the Romans worshipped their sun-god in circular arenas called circuses where horse races and other athletic competitions occurred so today many well-meaning individuals worship today in churches on Sunday.

### HEBREW ROOTS VS. CHRISTIAN LINGO:

#### •UNDERSTANDING THE WORD NEW TESTAMENT FROM A HEBREW PERSPECTIVE.

Did you ever wonder where the terms *New Testament* or *New Covenant* came from? Yes, you will find these phrases used in the Apostolic Writings (or “NT”) portion of your English Bible in exactly 10 places, but does this translation do justice to the spiritual meaning of the concept?

When you think of new what comes to your mind? A brand new car? A new house? A new pair of shoes? You see, in English, we have one word for *new*, but in biblical Greek there are two words: *Neos* and *kainos* and each has a different connotation. *Neos* more often than not carries the idea of *brand new* or *numerically new*, while *kainos* carries the idea of *renewed*, *refreshed* or *repaired* or *qualitatively new*. And when you see the term *new covenant* or *new testament* used in the Apostolic Writings can you guess which Greek word is used nine out of ten times for *new*? If you guessed *kainos* you were right. The terms *new testament* or *new covenant* in your Bibles would be more accurately translated *renewed covenant* instead of *new* (as in *brand new*) covenant or testament as has been done in the recently published *Hebrew Roots Version “New Testament”* translation. The usage of the word *renewed* over the use of the word *new* is exactly consistent with Paul’s usage of the word in **Heb 8:8**, “**For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new [or renewed] (2537) covenant (1242) with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...**” Paul here is quoting from **Jeremiah 31:31** in the Tanakh [or “OT”] where it says, “**Behold, the days come, saith YHWH, that I will make a new [or renewed] (2319) covenant (1285) with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah...**” The word for *new* in this passage in Jeremiah is the Hebrew word, *chadash*, which means *to*

*repair or renew.* Don't take my word for it, you can look these words up for yourself in a reputable Hebrew and Greek Bible lexicon or word dictionary and you will see what I mean.

So what is the bottom line here? The terms *new testament* and *new covenant* are mistranslations and do not mean *new* as in *brand new*, but *new* as in *renewed, refreshed or repaired*. You see, Yeshua the Messiah is not going to make a *brand new* covenant with his people when he returns to marry his spiritual wife which is the spiritual body of believers of whom he is the head. He will repair or renew the former covenants (plural, see Eph. 2:12) that ancient Israel broke and that many are still breaking even today by not keeping his Torah-commandments. And what was wrong with the former covenants (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants) you may ask? Was it the terms of the covenant, YHWH's Torah-commandments which were evil and had to pass away or was it something else? Let's let Scripture answer this question:

**Heb. 8:7 For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.**

**8 For finding fault with them, [YHWH found fault with the people, not with the Torah-law] he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a [renewed] covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:**

**9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.**

**10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:**

**11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.**

This renewed covenant, the same one that Jeremiah talked about in Jer. 31, verses 31 and 33, will still have the Torah-law as the terms of the agreement, but this time, YHWH will pour out his Holy Spirit onto his people to soften their hard hearts of rebellion and disobedience against his laws. With Yeshua, the Messiah, the Living Torah-word of Elohim living in their hearts via the power of the Holy Spirit, this time they will be an obedient wife to YHWH instead of a rebellious one when they broke the terms of their marriage covenant which they made when they said,, "I do" to him at Mt. Sinai. This bride, who will be made up of both Jewish and non-Jewish.

## **HEBREW ROOTS VS. CHRISTIAN LINGO:**

### **•HEBREW VERSUS CHRISTIAN TERMINOLOGIES**

I will give you a common contemporary Christian word or phrase and you will give me its equivalent in first-century Book of Acts Messianic Jewish parlance. Got that? Good. We're translating common Christian phrases back to their Hebrew roots, Book of Acts equivalents. Here we go:

- Jesus Christ = was originally Yeshua HaMashiach
- New Testament = Brit Chadasha or Renewed Covenant
- Old Testament = Tanach, an acronym for Torah (the books of Moses), Neviim (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings)
- Christians = Messianics, Nazarenes or Notzrim
- Law = Torah meaning *teachings, precepts or instructions in righteousness*

Okay class, how are you doing so far? Let's increase the difficulty. Here are some common Hebrew Roots expressions that became de-Hebrewized by Christian theologians somewhere along the way. I will give you the word and you tell me what you think its Christianized translation became. Let's go...

- Elohim became God
- Yahweh became LORD

- Scriptures became the Old Testament
- Synagogue became Church
- Immersion became baptism
- Israel became the Church

## **MAN'S TRADITION Vs. YHWH'S TRUTH:**

### **•THE SABBATH AND FIRST-CENTURY BELIEVERS**

On which day of the week did the Messianic Jewish believers of the Book of Acts congregate for worship and teaching? On Shabbat, the seventh day of the week or on Sunday, the first day of the week?

Before we answer this question let's first establish a few facts. Nowhere in the NT-Apostolic Writings is there a command to observe Sunday nor is there any place recorded in the Apostolic Writings that the first-century believers met on the first day of the week for any kind of a religious service unless it was a continuation of Sabbath services overlapping into Saturday evening which by Jewish reckoning was the beginning of the first day of the week. While there are no direct commands in the Apostolic Writings to keep the Sabbath (although there are 122 references to the Sabbath in the whole Bible 56 of which are found in the Apostolic Writings) there are numerous examples of Yeshua and the disciples attending Sabbath services in various local synagogues. While the Apostolic Writings contain no direct commands pertaining to Sabbath observance, the only Scriptures the early believers had was the Tanach (OT), and the Sabbath command and other commandments were clearly stated there and were still in effect, and everyone knew it.

According to the testimony of early church fathers such as Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, Sunday observance began to creep into the early church around A.D. 115, approximately 50 years after the death of the Apostle Paul and Sunday services became the law of the land in the Roman empire in 325 AD, thanks to the pagan Roman Impairer Constantine.

In fact Paul toward the end of his life publicly testified in two Roman courts of law (Acts 24:14; 25:8) that he had violated none of the laws of Moses, including Sabbath observance. Had he not been a faithful Sabbath-keeper this testimony would have made Paul a liar guilty of perjury.

The idea that the early believers kept Sunday in honor of Yeshua's resurrection is not substantiated by the early church fathers, but is simply historical revisionism on the part of subsequent Christian theologians attempting in retrospect to substantiate Sunday observance from the Scriptures. The fact is that Yeshua was in the grave for three days and three nights, just as he said he would be, and there are not three days and three nights between late Friday afternoon and early Sunday morning. In reality, Yeshua was crucified on Passover day on Wednesday afternoon during the afternoon sacrifice in the Temple and he arose exactly 72 hours later, as he said he would, late Sabbath afternoon. The Gospels record that the disciples found the tomb empty early Sunday morning, and not that he rose on Sunday morning.

Furthermore, both the prophets Isaiah (66:23) and Ezekiel (46:1,4,12) record that during the millennium all flesh will come to worship YHWH on the Sabbath, not just the Jews. So get ready to keep the Sabbath during Yeshua's millennial reign here on this earth. Sabbath observance is part of the roots of your Christian faith and was the faith of our spiritual fathers.

## **MAN'S TRADITION Vs. YHWH'S TRUTH:**

### **•BIBLICAL FEAST DAYS VERSUS PAGAN CHRISTIAN HOLIDAYS**

Did the first-century Messianic Jewish Book of Acts believers keep Christmas, Easter, Lent, Halloween, Good Friday, Palm Sunday or any of the other current, traditional Christian holidays? The answer is an emphatic and resounding, NO! Au contraire...they kept the commanded Holy Day festivals of YHWH Elohim as YHWH commanded them in the Books of Moses in the Tenach (OT).

These festivals were and are called the *seasons of our joy* by the Jews and were all prophetic shadow-pictures pointing to YHWH's plan of salvation for mankind and reconciliation to himself. They all pointed to the Messiah. The Spring feast days of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost pointed prophetically to the first coming of Messiah Yeshua and the fall festivals of Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles and the Eighth Day point to the immanent second coming of Messiah Yeshua.

There are many examples in the NT—Apostolic Writings of the early Messianic believers, including the

Apostle Paul, joyously celebrating not only the seventh day Sabbath, but the Feast Days, as well. Paul said in 1 Cor. 11:1 to, “Follow me as I follow Yeshua Messiah.” Messiah Yeshua kept the Feast Days and so did Paul who toward the end of his life could say with certainty and total truthfulness in two Roman courts of law that he had not violated even one of the Torah-laws of YHWH Elohim given to Moses and the Children of Israel including Sabbath and the observance of all the Feast Days.

My friends, the truth is that none of the current Christian holidays can be found anywhere in the Bible. All originated generations and some of them hundreds of years after the first-century. In fact, Yeshua was not born in December but in the fall during Feast of Tabernacles. Christmas has pagan origins which go back well before the birth of Yeshua. References to the Christmas tree are found in the Book of Jeremiah, chapter 10 where you will find a perfect description of a Christmas tree with all the trimmings and there YHWH utters a direct command to his people to not learn or practice the ways of the heathens including cutting and decorating Christmas tree.

## **MAN’S TRADITION VS. YHWH’S TRUTH:**

### **•THE MENORAH OR THE CROSS: WHICH IS THE TRUE SYMBOL OF THE BODY OF YESHUA?**

For those of you who want to base your spiritual walk solely on the Holy Word of YHWH Elohim we have a question: What is the one symbol in the Bible that you feel represents you as a born-again believer in Yeshua the Messiah? Is it the symbol of the cross? Now is the cross the symbol that Scripture itself uses to represent you — the spiritual body of believers to which you belong commonly referred to in Christianity as *the Church*? Absolutely not! Now there is in this writer’s mind no doubt that our Lord and Savior was crucified on a wooden cross. While it is true that the Apostolic Writers make reference to the cross 18 times in their writings in reference to both the torture instrument upon which Messiah was brutally murdered and later as a metaphor or word picture of the glorious redemptive work that Messiah accomplished there in none of those 18 references is *the cross* a symbol of the Body of Messiah.

So why has the cross become the universal symbol of Christianity? If Yeshua had had his head chopped off like his cousin Yochanon, or been stoned like Ya’acov the Apostle or been killed in the electric chair would we be wearing those symbols around our necks or adorning our houses of worship with axes, stones or electric chairs? It’s doubtful.

Am I straining at a pharisaical gnat here? I think not. Hopefully, the reader will not misconstrue what is being said here and end up sacrificing Scriptural truth and accuracy on the altar of man-made (and non-biblical) tradition.

Indeed while the Apostolic Writings do indeed refer to the cross 18 times, they also refer to Yeshua’s being sacrificed on a tree five times and in these references we see a solid hint as to the symbol that Scripture does use to represent the Body of Believers in Yeshua the Messiah.

Scripture plainly states that Yeshua and his body of followers are likened to a tree of which the seven-branched menorah that adorned both the Holy Place of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) YHWH instructed Moshe to build as well as the Holy Place of Solomon’s Temple. Furthermore, remember what Yeshua said in John 15:5? “I am the vine and you are the branches...” This is a perfect picture of a menorah which has a central trunk with six (the number representing man) branches growing out of the trunk. Remember what Yeshua said in Mt. 15:4-5 that his followers were to be lights upon a lampstand on a hill for all the world to see—a clear allusion in the mind of any Jewish reader to the Temple’s Menorah (upon the Temple Mount). Additionally, when a believer in and follower of Yeshua in a sacred state of worshipping his Lord and Savior lifts holy hands in worship, not only is this the universal sign of surrender (in this case to his Heavenly Master) but his body and hands are actually forming a human menorah. In worship, he is acting out what he is—a lampstand to the world radiating forth the good news of the truth and love of Yeshua. Do you still remain unconvinced that the menorah and not the cross is the symbol by which we should identify ourselves as believers in the Messiah? How about Rev. 1:12, 20 and 2:1 where the seven churches are symbolized as a seven-branched menorah! The menorah here is the symbol of the Assembly of Believers. Can anyone argue with this?

Though the cross is representative of the redemptive work Yeshua accomplish on our behalf, it is not the symbol of the “Church,” the menorah is! Furthermore, in Jewish thought the menorah is analogous to an olive tree (the ancient Temple menorah was constructed of hollow tubes of solid gold filled with olive oil which when lit burned) which to which the Apostle Sha’ul makes reference in Romans 11 as representing the Tree of Life (which ultimately represents Yeshua) into which all must be grafted if they are to be part the Body of Yeshua and have

eternal life.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES:**

### **•FROM AD 70 TO AD 135—**

#### **HOW DID THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH BECOME SEPARATED FROM ITS HEBREW ROOTS?**

Hebrew roots scholar, Dr. Ron Moseley has part of the answer to this question in his book, published in 1996, entitled, *Yeshua—A Guide to the Real Jesus of the Original Church*. He says, “After the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, two new religious organizations grew out of the Judaism of Jesus’ and Paul’s day. The Pharisees had fled Jerusalem to Yavneh and were spared, while the Jewish followers of Jesus had fled to the mountains of Pella and also survived (Matthew 24:16). From these two groups came two separate religions known as Rabbinic Judaism and the Christian Church. Today, neither Rabbinic Judaism nor the Church, which formed much of its theology from fourth-century Roman ideas, hold the same views as the pre-70 Judaism of Jesus’ and Paul’s day” (p. 69).

Christian Hebrew roots scholar, professor and theologian Marvin Wilson argues the same points in his 1989 book, *Our Father Abraham—Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*. He writes, “A cursory look at the beginnings of Christianity reveals a Church that was made up exclusively of Jews. Indeed, the Church was viewed as a sect within Judaism, as the book of Acts makes clear in referring to early followers of Jesus as the ‘sect of the Nazarenes’ (Acts 24:5). They seemed to function easily within Judaism in that they were described as ‘enjoying the favor of all the people’ (2:47)” (p. 47). Wilson then goes on to write that between 70 AD when the Roman army destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem and 135 AD when the Second Jewish revolt against Roman occupation of their country occurred the first-century Messianic congregation began to leave its Jewish roots. Let’s take a quick look at the timeline of events that led to the Christian church leaving its Hebrew roots as chronicled by Wilson (*ibid.* pp. 74ff)

—In 63 BC the Romans took the city of Jerusalem by storm and established Roman rule over the land. The Jews writhed under foreign domination which included the collection of high taxes and the torture and execution of any opposed to Roman rule.

—In AD 49, a dispute broke out between Jews and Messianic believers in Rome causing the Romans to expel both groups from that city. At that time the Romans made no distinction between Jews and Messianics.

—By AD 64, during Nero’s rule, Messianics were distinguished from traditional Jews and many Messianics were persecuted at this time. Paul was martyred during this time.

—By the time of Paul’s death in Rome, in Jerusalem the Zealots, who militantly rejected Roman rule over Judea, had gained considerable influence among the Jews in the Land of Israel. The Zealots were eagerly awaiting their chance to revolt against Roman domination and secure independence for Israel.

—In AD 66 the Zealots seized their opportunity to revolt against Rome which lasted for four years. After three years of fighting the Roman general was unexpectedly recalled to Rome at which time many Jews fled to the city of Yavneh and the early Messianic believers fled to Pella, a city in Jordan, just outside of Roman rule.

—In AD 70 the Romans returned to Israel under Roman general Titus, took Jerusalem, destroyed the city and Temple and killed hundreds of thousands of Jews.

—AD 73: For three years the Romans continued mopping up operations against the Jewish rebels which terminated in the fall of Masada, the Zealots’ last stronghold against the Romans.

—Move from Jerusalem to Pella: For the Messianics, Pella, located 60 miles NE of Jerusalem, became an important center for Messianic activities replacing Jerusalem. The failure of the Messianic community at this time to support the nationalistic movement against Rome did not endear them to the general Jewish population. In the face of national crisis such aloofness and lack of patriotism branded the Messianics with a stigma of disloyalty and treason. Furthermore, the geographical removal of Messianics from Jerusalem and its Temple affected the growing schism between traditional Jews and Messianics by loosening their close religious connection to Judaism, the strongest potential unifying force the Jewish people had. At the same time, Messianics used the fall of Jerusalem against traditional Jews in the Synagogue pointing to this as proof of YHWH’s displeasure and judgment against the traditional Jews for

rejecting Yeshua the Messiah. The First Jewish Revolt marked a turning point in the history of Judaism. The early Messianic congregation up to AD 70 was a daughter of Judaism, but only after the Revolt did they leave the nest.

—Meanwhile, after the First Jewish Revolt, the Temple system along with the Zealot, Sadducee and Essene sects ceased to exist. Only the Pharisaic system survived having transplanted to Yavneh, a city west of Jerusalem. There the foundations of modern rabbinic Judaism were laid with a religious reformulation on a spiritual rather than a territorial basis. At Yavneh, the Jewish leaders took a religious stand against the Messianic “heretics” further widening the breach between traditional and Messianic Jews. Accusations flew back and forth between these two camps.

—As the Gospel was preached and more and more Gentiles converted to Messianism and the balance of power and influence within the early church began to shift away from the Jewish to the Gentile side. By the early part of the second century the Messianic movement was primarily composed of non-Jews who lived in other areas beside Jerusalem such as Antioch and Rome.

—AD 132-135: The Second Jewish Revolt. At this time a popular Jewish figure named Simon Bar Kokhba led another revolt against the Romans. Some of the leading Jewish religious figures of the day declared Bar Kokhba to be the Messiah. After several years of fighting, the Romans defeated the Jews, expelled them from Jerusalem (but apparently allowed Christians who would renounce all Jewishness to enter the city) levelled the city renamed it Aelia Capitalina and Judea was renamed Palestine after the Philistines, the ancient Israelite enemies. The AD 135 revolt was the final breaking point between the traditional Jews and the Messianics who had but one Messiah—Yeshua of Nazareth. To accept Bar Kokhba was an outright denial of the Messiahship of Yeshua and was totally unacceptable.

—Marcion: early church heretic. At the same time a very influential and anti-semitic church father named Marcion who was influenced by Greek dualistic thought originated and propagated the idea far and wide among second century believers that the God of the OT was evil and judgemental and his laws were evil, a burden and impossible to keep, while conversely Jesus, the God of the NT was loving, full of mercy and grace and he came to free us from the old Mosaic law. Though Marcion was eventually branded as a heretic by church fathers, the seeds of his ideas took root in Gentile Christianity and eventually gave rise to the concept of dispensationalism prevalent in Christianity today which, succinctly stated, says that YHWH has one law, covenant, and set of salvation requirements for the Jews and another for the Gentiles.

—Between the second and fourth centuries: Later on, as the Romans, continued their persecution of the Jews throughout the Roman Empire Christians found it expedient for self preservation purposes to distance themselves from the Jewish ties, similitude and any beliefs that appeared in any way to smack of Judaism, no matter whether the Jewish beliefs were biblically-based or not. Eventually, as Christianity grew in numbers of converts and influence within the Roman Empire it joined forces with the Romans and became the state religion in the early part of the fourth century. Sunday became the official day of worship and all Jewish observances (such as the Feast Days) and religious practices were banned and were replaced with paganized Christian holidays such as Easter and Christmas. By this time, the Christian church had officially cut all ties with its Hebrew roots and had become a very different religious entity from that of the Book of Acts believers.

## **MESSIANIC PERSPECTIVES:**

### **•THE SYMBOL OF THE CROSS PREFIGURED IN THE TENAKH (OT)**

There is often a spirited debate among those returning to the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith as to whether Yeshua was crucified on a cross, a stake, tree or gallows. For the reason that the cross is a symbol of obvious ancient pagan origination many Messianic believers have an aversion to its being the instrument upon which Messiah Yeshua was crucified. This being the case, we must ask the obvious question: which came first? Was the cross originally a pagan symbol or not?

We may never, with certainty, know the answer to this question. But one thing is certain, the origins of the cross as a redemptive symbol are ancient—perhaps as ancient, if not more so, then its uses as a pagan religious symbol. For example, in the ancient paleo-Hebrew script, which some scholars believe predates the current square-lettered Hebrew script, the final letter in the Hebrew alphabet is the letter “t” which is shaped like a cross and because the letters in this ancient Hebrew script were actually pictorial symbols and thus descriptive in nature

(much like Egyptian cuneiform) the letter *tav* has meaning of *ownership, to make a sign, to seal, to make a covenant*.

In Scripture itself we see the symbol of the cross reoccurring over again. For example, when Ya'acov (Jacob) on his deathbed blessed Yosef's sons, Ephraim and Manassah, he crossed his arms as he laid his hands on their head to bless them (Gen. 48:14) and then he made mention of the Angel (the pre-incarnate Yeshua) redeeming him from evil (v. 16), an obvious reference to the redemptive work of the Messiah at the crucifixion.

Another reference to the cross can found in Ex. 12:7 where YHWH commands the Israelites to kill the Passover lamb and smear the blood therefrom on the sideposts and top of their doorframes—a perfect picture of the cross outlined in blood from the head and hands of Yeshua.

We see the outline of the cross once again in Num. 2 in how YHWH instructed the tribes to be configured around the Mishkan (Tabernacle). If one were to view the encampment from the air as is described in this passage of Scripture we see the outline of a perfect cross. Furthermore, within the Tabernacle itself, the furnishings are laid out in the shape of a cross. In essence we see a cross on a cross, or since the Tabernacle and all that furnishes is a prophetic shadow-picture of Yeshua himself, in essence we see not so much a cross on a cross, but rather, Yeshua on a cross.

In John 20:25 we find another proof that the stake upon which Yeshua was crucified had a horizontal cross member where it is written of Thomas, **“But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”** The word *nails* being in the plural in all major English and Messianic Bible translations indicate that more than one nail was used to secure his hands to the “crucifixion stake.” Had Yeshua been crucified on a stake without cross arms with his hands over his head nailed to the post one nail would have been used while with arms outstretched in the shape of a cross two nails would have been used—one for each wrist.

To some degree whether Messiah died on a cross, stake or some other contraption is irrelevant. The fact is that he died for our sins and that is the bottom line! But for those who are adamant that it was not a cross, they have some *cross* reference Scriptures to explain.

## **MESSIANIC PERSPECTIVES:**

### **•WHAT IS TRUTH?**

Pilate asked the Messiah Yeshua, the Son of Elohim, a question many inquiring minds have been asking since time immemorial, “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38). If someone were to ask you that same question what would your answer be?

Since the word *truth* is used around 300 times in the Scriptures it would be safe to assume that YHWH, the Author of the Bible, probably has some definite opinions as to the answer to the above question. What is your definition of *truth*? Does your definition square with his? If not, who's definition do you think is right? YHWH Elohim's or yours? Adam and Eve were confronted with this issue in the Garden of Eden. YHWH gave them truth and along came the serpent to tell them that YHWH's truth was not the only truth. Adam and Eve bought the devil's line and men have been confused as to what truth is ever since. Even today how many Bible believers really believe and obey all that the Bible says? Haven't theologians found slick theological arguments to explain away vast portions of Scripture so that now it doesn't really mean what it says? They have found many ways to tell us that we don't really have to obey the word of YHWH. That YHWH didn't really mean what he said or that he changed his mind. Wasn't this the line of the serpent at the beginning? Do you have a Swiss cheese Bible—with many parts cut out?

So what is the biblical definition of truth? Yeshua said that he was the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6). Yeshua said that the word of Elohim is truth (Jn. 17:17). Yeshua is himself both YHWH, the Word of Elohim, and the Word of Elohim that was made flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14). So Yeshua is the Living Word of Elohim or the Living Truth.

But what is the Word of Elohim which is Truth? Psalms 119:142 and 151 says that “thy Torah is truth” and that “all thy commandments are truth.” What is the Torah? The Hebrew word *torah* literally means *instructions, precepts* and *teachings* and as used in its Scriptural context it refers to YHWH's *instructions in righteousness* which when followed lead to eternal life and intimacy with our Heavenly Father. Speaking of YHWH's instructions in righteousness or Torah, Proverbs 6:23 says, “For the commandment is a lamp; and the Torah is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”

But where in Scripture is found the Torah with its commandments which the Bible calls truth? In the very part of the Bible that most born-again “Bible believers” have been taught is “done away with” and is no longer for us today—in the first five books of the Bible called the Books of Moses. I’m not making this up, this is what *your* Bible plainly states. Believe it or not, this is the truth! “But I can’t do all that stuff, it’s impossible,” some may say. Well, your Heavenly Father disagrees. In Deut. 30:11-14 he plainly says that obeying his truth is not impossible or too difficult to do and then in verse 15 he says, “ See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love YHWH thy Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and YHWH thy Elohim shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” “But that was for them back then, not for us today,” one might say. To this YHWH says that his commandments are good for 50,000 years or 1000 generations (Deut. 7:9). His truth endures forever and to all generations (Ps. 117:2 and 100:5). Does he ever change his mind? Does his truth ever change? Does he have one truth for the Jews and one truth for the Gentiles? Well, YHWH stated emphatically in Mal. 3:6, “For I am YHWH, I change not...” “Oh but things are different in the ‘New Testament,’” one may say, “a change occurred there, we’re under a different law, a different dispensation”. Remember that Yeshua is the truth or word of Elohim made flesh, so did he change? Well, in Hebrews 13:8 it says that Yeshua Messiah is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Is your church the pillar and ground of the Torah-truth of the Bible? The Apostle Paul, a Torah-commandment keeping orthodox messianic Jewish rabbi said in 1 Tim. 3:15 that it should be. The Apostle John said in 1 John 2:4 that, “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

My friends, that’s the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help us God to love you and your truth and may it be a way of life to us here and now. Amein and amein.