

Nazarene Jewish Manifesto

by
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Society for the Advancement of Nazarene Judaism



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Second Edition

PREFACE

The purpose of this manifesto is to lay out a systematic biblical and historical basis for the restoration of Nazarene Judaism as a movement. There is a lot of talk these days about “getting back to the New Testament Church” but most fail to recognize that the so-called “New Testament Church” did not have either a New Testament or a Church.

Yeshua did not come to earth to create a new religion, but to be the Messiah of Judaism. The first believers in Yeshua as Messiah were a Jewish sect known as "Nazarenes" or in Hebrew "*N'tzarim*" thus we read that Paul was a “ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (Acts 24:5).

The "church father" Jerome (4th Cent.) described these Nazarenes as those "...who accept Messiah in such a way that they do not cease to observe the old Law." (Jerome; On. Is. 8:14).

The fourth century "church father" Epiphanius gives a more detailed description:

But these sectarians... did not call themselves Christians— but "Nazarenes," ... However they are simply complete Jews. They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well, as the Jews do... They have no different ideas, but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims it and in the Jewish fashion-- except for their belief in Messiah, if you please! For they acknowledge both the resurrection of the dead and the divine creation of all things, and declare that G-d is one, and that his son is Y'shua the Messiah. They are trained to a nicety in Hebrew. For among them the entire Law, the Prophets, and the... Writings... are read in Hebrew, as they surely are by the Jews. They are different from the Jews, and different from Christians, only in the following. They disagree with Jews because they have come to faith in Messiah; but since they are still fettered by the Law—circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest-- they are not in accord with Christians.... they are nothing but Jews.... They have the Goodnews according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written. (Epiphanius; Panarion 29)

In closing let me add that the opinions here-in are my own. They express my own view of what Nazarene Judaism is and should be. Certainly not everyone will agree with me on every issue however this should not prevent one from finding the book useful as a general model for the movement. You will also notice that the cover page clearly reads “First Edition”. There is no doubt in my mind that as time goes on this initial work will be modified, expanded and improved. – James S. Trimm November, 2002

*But these... did not call themselves Christians--but "Nazarenes,"
-Epiphanius; Panarion 29*

Chapter 1

What's in a Name?

You may be surprised to find out that the original Jewish followers of Yeshua were not known as "Messianic Jews". As Daniel Juster admits:

No form of Judaism or Christianity... has used the term "Messianic Judaism" as its appropriate designation.
(*Jewish Roots*; 1986 edition, p. viii)

The original followers of Yeshua were a sect of Judaism known as "Nazarenes" (as we read in Acts 24:5 that Paul was a "ringleader of the teaching of the Nazarenes"). Epiphanius writes of these Nazarenes:

But these... did not call themselves Christians--but "Nazarenes,"
-Epiphanius; Panarion 29

The term "Messianic Judaism" was invented in the late 60's and it is a human invention. David Stern writes in his book *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*:

According to Scripture the word "Christian" does not denote Jewish believers in Yeshua at all. The New Testament calls them followers of "this way" (Acts 9:2, 22:4) and "Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5)... the New Testament does not call Jewish believers "Christians". According to New Testament usage the term "Christian" is reserved for Gentile believers in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua.

Acts 11:19-26 tells how in Antioch some Jewish believers... did not limit their proclamation of Yeshua as the Messiah to Jews, as had been the norm previously, but broke new ground... Many of these Gentiles came to believe... the other Gentiles in Antioch... coined the word *christiano* (Christians),... Thus the term "Christian" was invented

by Gentiles to describe Gentiles in a Gentile environment.
The New Testament tells us explicitly that “the disciples
were first called Christians in Antioch.” [Acts 11:26]
(*Messianic Jewish Manifesto*; David Stern; p. 32)

Now it is important here to note that David Stern himself in his *Jewish New Testament*
and *Complete Jewish Bible*, translates Acts 11:26 this way:

...it was at Antioch that the talmidim for the first time
were called “Messianic”. (Acts 11:26 JNT)

In his commentary to this passage (Acts 11:26) in his *Jewish New Testament*
Commentary Stern writes:

“Messianic,” or “Messianics,” Greek Christianoi, which
could be rendered... as in other translations, “Christians.”
...the name “Christianoi” was applied to Gentile believers
by Gentile nonbelievers. The name nonbelieving Jews gave
to Jewish believers was “Natzaratim”... (“Nazarenes”),...

Again in *Messianic Jewish Manifesto* Stern writes:

“Messianic” comes from the Hebrew mashiach, which means
“anointed.” “Christian” comes from Greek christos, which is
the [Greek] New Testament’s translation of mashiach **and**
means the same thing. ...in the New Testament
the term “Christian,” which appears only three times,
apparently denotes being a Gentile believer in Yeshua,
so that scripturally “Jewish Christian” is a contradiction in terms.
(Emphasis and brackets added)
(*Messianic Jewish Manifesto*; David Stern; p. 20)

Now we can see from David Stern’s own words above:

1. The terms “Christian” and “Messianic” are alternate translations of the Greek word
“Christianoi” “and mean the same thing”.
2. The term “Christianoi” or “Christian” is used in the scriptures only to denote a *gentile*
believer in Yeshua, so that scripturally the term “Jewish Christian” is “a contradiction in
terms”.

Therefore we may conclude that the term “Messianic” is used in the scriptures only to
denote a *gentile* believer in Yeshua, so that scripturally the term “Messianic Jew” is a
contradiction in terms. The logic is inescapable... the term “Messianic Judaism” is
scripturally invalid, it is a human invention and a contradiction in terms.

So what were the original Jewish followers of Yeshua called if they were not Messianic Jews? Stern admits:

The New Testament calls them followers of “this way” (Acts 9:2, 22:4) and “*Nazarenes*” (Acts 24:5) (*Messianic Jewish Manifesto*; David Stern; p. 32)

“*Messianic,*” or “*Messianics,*” Greek Christianoi, which could be rendered... as in other translations, “Christians.” ...the name “Christianoi” *was applied to Gentile believers* by Gentile nonbelievers. *The name nonbelieving Jews gave to Jewish believers was “Nazaratim”... (“Nazarenes”),...* (*Jewish New Testament Commentary* on Acts 11:26; David Stern)

In fact if we quote Stern, but substitute the word “Messianic” for “Christians” (since Stern admits “they are the same”) we read:

According to Scripture the word “*Messianic*” does not denote Jewish believers in Yeshua at all. The New Testament calls them followers of “this way” (Acts 9:2, 22:4) and “*Nazarenes*” (Acts 24:5)... the New Testament does not call Jewish believers “*Messianic*”. According to New Testament usage the term “*Messianic*” is reserved for Gentile believers in the Jewish Messiah Yeshua. (*Messianic Manifesto* by David Stern p. 32 modified)

So the *biblical* term for Jewish believers in Messiah is *not* “Messianic Jews” but “Nazarene Jews”. We should be seeking a restoration of “Nazarene Judaism” not creating “Messianic Judaism” which, being “Christian Judaism” (i.e. “Christianized Judaism”) is a contradiction in terms.

SHOULD NAZARENES DENY BEING “MESSIANIC JEWS”?

Absolutely not! Although the term is scripturally inaccurate, we are Jews who believe in Messiah. In fact any Jew who believes in the concept of “Messiah” (even if that “Messiah” is not Yeshua) might reasonably be termed a “Messianic Jew”. So we need not deny that we are “Messianic Jews” to those who ask.

Chapter 2

History of Nazarene Judaism

John the Baptist and Qumran

To trace the origin of the Nazrenes we must first examine the figure of John (Yochanan) the Baptist. As the Goodnews according to Mark begins:

The beginning of the goodnews of Yeshua the Messiah...
John came immersing in the wilderness...
(Mk. 1:1, 4)

As George Howard has pointed out, "...there was a John the Baptist sect that existed from early times and continued perhaps for centuries."¹ Such a sect still exists in Iraq today. Howard has also noted:

In Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew John the Baptist emerges as a much more important figure than in Greek Matthew. The Greek Matthew may well represent a later corrective to the more primitive statements made about John the Baptist in Hebrew Matthew before the followers of John the Baptist were seen as a threat to trunkline Christianity.
(ibid).

A careful reading of the Gospels will show that John the Baptist had his own "disciples" (Jn. 1:35) who continued on as such, apart from the Yeshua movement even after John and Yeshua had died (Acts 19:1-3). The flavor of John chapter one also indicates that John did not live alone in the wilderness, but lived with a community of followers near Bethabara (Jn. 1:28) a town just eight miles from Qumran.

Now one of the most important similarities between John the Baptist and his disciples, and the Qumran community is quite obviously that of geography. As mentioned, John and his disciples resided "in the wilderness" near a town just eight miles from Qumran. In fact the caves in which the scrolls were found are just five miles from the location along the Jordan at which John was baptizing. Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament use the phrase "in the wilderness" (drawn from Is. 40:3) almost as a proper noun, to describe this area. One NT passage in particular seemed a mystery until the discovery of the Scrolls. Luke 1:80 states

...the child [John the Baptist] grew and became strong in spirit,

¹ The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text by George Howard; 1987; p. 205; see Acts 18:5-19:7; Justin, Trypho 80; Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions 1:54:60

and was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

What would a child be doing "in the wilderness?" Could John have been raised at the Qumran community? An apocraphal tradition once circulated in the Church of the East may offer some insight. The Protevangelion of James, once read in some eastern churches, records a tradition that at the time of the slaughter of the innocents,

Elizabeth took her son and went up unto the mountains,
and looked around for a place to hide him;
and there was no secret place to be found.
Then she groaned within herself, and said,
O mountain of YHWH, receive the mother with the child.
For Elizabeth could not climb up.
And instantly the mountain was divided and received them.
And there appeared to them an angel (or messenger) of YHWH,
to preserve them." -Protevangelion 16:3-8

Could this text be preserving an ancient tradition that John and his mother were taken in through an opening in the mountains (a cave) and a "messenger of YHWH" at Qumran took them in. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that Hugh Schonfield has shown that there are a number of parallelisms between DuTillet Hebrew Matthew and the Protevangelion, "which cannot be accidental."² Moreover Joesphus tells us that the Essenes commonly raised other peoples children (Josephus; 2:8:3). Thus it would seem that John the Baptist was raised up in the Qumran community. As a Levite, and descendant of Zadock, John would have held a prominent place in the Qumran community, which favored the priesthood heirs. However, John's normal life at Qumran was interrupted when "the word of G-d came to John... in the wilderness" (Lk. 3:2). In a rigid community where everyone had a rank and no one spoke out of turn, John's message may not have been welcome. This would explain why John and his disciples relocated near nearby Bethabara.

Both Matthew and Mark tell us that John ate locusts (Mt. 3:4; Mk. 1:6). Of course, Lev. 11:20-23 lists these insects as kosher. Now The Dead Sea Scrolls tell us that the Qumran community also made locusts as part of their diet. In fact, the Dead Sea Scrolls even tell us how they were to be cooked (Dam. Doc. xii, 11-15³).

Both the Qumran community, and John quoted Is. 40:3 as being a prophecy foretelling of their work (Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn 1:23; Manual of Discipline. viii, 12-14; ix, 20⁴). This verse appears in most New Testament as:

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
"Prepare the way of YHWH;
make straight in the desert a highway for our G-d."*

² An Old Hebrew Text of Matthew's Gospel by Hugh Schonfield; 1927; p. 25-30, 40

³ The Dead Sea Scrolls; A New Translation by Wise, Abegg and Cook; 1996 p. 70

⁴ The Dead Sea Scrolls; A New Translation by Wise, Abegg and Cook; 1996 pp. 138 & 140

However, the cantor markings in the Masoretic Text give us the understanding:

*The voice of one crying "In the wilderness
prepare the way of YHWH;
make straight in the desert a highway for our G-d."*

As a result of their use of this verse, both John and the Qumran community referred to themselves as being "in the wilderness" and both the Qumran community and the early believers in Yeshua called their movement "the way".

Another strong parallel between John and the Qumran community is that of the importance given to the practice of water immersion/baptism (Heb: T'vilah). The Torah requires "washing" for "uncleaness" (Lev. 16-18) and "uncleaness" can result from sin (Lev. 18:1ff for example.) King David spoke of this practice in the Psalms (Ps. 51:2, 7). In the Qumran community this practice was given great importance (Man. Disc. iii, 4f; v, 13; Dam. Doc. x, 10-13) and it was certainly regarded as of high priority to John (Mt. 3:6, 11; Mk. 1:4-5; Lk. 3:2-3, 7; Acts 19:3-4). Both believed that water baptism was only symbolic of a greater cleansing of wickedness performed by the Ruach HaKodesh (Man. Disc. iv, 12-13).

One final similarity between John and the Qumran community was that both stressed that the day of fiery judgment was eminently approaching.

Now having discussed the similarities between John the Baptist and the Qumran Community, let us note the differences. Essenes always wore white (Josephus; 2:8:3) yet John wore camel's hair (Mt. 3:4). Secondly, the Qumran community only ate food provided by their community yet John foraged for himself (Mt. 3:4). Finally and most importantly the Qumran community was not even a little bit evangelical. The Manual of Discipline specifically commands its adherents to:

bear unremitting hatred towards all men of ill repute...
to leave it to them to pursue wealth and mercenary gain...
truckling to a depot.
(Man. Disc. ix 21-26).

But John called these men of ill repute to "Repent, for the Kingdom of G-d is offered." (Mt. 3:2). This new teaching must have been the "word of G-d" which John "received in the wilderness" (Lk. 3:2) since it is later echoed by Yeshua (Mt. 4:17) and Yeshua's disciples (Mt. 10:7).

As a result of the new light shined on the NT by the Dead Sea Scrolls, we may now conclude that John the Baptist was raised in the very community which wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls. That the word of G-d came to John, and he began teaching an evangelical message of repentance. A message which was unacceptable to the Qumran community. That message probably caused a schism which resulted in John the Baptist and his

disciples relocating to Bethabara, just eight miles from Qumran. This new group became a John the Baptist sect which has continued to this very day, and which held a close relationship to the Messianic movement surrounding Yeshua.

Yeshua the Messiah

Yeshua came to be immersed by John in the wilderness at about the age of 30 and was proclaimed by John to be the "lamb" of Isaiah 53:7 (Jn. 1:29). Certain of John's students then became students of Yeshua (Jn. 1:35-51). Yeshua then began to proclaim, as John had proclaimed: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is offered." (Mt. 3:17). Later He sent his twelve students out with the same proclamation (Mt. 10).

Yeshua, however, differed somewhat from John (Mt. 11:18-19). Whereas John was primarily of an Essene background, Yeshua's teaching was largely Pharisaic. Not only was Yeshua's teaching largely Pharisaic, but it largely followed that of the School of Hillel rather than that of the School of Shamai.

One of the most significant parallels between Yeshua and Hillel is their profound teaching of Love. Yeshua's teaching of love was a radical departure from the teachings at Qumran. Now Philo tells us that the Essenes had great "desire to promote brotherly love" (Philo; The Hypothetica 11:2) this brotherly love seems to have been only to fellow members of the Yachad (unity). This is reflected in the Damascus Document's use of Lev. 19:18. In the Torah Leviticus 19:18 reads:

You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of my people, But you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am YHWH.

Now the Damascus Document interprets this passage as follows:

As for the passage that says, "Take no vengeance and bear no grudge against your kinfolk" (Lev. 19:18) any covenant member who brings against his fellow an accusation not sworn to before witnesses or who makes an accusation in the heat of anger or who tells it to his elders to bring his fellow into repute, the same is a vengeance-taker and a grudge-bearer....
(Damascus Document 9, 2)

Note that this Qumran interpretation of Lev. 19:19 would limit "neighbor" in Lev. 19:18 to "any covenant member" i.e. a member of the Yachad. In fact the Qumran sect taught: ...bear unremitting hatred towards all men of ill repute... to leave it to them to pursue wealth and mercenary gain... truckling to a depot.
(Man. Of Disc. ix, 21-26)

By contrast Hillel is quoted as saying:

Be disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and drawing them near to the Torah.
(m.Avot 1:12)

The Qumran attitude was one of hatred to the sinner. There was no concept of "drawing them near to the Torah" but rather to "leave it to them to [sin]... truckling to a depot." Yet Hillel took the opposite approach. Hillel's attitude was to "Love" the men of ill repute and draw them near to the Torah. This was also Yeshua's approach.
Yeshua taught:

You have heard that it was said "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?
(Mt. 5:43-47)

Yeshua here begins by quoting the Tenach "Love your neighbor" (Lev. 19:18) but then gives the Qumran corollary "hate your enemy." Yeshua differs with this "hate your enemy" teaching in agreement with the love philosophy of Hillel. Apparently the Qumran community inferred from "Love your neighbor" (Lev. 19:18) that they should therefore bear unremitting hatred toward their enemies. To Yeshua (and presumably Hillel) the issue is the interpretation of "neighbor." In his Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29-36) Yeshua argues that we cannot be sure who our "neighbor" is, so in order to make sure we do not violate Lev. 19:18 we should love everyone.

Another strong parallel between Hillel and Yeshua is that of the so called "Golden Rule." There is a story in the Talmud in which Hillel gives a summary of the Torah. The Talmud says:

...it happened that a certain heathen came before Shammai and said to him, "Make me a prosolyte, on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Thereupon he repulsed him with the builders cubit which was in his hand. When he went before Hillel, he said to him "Do not to others what you would not have them do to you: that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof; go and learn it."
(b.Shab. 31a)

A similar incident occurs in the Gospels:

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Yeshua said to him, " 'You shall love

YHWH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the first and great commandment. "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Mt. 22:34-40 = Mk. 12:28-31 = Lk. 10:25-37)

Here Yeshua is pressed to summarize the Torah and answers with the Sh'ma (Dt. 6:4-9) and the commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). This is remarkably similar to Hillel's answer to the same question. It is important to note that the Pharisees agreed that Yeshua's answer was correct. Yeshua elsewhere gives a summary of the Torah which parallels Hillel's answer even closer:

Whatever you would that men should do to you, do you even to them, for this is the Torah and the Prophets.

(Mt. 7:12 = Lk. 6:31)

Within Rabbinic literature we have record of over 350 disputes between the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai. Generally Shammai gave the stricter interpretation, while Hillel's understandings were more relaxed. According to the Zohar (Ra'aya Meheimna 3:245a) The School of Shammai was based on GEVURAH ("severity") while the School of Hillel was based on CHESED ("grace"/"mercy"). This is very significant. In Mark's account of Yeshua's summary of the Torah (Mk. 12:28-33) A "scribe" comes to question Yeshua. In Matthew's account this "scribe" is identified as a Pharisee (Mt. 22:34-36).

According to Mark's account this Pharisee not only agreed with Yeshua's summary of Torah and repeated it adding:

...and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

(Mt. 12:33b)

It is not unlikely from this context that the Pharisee was quoting a now-lost saying of Hillel here. In making this statement the Pharisee, who apparently was from the School of Hillel, was pointing to Hosea 6:6:

For I [YHWH] desire mercy (CHESED), and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of ELOHIM more than burnt offerings.

This Pharisee seems to have identified "love your neighbor" of Lev. 19:18 with the CHESED of Hosea 6:6. Remember the relaxed halachic positions of the School of Hillel were based on CHESED, it is indeed likely that Hosea 6:6 served as a proof text for many of their halachic rulings, since this passage assigns a halachic weight to CHESED. We also find Yeshua using Hosea 6:6 in support of his relaxed halachic rulings regarding the Shabbat (Mt. 12:7 = Hosea 6:6) here Yeshua argues from Hosea 6:6 that CHESED is of >greater weight than the sacrifices. Since CHESED outweighs sacrifice, and sacrifice outweighs Shabbat, then CHESED outweighs Shabbat.

It seems that both Yeshua and Hillel emphasised love for all men, taught the "golden rule" and had many of their halachic rulings rooted in CHESED ("mercy").

Despite the fact that Yeshua's teachings largely agreed with that of the Pharisaic School of Hillel, there were occasions where Yeshua's teachings agreed with the School of Shammai against the School of Hillel. An important example of this is the issue of divorce where Yeshua agreed with Shammai against Hillel (Mt. 5:31-32 & m.Gittin 9:10). There were also occasions when Yeshua's teachings agreed with that of the Essenes against that of the Pharisees. One example is on the issue of oaths (compare Mt. 5:33-37 & Damascus Document- Geniza A; Col. 15; Lines 1-3).

While Yochanan was essentially an Essene, Yeshua did not appear to live the Essene lifestyle, as we read in Mt. 11:18-19:

Yochanan came neither eating nor drinking...
The Son of man came eating and drinking...

Nonetheless there are many important similarities between the teachings of Yeshua and those of the Essenes/Qumran community. Yeshua went out into the wilderness to be tempted (Mt. 4:1f). Yeshua's twelve talmidim (students) remind us of the council of twelve at Qumran (Manual of Discipline 1QS 8:1). Yeshua's twelve talmidim seemed to be headed by three (Kefa (Peter), James (Ya'akov) and Yochanan (John) and the twelve laymen of Qumran were headed by three priests (1QS 8:1).

Josephus, speaking of the Essenes writes:

...and if any of their sect come from other places, what they have lies open for them, just as if it were their own; and they go into such as they never knew before, as if they had been ever so long acquainted with them. For which reason they carry nothing with them when they travel into remote parts, though still they take their weapons with them, for fear of thieves.

Accordingly there is, in every city where they live, one appointed particularly to take care of strangers, and provide garments and other necessaries for them.
(Josephus; Wars 2:8:4)

This provides interesting cultural context for Yeshua's instruction to his Talmidim:

...Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your moneybelts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for the worker is worthy of his food. Now whatever city or town you enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.
(Mt. 10:9-11)

Also note that Yeshua and his Talmidim traveled armed (Lk. 22:38) Were Yeshua and his Talmidim circulating to some extent within the Essene community network?

Many of Yeshua's halachic teachings parallel those of the Qumran community. Yeshua opposed the taking of oaths (Mt. 5:34) as did the Essenes (Josephus; Wars 2:8:6; Manual of Discipline 1QS 15:1-3). Y'shua's use of Gen. 1:27 to prove his halachic position on divorce is paralleled in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

...they are caught in two traps: fornication, by taking two wives in their lifetimes although the principle of creation is: "male and female He created them."
(Dam. Doc. Col. 4 line 20 through Col. 5 line 1)

Yeshua's halachah on the issue of "CORBAN" (an offering) being used as an excuse to violate Torah in Matthew 15:1-8 parallels a similar ruling at Qumran (Damascus Document 16:13).

Matthew records a very interesting event involving Yeshua and the Temple Tax:
...they that received tribute came to Kefa (Peter) , and said, Does not your master pay tribute? He said, Yes. And when he came into the house Yeshua prevented him, saying, what do you think, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Kefa (Peter) said to him, of strangers. Yeshua said to him, Then the children are free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go you to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first comes up; and when you have opened his mouth, you shall find a piece of money: that take, and give to them for me and you.
(Mt. 17:24-27)

Here Kefa indicates the Yeshua pays the Temple tax, but Yeshua indicates that neither himself, nor Kefa nor apparently any of his followers owe the Temple tax. Yeshua does not seem to argue that he does not owe such a tax because he is the Messiah, for he extends the same privilege to Kefa and apparently all of his followers. Is Yeshua teaching against Torah? The answer is no. The Torah does command that a Temple tax must be paid by every male 20 and older (Ex. 30:11-16) but is ambiguous as to how often it must be paid. The Pharisaic Halachah (and apparently the Sadducean Halachah) had the tax being paid annually during the month of Adar (m.Shek. 1:1, 3) However the Qumran community had a different Halachah. They taught:

...concerning the Ransom: the money of the valuation which a man gives as ransom for his life shall be half a shekel in accordance with the shekel of the sanctuary. He shall give it only once in his life.
(4Q159 Frag 1; Col. 2; lines 6-7)

Now if Yeshua held to this Essene Halachah then He would not believe that he or his followers owed the tax, if they had already paid it at least once in their lifetime. This would explain why Kefa said that Yeshua pays the tax, while Yeshua claims that he and his followers don't owe the tax.

Like the Qumran community Yeshua speaks allegorically of "Living Water" coming from a well. . In John chapter four "living water" is symbolically drawn from Jacob's well,

and brings salvation and eternal life. In the Manual of Discipline "living water" is the teachings of the community and is symbolically drawn from the well of Num. 21:18 which is identified by the Scroll to be symbolic of the Law. Thus we may conclude that in Jn. 4 Yeshua draws upon a Midrash (allegorical interpretation) which existed in his time (Jn. 4:10 & Dam. Doc. VI, 4-5; VII, 9-VIII, 21).

Yeshua's use of the Passover Seder as a sort of Messianic banquet certainly reminds us of the Messianic banquet of the Qumran Essenes (Josephus; Wars 2:8:5; Manual of Discipline 6:3-6 & 1QS Sa. 2, 17-20). The Qumran material even reads "the Messiah of Israel shall reach for the bread" (1QSa. 2:20-21) a phrase which certainly reminds us of the "Last Supper" account of the New Testament. There were however some very important points with which Yeshua greatly disagreed with the Essenes. The Essenes held the strictest rules of resting on the Sabbath than any of the Jews (Josephus; Wars 2:8:9). The Qumran community, with its stricter Halacha likely did not permit healing on the Shabbat at all. They did not allow carrying medicine on the Shabbat nor did they allow using a tool to save a life on the Shabbat (Dam. Document col. 10; lines 14-18). Now Y'shua's Halacha on the issue seems to have been less strict. There is conflict between Yeshua and Qumran on the plucking and rubbing of wheat in Mt. 12:1=Lk. 6:1=Mk. 2:23. The activity described is clearly permitted by the Torah in general, though not necessarily on the Shabbat (Duet. 23:26 (23:25 in non-Jewish editions)). This was forbidden by Qumran halacha which stated:

"A man may not go about in the field to do his desired activity on the Sabbath... A man may not eat anything on the Sabbath except food already prepared."
(Dam. Doc. Col. 10; lines 20-22).

Also Yeshua's teaching that it is permitted to rescue an animal from a pit. (Mt. 12:11 and Lk. 14:3-6) is in direct conflict with Qumran Halacha. (Dam. Doc. col. 10; lines 14-18). Finally the Qumran community had an intense hatred for outsiders. The Manual of Discipline even states the community members should "bear unremitting hatred towards all men of ill repute..." (1QS 11:21f). This hatred greatly contrasts with such teachings of Yeshua as the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

James the Just

Another important figure to the ancient Nazarenes was that of James the Just (Ya'akov HaTzadik). After the death of Yeshua, the Nazarenes recognized his brother James the Just as legal heir to the throne of David. For this reason the Nazarenes recognized James the Just as the Nasi of their Nazarene Sanhedrin (Acts 15). It is likely that James the Just had students of his own, and that his movement merged into the Yeshua movement after Yeshua's death. This is evident because there is scarcely any mention of James the Just prior to Yeshua's death, however very early on he became leader of the Nazarene movement (Acts 12:17; 15:13-29; 21:18-26 & Gal. 1:19; Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 2:23). According to the *Goodnews of Thomas*, it was Yeshua himself who named James the Just as their new leader:

The students said to Yeshua: "We know you will leave us. Who is going to be our leader then?" Yeshua said to them: "No matter where you reside, you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."
(*Goodnews of Thomas* saying 12)

The Goodnews according to the Hebrews relates the following regarding James the Just:

Now the L-rd, when he had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him (for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the L-rd's cup until he should see him rise again from among them that sleep), and again after a little, "Bring you," said the L-rd, a table and bread", and immediately it is added", "He took bread and blessed and broke and gave it to James the Just and said to him: "My brother, eat your bread, for the son of Man is risen from among them that sleep."
(Quoted by Jerome; *Of Illustrious Men* 2)

This is likely the event Paul refers to in 1Cor. 15:7 and it likely had a profound effect upon James. The Nazarene historian Hegesippus (c. 180 C.E.) is quoted by Eusebius (4th century) as describing James the Just this way:

But James, the brother of the L-rd, who, as there were many of his name, was surnamed the Just by all, from the days of our L-rd until now, received the government of the assembly with the emissaries. This emissary was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor fermented liquors, and abstained from animal food. A razor never came upon his head, he never anointed with oil, and never used a bath. He alone was allowed to enter the sanctuary. He never wore woolen, but linen garments. He was in the habit of entering the Temple alone, and was often found upon his bent knees, and interceding for forgiveness of the people; so that his knees became as hard as camel's. in consequence of his habitual supplication and kneeling before G-d. And indeed, on account of his exceeding great piety, he was called the Just, and Oblias (or Tzadik and Ozleam) which signifies justice and protection of the people; as the prophets

declare concerning him.
(Hegesippus in the fifth book of his [lost] commentaries,
quoted by Eusebius; Eccl. Hist. 2:23)

James the Just was very popular with the Jewish community in general. Under his influence the Nazarene movement grew until his death in 63 C.E, as Hegesippus goes on to say:

Some of the seven sects, therefore, of the people, mentioned by me above in my commentaries, asked him what was the door to Yeshua? and he answered: "That he was the Saviour." From which, some believed that Yeshua is the Messiah. But the aforementioned heresies did not believe either a resurrection, or that he was coming to give to every one according to his works; as many however, as did believe, did so on account of James. As there were many therefore of the rulers that believed, there arose a tumult among the Jews, Scribes and Pharisees, saying that there was danger, that the people would now expect Yeshua as the Messiah. They came therefore together, and said to James: "We entreat you, restrain the people, who are led astray after Yeshua, as if he were the Messiah. We entreat you to persuade all that are coming to the feast of the Passover rightly concerning Yeshua; for we all have confidence in you. For we and all the people hear the testimony that you are just, and you respect not persons. Persuade therefore the people not to be led astray by Yeshua, for we and all the people have great confidence in you. Stand therefore upon a wing of the Temple, that you may be conspicuous on high, and your words may be easily heard by all the people; for all the tribes have come together on account of the Passover, with some of the Gentiles also. The aforesaid Scribes and Pharisees, therefore, placed James upon a wing of the Temple, and cried out to him: "Oh you just man, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are led astray after Yeshua that was crucified, declare to us what is the door to Yeshua that was crucified." And he answered with a loud voice, "Why do you ask me respecting Yeshua the Son of Man? **He is now sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of Great Power, and is about to come on the clouds of heaven.**" (Ps. 110:1 & Dan. 7:13). And as many were confirmed, and glorified in this testimony of James, and said, Hosanna to the son of David, these same priests and Pharisees said to one another: "We have done badly in affording such testimony to Yeshua, but let us go up and cast him down, that they may dread to believe in him." And they cried out: "Oh, oh, the Just himself is deceived," and they fulfilled that which is written in Isaiah: **Let us take away the just, because he is offensive to us; wherefore they shall eat the fruit of their doings.** (Is. 3:10) Going up therefore, they cast down the just man, saying to one another: "Let us stone James the Just." And they began to stone him, as he did not die immediately when cast down; but turning round, he knelt down saying, "I entreat

you, O L-rd G-d and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Thus they were stoning him, when one of the priests of the sons of Rechab, a son of the Rechabites, spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out saying: "Cease, what are you doing? Justus is praying for you." And one of them, a fuller, beat out the brains of Justus with the club that he used to beat out clothes. Thus he suffered martyrdom, and they buried him on the spot where his tombstone is still remaining, by the Temple. He became a faithful witness, both to the Jews and the Greeks, that Yeshua is the Messiah. Immediately after this, Vespian invaded and took Judea.

(Hegesippus as quoted by Eusebius Eccl. Hist. 2:23)

Josephus also records the death of James the Just this way:

Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he [Ananus the High Priest] assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Yeshua, who was called Messiah, whose name was James, and some others, [or some of his companions;] and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done.

(Josephus; Antiquities 20:9:1)

According to Eusebius, his version of Josephus's works contained the following in relation to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E.:

These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was brother of him that is called the Messiah, and whom the Jews had slain, notwithstanding his pre-eminant justice.

(Josephus quoted by Eusebius; Eccl. Hist. 2:23)

There are also many parallels between Ya'akov HaTzadik (James the Just) and the Essenes of Qumran. The title "HaTzadik" ("the righteous"; or "the Just") reminds us of the title of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran scrolls. Ya'akov, like Yeshua discouraged swearing (James 5:12) as did the Essenes (Essenes (Josephus; Wars 2:8:6; Manual of Discipline 1QS 15:1-3). Ya'akov's admonition to be "doers" of the word (James 2:21-27) reminds us of the very term "Essene" which may come from the Hebrew "OSSIM" ("doers" [of the Torah]). Finally Ya'akov's discourse on the use of the tongue (James 3:1-12) closely parallels the Manual of Discipline (Col. 10:21-11:2).

Paul the Pharisee

Another important figure to the early Nazarenes was Paul. Paul was a ringleader of the Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). Paul was of Pharisaic background (Acts. 23:6) and had been a student of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) the grandson of Hillel. Paul was at first an enemy of the

Nazarene movement, however after his vision on the road to Damascus, he became a ringleader of the movement. Kefa tells us that Paul's writings are "hard to understand" (2Pt. 3:15-16). Paul knew that his teachings were being twisted and that he was misunderstood as teaching against the Torah (Rom. 3:8; 6:1-2, 15). Paul went to great lengths to prove that this was not true (Acts 21:20-26).

Nonetheless there are several parallels between Paul and Qumran. Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus reminds us of the Qumran community who made a New Covenant at Damascus. It is also of interest that Paul spent years in Damascus before beginning his ministry (Gal. 1:16-17). There are several Parallels between Paul's teachings and those at Qumran. Paul's teaching often involved what he called "mysteries" (Eph. 3:3-4; Col. 1:12 etc.) as did the Qumran Scrolls (Hab. Commentary 1QpHab 7, 4-5; Man. Of Disc. 40, 5; Hodayot 7, 26). Paul often used metaphores of light and darkness (2Cor. 6:14; Rom. 13:12) as the Qumran scrolls do (Damascus Document 4, 3). Paul allegorically compared the Nazarene community to the Temple (Eph. 2:20-22) while the Manual of Discipline makes the same comparison of the Temple with the Qumran society (1Qs 8:5-9). Paul's use of the phrases "works of darkness" and "works of light" (Eph. 4:17; 5:14) are paralleled at qumran (Dam. Doc. 4:3). Both Paul and the Scrolls refer to men as "vessels of clay" (2Cor. 4:7 & Hodayot 11, 3). Paul's concept of "partakers of the inheritance of the Holy Ones" (Col. 1:12) is similar to the phrase "heirs in the legacy of the Holy Ones" (1Qs 11:7-8) found in the Manual of Discipline. Paul's terms "Belial" (2Cor. 6:14) and "Angel of Satan" (2Cor. 12:7) also appear in the scrolls ("Belial" in 1Qs 4, 13 and "Angel of Satan" in 1Qs 16:4). However Paul also contrasts Qumran theology. His commentary on Hab. 2:4 (in Gal. 3:11, Rom. 1:17 & Heb. 10:37-38 see my Hebrews Commentary on this passage) seems to be a rebuttal to that of the Qumran community (1QpHab 8, 1-3). In fact Paul's epistle to the Hebrews seems aimed at those with an Essene background. (See *SEMITIC LIGHT ON HEBREWS* by James Trimm).

The Dynasty

The leaders of the Nazarene movement were a sort of "dynasty" surrounding Yeshua's family. There were however good reasons for this. In his discussions of the Nazarenes Epiphanius mentions that Messiah Yeshua was heir to King David's throne as King David's seed:

David's throne continued to exist until Messiah himself...
The royal dignity coming from our Lord Yeshua the Messiah...
From the fact that he is of King' David's seed...
Ya'akov having been ordained at once the first Bishop (Nasi)
he who is called brother of the Lord and emissary, Yosef's
son by nature... he is David's stock through being Yosef's son...

Following Ya'akov's death in 63 C.E. the Nazarenes chose his relative Shim'on as his successor as Eusebius writes:

After the martyrdom of Ya'akov... those of the emissaries and talmidim of our Lord, that were yet surviving, came together from all parts with those that were related to our Lord according to the flesh. For the greater part of them were yet living. These consulted together, to determine whom it was proper to pronounce worthy of being the successor of Ya'akov. They all unanimously declared Shim'on the son of Cleophas... They say he was the cousin of our Saviour, for Hegesippus asserts that Cleophas was the brother of Yosef.
(Eccl. Hist. 3:11)

It should be noted that the Ketuvim Netzarim mentions a Shim'on who was the SON of Yosef and BROTHER of Ya'akov. It is possible that THIS was the Shim'on who succeeded Ya'akov as heir to the throne. At any rate the second Nasi, Shim'on was also a Yeshua's relative and it seems that the office of Nasi among the ancient Nazarenes was passed along the "dynasty" of the heirs to King David's throne. Shim'on served as Nasi until 98 C.E. During his time in office Rome became particularly concerned that heirs of King David including grandchildren of Yeshua's brother Y'hudah might still exist. Vespian had earlier attempted to wipe out any such heirs. In 94 CE the Emperor Evocatus had the two son's of Yeshua's brother Y'hudah brought before him. They confessed to being David's heirs but upon examination the emperor found that they had only a small amount of money between the two of them and that they had calluses from farming a mere thirty-nine acres which they farmed to support their family and pay their taxes. When asked about Messiah's Kingdom they indicted that it would only appear at the end of the world. The emperor dismissed them as "simpletons" (Eccl. Hist. 3:20). It is likely that "Justus" who succeeded Shim'on in 110 C.E. was one of these two sons of Y'hudah (Eccl. Hist. 3:35).

This dynasty of the heirs to David's throne extended beyond Jerusalem and had an outpost in the Parthen Empire, outside of the power of Rome. The overseer of the assembly at Babylon from 90-107 C.E. was Adon Abris who was said to be a relative of Miriam the mother of Yeshua. He was said to have been elected at Jerusalem and sent to serve as overseer in Babylon. He was succeeded in Babylon by Adon Avraham who served from 130-152 C.E. and was said to be a relative of Ya'akov HaTzadik (James the Just). Also another overseer of the assembly at Babylon was a certain Adon Ya'akov who served from 172-190 and was said to be a relative of Yosef the step-father of Yeshua. He also had been sent from Jerusalem to serve as overseer of the assembly at Babylon.

The Nazarenes and Essenes

Yeshua's ministry got started when he visited Yochanan's community in the wilderness. It was here that Yochanan declared him to be the Messiah and it was here that he first met the first of his talmidim (disciples/students) Kefa (Peter), Andrew and an unnamed student whom most identify as Yochanan (John) the Talmid (Yochanon tends to avoid

mentioning himself by name in his Gospel). These men were likely of an Essene background as Yochanan the immerger had been (John 1).

Yeshua's followers had much in common with the Essenes. Both were called "The Way" (Acts 9:2 & 1QS 9,18) and "B'nai Or" (Sons of Light) (Lk. 16:8; Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; 1Thes. 5:5; Man. Of Disc. 1,9; 2, 24; 1QM). Like the Essenes they shared all things in common (Acts 2:44-45; Josephus; Ant. 18:1:5; Wars 2:8:3) and lying about such assets was regarded as a great sin (Acts 5:1-10). Although further study is needed, there may be some good connections between the Qumran hierarchy and that of the Nazarenes. Both groups seemed to have made some use of the Book of Enoch (1Enoch 1:9 is quoted in Jude 1:14-15; seven fragmentary copies of Enoch were found at Qumran). Like the Qumran community, the Nazarenes also seem to have used Hebrew manuscripts of Tanak books which agreed in places with the text behind the Septuagint. The Nazarene belief in two comings of the Messiah is similar to the Qumran belief in two Messiahs. The Qumran community believed in a priestly Messiah who was a Melchizedek figure whom they termed EL, ELOHIM and YHWH (11Q13), a figure they believed was prophesied of in such passages as Dan. 9:24-27; Is. 52 (and presumably 53) and Is. 61:1. In like manner the Nazarenes saw their Messiah Yeshua as a Melchizedek figure (Hebrews 7) who fulfilled the very same prophecies.

What do the similarities mean? First of all these many similarities place both the Nazarenes and the New Testament firmly in the context of first century Judaism. These similarities also make it apparent that the Essenes were likely forerunners of the Nazarenes. This however should not subtract from the Pharisaic roots which are also apparent among the Nazarenes (which I will soon cover in another companion article). By recognizing that the Essenes were our forerunners we may now move forward in greater light. Knowing where we came from helps us to move forward with accuracy in reconstructing the Nazarene movement. Moreover understanding the Essene element in the sayings of Yeshua (and the rest of the New Testament) will help us to understand them better. Finally recognizing the Essene factor in Nazarene halachah will aid us in understanding the nature of Nazarene Halachah and Halachic authority and how it relates to that of Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees as well as modern Rabbinic Judaism (which descends from the Pharisees).

I quote from the Introduction to *THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS; A New Translation*; by Wise, Abegg and Cook:

For Jews the Qumran texts say, "Our family was larger than you knew." The watchword is diversity. Modern [Rabbinic] Judaism comes from Pharisaism, but in the first two centuries B.C.E. and C.E. there were also other kinds of Judaism, and it was not obvious that the Pharisees would be the ones still standing at the end of the day. Understanding the world of the first century C.E. now means understanding the fact of diversity, and the scrolls have helped cultivate a sense of the historical complexity of the matrix of Judaism and early Christianity. The scrolls teach, indirectly, a message the scroll writers themselves would have repudiated; that is,

that there are different ways of being authentically Jewish. Any effort to "reclaim the scrolls for Judaism" must acknowledge that truth.
(THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS; A New Translation;
by Wise, Abegg and Cook; p. 34)

70 C.E. The Coalition Divides

70 C.E. was a very important year to the Nazarenes. In this year the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem and after five months, invaded the city. This event had many profound effects on the Nazarenes.

When the city was brought under siege, the Nazarenes remembered the words of Yeshua:

And when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies,
then know that its desolation is near.
Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains...
- Luke 21:20-21a

The Nazarenes heeded these words and fled to Pella, most likely dwelling in the caves of the wilderness which are outside of Pella.

The Historian/"Church Father" Eusebius records the event this way:

The whole body, however, of the Assembly at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella. (Eusebius; Eccl. Hist. 3:5)

It is likely that the Pharisees and other Jews resented the Nazarene flight to Pella as an act of cowardice.

The flight to Pella itself also had a profound effect on the Nazarenes. A great deal of confusion resulted and the coalition fell apart. It was at Pella that the Ebionites first emerged as a separate sect. The "Church Father" Epiphanius records this event saying:

Their sect [the Ebionites] began after the capture of Jerusalem. For when all those who believed in Messiah settled at that time for the most part in Peraea, at a city called Pella belonging to the Decapolis... then they moved there and stayed and that provided an opportunity for Ebion. He took up residence in a village called Cocabe ... from which he began his... teaching.
(Ephiphanius; Panarion; 30:2:7-8)

73 C.E. The Nazarenes Build a Synagogue on Mount Zion

In 73 C.E. , after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. the Nazarenes returned to Jerusalem. Unlike Gentile Christians who belonged to an outlaw religion, the Nazarenes were simply Jews who believed Yeshua had been the Messiah of Judaism. Since they were simply a sect of Judaism and Judaism was a recognized and protected religion under Roman Law, they were permitted to take stones from the Temple to Mt. Zion and build a Nazarene Synagogue there. It is especially significant that certain Greek manuscripts of Matthew contain marginal notes from an alternate Jewish version. This alternate Jewish version is called the “Judaikon” (Jewish) and is described as being a standard copy on Zion the Holy Mount⁵. This ancient Nazarene Synagogue still stands and was incorporated into the structure now wrongly called “King David’s Tomb.”⁶

90 C.E. Cast out of the Synagogues

In 90 C.E. Samuel the Lesser was commissioned to add what came to be called the Birkat haMinim to the Eighteen Benedictions of the Amidah. The Talmud records the event this way:

Our Rabbis taught: Simeon ha-Pakuli arranged the eighteen benedictions in order before Rabban Gamaliel in Jabneh.
Said Rabban Gamaliel to the Sages: "Can any one among you frame a benediction relating to the Minim?" Samuel the Lesser arose and composed it. (b.Berakot 29a)

The Birkat haMinim as it appears today reads:

And for slanderers let there be no hope,
and let all wickedness perish as in a moment;
let all thine enemies be speedily cut off,
and the dominion of arrogance do you uproot and crush,
cast down and humble speedily in our days.
Blessed are you, O L-rd, who breakest the enemies
and humbles the arrogant.

However an old copy of the Birkat haMinim found at the Cairo Genizah reads:

For the renegades let there be no hope,
and may the arrogant kingdom soon be rooted out in our days,
and the Nazarenes and the Minim perish as in a moment
and be blotted out from the book of life

⁵ All of these alternate readings are given in the footnotes of the Hebraic Roots Version NT and are discussed in the HRV Introduction).

⁶ See Biblical Archaeology Review; May/June 1990 “Church of the Apostles Found on Mount Zion” by [Bargil Pixner](#)

and with the righteous may they not be inscribed.
Blessed are you, O L-rd, who humbles the arrogant.

This benediction was in the form of a curse on the Nazarenes which would have the effect of casting them out of the Pharisaic synagogues (see Jn. 16:2) since Nazarenes who attended would be expected to recite a curse upon themselves. As Epiphanius records in the fourth century:

Not only do Jewish people have a hatred of them;
they even stand up at dawn, at midday, and toward evening,
three times a day when they recite their prayers in the synagogues,
and curse and anathemize them. Three times a day they say,
"G-d curse the Nazarenes." For they harbor an extra grudge
against them, if you please, because despite their Jewishness,
they proclaim that Yeshua is Messiah...
(Epiphanius Panarion 29)

132 C.E. The Bar Kokhba Revolt

In 132 a second Jewish revolt against Rome began. The Emperor Hadrian banned circumcision. In reaction the Jews, Nazarenes and Pharisees alike, took up arms. During the revolt Akiva, a leading Pharisee Rabbi at the time, declared the leading Jewish general known as Bar Kosiba to be the Messiah. Bar Kosiba was renamed Bar Kochba (son of the star) and was declared the Messiah based on Num. 24:17. The Nazarenes could not accept Bar Kokhba as the Messiah and so they left the army. From this time forward Nazarenes were labeled "meshumed" (traitor). Though the Pharisees later admitted Bar Kokhba was not the Messiah, their resentment toward the Nazarenes for refusing to follow him continued.

After the Romans defeated the Jews around 135 C.E. Y'huda the last of recorded Nazarene Nasi was exiled with the rest of the Jews from Jerusalem. A Gentile Christian named Markus was made Bishop of Jerusalem in his stead.

The Assimilation

By the fourth century the Nazarenes had communities in Beorea near Colesyria, in the Decapolis near Pella, and at Bashanitis at the place called Kokhba. (Epiphanius; Pan. 29). However, the Nazarenes by this time were a small sect which Epiphanius described as "small," "like an insect." (ibid)

According to a tradition preserved by the Assyrian Christians known as Nestorians, these Nazarenes escaped the Roman empire into the Parthian Empire to its east. Here they either assimilated into the Nestorian Church of the East, finding fellowship with their fellow Semite Assyrians, or they were wiped out by the rise of Islam.

*...false teachers, who, seeing that none
of the apostles any longer survived,
at length attempted with bare and uplifted
head to oppose the preaching of the truth...
- Hegesippus the Nazarene c. 185 CE*

Chapter 3

The Apostasy and Restoration

Now in 2Thes. we read about a coming "apostasy":

3. Do not let anyone deceive you in any way,
because [it will not come] except
an apostasy should come first
and the son of man of Torah-less-ness be revealed,
the son of destruction ,
(2Thes. 2:3)

The scriptures abound with prophecies about this great apostasy.
We read in the Tanak:

11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord YHWH,
that I will send a famine in the land,
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,
but of hearing the **words of the YHWH**:
12 And they shall wander from sea to sea,
and from the north even to the east, they
shall run to and fro to seek the **word of YHWH**,
and shall not find it.
(Amos 8:11-12)

Now just what is "The Word of YHWH"? In Isaiah we read:

...For the **Torah** will go out from Zion;
and the **word of YHWH** from Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 2:3)

Thus the "Word of YHWH" would seem to be the Torah.

Micah writes:

5 Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets
that make my people err, that bite with their teeth,
and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths,
they even prepare war against him.
6 Therefore night shall be unto you,
that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you,
that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the
prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.
7 Then shall the seers be ashamed,
and the diviners confounded:
yea, they shall all cover their lips;
for there is no answer of God...
11 The heads thereof judge for reward,
and the priests thereof teach for hire,
and the prophets thereof divine for money:
yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say,
Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.
(Micah 3:5-7, 11)

And Isaiah says:

1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty,
and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down,
and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.
2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
as with the servant, so with his master;
as with the maid, so with her mistress;
as with the buyer, so with the seller;
as with the lender, so with the borrower;
as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.
3 The land shall be utterly emptied,
and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.
4 The earth mourneth and fadeth away,
the world languisheth and fadeth away,
the haughty people of the earth do languish.
5 The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;
because they have *transgressed the Torahs,*
changed the ordinance,
broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
and they that dwell therein are desolate:
therefore the inhabitants of the earth
are burned, and few men left.
(Is. 24:1-6)

The authors of the Ketuvim Netzarim also refer to this great apostasy:

11 And many false prophets will arise,
and will lead many astray.
12 And because apostasy will abound,
the love of many will wax cold.
(Mt. 24:11-12 DuTillet Hebrew text)

Do not let anyone deceive you in any way,
because [it will not come] except
an apostasy should come first
and the son of man of Torah-less-ness be revealed,
the son of destruction ,
(2Thes. 2:3)

Now the spirit plainly says that in the last times
some men shall **depart from the faith**
and shall go after **deceiving** spirits
and after **teachings of shadim**,
Those who **deceive** by false appearance
and are speaking **a lie**,
and are seared in their conscience,
(1Timothy 4:1-2)

What does it mean "depart from the faith"? There is only one true faith (Eph. 4:5) which was once and for all delivered (Jude 1:3). But that faith was the faith of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Rom. 4) not Christianity. In fact that faith is inseparable from Torah:

Remove the false way from me,
and graciously grant me your **Torah**.
I have chosen the way of **faith**;
I have placed your ordinances before me.
(Psalm 119:29-30)

Also what does Paul mean by "**deceiving** spirits...who **deceive**...speaking a **lie**"?
Remember the Torah is truth (Ps. 119:142, 151) Now if the Torah is **truth**, then what is HaSatan's **lie**? His **lie** is that there is **not a Torah**, that **the Torah has been done away with**.

Now that we know what these terms mean lets look again at 1Tim. 4:1-2:

Now the spirit plainly says that in the last times
some men shall **depart from the faith**
and shall go after **deceiving** spirits
and after **teachings of shadim**,
Those who **deceive** by false appearance

and are speaking *a lie*,
and are seared in their conscience,
(1Timothy 4:1-2)

Now we can see that 1Timothy 4:1-2 refers to a departure from the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Judaism) to a new faith which is without the Torah.

Now lets look at 2Timothy 3:1-7:

1. But this know, that in the last days difficult times will come.
2. And sons of men will be lovers of their nefeshot,
and lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers,
those who are not obedient to their parents,
ungrateful, wicked,
3. Slanders, slaves to lust, cruel, haters of good,
4. Betrayers, unrestrained, proud, lovers of lusts
more than the love of Eloah,
5. Those who have the form the awe of Eloah⁷ but are far removed from his power.
Those who are thus,
thrust them out from you.
6. For from them are those who creep from house to house and captivate women
who are loaded down with sins and are led away by various lusts,
7. Who always are learning and are not ever able to come to the knowledge of the
*truth*⁸.

Once again Paul writes to Timothy about a great apostasy which he associates with a lack of Torah observance by those "Who always are learning and are not ever able to come to the knowledge of the *truth*". Remember, *the Torah is truth* (Ps. 119:142, 151).

A few verses down Paul writes:

3. For the time will come when they will not hear sound teaching, but
according to their lusts, they will multiply teachers to their nefeshot with the
itching of their hearing,
4. And they will turn their ear from the *truth*⁹,
and they will turn aside to myths.
(2Tim. 4:3-4)

Once again he associates this great apostasy with a rejection of the Torah.

Kefa also speaks of this last days apostasy as follows:

- 1 But there were also false prophets among the people,

⁷ By implication a "God fearer"

⁸ Psalm 119:142, 151

⁹ Psalm 119:142, 151

even as there will be false teachers among you,
who will secretly bring in destructive sects,
even denying the Lord who redeemed them,
and bring on themselves swift destruction.
2 And many will follow their destructive ways,
because of whom the *way of truth*¹⁰
will be blasphemed.
(2Kefa 2:1-2)

Then a little further down he writes:

19 While they promise them *freedom*,
they themselves are *slaves* of corruption;
for by whom a person is overcome,
by him also he is *brought into bondage*.
(2Kefa 2:19)

Remember we learned that the Torah is Truth (Ps. 119:142) and that Yeshua said:

... if you continue in my *word*,
then are you my disciples indeed.
And you shall know the *truth*,
and *the truth shall make you free*.
(John 8:31-32)

So as we look once again at 2Kefa:

19 While they promise them *freedom*,
they themselves are *slaves of corruption*;
for by whom a person is overcome,
by him also he is *brought into bondage*.
(2Kefa 2:19)

Two entire books of the New Scriptures, 2Peter and Jude, are dedicated to combating this apostate teaching. These books warn us of men who will promise "freedom" but turn from the "holy commandment" (the Law) (2Pt. 2:18-21) turning "the grace of our God" into a license to sin (Jude 1:4, 14-18).

We have already discussed some of the many prophecies in both the Tanak and the Ketuvim Netzarim of this apostasy. We have already noted that the grafted in branches would apostasize if they were not fed by the root. This apostasy began as early as the first century. Even within the lifetimes of the emissaries many of these grafted in branches were turning not to Israel as their root, but to Babylon. Paul writes:

8 For then when you did not know Eloah, you served those that from their nature are not Eloah

¹⁰ Psalm 119:105, 142, 151; Prov. 6:23

9 But now that you know Eloah, or rather you are known from Eloah you have again returned concerning those weak and poor elements and again desire to be made subject to them.

10 Days and months and times and years you observe

11 I fear lest vainly I have labored among you.

(Gal. 4:8-11)

Here Paul is writing to some grafted in gentiles who are turning away from the root of Judasim and turning back to their Pagan systems rooted in Babylon. They are attempting to incorporate the same "Days and months and times and years" that they had observed as Pagans into their new religion. This attempt at grafting Judaism into Babylonian Paganism eventually came to be the religion we today call "Christianity". These apostate branches which often boast against the natural branches have not been fed by the root and have in fact become Babylonians.

98 C.E. Antinomian Apostasy at Antioch Complete

As early as the first century many of the gentile assemblies were already having problems with the anti-nomian heresy. Now the first Gentile Assembly was at Antioch in Syria (Acts 11:19-26) it was here that Gentile Messianic Believers were first called "Christians". After the assembly was established Bar Nabba (Barnabas) was sent from Jerusalem to the assembly. Bar Nabba seems to have felt that he need help because he went to Tarsus to get Paul and bring him back to Antioch with him. Antioch became the initial center of the Gentile Messianic movement and became a sort of "home base" from which Paul launched his voyages to take the message to the nations (Acts 14:21-28). Early on there was a debate raised at Antioch over whether or not a gentile had to become circumcised to be saved (Acts 15:1) which escalated to an issue brought before the Beit-Din in Jerusalem (Acts 15) and the sending of a letter to Antioch setting basic essential standards for gentiles just coming to the faith. Now even in his own era Paul's teachings were being twisted and misinterpreted. Kefa writes of Paul that in his letters he speaks of things "in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction" (2Pt. 3:15-16). Paul himself speaks of "slandorous reports" that "some affirm that we say" That we may "do evil" and "sin" because "we are not under Torah but under grace" (Rom. 3:8; 6:1-2, 15). When he returned to Jerusalem in Acts 21 he was informed that the Jews of Jerusalem had been "informed about" him that he was teaching "the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses" and that "they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs." (Acts 21:20-21). No doubt these slanderous reports, misinformation and twistings of Paul's teachings were coming largely out of Antioch, his home base. From the very beginning there were unstable individuals at Antioch twisting Paul's teaching into anti-nomianism. Paul also said to the Ephesians on his last visit to them:

I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will enter in among you without mercy upon the flock.

And also from among you there will rise up men speaking perverse things, so that they might turn away the talmidim to follow after them.

(Acts 20:29-30)

Paul seems to indicate that after his death leaders would begin to rise up in his stead that would draw people to follow themselves and draw them away from Torah. Perhaps the some of the very men who had twisted Paul's teaching into anti-nomianism would one day become the leadership. In fact Paul died in 66 C.E. and the first overseer (Bishop) of Antioch to take office after his death was Ignatius in 98 C.E.. Ignatius fulfilled Paul's words precisely. Upon taking the office of Bishop over Antioch Ignatius sent out a series of epistles to other assemblies. His letters to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallianns, Romans, Philadelphians and Smyrnaeans as well as a personal letter to Polycarp overseer of Smyrnaea have survived to us.

In these letters Ignatius asserts the absolute authority of the office of "bishop" (his own office) over the assembly. Ignatius writes:

...being subject to your bishop...
...run together according to the will of God.
Jesus... is sent by the will of the Father;
As the bishops... are by the will of Jesus Christ.
(Eph. 1:9, 11)

...your bishop...I think you happy who are so joined to him,
as the church is to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is to the Father...
Let us take heed therefore, that we not set ourselves
against the bishop, that we may be subject to God...
We ought to look upon the bishop, even as we would
upon the Lord himself.
(Eph. 2:1-4)

...obey your bishop...
(Mag. 1:7)

Your bishop presiding in the place of God...
...be you united to your bishop...
(Mag. 2:5, 7)

...he... that does anything without the bishop...
is not pure in his conscience...
(Tral. 2:5)

...Do nothing without the bishop.
(Phil. 2:14)

See that you all follow your bishop,
As Jesus Christ, the Father...
(Smy. 3:1)

By exalting the power of the office of bishop (overseer) and demanding the absolute authority of the bishop over the assembly, Ignatius was actually making a power grab by thus taking absolute authority over the assembly at Antioch and encouraging other Gentile overseers to follow suite. In the past such disputes were resolved by the Nazarene Sanhedrin of the Nazarene assembly in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Moreover Ignatius drew men away from Torah, not only at Antioch but at other Gentile assemblies to which he wrote:

Be not deceived with strange doctrines;
nor with old fables which are unprofitable.
For if we still continue to live according to the Jewish Law,
we do confess ourselves not to have received grace...

let us learn to live according to the rules of Christianity,
for whosoever is called by any other name
besides this, he is not of God....

It is absurd to name Jesus Christ, and to Judaize.
For the Christian religion did not embrace the Jewish.
But the Jewish the Christian...
(Mag. 3:1, 8, 11)

(This is the first time in History that Christianity is characterized as a new and different religion apart from Judaism).

But if any one shall preach the Jewish law unto you,
hearken not unto him...
(Phil. 2:6)

Now Paul's prophecy was being fulfilled. Gentile leaders were causing men to follow after themselves and drawing people away from Torah, and it was springing forth from the first Gentile assembly. The result was the birth of a new Gentile religion that had effectively rebelled against Torah based Judaism, a religion known as Christianity.

Thus the Ancient Nazarene Historian and commentator Hegesippus (c. 180 CE) writes of the time immediately following the death of Shim'on, who succeeded Ya'akov HaTzadik as Nasi of the Nazarene Sanhedrin and who died in 98 CE:

Up to that period (98 CE) the Assembly had remained like a virgin
pure and uncorrupted: for, if there were any persons who were
disposed to tamper with the wholesome rule of the preaching

of salvation, they still lurked in some dark place of concealment or other. But, when the sacred band of Emissaries had in various ways closed their lives, and that generation of men to whom it had been vouchsafed to listen to the Godlike Wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then did the confederacy of godless error take its rise through the treachery of false teachers, who, seeing that none of the apostles any longer survived, at length attempted with bare and uplifted head to oppose the preaching of the truth by preaching "knowledge falsely so called."
(Hegesippus the Nazarene; c. 185 CE)

Hegesippus indicates the apostasy began the very same year that Ignatius became bishop of Antioch!

The Council of Nicea

In 325 C.E. A Pagan Gentile named Constantine conquered Rome and made himself emperor. Constantine, although a Pagan himself, declared Christianity to be the Catholic (Latin: universal) religion, thus making Christianity the enforced state religion of the Roman empire. Constantine, who was an anti-Semite called the council of Nicea in 325 C.E. to standardize Christianity. Nazarenes were excluded from the meeting. Jewish practices were banned. For the first time Gentile Christianity officially labeled the Nazarenes as apostates. From this time forward Nazarenes begin to be listed in the catalogs of apostate movements (the first of these to include the Nazarenes was Epiphanius's "Panarion" (around 370 C.E.).

CHRISTMAS

Following the great flood mankind attempted to centralize on the plains of Shinar and built a city called Babel (Babylon and Babel are the same word in Hebrew: Bavel). HaSatan immediately sought to turn mankind away from the true Messiah by introducing a false Messiah. HaSatan found the perfect tool, an ambitious woman named Semeramis. She was the widow of Nimrod, "the mighty hunter before YHWH" (Gen. 10:9) who had met with a violent death. Nimrod had been deified as being a deliverer from the menace of wild animals. Semeramis, seeking to perpetuate his worship and also to retain her throne, deceived them into joyfully believing that by way of a miraculous conception she had given birth to a son called Tammuz, who was claimed to be Nimrod reincarnated. This woman with her mamzer (illegitimate) child was thenceforth worshipped as "mother of (a) G-d" (Madonna)-- "the queen of heaven."

This was the birth of the ancient Babylonian-Akkadian religion, the fountainhead of all idolatry. Every form of paganism, can be traced to this source.

Alexander Hislop, in his book. *THE TWO BABYLONS*, has clearly documented that Christian worship is none other than the worship of Nimrod and his wife, disguised Concerning the Christmas festival Hislop writes:

The Christmas was originally a pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year, the ceremonies with which it is celebrated, prove its origin. In Egypt, the son of Isis, the Egyptian title for the queen of heaven, was born at this very time, about the time of the winter solstice. The very name by which Christmas is popularly known among ourselves-- Yule day-- proves at once its pagan and Babylonian origin. "Yule" is the Chaldee name for "infant," or "little child"; and as the 25th of December was called by our pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors "Yule-day" or "the child's day", and the night that preceded it, "Mother night", long before they came in contact with Christianity, that sufficiently proves its real character. Far and wide in the realms of paganism was this birthday observed
(*THE TWO BABYLONS*; Alexander Hislop; p. 93)

It may be demonstrated that Y'shua was not born in the winter at all, but during the Fall Feasts. Since YHWH has not in his Torah authorized the celebration of Christmas, then where did it come from? As early as the first century Paul was condemning those from the Gentiles who were attempting to incorporate their old pagan "days, and months and seasons and years" into their new faith (Gal. 4:8-11). About the year 230 the Gentile Christian "Church Father" Tertullian wrote:

By us [Gentile Christians] who are strangers to (Jewish) Sabbaths, and new moons, and festivals, ... the Saturnalia, the feasts of January, the Brumalia, and Matronalia are now frequented, with gifts being carried to and fro.

Since Tammuz was identified with Ba'al, the sun god, and since the sun noticeably began to grow stronger at about the 25th of December, at the winter solstice this season came to be celebrated as the rebirth of Nimrod. The feast of Saturnalia, lasting about a week, was held at this time.

Now it was the policy of Roman Catholicism to incorporate pagan festivals into Christianity so as to bring in more converts.

Pope Gregory wrote to Augustine the first missionary to the British Isles (C.E. 597):

Do not destroy the temples of the English gods; change them to Christian churches. Do not forbid the "harmless" customs

which have been associated with the old religions;
consecrate them to Christian use.

Thus Rome retained a pagan form for "Xmas" but could not restrain its pagan spirit--existing to this day.

Sir James Fraser in "The Golden Bough" writes:

Thus it appears that the Christian Church chose to celebrate the birthday of its founder on the 25th of December in order to transfer the devotion of the heathen from the sun to him who was called the Sun of Righteousness. If that was so, there can be no intrinsic improbability in the conjecture that motives of the same sort may have led the ecclesiastical authorities to assimilate the Easter festival of the death and resurrection of their Lord to the festival of the death and resurrection of another Asiatic God which fell in the same season.

The name "Christmas" appeared around 450 C.E. when Pope Julius decreed that all Christians must observe the birth of Jesus at the same time that the pagans were observing the Saturnalia, etc. It was then called "Christe-masse", or Christ's mass.

The so-called "Christmas tree" had its origin in Babylonian religion, The tree was used to represent Tammuz (a name meaning "branch" or "sprout") HaSatan's counterfeit of "The Branch" (Hebrew: NETZER; branch; shoot; sprout)-- Messiah, who was also prophetically called "The Root out of dry ground" (Is. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 6:12-- "Behold the man whose name is The Branch"). Ancient coins have been found picturing a tree stump (representing dead Nimrod) and a small tree growing nearby (Tammuz).

EASTER

The present variable time was appointed by early Romanism in amalgamation with the very ancient pagan spring festival to the goddess of the spring. It was fixed on the Sunday immediately following the 14th day of the paschal moon which happened on or first after the vernal equinox.

(*Schaff-Herzog Ency. Of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. 2, p. 682)

Eostre was the Anglo-Saxon name for the Babylonian goddess Ishtar¹¹. The celebration of the Christian holiday "Easter" goes back to the pagan Babylonian spring festival also known as the Roman

Pagan festival Veneralia held on April 1st in honor of Venus, the Roman equivalent of the Greek Aphrodite who was the same as the Babylonian Ishtar.¹²

So-called "Lent" is of purely Babylonian origin. The word "Lent" actually came from the Saxon word "Lenct", meaning "spring." Lent began as the forty days of "weeping for Tammuz" (see Ezek. 8:13-14) leading up to the spring equinox and the festival of Ishtar.

Tammuz was the supposed reincarnation of Ishtar's (i.e. Semeramis') husband (Nimrod). In the spring, his death and reappearance was celebrated. A season of lamentation was followed by one day of joy at the rising of the sun at the spring equinox (as in Ezek. 8:15-18)

with the Ishtar sunrise service:

Turn you yet again and you shall see
greater abominations than these.
And he brought me into the inner court
of the House of YHWH and behold,
at the door of the Temple of YHWH
between the porch and the altar,
were about five and twenty men
with their backs to the Temple of YHWH
and their faces toward the east;
and they worshipped the sun toward the east...
and though they cry in my ear with a loud voice,
yet will I not hear them.

Ishtar (the queen of heaven) was worshipped with nice fluffy cakes (Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19) today's hot-cross buns. By contrast Passover which occurs at about the same time is observed with unleavened bread. In fact Easter eggs and Easter bunnies are both fertility symbols associated with the fertility goddess Ishtar.

Notice that Ishtar worship was a big family event for the children:

The children gather wood
and the fathers kindle the fire
and the women knead their dough,
to make cakes to the queen of heaven
and to pour out drink offerings to other gods, that
they may provoke me to anger,
(Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19)

¹¹ Encyclopedia of Gods p. 77

¹² ibid p. 20-21, 280-281

The custom of wearing new clothes at Easter also seems to be the antipathy of Passover during which traveling clothes are to be worn (Ex. 12:11).

STEEPLES

The steeple originates from the vile phallic worship referred to in Isa. 57:5-8 and Ezek. 16:17. The "groves" connected with "high places" that Israel so frequently "went whoring with" (Ps. 106:28-39) were the images and places where these "queen of heaven" festivals were carried on. The word "groves," found forty times in the KJV English, comes from the Hebrew word *asherah* and is always associated with the worship of *Ashthoreth*, alias Ishtar, Eostre, the goddess of spring, Easter. This phallic worship often involved the use of phallic symbols (see Ezek. 16:17). Egyptian obelisks are just such phallic symbols. Today many churches are also topped with these Babylonian phallic symbols known today as "steeple".

CROSSES, DOVES AND FISHES

Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14) also called Dumuzi was the Sumerian and Babylonian Akkadian name for the Phoenician god Ba'al Shamin¹³. Ba'al Shamin (the Lord of Heaven) originated in Canaanite culture as Ba'al¹⁴ (Lord) so often mentioned in the Bible. Ba'al also appears in the Babylonian pantheon as Bel¹⁵. Which was also a title of the Babylonian god Marduk¹⁶ called in Hebrew Merodach¹⁷. One of the Biblical titles of Ba'al was "Ba'al Gad" (pronounced Ba'al Gawd or Ba'al God) (Josh. 11:17; 12:7; 13:5). Ba'al Gad (the Lord God) is also listed in the Encyclopedia of Gods as a Western Semetic god.

According to the Encyclopedia of Gods:

He is the first "dying-and-rising" god to be historically recorded by name... He is commanded by Inana [Ishtar] to enter the underworld for a period each year, which accounts for the seasonal demise of the green world to drought. ... as late as biblical times there are references to women "weeping for Tammuz".¹⁸

¹³ The Encyclopedia of Gods identifies "Ba'al Shamin" as the consort of Astarte (p. 29) who is the Phoenician version of the Babylonian-Akkadian goddess Ishtar (p. 119) who is synonymous with the Sumerian goddess Inana (p. 119) whose consort is Dumuzi (Tammuz) (p. 70, 114).

¹⁴ *ibid* pages 36-37

¹⁵ *ibid* p. 41

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid* p. 158

¹⁸ *ibid* p. 70

Ba'al also is said to have died, descended into the underworld and been restored¹⁹

The Greek version of the Babylonian god Tammuz was Adonis. Adonis was synonymous with the Phoenician deity Adon (lord)²⁰. Regarding Adonis the Encyclopedia of Gods say:

Adonis is modeled on the Mesopotamian dying vegetarian god Dumuzi (Hebrew: Tammuz)... Tradition has it that he was killed... and is condemned to the underworld for six months of each year, during which the earth's vegetation parches and dies under the Summer sun and drought. He was honored in a spring festival...²¹

The first letter in Tammuz is the Semitic letter **TAW** which appeared in Canaanite script as a **cross**. As a result Tammuz was often worshiped with the **symbol of the cross**.

Thus Tammuz was also known as **Adon (Lord)**; Ba'al (**Lord**); "Ba'al Shamin" (**The Lord of Heaven**) and Ba'al Gad (**The Lord God**). He **died, descended into the underworld and was resurrected**. His resurrection was celebrated with a **spring festival** and he was worshipped with the **symbol of the cross**.

Dagon is mentioned as the god of the Philistines in Judges 16:23; 1Sam. 5:2-7 and 1Chron. 10:10. Dagon (Strong's # 1712) means "fish-god" and is taken from DAG (Strong's # 1709 "fish"). According to the Encyclopedia of Gods Dagon (Dagon) was a grain and fertility god and the **father of Ba'al**. His attributes included a fish tail. Thus the **father of Ba'al** was worshipped with the **symbol of the fish**.

Ishtar was the Babylonian equivalent of the Sumerian goddess Inan²² who was the consort of Tammuz²³. She was known to the Greeks as Aphrodite²⁴ and to the Romans as Venus²⁵ and worshipped her with the **symbol of the dove**. She was known to the Amorites, Canaanites and Phoenicians as Asherah²⁶. The Phoenicians also called her Astarte the consort of Ba'al Shamin²⁷.

Her festival was the Roman feast of Veneralia on April 1st²⁸. This corresponded to the **Babylonian Spring Equinox festival of Ishtar also called "Easter" still observed today**.

¹⁹ ibid p. 37

²⁰ ibid page 3

²¹ ibid p. 4

²² ibid p. 119

²³ ibid p. 70

²⁴ ibid p. 20-21

²⁵ ibid p. 280

²⁶ ibid p. 27.

²⁷ ibid p. 29

²⁸ ibid p. 281

THE CHRISTIAN CHALDEANS

The Chaldean peoples, the literal Babylonians converted to Christianity early on. In the 1500's they joined the Roman Catholic Church becoming Chaldean Roman Catholics. Thus the literal Babylonians, the Chaldean peoples are Christians.

COME OUT OF HER AND BE SEPERATE

Now comes the call to come out from Babylon. This call is repeated several times in the Scriptures:

Go you forth of Babylon....
(Is. 48:20)

Depart you, depart you, go you out from thence,
touch no unclean thing;
go you out of the midst of her;
be you clean, that bear the vessals of YHWH.
(Is. 52:11)

Remove out of the midst of Babylon,
and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans,
and be as the he goats before the flocks....
Flee out of the midst of Babylon,
and deliver every man his soul:
be not cut off in her iniquity;
for this is the time of YHWH's vengeance;
he will render unto her a recompence....
My people, go ye out of the midst of her,
and deliver ye every man his soul
from the fierce anger of YHWH.
(Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45)

6 Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north,
saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad
as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.
7 Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with
the daughter of Babylon.
(Zech. 2:6, 7)

14. And be not yokefellows to those who do not believe²⁹,
for what fellowship has righteousness with Torahlessness?
Or what communion has light with darkness?

²⁹ see Deut. 22:10

15. Or what agreement has the Messiah with HaSatan?
Or what part has he who is faithful with him who is not faithful?
16. And what unity has the temple of Eloah with shadim?
But you are the temple of the living Eloah,
as it is said, **I will dwell with them, and I will walk with them, and I will be their Eloah, and they will be my people.**³⁰
17. Because of this, **Go out from among them and be separated**³¹ **from them**, said YHWH, **and do not come near the unclean**³², **and I will receive you,**³³
18. And **I will be** to you a **father and you will be sons and daughters to me**, says the almighty, **YHWH.**³⁴
(2Cor. 6:14-18)

Here Paul creates an allegory from the Torah command against yoking different kinds of animals together. He then gives various sets of diametrically opposed things which generally are associated with Torah vs. Torahlessness. The word translated "unrighteousness" in the KJV text of 2Cor. 6:14 is actually ANOMIA (without Torah). It is important to come out from Babylon and be *separate* from these Torahless ones. Jeremiah foretells of those who fail to heed the call to come out of Babylon hoping instead to heal her (Jer. 51:6-8) but she will not be healed (Jer. 51:9). We must not be yoked to them for Isaiah warns us that at the last days judgment of Babylon (Is. 13:1, 10) that:

Everyone that is found shall be thrust through;
and everyone that is *joined* to them shall fall by the sword.
(Is. 13:15)

As the cry appears in Revelation:

4. And I heard another voice from heaven saying,
Come out from within her, my people,
so that you do not partake in her sins³⁵
so that you do not receive of **her plagues**³⁶,
(Rev. 18:4)

The Remnant

Now if we return to the parable of the olive tree (Rom. 11) Romans 11:8 quotes Is. 29:10-11 likening this apostasy to a "sleep" and blindness. following this apostasy there would be a restoration of the natural branches (Rom. 11:23-27). to the olive tree. These are a

³⁰ Lev. 26:12; Exodus 6:7; Jer. 31:32 (33); 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27

³¹ Jer. 50:8, 28; 51:6, 9, 45; Zech. 2:11 (2:7); Is. 52:11; see also Rev. 18:4

³² Isaiah 52:11; Zech. 2:7, 11

³³ Ezek. 20:34, 41

³⁴ 2Sam. 7:8, 14; Is. 43:6

³⁵ Jer. 50:8, 28; 51:6, 9, 45; Zech. 2:11 (2:7); Is. 52:11; see also 2Cor. 6:17

³⁶ Jer. 50:13

"remnant" (Rom. 11:5 & Rev. 12:17) they are the seed of Israel (woman in Rev. 12) who observe Torah and accept Messiah (Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 15:3; Rev.6:9).

...the remnant of her seed,
which keep the commandments of Eloah,
and have the testimony of Yeshua the Messiah.
(Rev. 12:17)

Note how well this description of the "remnant" agrees with the descriptions of the ancient sect of Nazarene Judaism given by ancient Christian "Church Fathers":

The Nazarenes... accept Messiah in such a way
that they do not cease to observe the old law...
(Jerome; On Isaiah 8:14; 4th Century)

They [the Nazarenes] have no different ideas,
but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims it
and in the Jewish fashion-- except for their belief in Messiah...
but since they are still fettered by the Law-- circumcision,
the Sabbath, and the rest-- they are not in accord with Christians.
(Epiphanius; Panarion 29; 4th Century)

Obviously the last days "remnant" of Rev. 12:17 are a restoration of the ancient sect of Nazarene Judaism. They are a "remnant" because there have always been Nazarene Jews (Torah observant Jews who believe Yeshua was Messiah) but they had not been organized as a movement.

This remnant sound a call to come out from Babylon and be separate. Now lets look at another prophecy in Zech. 8:23:

Thus said YHWH of hosts, 'In those days ten men
from all languages of the nations take hold,
yea, they shall take hold of the edge of the garment of a man,
a Yehudite, saying, "Let us go with you,
for we have heard that Elohim is with you ."

Now lest anyone think that the "Jew" (Yehudite) in this passage is a certain Jew, such as the Messiah, I must point out that in the Hebrew the word "you" in "let us go with "you" and "Elohim is with you" is PLURAL and therefore refers not to an individual Jew, but to the remnant of the House of Judah, Nazarene Judaism.

*They use not only the New Testament
but the Old Testament as well, as the Jews do...*
- *Epiphanius; Panarion 29*

Chapter 4

The Canon

The Canon of the Ketuvim Netzarim

One of the best ancient descriptions we have of the ancient Netzarim is made by the ancient writer Epiphanius who says of them:

They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well... they have the Good News according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written.
(Ephiphanius; Pan. 29)

Epiphanius contrasts this description of the Nazarenes with a description of the Ebionites in the following section of Panarian. Epiphanius described the Ebionites as using a version of Matthew which omitted the first two chapters and began with the story of the ministry of Yochanan (Pan. 30:13:6) Epiphanius notes that this is because the Ebionite version of Matthew was "not wholly complete but falsified and mutilated (30:13:2). This in contrast to the Nazarenes whom he said had Matthew "in its entirety". Moreover while Epiphanius says of the Nazarenes: "They use... the New Testament..." (Epiphanius; Panarion 20) Irenaeus writes of the Ebionites: "But the Ebionites use only... Matthew..." (Irenaeus; Against Heresies 1:16:2). So the Nazarenes used the "New Testament" and had Matthew "in its entirety" but the Ebionites used only Matthew in a version that was "not wholly complete but falsified and mutilated" in such a way that it among other things, omitted the virgin birth story in the first two chapters. It is important to note that this important distinction (among others) distinguished Nazarenes from Ebionites.

We must also ask the question, what did Epiphanius mean when he said:

They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well... they have the Good News according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written.
(Ephiphanius; Pan. 29)

Well certainly part of what he meant was that the Nazarenes were NOT like the Ebionites in that they used the entire NT including a Matthew which was complete and contained the first two chapters (and therefore the virgin birth account). Epiphanius's book Panarian is a list of groups which Rome had labeled apostate. In this book Epiphanius seeks to discredit each of these groups. One issue that comes up frequently is that Epiphanius does not hesitate to attack groups for rejecting all or parts of books he [Epiphanius] regarded as canon, or for accepting books that he [Epiphanius] regarded as apostate or questionable. He even questions the Nazarenes for using the "Old Testament" right along side of the "New Testament". If the Nazarenes rejected all or parts of what Epiphanius knew as the "New Testament" then Epiphanius would not have hesitated to make this clear in his attack on them. While he clarifies that they use Hebrew Matthew rather than Greek Matthew (and I believe that they used the Aramaic NT as well) he does NOT question their choice of canonical NT books. Now since Epiphanius clearly did not disagree with the Nazarene NT canon, if we can determine the NT canon Epiphanius understood as canonical, we would seem to also know what books the Nazarenes used as NT canon.

At this point I want to address the false claim that the 27 books we know as the NT canon today was the product of Rome or that it was manipulated and altered by Roman Catholic Monks. While it is true that Rome officially acknowledged the 27 books we call the NT as the NT canon at the council of Carthage in 397 CE this was simply an act to acknowledge the books which were already accepted as the canon. Now the earliest list of NT books that matches our own exactly was given by Athanasius of Alexandria in 367 CE. Shortly afterward Jerome and Augustine also listed the same 27 books. Now at this point I should clarify that two NT canons existed. In the east a 22 book canon was used (it lacked 2Pt. 2&3 John, Jude and Rev.) while in the west the familiar 27 books were used. Note that this eastern canon of 22 books was the standard in the Parthian Empire, which bordered the Roman Empire as a rival and was never under Roman control. The historian Eusebius (300-320 CE) gave a list of books identical to our 27 though he omitted Hebrews. This was likely an oversight because he elsewhere acknowledges Hebrews as a Pauline epistle. Much earlier Origen (245 CE) had listed the books he called "homologoumena" (acknowledged) books. His list lacked only 2Peter, 2 & 3 Jn, Jude and Hebrews. However this may have been an error because he elsewhere identifies Hebrews as an authentic Pauline production and he cites 2Peter as "scripture". The only variances then would be between the 22 book canon of the east and the 27 books of the west). Prior to this time, if we trace back the so-called "church fathers" of Christendom all the way back through and into the first century. we find them quoting as "Scripture" from the same 27 books we know today as the "New Testament". And if we go all the way back to "New Testament times" we find Paul quoting Matthew=Luke right along side the Torah as "Scripture" (1Tim. 5:18 quotes Mt. 10:10 = Lk. 10:7 with Deut. 25:4 as "scripture") we also find 2Kefa referring to the Pauline Epistles as being twisted by some as the do with "the rest of the scriptures" (2Kefa 3:15-16). So in NT times it seems that at least Matthew and/or Luke and the Pauline epistles had already been canonized. In other words, like the Tanak, the various sections of the NT were being canonized as they went.

Now when Epiphanius wrote in 370 CE of the Nazarenes:

They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well... they have the Good News according to Matthew in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written.
(Ephiphanius; Pan. 29)

It is clear that he is saying that the ancient Nazarenes accepted and used the same New Testament books that we know today as the New Testament.

Order of the Books of the Ketuvim Netzarim

Just as the manuscript order of the books of the Tanak (OT), (followed by Judaism) does not agree with the ordering of the same books in the Christian "Old Testament" as printed today, so also does the manuscript order of the NT differ. The ancient manuscript order of the books of the "New Testament" has first the "Gospels" then "Acts" followed by the Jewish Epistles (Ya'akov (James); 1 & 2 Kefa (Peter); 1, 2 & 3 Yochanan (John) and Y'hudah (Jude)) followed by the Pauline epistles which are followed by Revelation. This order was rearranged by Rome in the Latin Vulgate in which the Pauline epistles were given first place and the Jewish epistles given second place. The original manuscript order had an important significance. It agreed with the precept that the message was to the Jews first and then to the Goyim (Gentiles). It also agrees with the concept that Ya'akov, Kefa and Yochanan were emissaries that come BEFORE Paul (Gal. 1:17) and with the concept that Kefa, Ya'akov and Yochanan served as three pillars which lend authority upon which Paul's message was built (Gal. 2:9) and not vice-versa. The reader of the NT was intended to read the "Jewish" epistles FIRST and then to read the Pauline epistles already having understood the Jewish epistles. The NT reader was intended to read Ya'akov's (James') admonition concerning faith and works (Ya'akov 2) as well as Kefa's warnings about Paul being difficult to understand and often twisted (2Kefa 3:15-16) etc. before ever attempting to understand the writings of Paul.

*They have the Goodnews according to Matthew
in its entirety in Hebrew. For it is clear that they still
preserve this, in the Hebrew alphabet, as it was originally written.
- Epiphanius; Panarion 29*

Chapter 5

The Semitic New Testament

Language of First Century Israel

The Middle East, through all of its political turmoil, has in fact been dominated by a single master from the earliest ages until the present day. The Semitic tongue has dominated the Middle East from ancient times, until the modern day. Aramaic dominated the three great Empires, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian. It endured until the seventh century, when under the Islamic nation it was displaced by a cognate Semitic language, Arabic. Even today some few Syrians, Assyrians and Chaldeans speak Aramaic as their native tongue, including three villages north of Damascus³⁷.

The Jewish people, through all of their persecutions, sufferings and wanderings have never lost sight of their Semitic heritage, nor their Semitic tongue. Hebrew, a Semitic tongue closely related to Aramaic, served as their language until the great dispersion when a cognate language, Aramaic, began to replace it. Hebrew, however continued to be used for religious literature, and is today the spoken language in Israel.

The Babylonian Exile

Some scholars have proposed that the Jews lost their Hebrew language, replacing it with Aramaic during the Babylonian captivity. The error of this position becomes obvious. The Jewish people had spent 400 years in captivity in Egypt³⁸ yet they did not stop speaking Hebrew and begin speaking Egyptian, why should they exchange Hebrew for Aramaic after only seventy years³⁹ in Babylonian captivity? Upon return from the Babylonian captivity it was realized that a small minority could not speak "the language of Judah"⁴⁰ so drastic measures were taken to abolish these marriages and maintain the purity of the Jewish people and language⁴¹ One final evidence rests in the fact that the

³⁷ *The New Covenant Aramaic Peshitta Text with Hebrew Translation*; Bible Society of Jerusalem; 1986; p. iii

³⁸ Ex. 12:40-41; Acts 7:6

³⁹ Jer. 5:11-12; 29:10; Zech. 7:5; Dan. 9:2

⁴⁰ (Neh. 13:23-24) A euphemism for Hebrew as opposed to Aramaic (see 2Kn. 18:26)

⁴¹ Neh. 13:23-31; Ezra 10:3-19

post-captivity books (Zech., Hag., Mal., Neh., Ezra, and Ester) are written in Hebrew rather than Aramaic.

Hellenization

Some scholars have also suggested that under the Helene Empire Jews lost their Semitic language and in their rush to hellenize, began speaking Greek. The books of the Maccabees do record an attempt by Antiochus Epiphanies to forcibly Hellenize the Jewish people.⁴² In response, the Jews formed an army led by Judas Maccabee⁴³ This army defeated the Greeks and eradicated Hellenism⁴⁴. This military victory is still celebrated today as Chanukkah, the feast of the dedication of the Temple⁴⁵ a holiday that even Yeshua seems to have observed at the Temple at Jerusalem in the first century⁴⁶. Those who claim that the Jews were Hellenized and began speaking Greek at this time seem to deny the historical fact of the Maccabean success.

During the first century, Hebrew remained the language of the Jews living in Judah and to a lesser extent in Galilee. Aramaic remained a secondary language and the language of commerce. Jews at this time did not speak Greek, in fact one tradition had it that it was better to feed ones children swine than to teach them the Greek language. It was **only** with the permission of authorities that a young official could learn Greek, and then, solely for the purpose of political discourse on the National level. The Greek language was completely inaccessible and undesirable to the vast majority of Jews in Israel in the 1st century.^{70a} Any gauge of Greek language outside of Israel cannot, nor can any evidence hundreds of years removed from the 1st century, alter the fact that the Jews of Israel in the 1st century did not know Greek.

The Testimony of Josephus

The first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (37-c.100 C.E.) testifies to the fact that Hebrew was the language of first century Jews. Moreover, he testifies that Hebrew, and not Greek, was the language of his place and time. Josephus gives us the only first hand account of the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. According to Josephus, the Romans had to have him translate the call to the Jews to surrender into "their own language"⁴⁷. Josephus gives us a point-blank statement regarding the language of his people during his time:

I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of the Greeks, and understanding the elements of the Greek language although I have so long accustomed myself to speak our own language, that I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness: for our nation does not encourage those

⁴²1Macc. 1:10-15, 41-64; 2Macc. 4:9-17; 6:1-11; Josephus ;*Ant.* 12:5

⁴³ 1Macc 2:19-9; 2Macc. 8f; Josephus ;*Ant.* 12:6

⁴⁴ 1&2 Macc.; Josephus ;*Ant.* 12:7;

⁴⁵1Macc. 4:52-59; 2Macc. 10:5-8; Josephus ;*Ant.* 12:7:6-7; b.Shabbat 21b

⁴⁶ Jn. 10:22

^{70a} see below next to note 103b

⁴⁷ Josephus; *Wars* 5:9:2

that learn the languages of many nations.⁴⁸

Thus, Josephus makes it clear that first century Jews could not even speak or understand Greek, but spoke "their own language."

Archaeology

Confirmation of Josephus's claims has been found by Archaeologists. The Bar Kokhba coins are one example. These coins were struck by Jews during the Bar Kokhba revolt (c. 132 C.E.). All of these coins bear only Hebrew inscriptions. Countless other inscriptions found at excavations of the Temple Mount, Masada and various Jewish tombs, have revealed first century Hebrew inscriptions⁴⁹

Even more profound evidence that Hebrew was a living language during the first century may be found in ancient Documents from about that time, which have been discovered in Israel. These include the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Bar Kokhba letters.

The Dead Sea Scrolls consist of over 40,000 fragments of more than 500 scrolls dating from 250 B.C.E. to 70 C.E.. These Scrolls are primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic. A large number of the "secular scrolls" (those which are not Bible manuscripts) are in Hebrew.

The Bar Kokhba letters are letters between Simon Bar Kokhba and his army, written during the Jewish revolt of 132 C.E.. These letters were discovered by Yigdale Yadin in 1961 and are almost all written in Hebrew and Aramaic. Two of the letters are written in Greek, both were written by men with Greek names to Bar Kokhba. One of the two Greek letters actually apologizes for writing to Bar Kokhba in Greek, saying "the letter is written in Greek, as we have no one who knows Hebrew here."

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bar Kokhba letters not only include first and second century Hebrew documents, but give an even more significant evidence in the dialect of that Hebrew. The dialect of these documents was not the Biblical Hebrew of the Tenach (Old Testament), nor was it the Mishnaic Hebrew of the Mishna (c. 220 C.E.). The Hebrew of these documents is colloquial, it is a fluid living language in a state of flux somewhere in the evolutionary process from Biblical to Mishnaic Hebrew. Moreover, the Hebrew of the Bar Kokhba letters represents Galilean Hebrew (Bar Kokhba was a Galilean), while the Dead Sea Scrolls give us an example of Judean Hebrew. Comparing the documents shows a living distinction of geographic dialect as well, a sure sign that Hebrew was not a dead language.

Final evidence that first century Jews conversed in Hebrew and Aramaic can be found in other documents of the period, and even later. These include: the Roll Concerning Fasts⁵⁰ in Aramaic (66-70 C.E.), The Letter of Gamaliel⁵¹ in Aramaic (c. 30

⁴⁸ Josephus; *Ant.* 20:11:2

⁴⁹ *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr.; 1984; pp. 55-68

⁵⁰ A list of days on which fasting is forbidden.

⁵¹ This letter, according to the Talmud (j.San. 18) was written by Gamliel I, who was Paul's teacher (Acts 22:3) and who appealed on Peter's behalf (Acts 5:34).

- 110 C.E.), Wars of the Jews⁵² by Josephus in Hebrew (c. 75 C.E.), the Mishna in Hebrew (c. 220 C.E.) and the Gemara⁵³ in Aramaic (c. 500 C.E.)

Scholars on the Language of the New Testament

Having thus demonstrated that Hebrew and Aramaic were languages of Jews living in Israel in the first century, we shall now go on to demonstrate that the New Testament was first written in these languages.

A number of noted scholars have argued that at least portions of the New Testament were originally penned in a Semitic tongue. This argument has been asserted of the four Gospels⁵⁴, Acts⁵⁵, and Revelation⁵⁶.

The following is just some of what these scholars have written on the topic:

When we turn to the New Testament we find that there are reasons for suspecting a Hebrew or Aramaic original for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, John and for the apocalypse.

- Hugh J. Schonfield; *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel*; 1927; p. vii

The material of our Four Gospels is all Palestinian, and the language in which it was originally written is Aramaic, then the principle language of the land...

-C. C. Torrey; *Our Translated Gospels*; 1936 p. ix

The pioneer in this study of Aramaic and Greek relationships was Charles Cutler Torrey (1863-1956),... His work however fell short of completeness; as a pioneering effort, in the nature of the case, some of his work has to be revised and supplemented. His main contention of translation, however, is undeniably correct. ...

The translation into Greek from Aramaic must have been made from

⁵²Was first written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek (*Wars* preface:1)

⁵³Commentary on the Mishna which together with the Mishna forms the Talmud.

⁵⁴ See *Our Translated Gospels* by Charles Cutler Torrey; Harper and Brothers, New York; 1936; p. ix; *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* by Matthew Black; *The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels* by Frank Zimmerman; New York; 1979

⁵⁵ *The Composition and Date of Acts* by Charles Cutler Torrey; Cambridge Mass.; 1916; p. 7; *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* by Matthew Black; *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard Jr. 1984; p. 23; See also *The Semitisms of Acts* by Max Wilcox; 1965

⁵⁶ *The Original Language of the Apocalypse* by R. B. Y. Scott; University of Toronto Press; 1928; *Documents of the Primitive Church* by Charles Cutler Torrey; 1941

a written record, including the Fourth Gospel. The language was Eastern Aramaic, as the material itself revealed, most strikingly through a comparison of parallel passages. ...

One group [of scholars], which originated in the nineteenth century and persists to the present day [1979], contends that the Gospels were written in Greek...

Another group of scholars, among them C. C. Torrey ... comes out flatly with the proposition that the Four Gospels... including Acts up to 15:35 are translated directly from Aramaic and from a written Aramaic text....

My own researches have led me to consider Torrey's position valid and convincing that the Gospels as a whole were translated from Aramaic into Greek.

- Frank Zimmerman; *The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels*; KTAV; 1979

Thus it was that the writer turned seriously to tackle the question of the original language of the Fourth Gospel; and quickly convincing himself that the theory of an original Aramaic document was no chimera, but a fact which was capable of the fullest verification...

- Charles Fox Burney; *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*; 1922; p. 3

...this [Old Syriac] Gospel of St. Matthew appears at least to be built upon the original Aramaic text which was the work of the Apostle himself.

- William Cureton; *Remains of a Very Ancient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac*; 1858; p. vi)

...the Book of Revelation was written in a Semitic language, and that the Greek translation... is a remarkably close rendering of the original."

- C. C. Torrey; *Documents of the Primitive Church* 1941; p. 160

We come to the conclusion, therefore that the Apocalypse as a whole is a translation from Hebrew or Aramaic...

- R. B. Y. Scott; *The Original Language of the Apocalypse* 1928; p. 6

The question of the Luke/Acts tradition holds particular interest to us. This is because the common wisdom has been to portray Luke as a Greek speaking, Greek

writing Gentile who wrote his account to the Gentiles. The reality of the matter is (whether Luke himself knew Greek or not) that Luke was most certainly written in a Semitic language. as Charles Cutler Torrey states:

In regard to Lk. it remains to be said, that of all the Four Gospels it is the one which gives by far the plainest and most constant evidence of being a translation.

- C.C. Torrey; *Our Translated Gospels* p. lix

TESTIMONY OF THE "CHURCH FATHERS"

All of the "Church Fathers", both East and West, testified to the Semitic origin of at least the Book of Matthew, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Papias (150-170 C.E.)

Matthew composed the words in the Hebrew dialect, and each translated as he was able.⁵⁷

Ireneus (170 C.E.)

Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect.⁵⁸

Origen (c. 210 C.E.)

The first [Gospel] is written according to Matthew, the same that was once a tax collector, but afterwards an emissary of Yeshua the Messiah, who having published it for the Jewish believers, wrote it in Hebrew.⁵⁹

Eusebius (c. 315 C.E.)

Matthew also, having first proclaimed the Gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to the other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them by his writings.⁶⁰

Pantaenus... penetrated as far as India, where it is reported that he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had been delivered before his arrival to some who had the knowledge of Messiah, to whom Bartholomew, one of the emissaries, as it is said, had proclaimed, and left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters.⁶¹

⁵⁷ quoted by Eusebius *Eccl. Hist.* 3:39

⁵⁸ Ireneus; *Against Heresies* 3:1

⁵⁹ quoted by Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 6:25

⁶⁰ Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 3:24

⁶¹ Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 5:10

Epiphanius (370 C.E.)

They [the Nazarenes] have the Gospel according to Matthew quite complete in Hebrew, for this Gospel is certainly still preserved among them as it was first written, in Hebrew letters.⁶²

Jerome (382 C.E.)

"Matthew, who is also Levi, and from a tax collector came to be an emissary first of all evangelists composed a Gospel of Messiah in Judea in the Hebrew language and letters, for the benefit of those of the circumcision who had believed, who translated it into Greek is not sufficiently ascertained. Furthermore, the Hebrew itself is preserved to this day in the library at Caesarea, which the martyr Pamphilus so diligently collected. I also was allowed by the Nazarenes who use this volume in the Syrian city of Borea to copy it. In which is to be remarked that, wherever the evangelist... makes use of the testimonies of the Old Scripture, he does not follow the authority of the seventy translators [the Greek Septuagint], but that of the Hebrew."³⁹

"Pantaenus found that Bartholomew, one of the twelve emissaries, had there [India] preached the advent of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah according to the Gospel of Matthew, which was written in Hebrew letters, and which, on returning to Alexandria, he brought with him."³⁹

Isho'dad (850 C.E.)

His [Matthew's] book was in existence in Caesarea of Palestine, and everyone acknowledges that he wrote it with his hands in Hebrew...⁶³

Other "church fathers" have testified to the Semitic origin of at least one of Paul's epistles. These "church fathers" claim that Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews was translated into Greek from a Hebrew original, as the following quotes demonstrate:

Clement of Alexandria (150 - 212 C.E.)

In the work called *Hypotyposes*, to sum up the matter briefly he [Clement of Alexandria] has given us abridged accounts of all the canonical Scriptures,... the Epistle to the Hebrews he asserts was written by Paul, to the Hebrews, in the Hebrew

⁶² Epiphanius; *Panarion* 29:9:4

⁶³ Isho'dad *Commentary on the Gospels*

tongue; but that it was carefully translated by Luke, and published among the Greeks.⁶⁴

Eusebius (315 C.E.)

For as Paul had addressed the Hebrews in the language of his country; some say that the evangelist Luke, others that Clement, translated the epistle.⁶⁵

Jerome (382)

"He (Paul) being a Hebrew wrote in Hebrew, that is, his own tongue and most fluently while things which were eloquently written in Hebrew were more eloquently turned into Greek⁶⁶

It should be noted that these church fathers did not always agree that the other books of the New Testament were written in Hebrew. Epiphanius for example, believed "that only Matthew put the setting forth of the preaching of the Gospel into the New Testament in the Hebrew language and letters."⁶⁷ Epiphanius does, however, tell us that the Jewish believers would disagree with him, and point out the existence of Hebrew copies of John and Acts in a "Gaza" or "treasury" [Genizah?] in Tiberius, Israel.⁶⁸ Epiphanius believed these versions to be mere "translations"⁶⁹ but admitted that the Jewish believers would disagree with him.⁷⁰ The truth in this matter is clear, if Greek had replaced Hebrew as the language of Jews as early as the first century, then why would fourth century Jews have any need for Hebrew translations. The very existence of Hebrew manuscripts of these books in fourth century Israel testifies to their originality, not to mention the fact that the Jewish believers regarded them as authentic.

TESTIMONY OF THE TALMUDIC RABBIS

In addition to the statements made by the early Christian church fathers, the ancient Jewish Rabbis also hint of a Hebrew original for the Gospels. Both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds and the Tosefta relate a debate among Rabbinic Jews over the method of destruction of manuscripts of New Testament books⁷¹. Specifically mentioned is a book called by them as *ספרי תורה*⁷² (or "Gospels"). The question which arose was how to handle the destruction of these manuscripts since they contained the actual name of God. It is of course, well known that the Greek New Testament

⁶⁴ Clement of Alexandria; *Hypotyposes*; referred to by Eusebius in *Eccl. Hist.* 6:14:2

⁶⁵ Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 3:38:2-3

⁶⁶ Lives of Illustrious Men, Book V

⁶⁷ Epiphanius; *Pan.* 30:3

⁶⁸ Epiphanius; *Pan.* 30:3, 6

⁶⁹ Epiphanius; *Pan.* 30:3, 6, 12

⁷⁰ Epiphanius; *Pan.* 30:3

⁷¹ t.Shab. 13:5; b.Shab. 116a; j.Shab. 15c

⁷² (b.Shab. 116a) The word *ספרי תורה* is part of the title of the Old Syriac manuscripts, and is also used in some passages of the Peshitta (such as Mk. 1:1) and may be a loan word from the Greek word for "Gospel" and in Hebrew and in Aramaic may mean "a powerful scroll." The exact same spelling is used both in the Talmud, the Old Syriac and the Peshitta.

manuscripts do not contain the Name but use the Greek titles "God" and "Lord" as substitutes. This is because the Name is not traditionally translated into other languages, but instead is (unfortunately) translated "Lord", just as we have it in most English Bibles today, and just as we find in our late manuscripts of the Septuagint⁷³. The manuscripts these Rabbi's were discussing must have represented the original Hebrew text from which the Greek was translated.

History of the Movement

That the New Testament, like the Old Testament, was originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic is further verified by the history of the early believers in Yeshua as the Messiah. The first believers in Yeshua were a Jewish sect known as "Nazarenes"⁷⁴. Sometime later the first Gentile believers in Yeshua called "Christians" appeared⁷⁵. This first congregation of Gentile Christians formed in Antioch, the capital of Syria, where some of the people spoke Greek and almost all spoke Aramaic, which is also called "Syriac". Then in 70 C.E., there was a mass exodus of the Nazarenes from their center at Jerusalem to Pella.⁷⁶ Eventually, they established communities in Beroea, Decapolis, Bashanitis and Perea.⁷⁷ These Nazarenes used Hebrew Scriptures⁷⁸ and in the fourth century Jerome traveled to Borea to copy their Hebrew Matthew.⁷⁹ As a result, while at least the book of Matthew was first written in Hebrew, very early on Aramaic and Greek New Testament books were needed.

The Eastward Spread

In addition to these factors we must also consider the Eastern spread of Christianity. We have heard much about the so called "Westward spread of Christianity" but little is written of the equally profound Eastward movement. While Paul made missionary journeys from his headquarters in Antioch Syria, into the Western world, most of the emissaries (apostles) traveled eastward. Bartholomew traveled eastward through Assyria into Armenia, then back down through Assyria, Babylon, Parthia (Persia) and down into India where he was flayed alive with knives. Thaddeus taught in Edessa (a city of northern Syria) Assyria and Persia, dying a martyr by arrows either in Persia or at Ararat. Thomas taught in Parthia, Persia and India. He was martyred with a spear at Mt. St. Thomas near Madras in India. To this very day a group of Christians in India are called "St. Thomas Christians. Finally Kefa (Peter) traveled to Babylon and even wrote one of his letters from there⁸⁰.

That the emissaries brought Semitic New Testament Scriptures eastward with them is affirmed to us by the Church fathers. Eusebius writes:

⁷³ Greek translation of the "Old Testament"

⁷⁴ Acts 11:19; 24:5

⁷⁵ Acts 11:26

⁷⁶ Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 3:5

⁷⁷ Epiphanius; *Panarion* 29:7:7-8

⁷⁸ Epiphanius; *Panarion* 29:7:2-4; 9:4

⁷⁹ Jerome; *Of Illustrious Men* 3

⁸⁰ 1Pt. 5:13

Pantaenus... penetrated as far as India, where it is reported that he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had been delivered before his arrival to some who had the knowledge of Messiah, to whom Bartholomew one of the emissaries, as it is said, had preached, and left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters.⁸¹

And as Jerome writes:

Pantaenus found that Bartholomew, one of the twelve emissaries, had there [in India] preached the advent of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah according to the Gospel of Matthew, which was written in Hebrew letters...⁸²

This entire region of the Near East stretching from Israel through Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia (Parthia) and down into India, became known as the "Church of the East." At its high point the Church of the East stretched as far east as China! By the fifth and sixth Centuries Christological debates had split the Church of the East into two major factions, Nestorians and Jacobites. Today, the Church of the East has been split into even more groups: Nestorians⁸³, Jacobites⁸⁴, Chaldean Roman Catholics, and Maronites⁸⁵. All of whom continue to use an Aramaic New Testament text.

When the Roman Catholic Portuguese invaded India in 1498 they encountered over a hundred churches belonging to the St. Thomas Christians along the coast of Malabar. These St. Thomas Christians, according to tradition, had been there since the first century. They had married clergymen, did not adore images or pray to or through saints, nor did they believe in purgatory. Most importantly they maintained use of the Aramaic New Testament which they claimed had been in use at Antioch⁸⁶.

⁸¹ Eusebius; *Eccl. Hist.* 5:10

⁸² Jerome; *De Vir.* 3:36

⁸³ Nestorians prefer the name the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East. Nestorius the Syrian was Patriarch of Constantinople from 428 to 431 C.E.. His name in Aramaic means "banner on a mountain" (see Is. 13:2) One Rabbinic tradition claims that this Nestorius was closely associated with the Nazarenes (Toldot Yeshu 7). Nestorius refused to call Miriam (Mary) "Mother of God" because he claimed that in Messiah a divine and a human person acted as one, but did not fuse inseparably, as a result Nestorius taught that Miriam was only the mother of Yeshua the man, but that God existed before Yeshua was ever born. In 431 the Council of Ephesus excommunicated Nestorius and his followers who became known as "Nestorians."

⁸⁴ The Jacobites are Monophysites. They prefer the name Syrian Orthodox Church. They were founded in 570 C.E. when Jacob Baradai, Bishop of Edessa united the Monophysites. These Jacobites are headed by the Patriarch of Antioch and claim to be the original Christians of Antioch.

⁸⁵ The Maronites are the Christians of Lebanon. They were originally Monophysites in the seventh century, but joined the Roman Catholic Church in the twelfth Century.

⁸⁶ *The Syriac New Testament* sixth ed. ; James Murdock; Scripture Tract Repository; 1883; pp. xvi-xvii

The Westward Spread

Now while many of the emissaries were spreading the Messianic movement eastward, Paul was taking the movement into the Western world. From his headquarters at Antioch, the capitol of Syria, Paul conducted several missionary journeys into Europe. At this time there came a need for Greek versions of New Testament books.

As time progressed several events occurred which resulted in a great rise of anti-Semitism in the West. This began when the Jews revolted against the Roman Empire in 70 C.E.. A second revolt by Jews in Egypt occurred in 116 C.E.. Things were further complicated by the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132 C.E.. In the Roman Empire anti-Semitism became very popular, and even patriotic. In the West, Gentile Christianity sought to distance itself from Judaism and Jewish customs. The Greek text began to be favored over the Semitic text and many Semitic writings were subsequently destroyed.

By 325 C.E. anti-Semitism and the priority given in the West to the Greek Scriptures had solidified. Constantine invaded Rome, making himself emperor. Constantine proclaimed Christianity to be the Catholic (universal) religion, thus making Christianity the enforced state religion of the Roman Empire. Before this occurred one could be killed for being a Christian, afterwards one could be killed for not being a "Christian." Constantine, who was an anti-Semite, called the council of Nicea in 325 C.E. to standardize Christianity. Jews were excluded from the meeting. Jewish practices were officially banned and the Greek translations officially replaced the original Semitic Scriptures.

Having alienated the Jewish Nazarenes in 325 at the Council of Nicea, subsequent councils alienated the Assyrians and Syrians over Christological debates. The Nestorian Assyrians were alienated in 431 C.E. at the Council of Ephesus while the Jacobite Syrians were alienated in 451 C.E. at the Council of Chalcedon. The division between the Semitic peoples of the Near East, and the Roman Catholic Church grew ever steeper.

With the rise of Islam in the Near East the Near Eastern Christians were even further separated from their European counterparts in the West. Relations between the Christian West and the Islamic Near East were non-existent.

As time progressed, in the West the Roman Catholic Church began to suppress the Scriptures in Europe. Those who would try to make the Scriptures available to the common man were often burned alive. Such suppression was impossible in the Near East, where the Scriptures were already in Aramaic, the common language of the people. When the Protestant reformation emerged, claiming the Greek New Testament as the original, it was a time when most Europeans were not even aware that an Aramaic version existed.

It was in this atmosphere, in 1516 that the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament was published in Europe. This edition, published by Erasmus, would become known as the Textus Receptus, and serve as the standard Greek text until the 19th Century. The first edition of this work was based solely on six manuscripts, while later editions used only ten. None of these manuscripts were complete, and only one was even particularly old, dating to the tenth century. Since none of his manuscripts were complete, Erasmus was forced to invent many of his Greek portions of Revelation by translating from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. It was this poor edition which served as the evidence

by which the West would embrace the Greek as the original. This edition would later serve as the basis for the King James Version.

Grammar of the New Testament

It has long been recognized that the New Testament is written in very poor Greek grammar, but very good Semitic grammar. Many sentences are inverted with a verb > noun format characteristic of Semitic languages. Furthermore, there are several occurrences of the redundant "and". A number of scholars have shown in detail the Semitic grammar imbedded in the Greek New Testament books.⁸⁷

In addition to the evidence for Semitic grammar imbedded in the Greek New Testament, the fact that serious grammatical errors are found in the Greek New Testament books may be added. Speaking of the Greek of Revelation, Charles Cutler Torrey states that it "...swarms with major offenses against Greek grammar."⁸⁸ He calls it "linguistic anarchy", and says, "The grammatical monstrosities of the book, in their number and variety and especially in their startling character, stand alone in the history of literature."⁸⁹ Torrey gives ten examples⁹⁰ listed below:

1. Rev. 1:4 "Grace to you, and peace, from **he who is and who was and who is to come**" (all nom. case)
2. Rev. 1:15 "His legs were like burnished **brass** (neut. gender dative case) as in a furnace **purified**" (Fem. gender sing. no., gen. case)
3. Rev. 11:3 "My **witness** (nom.) shall prophesy for many days **clothed** (accus.) in sackcloth."
4. Rev. 14:14 "I saw on the cloud one seated like unto a **Son of Man** (accus.) **having** (nom.) upon his head a golden crown."
5. Rev. 14:19 "He harvested the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the **winepress** (fem), the **great [winepress]** (masc.) of the wrath of God."
6. Rev. 17:4 "A golden cup filled with **abominations** (gen.) and with **unclean things**" (accus.)
7. Rev. 19:20 "The lake of **blazing** (fem.) **fire** (neut.)."
8. Rev. 20:2 "And he seized the **dragon** (accus.), the old **serpent** (nom.) who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him."

⁸⁷ For example: *Our Translated Gospels* By Charles Cutler Torrey; *Documents of the Primitive Church* by Charles Cutler Torrey; *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* by Matthew Black; *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* by Charles Fox Burney; *The Aramaic Origin of the Four Gospels* by Frank Zimmerman and *Semitisms of the Book of Acts* by Max Wilcox

⁸⁸ *Documents of the Primitive Church*; Charles Cutler Torrey; Harper and Brothers, New York; 1941; p. 156

⁸⁹ *ibid* p. 158

⁹⁰ *ibid*

9. Rev. 21:9 "Seven angels holding seven *bowls* (accus.) *filled* (gen.) with the seven last plagues."

10. Rev. 22:5 "They have no need of *lamplight* (gen.) nor of *sunlight* (accus.)."

Mistakes in the Greek New Testament

In addition to grammatical errors in the Greek New Testament, there are also a number of "blunders" in the text which prove that the present Greek text is not inerrant.

One of the mistakes in the Greek New Testament may be found in Matthew 23:35 where Zechariah the son of Jehoidai (2Chron. 24:20-21; b.San. 96; j.Ta'anit 69) mistakenly appears as Zechariah the son of Berechiah (Zech. 1:1).⁹¹ This error was not to be found in the ancient Hebrew copy which Jerome held. Jerome writes of Hebrew Matthew: "In the Gospel which the Nazarenes use, for 'Son of Barachias' I find 'of Joiada' written"⁹²

Another mistake in the Greek New Testament is to be found in Matthew 27:9 which quotes Zech. 11:12-13 but falsely credits the quote to Jeremiah⁹³. The Shem Tob Hebrew correctly attributes the quote to Zechariah, while the Aramaic (Old Syriac and Peshitta) simply attribute the quote to "the prophet."

Yet another apparent mistake in the Greek text of the New Testament is the name "Cainan" in Luke 3:36. In this passage the name appears but not in the corresponding Masoretic genealogies in Gen. 10:24; 11:12 and 1Chron. 1:18, 24.⁹⁴ The Old Syriac does not contain this reading, but reads "Elam" a name which appears in the Masoretic genealogy of Gen. 10:22 and 1Chron. 1:17 as a brother, who apparently is inserted into this family line based on Deut. 25:5-6.

Greek Mt. 1:1-17 subtracts a name in the Messiah's genealogy. The genealogy in Matthew is supposed to contain three sets of fourteen names each (Mt. 1:17) yet the last set contains only 13 names in the Greek. The missing name, Abner (Av'ner) does appear in the DuTillet Hebrew text of Mt. 1:13.

Semitic Idiomatic Expressions

Another evidence for a Semitic background for the New Testament is the abundance of Semitic idiomatic expressions in the New Testament text. Idiomatic expressions are phrases whose literal meanings are nonsense, but which have special meanings in a particular language. For example, the English phrase "in a pickle" has nothing to do with pickles, but means to be in trouble. When translated into Aramaic it is meaningless.

⁹¹ It has been claimed that a similar mistake, found in the Koran, which confuses Miriam (Mary) the mother of Yeshua with Miriam the sister of Aaron and Moses (Koran; Surah 19:16-28) proves that the Koran is not inspired.

⁹² Jerome; *Com on Mt. 23:35*

⁹³ Perhaps because of a similar prophecy in Jer. 18:2; 19:2, 11; 32:6-9

⁹⁴ The name does appear in the LXX in Gen. 11:12 but not in the other passages where it would appear if it were a true reading.

Several Semitic idiomatic expressions appear in the New Testament, the following are only a few:

- "good eye" meaning "generous" and "bad eye" meaning "stingy" (Mt.6:22-23; 20:15; Lk. 11:34)^{95 96}
- "bind" meaning "prohibit" and "loose" meaning "permit" (Mt. 16:19; 18:18)⁹⁷
- "destroy the Law" meaning to teach a precept of the Law incorrectly, and "fulfil [the Law]" meaning to teach its precepts correctly (Mt. 5:17).⁹⁸
- Use of the word "word" to mean "matter" or "thing" (1Cor. 12:8)
- Use of the word "Heaven" as a euphemism for "God"⁹⁹ (Mt. 5:3; 21:25, Lk. 15:18; Jn. 3:27)¹⁰⁰
- Idiomatic use of the word "face" (Lk. 9:51-52)
- The phrase "cast out your name as evil" (Lk. 6:22)¹⁰¹ is a poor translation of "cast out your evil name." meaning to defame someone¹⁰².
- "Lay these sayings in your ears" (Lk. 9:44)¹⁰³ means to listen carefully.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁵ Other examples: Prov. 22:9; 23:6; 28:22

⁹⁶ *Understanding the Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.; Austin, TX;1984; pp. 143f; *Jewish New Testament Commentary*; David H. Stern; 1992; p. 57

⁹⁷ Other examples: j.Ber. 5b; 6c; j.San. 28a; b.Ab.Zar. 37a; b.Ned. 62a; b.Yeb. 106a; b.Bets. 2b; 22a; b.Ber. 35a; b.Hag. 3b

⁹⁸ *Understanding the Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.; Austin, TX;1984; pp. 152

⁹⁹ *Understanding the Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.; Austin, TX;1984; p. 85

¹⁰⁰ Other example: 1En. 6:1-2 = Gen 6:1-2

¹⁰¹ Other examples: Deut. 22:13, 19

¹⁰² *Understanding the Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.; Austin, TX;1984; p. 156f

¹⁰³ Other example: Ex. 17:4

¹⁰⁴ *Understanding the Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.; Austin, TX;1984; p. 160f

The Pauline Epistles

The common wisdom of textual origins has always been that the Pauline Epistles were first written in Greek. This position is held by many, despite the fact that two "church fathers" admitted the Semitic origin of at least one of Paul's Epistles and one (Jerome) admits to the Semitic origin of most, if not all, of Paul's Epistles¹⁰⁵. Still, Paul is generally seen as a Hellenist Jew from Tarsus who Hellenized the Gospel. So strong has this image of Paul been instilled in Western scholarship that even those who have argued for a Semitic origin for significant portions of the New Testament have rarely ventured to challenge the Greek origin of the Pauline Epistles.

Paul and Tarsus

In addressing the issue of the Pauline Epistles, we must first examine the background of Tarsus. Was Tarsus a Greek speaking city? Would Paul have learned Greek there? Tarsus probably began as a Hittite city-state. Around 850 B.C.E. Tarsus became part of the great Assyrian Empire. When the Assyrian Empire was conquered by the Babylonian Empire around 605 B.C.E. Tarsus became a part of that Empire as well. Then, in 540 B.C.E. The Babylonian Empire, including Tarsus, was incorporated into the Persian Empire. Aramaic was the chief language of all three of these great Empires. By the first century Aramaic remained a primary language of Tarsus. Coins struck at Tarsus and recovered by archaeologists have Aramaic inscriptions on them¹⁰⁶.

Regardless of the language of Tarsus, there is also great question as to if Paul was actually brought up in Tarsus or just incidentally born there. The key text in question is Acts 22:3:

I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia,
but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel,
taught according to the strictness of our father's Torah.
and was zealous toward God as you all are today.

Paul sees his birth at Tarsus as irrelevant and points to his being "brought up" in Jerusalem. Much argument has been given by scholars to this term "brought up" as it appears here. Some have argued that it refers only to Paul's adolescent years. A key, however, to the usage of the term may be found in a somewhat parallel passage in Acts 7:20-23:

At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God;
and he was brought up in his father's house for three months.
And when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away
and brought him up as her own son.

¹⁰⁵ As noted in the previous chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Greek Coins; Charles Feltman; p. 185

And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians...

Note the sequence; "born" (Greek = gennao; Aramaic = ityiled); "brought up" (Greek = anatrepho; Aramaic = itrabi); "learned/taught" (Greek = paideuo; Aramaic = itr'di). Through this parallel sequence which presumably was idiomatic in the language, we can see that Paul was born at Tarsus, raised in Jerusalem, and then taught. Paul's entire context is that his being raised in Jerusalem is his primary upbringing, and that he was merely born at Tarsus.

Was Paul a Hellenist?

The claim that Paul was a Hellenistic is also a misunderstanding that should be dealt with. As we have already seen, Paul was born at Tarsus, a city where Aramaic was spoken. Whatever Hellenistic influences may have been at Tarsus, Paul seems to have left there at a very early age and been "brought up" in Jerusalem. Paul describes himself as a "Hebrew" (2Cor. 11:2) and a "Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5), and "of the tribe of Benjamin" (Rom. 11:1). It is important to realize how the term "Hebrew" was used in the first century. The term Hebrew was not used as a genealogical term, but as a cultural/linguistic term. An example of this can be found in Acts 6:1 where a dispute arises between the "Hebrews" and the "Hellenistic." Most scholars agree that the "Hellenistic" here are Hellenist Jews. No evangelistic efforts had yet been made toward non-Jews (Acts 11:19) much less Greeks (see Acts 16:6-10). In Acts 6:1 a clear contrast is made between Hellenists and Hebrews which are clearly non-Hellenists. Hellenists were not called Hebrews, a term reserved for non-Hellenist Jews. When Paul calls himself a "Hebrew" he is claiming to be a non-Hellenist, and when he calls himself a "Hebrew of Hebrews" he is claiming to be strongly non-Hellenist. This would explain why Paul disputed against the Hellenists and why they attempted to kill him (Acts. 9:29) and why he escaped to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). If there was no non-Hellenist Jewish population in Tarsus, this would have been a very bad move.

Paul's Pharisee background gives us further reason to doubt that he was in any way a Hellenist. Paul claimed to be a "Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee" (Acts 23:6) meaning that he was at least a second generation Pharisee. The Aramaic text, as well as some Greek mss. have "Pharisee the son of Pharisees," a Semitic idiomatic expression meaning a third generation Pharisee. If Paul were a second or third generation Pharisee, it would be difficult to accept that he had been raised up as a Hellenist. Pharisees were staunchly opposed to Hellenism. Paul's claim to be a second or third generation Pharisee is further amplified by his claim to have been a student of Gamliel (Acts 22:3). Gamliel was the grandson of Hillel and the head of the school of Hillel. He was so well respected that the Mishna states that upon his death "the glory of the Torah ceased, and purity and modesty died."¹⁰⁷ The truth of Paul's claim to have studied under Gamliel is witnessed by Paul's constant use of Hillelian Hermeneutics. Paul makes extensive use, for example,

¹⁰⁷ m.Sotah 9:15

of the first rule of Hillel.¹⁰⁸ It is an unlikely proposition that a Helenist would have studied under Gamliel at the school of Hillel, then the center of Pharisaic Judaism.

The Audience and Purpose of the Pauline Epistles

Paul's audience is another element which must be considered when tracing the origins of his Epistles. Paul's Epistles were addressed to various congregations in the Diaspora. These congregations were mixed groups made up of a core group of Jews and a complimentary group of Gentiles. The Thessalonian congregation was just such an assembly (Acts 17:1-4) as were the Corinthians¹⁰⁹. It is known that Aramaic remained a language of Jews living in the Diaspora, and in fact Jewish Aramaic inscriptions have been found at Rome, Pompei and even England.¹¹⁰ If Paul wrote his Epistles in Hebrew or Aramaic to a core group of Jews at each congregation who then passed the message on to their Gentile counterparts then this might give some added dimension to Paul's phrase "to the Jew first and then to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16; 2:9-10). It would also shed more light on the passage which Paul writes:

What advantage then has the Jew,
or what is the profit of circumcision?
Much in every way!
To them first, were committed the Words of God.
- Rom. 3:1-2

It is clear that Paul did not write his letters in the native tongues of the cities to which he wrote. Certainly no one would argue for a Latin original of Romans.

One final issue which must be discussed regarding the origin of Paul's Epistles, is their intended purpose. It appears that Paul intended the purpose of his Epistles to be:

- 1) To be read in the Congregations (Col. 4:16; 1Thes. 5:27)
- 2) To have doctrinal authority (1Cor. 14:37)

All Synagogue liturgy during the Second Temple era, was in Hebrew and Aramaic¹¹¹ Paul would not have written material which he intended to be read in the congregations in any other language. Moreover all religious writings of Jews which claimed halachic (doctrinal) authority, were written in Hebrew or Aramaic. Paul could not have expected that his Epistles would be accepted as having the authority he claimed for them, without having written them in Hebrew or Aramaic.

¹⁰⁸ kal v'khomer (light and heavy).

¹⁰⁹ Certain passages in the Corinthian Epistles are clearly aimed exclusively at Jews (1Cor. 10:1-2 for example.)

¹¹⁰ Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology "Note on a Bilingual Inscription in Latin and Aramaic Recently Found at South Shields"; A. Lowy' Dec. 3, 1878; pp. 11-12; "Five Transliterated Aramaic Inscriptions" The American Journal of Archaeology; W.R. Newbold; 1926; Vol. 30; pp. 288ff

¹¹¹ see The Words of Jesus By Gustaf Dalman; Edinburg, England; 1909

Semitic Style of Paul's Epistles

Another factor which should be considered in determining the origin of the Pauline Epistles is the Semitic style of the text. This Semitic style can be seen through Paul's use of Semitic poetry, Semitic idioms, Hillelian hermeneutics and Semitic terms. These factors neutralize the claim that Paul was a Hellenist writing in Greek with Hellenistic ideas and style.

Paul's use of Semitic poetry also points to a Semitic background for his epistles. The following are just a few examples of Paul's use of the Semitic poetic device known as parallelism:

Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest in the Law
and make your boast in God, and know his will
and approve the things that are more excellent,
being instructed out of the Law
and are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind
a light of them which are in darkness,
an instructor of the foolish
a teacher of babes
which has the form of knowledge
and of the truth in the Law

You therefore which teach another,
teach you not yourself?
You that proclaim a man should not steal,
do you steal?
You that say a man should not commit adultery,
do you commit adultery?
You that abhor idols,
do you commit blasphemy?
You that makes your boast of the Law,
through breaking the Law, dishonor you God?
(Rom. 2:17-23)

Now there are diversities of gifts,
but the same Spirit.
And there are differences of administrations,
but the same Lord.
And there are diversities of operations,
but it is the same God which works all in all.
(1Cor. 12:4-6)

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not love,

I have become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have prophecy, and understand all mysteries
and all knowledge,
and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains,
and have not love,
I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned,
and have not love,
it profits me nothing.
(1Cor. 13:1-3)

Be you not unequally yoked together with unbelievers:
for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?
and what communion has light with darkness?
and what concord has Messiah with B'lial?
or what part has he that believes with an infidel?
and what agreement has the Temple of God with idols?
(2Cor. 6:14-16a)

Finally, my brothers, be strong in the Lord,
and in the power of his might.
Put on the whole armour of God.
that you may be able to stand against the whiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Therefore, take unto you the whole armour of God,
that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,
and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
And your feet shod with the preparation of the goodnews of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith,
wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take up the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,

which is the word of God.
(Eph. 6:10-17)

Paul clearly writes using Semitic idiomatic expressions. Paul uses the term "word" to refer to some matter or thing (1Cor. 12:8) Paul also uses the Semitic form of magnification by following a noun with its plural form. This is used in the Tenach (Old Testament) in such terms as "Holy of Holies." Paul uses this idiom in such phrases as "Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5); "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" (1Tim. 6:15).

Paul was born in Tarsus, an Aramaic speaking city, and raised up in Jerusalem as a staunch non-Helenist. He wrote his Epistles to core groups of Jews at various congregations in the Diaspora to hold doctrinal authority and to be used as liturgy. There can be little doubt that he wrote these Epistles in Hebrew or Aramaic and they were later translated into Greek.

Tanak Quotes

It has often been claimed by the pro-Greek New Testament origin crowd, that the several quotes in the Greek New Testament which agree with the LXX prove the Greek origin of the New Testament. This argument is faulty however, for two important reasons.

First of all, the premise of this argument presumes the conclusion to be true. It is only in the Greek New Testament that such neat agreements with the LXX occur. Hebrew Matthew (Shem Tob and DuTillet) tends to agree with the Masoretic Text, While the Aramaic versions of New Testament books (Old Syriac Gospels, Peshitta New Testament and Crawford Revelation) tend to agree in many places with the Peshitta Old Testament.

The second fault with this argument is that recent discoveries in the Dead Sea Scrolls have produced first century Hebrew mss. of Old Testament books which in places agree with the LXX against the current Hebrew Text (the Masoretic text) and at times agree with the Peshitta Old Testament against the Masoretic text or the LXX. Thus many, but not all agreements of the New Testament with the LXX may be due to these first century Old Testament texts which contained such agreements.

An examination of four sample Old Testament quotes as they appear in the Aramaic New Testament will demonstrate two important facts. First, the Aramaic text of the Old Syriac and Peshitta New Testament could not have been translated from the Greek New Testament. Second, the Aramaic New Testament, as we have it today has been altered in some places so as to agree with the Greek. In all of these examples the Greek New Testament agrees with the LXX perfectly.

Heb. 10:5-7 = Ps. 40:7-9 (6-8)

With sacrifices and offerings You are not pleased

But You have clothed me with a body
And burnt offerings which are for sins You have not asked for.
Then I said, Behold I come,
In the beginning of the book it is written concerning me
I will do your will, God.

Here the phrase "But You have clothed me with a body" best agrees with the LXX which has "You have prepared a body for me," a radical departure from the Masoretic Text which has "Ears You have cut/dug for me." but agreeing with the Zohar which alludes to the passage saying "Your eyes behold me ere *I was clothed in a body* and all things are written in your book". However the phrase "In the beginning of the book..." is a unique reading from the Peshitta Old Testament. The Hebrew has "In the roll of the book..." while the LXX has "In the volume of the book..." agreeing with the Greek of Hebrews.

Thus, this quote in the Peshitta version of Hebrews is a hybrid text sometimes agreeing with the LXX against the Masoretic Text and Peshitta Old Testament, and sometimes agreeing with the Peshitta Old Testament against both the LXX and the Masoretic Text. In fact this hybrid nature looks just like what such a quote might be expected to look like, in light of the hybrid texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This quote could not contain agreements with both the LXX and the Peshitta Old Testament if it were translated from the Greek New Testament. If this passage were translated from the Greek it would either have agreed with the LXX only as does the Greek, or inserted the standard Peshitta reading as a substitute. This quote therefore, is not a translation from Greek nor a substitute inserted from the Peshitta Old Testament but is a reading which originated apart from the Greek text.

1Peter 1:24-25 = Isaiah 40:6-8

Because of this all flesh is grass
And all its beauty like a flower of the field
The grass dries up and the flower withers
and the Word of our God abides forever

Here the line "And all its beauty like a flower of the field" agrees with the Peshitta Old Testament and Masoretic Text against the LXX and Greek New Testament which has "and all the glory of man like the flower of grass." In fact this quote agrees with the Peshitta Old Testament exactly except for the omission of Isaiah 40:7 which agrees with the LXX. Like the previous example, it could not have been translated from the Greek text.

Acts 8:32-33 = Isaiah 53:7-8

Like a lamb he was led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep before its shearer is silent,

Even thus he did not open his mouth.
In his humiliation he was led from prison and from judgement,
And who will declare his generation?
because his life has been taken from the earth/land

In the first two lines the words "lamb" and "sheep" are reversed in the LXX and Greek Acts but not here, where they agree with the Masoretic Text and the Peshitta Old Testament. "from prison" agrees with the Masoretic Text and the Peshitta Old Testament against the LXX, but "In his humiliation" agrees with the LXX against both. The final line contains a special problem. In this line the Peshitta Acts agrees with the LXX and Greek Acts, but this passage could not have merely come from a variant Hebrew text. In this passage the Masoretic Text and the Peshitta Old Testament agree against the LXX with "He was cut off out of the land of the living." An examination of the two versions makes it clear that the LXX translator misunderstood the Hebrew grammar here and took the word "life/living" to be a direct object rather than a modifier. Thus this phrase could only have come from the LXX. It is apparent however, because of the agreements with the Masoretic Text and Peshitta Old Testament against the LXX in the preceding lines, that this quote could not have been translated from the Greek. Thus, we may conclude that the Peshitta New Testament has been revised in places to agree with the Greek text, as our last example will further demonstrate.

Mt. 4:4 = Deut. 8:3

Man does not live by bread alone,
but by every word which comes from the mouth of God.

The word "God" here agrees with the LXX against both the Masoretic Text and the Peshitta Old Testament. It might first appear that this passage was merely translated from the Greek of Matthew. However, a look at the Old Syriac version, which is recognized by most scholars as the ancestor of the Peshitta¹¹² has "Lord" in closer agreement with the Masoretic Text and the Peshitta Old Testament against the LXX. Thus, it is clear that the Peshitta was revised here to agree with the LXX and the more primitive text of the Old Syriac retains the original, unrevised reading.

Zech. 12:10 = Jn. 19:37

...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced... (Zech. 12:10)
...they shall look upon him whom they have pierced... (Jn. 19:37)

19:37 They will look at him whom they pierced – Aramaic: **ܕܢܚܘܪܝܢ ܒܡܢ ܕܕܩܪܘ**
The passage is quoting from Zech. 12:10 where the original Hebrew reads:

¹¹² See for example Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac; Arthur Voobus; 1951; p. 46; 54-55; The Text of the New Testament; Bruce Metzger; 1968; pp. 69-70 note; Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament; Sir Fredric G. Kenyon; 1951; p. 164.

והביטו אלי את אשר דקרו

“And they shall look toward me whom they pierced”

The Aramaic Peshitta Tanak translates the phrase into Aramaic with:

דנחורון לותי במן דדקרו

“they shall look toward me at him whom they pierced”

Note that the Aramaic translation adds the phrase “at him” (במן) to the passage. This is because the Aramaic translator was attempting to translate the Hebrew word for word into Aramaic. In his quest for such a word for word translation, he attempted to translate the untranslatable Hebrew word את with “at him” (במן) so as to convey the idea of a pointer to “whom they pierced” as the direct object. The Hebrew word את is a preposition which is unique to Hebrew and which points to the next word or phrase as the direct object receiving the action of the verb. In this case the word indicates that the אשר דקרו “whom they pierced” is receiving the action of והביטו אלי “and they shall look toward me”. The Aramaic translator has added במן “at him” so as to connect דדקרו “whom they pierced” with דנחורון לותי “they shall look toward me”. Note that the text as quoted in Yochanan has:

דנחורון במן דדקרו

“they shall look at him whom they pierced”

Note that the Aramaic as it appears in Jn. 19:37 differs from the Peshitta Aramaic of Zech. 12:10 only by one word. This Aramaic reading omits the phrase לותי “toward me” and retains only במן “at him”. Either Yochanan or the scribe of the Aramaic text of Zech 12:10 which served as his source text, seems to have found the phrase לותי במן “toward me at him” to be redundant and thus omitted the phrase לותי “toward me”. This shift from “toward me” to “at him” could only have occurred in the Aramaic text of Yochanan 19:37 and been translated into the Greek text of John 19:37. Thus pointing to the Aramaic origin of the book and explaining the shift in the reading of this verse.

From the above examples it is clear that Old Testament quotes as they appear in the Aramaic New Testament demonstrate that the Peshitta New Testament could not have been simply translated from Greek.

THE SEMITIC NEW TESTAMENT SOURCES

Hebrew Sources

DuTillet Matthew

The DuTillet version of Matthew is taken from a Hebrew manuscript of Matthew which was confiscated from Jews in Rome in 1553. On August 12th, 1553, at the petition of Pietro, Cardinal Caraffa, the Inquisitor General¹¹³, Pope Julius III signed a decree banning the Talmud in Rome. The decree was executed on September 9th (Rosh HaShanna) and anything that looked like the Talmud, that is, anything written in Hebrew characters was confiscated as the Jewish homes and synagogues were ravished. Jean DuTillet, Bishop of Brieu, France was visiting Rome at the time. DuTillet was astounded to take notice of a Hebrew manuscript of Matthew among the other Hebrew manuscripts. DuTillet acquired the manuscript and returned to France, depositing it in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris. It remains there to this day as Hebrew ms. No. 132.¹¹⁴

While most scholars have ignored the DuTillet Hebrew version of Matthew, two scholars, Hugh Schonfield and George Howard,¹¹⁵ have stated their opinion that this Hebrew text underlies our current Greek text.¹¹⁶ Schonfield writes:

...certain linguistic proofs... seem to show that the Hebrew text [DuTillet] underlies the Greek, and that certain renderings in the Greek may be due to a misread Hebrew original.

(*An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel*; 1927, p. 17)

Munster Matthew

The Munster Hebrew Text of Matthew was published in 1537 by Sebastian Munster. Munster claimed to have received his Hebrew text from the Jews. Munster also noted that he received the text "in defective condition, and with many lacunae (holes)" which he himself filled in. Unfortunately Munster did not take steps to preserve his manuscript source which is now lost, and he did not make note of those places where he filled in missing text.

¹¹³ later to become Pope Paul IV

¹¹⁴ *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Hugh Schonfield; 1927; p. 3-4

¹¹⁵ Initially Howard concluded that the DuTillet text was a translation from Greek, (JBL 105/1 (1986) p. 53, 62) later Howard concluded that DuTillet is a "revision of an earlier Hebrew Matthew" related to the Shem Tob version (JBL 105/1 (1986) p. 63 n. 34). Howard elsewhere states his belief that the Shem Tob text is a descendant of a Hebrew text which served as a model for our present Greek text, as shown later in this chapter.

¹¹⁶ See *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel*, Hugh Schonfield; 1927; *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text*; George Howard; Mercer University Press; 1987; *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105/1 (1986) pp. 49-63; 108/2 (1989) pp. 239-257

Shem Tob Matthew

The Shem Tob Hebrew version of Matthew was transcribed by Shem Tob Ben Yitzach Ben Shaprut into his apologetic work *Even Bohan* sometime around 1380 C.E.. While the autograph of Shem Tob's *Even Bohan* has been lost, several manuscripts dating between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries still exist, complete with the transcribed text of Hebrew Matthew. George Howard writes of Shem Tob's Hebrew Matthew:

...an old substratum to the Hebrew in Shem Tob is a prior composition, not a translation. The old substratum, however, has been exposed to a series of revisions so that the present text of Shem-Tob represents the original only in an impure form.

(*The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text*; 1987;p.223)

It might appear from the linguistic and sociological background to early Christianity and the nature of some theological tendencies in Shem-Tob's Matthew that the Hebrew text served as a model for the Greek. The present writer is, in fact, inclined to that position.

(ibid p. 225)

Shem-Tob's Matthew... does not preserve the original in a pure form. It reflects contamination by Jewish scribes during the Middle Ages. Considerable parts of the original, however, appear to remain...

(*Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*; 1995; p. 178)

Munster Hebrew Hebrews

In 1537 Munster had published Hebrew Matthew. Twenty years later, in 1557, a second edition was printed containing a complete Hebrew text of Hebrews in an appendix.

Although we have no clear record of a statement by Munster that he obtained his Hebrew Hebrews from among the Jews, it seems safe to say that this was the case. Munster did plainly make this claim of his Hebrew Matthew in 1537 so it seems likely that this was also the source for the supplemental Hebrew Hebrews in the 1557 edition of his Hebrew Matthew. (Munster had died before the publication of his second edition in 1557, which may explain why he had not written an introduction for the Hebrew Hebrews explaining its origin. The fact that Hebrew Hebrews uses the Jewish substitution ׀ for the Sacred Name seems to confirm the Jewish source of this document. There is a good deal of internal evidence which indicates that this Hebrew text of Hebrews descends from the

original Hebrew of Hebrews while Greek Hebrews represents a Greek translation of the original Hebrew.

Aramaic Sources

The Old Syriac Gospels

Another relatively unknown fact to much of Christendom is the existence of two ancient Aramaic manuscripts of the Four Gospels dating back to the Fourth century. The first was discovered by Dr. William Cureton in 1842. It was found in a monastery at the Naton Lakes Valley in Egypt. This manuscript is known as Codex Syrus Curetonianus or, the Cureton and is catalogued as British Museum Add. No. 14451. The second was discovered by Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis in 1892. It was found at St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of traditional Mount Sinai in Egypt. This manuscript is known as Codex Syrus Sinaiticus or the Syriac Siniatic and is catalogued as Ms. Sinai Syriac No. 30. After making his profound discovery Dr. Cureton studied the Old Syriac text of the manuscript in detail. Cureton concluded that at least the version of Matthew found in the Old Syriac has its basis in the original Semitic text and was not merely a translation from the Greek or Latin. Cureton published his findings to the world saying:

...this Gospel of St. Matthew appears at least to be built upon the original Aramaic text which was the work of the Apostle himself.

(Remains of a Very Ancient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac;
1858; p. vi)

The Peshitta New Testament

The Peshitta Bible is an Aramaic version of the Scriptures which is used throughout the Near East. The birth of the Peshitta looms beyond the horizon of antiquity.

Although one tradition has the Tanak portion of the Peshitta being translated at the time of Solomon at the request of Hiram, and another ascribes the translation to a priest named Assa sent by the king of Assyria to Samaria¹¹⁷. More likely is that the Peshitta Tanak was prepared at the edict of King Izates II of Abiabene who with his entire family converted to Judaism. Josephus records that at his request, King Izates' five son's went to Jerusalem to study the Jewish language and customs¹¹⁸. It was probably at this time that the Peshitta Tanak was born.¹¹⁹

The New Testament portion of the Peshitta was added to the Peshitta Tanak in the earliest Christian centuries. It is universally used by Jacobite Syrians; Nestorian Assyrians and Roman Catholic Chaldeans. The Peshitta must predate the Christological

¹¹⁷ 2Kings 17:27-28; *Encyclopedia Judaica* Bible article

¹¹⁸ Josephus; *Antiquities of the Jews* 20:2-4; *Encyclopedia Judaica* Bible article.

¹¹⁹ *Encyclopedia Judaica* Bible article; *The New Covenant Aramaic Peshitta Text with Hebrew Translation*; The Bible Society of Jerusalem; 1986; p. iii

debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, since none of these groups would have adopted their rival's version. Thus, this version certainly originated in the pre-Nicean Church of the East. It includes all of the books except 2Peter; 2John; 3John; Jude and Revelation. These books were not canonized by the Church of the East. The Peshitta is not merely a translation from the Greek text, but rather a revision of the Old Syriac, as Arthur Voobus writes:

... the Peshitta is not a translation,
but a revision of an Old Syriac version.
(Studies in the History of the Gospel Text in Syriac;
1951; p. 46 see also pp. 54-55).

The Crawford Manuscript of Revelation

The Crawford Aramaic version of Revelation is a very rare, little known version. How the manuscript made its way to Europe is unknown. What is known is that the manuscript was purchased by the Earl of Crawford around 1860. In the Earl of Crawford's possession the ms. became catalogued Earl of Crawford's Haigh Hall, Wigan, no. 11. It has since come into the possession of the well known John Rylands Library of Manchester, England. The manuscript contains a complete Peshitta text supplemented by the extra-Peshitta epistles¹²⁰ and this unique version of Revelation¹²¹. Concerning the variants of this version John Gwyn Writes:

Two or three... are plausible readings; and might well be judged worthy of adoption if there were any ground for supposing the Apocalypse to have been originally written, or to be based on a document written, in an Aramaic idiom.
(The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown;
1897; p. lxxix)

And to this we may add to show that there *is* ground for "supposing the Apocalypse to have been originally written, or to be based on a document written, in an Aramaic idiom.":

...the Book of Revelation was written in a Semitic language, and that the Greek translation... is a remarkably close rendering of the original."
- C. C. Torrey; *Documents of the Primitive Church*
1941; p. 160

We come to the conclusion, therefore that the Apocalypse as a whole is a translation from Hebrew or Aramaic...

¹²⁰ Being translations from Greek 2Peter, 2John, 3John and Jude.

¹²¹ The other Aramaic Revelation which appears in most manuscripts is entirely different and is clearly a translation from the Greek.

- RBY Scott; *The Original Language of the Apocalypse*
1928; p. 6

When we turn to the New Testament we find that
there are reasons for suspecting a Hebrew or Aramaic
original for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, John
and for the apocalypse.

- Hugh J. Schonfield; *An Old Hebrew Text
of St. Matthew's Gospel*; 1927; p. vii

Chapter 6

The Covenants

To the ancient Hebrews a blood covenant was the most binding, sacred agreement one could enter into. The making of blood covenants seems to be a universal concept found among all peoples in even the most remote parts of the world. The custom of making blood covenants can be found among American Indians as well as in the deepest most remote parts of Africa. The origin of the blood covenant custom looms somewhere beyond the horizon of history. The customs surrounding the making of a blood covenant among the Hebrews involved:

1. Exchanging garments and swords (1Sam. 18:4)
2. A blood sacrifice (Gen. 15:9-17; 31:43-54; Jer. 34:18-19)
3. A memorial covenant meal (Gen. 31:54)

There are several examples of covenants in the Bible. Laban entered into a covenant with Jacob (Gen. 31:43-55). And David made a covenant with Jonathan (1Sam. 18:1-4). When two men were in a covenant relationship, everything they owned and their very lives were offered to each other. Moreover a person with a covenant relationship held heirship rights with his coventor. For this reason David was the legal heir to the throne when Jonathan and Saul were killed. One of the best pictures we have of the power of the blood covenant is given in 1Samuel 18-20. Because of their covenant, Jonathan pleaded with his father the King on David's behalf (1Sam. 19:4-7). And because of the covenant David sought out Jonathan's son Mephibosheth so as to show kindness to him and make him as one of his own sons (2Sam. 9). Now our covenants with G-d are patterned after the Hebrew blood covenant customs. In the same way we:

1. Exchanging garments and swords (Eph. 6:11-17)
2. Have a blood sacrifice (Heb. 9:12-22)
3. Have a memorial covenant meal (Mt. 26:26-29)

As covenantors with the Messiah we also have an inheritance (Rom. 8:15-17; Eph. 1:11, 14, 18; Heb. 9:15-17; 1Pt. 1:4).

THE EDENIC COVENANT

The Edenic Covenant is very similar to what Dispensationalists call "*The Age of Innocence*". The terms of this covenant are set forth in Gen.2:15-17 where Adam and Eve are given the entire Garden of Eden with one exception, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They were given eternal life with just one condition, they must not eat from this one tree. At the encouragement of the serpent, Eve ate from the forbidden tree, and gave to Adam who also ate. Having stolen the one thing which did not belong to them, they lost their eternal life and were exiled from the Garden.

THE ADAMIC COVENANT

The Adamic Covenant is very similar to what Dispensationalists call the "*Age of Conscience*". The terms of this covenant are found in Gen. 3:14-23 where G-d, having exiled man from the Garden, established another covenant with man. Under the conditions of this covenant, women would experience pain in childbirth and are to desire their husbands, while men would rule over their wives, work for food and contend with thorns and thistles. As part of this covenant G-d, also promised a "*seed*" from woman who would restore the conditions of the Edenic Covenant (Gen 3:15; See also Rom. 5:12-21 & 1Cor. 15:21-22).

THE NOACHDIC COVENANT

The Noachdic Covenant is very similar to what Dispensationalists call the "*Age of Human Government*". The terms of this covenant are found in Gen. 9:1-17, where G-d makes a covenant with Noah and his descendants (Gen. 9:9, 12) the "*nations*"/Gentiles [Same word in Hebrew] (Gen. 10:32). This covenant is an "*everlasting covenant*" (Gen. 9:16) and is for "*perpetual generations*" (Gen. 9:12). According to the conditions of this covenant, G-d promised never to flood the earth again the rainbow(Gen. 9:11-15). The nations/Gentiles were given animal life as food(Gen. 9:2-3); forbidden to eat blood or flesh from a living animal (Gen. 9:4); forbidden to murder(Gen. 9:5-6); required to administer justice in accordance with G-d's Law (Gen. 9:5-6); and required to procreate(Gen 9:1, 7).

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

The Abrahamic Covenant is very similar to what Dispensationalists call "*The Age of Promise*". The terms of this covenant are found in Gen.17:1-27, where G-d makes a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, the Jews (Gen.17:4,7,10,19,21). This covenant is an "*everlasting covenant*" (Gen.17:7,13,19), is for all generations of

Jews(Gen.17:7, 9,13,19) and is not nullified by later covenants (Gal.3:15-17). According to the conditions of this covenant; every male must be circumcised on the eighth day (Gen.17:10-14); G-d would make a multitude of nations from Abraham (Gen.17:4-6); G-d would have a special relationship with Israel (Gen.17:7-8); and G-d would give Israel the Land of Canaan (Gen.17:8). Much confusion surrounds this covenant. Many have confused the Abrahamic Covenant of Gen. 17 with Abraham's justification by faith alone in Gen 15:6. However, Abraham's justification by faith alone in Gen.15:6 was by **FAITH ALONE, NOT OF WORKS** (Rom.4:1-5, 9-12; Gal. 3:6). The Abrahamic Covenant, to the contrary, **REQUIRES** circumcision, and anyone who is not circumcised is **OUTSIDE** the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:10-14). Though G-d prophesied the Abrahamic Covenant prior to making this covenant (Gen.12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:1-6, 18-21), until Abraham was circumcised, there was no Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 17:10-14). Thus, Abraham was justified by faith alone before there was an Abrahamic Covenant(Rom. 4:1-5, 9-12), the two are not identical.

THE MOSAIC COVENANTS

The Mosaic Covenants are very similar to what Dispensationalists call "*The Age of Law*". There are two of these Mosaic Covenants, the first made at Sinai (Horeb) and the second made at Moab.

1. **THE MOSAIC COVENANT AT SINAI (*HOEB*)** - The terms of the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai (sometimes called the Sinaitic Covenant) are given in Ex. 19:1-31:18 and throughout most of the Torah, where G-d made a covenant with Israel alone, which did not apply to the Gentiles (Ex. 19:5; 24:7; Deut. 4:6-8; 5:1-3; Ps 147:19-20; Rom. 9:4; Acts 15; and Galatians). There is no shortage of verses which state that this covenant is an "*everlasting*" covenant "*for all generations*", "*forever*" (Ex. 27:21; 28:43; 29:28; 30:21; 31:17; Lev. 6:18, 22; 7:34, 36; 10:9, 15; 17:7; 23:14, 21, 41; 24:3; Num. 10:8; 15:15; 18:8, 11, 19, 23; 19:10; Deut. 5:29; Ps. 119:160) and that this Mosaic Covenant would never be added to or taken from (Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

2. **THE MOSAIC COVENANT AT MOAB** - The terms of the Mosaic Covenant at Moab (sometimes called the Palestinian Covenant, or Covenant of the Land) are found in Deut. 29-30 and Lev. 26 where G-d promised that if Israel should turn from the Torah and find herself exiled from the land, that when Israel would again turn to G-d, G-d would restore her to the land.

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

The terms of the Davidic Covenant are given in 2Sam.7:5-19;1Chron.17:4-15 and Psalms 89:19-37. Through this covenant G-d promises Israel that the throne of the Davidic Kingdom will endure forever. Since the Messiah will fulfill this promise, he is often called "*Messiah the Son of David*" or "*King Messiah*"(see Acts 1:6-7; Rev. 20:2-6).

THE NEW COVENANT

The New Covenant is very similar to what Dispensationalists call "*The Kingdom Age*" or "*The Millennium*". The terms of this covenant are found in Jer. 31:31-34; 32:40-44; Ezkl. 16:60-63; 37:26-27 and Is. 59:20-21, where we are told that G-d will make a "*New Covenant*" with "*the House of Israel and the House of Judah*" (Jer. 31:31), ie. those with whom the Mosaic Covenant [at Sinai] had been made (Heb. 9:15, 18-20). This covenant, like the others, is to be eternal (Jer. 31:35-37; 32:40; Ezkl. 37:26). The terms of this "*New Covenant*" are:

- G-d will put His Torah in Israel's inward parts and write it in their hearts. (Jer. 31:33; 32:40)
- G-d will maintain a special relationship with Israel (Jer.31:33; Ezkl. 37:27-28)
- All Israel shall know the L-RD. (Jer. 31:34)
- Israel's transgressions will be forgiven. (Jer. 31:35; Ezkl. 16:63; Heb. 9:15, 22)
- ALL of the promised land will be given to Israel. (Jer.32:41-44; Ezkl. 37:26)
- G-d will multiply Israel. (Ezkl. 37:26)
- The Temple will permanently stand in Israel. (Ezkl.37:26-28)

The truth is that the New Covenant is not the Good News (Gospel) but is a covenant which HaShem will make with "*the House of Israel and the House of Judah*" when He establishes the Kingdom. There is nothing in the Scriptures to indicate that there is more than one New Covenant. The following are just a few reasons we know the New Covenant is not for today:

- The New Covenant is always mentioned in connection with the Kingdom. (For example Jer. 31:31-34 in context of 34:10-40; Jer. 32:40-44 in context of 32:37-44; Ezkl.37:26-27 in context of 37: 1-28; See also Mt. 26:28-29 = Mk. 14:25)
- When the New Covenant comes all Israel will know G-d.(Jer. 31:31,34)
- When the New Covenant comes Israel will receive ALL of the land promised to Abraham. (Jer. 32:41-44; Ezkl. 37:26;This has yet to happen, see Gen. 16:18-21)

- When the New Covenant comes the Millennial Temple will stand in Israel forever. (Ezkl. 37:26-28)
- Y'shua refused to partake of the cup of the New Covenant until his return to establish the Kingdom. (Mt. 26:28-29 = Mk. 14:25 = Lk. 22:20)

Understanding Acts 15

The material below takes the form of a commentary written following material from a preliminary version of my translation of Acts from the Aramaic:

CHAPTER 15

1. And men came down from Y'hudah and were teaching the brothers, Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of the Torah, you are not able to have life [eternal].

Comments:

In Acts 15 we have a halachic issue being settled by the Rosh Beit Din. In order to understand the proceedings of that meeting and its ruling we must know what the issue was that was before it. In this case Paul's position is not clearly spelled out in the pashat only his opponents' position is clearly spelled out in the pashat.

Pauls opponents' position is:

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of the Torah, you are not able to have life [eternal]."

Now we must ask ourselves: "What are the implications or ramifications of this position?"

We have a good model to work from. A similar position is held today by a group called the "Church of Christ" also known as "Campbelites". These teach that a person must be baptised in order to be saved. This has resulted in a debate between them and other protestants (especially Baptists). The Baptists often pose the situation of a man who becomes a believer while across the street from a Church of Christ Church. He immediately runs across the street to get baptised and is hit by a truck and killed. The baptists point out that this man according to the Church of Christ position would not be saved. Many Church of Christ evangelists run around with keys to their church so that at

any time they can go get that baptism immediately, perchance the person dies before an more oportune time comes.

This would also be the mindset of Paul's opponents of Acts 15:1. They would believe that that person should become circumcised immediatly upon becoming a believer perchance they die before doing so.

The more traditional view in Judaism differs. The more traditional view is that since circumcision and immersion mark the point at which a person becomes a Jew, that they must learn the Torah first. This is becaue if they are circumcised and become a Jew before learning the 613 commandments of the Torah then they will immediately be violating commandments that they do not know, bringing judgement down upon our whole people (Deut. 28-29 & lev. 26) . The traditional Jewish approach is therefore to teach the new believer the Torah first.

Now we can see from the remez what Paul's position is. The opponents are teaching that a person must be circumcised immediatly to be saved and then taught the Torah. Paul was teaching that they should first learn the Torah.

2. And Paul and Bar Nabba had much strife and dispute with them. And it happened that they sent up Paul and Bar Nabba, and others with them, to the emissaries and elders who were in Yerushalayim, because of this dispute.

COMMENTS:

So they took the matter to the beit din.

3. And the assembly escorted [and] all of Phenicia and also among the Samaritans while recounting concerning the conversion of the Gentiles, and causing great joy to all the brothers.

COMMENTS: Notice that Paul has been converting Gentiles !?!?!?

4. And when they came to Yerushalayim, they were received by the assembly and by the emissaries and by the elders, and they recounted to them all that Eloah had done with them.

5. And men stood up, those from the teaching of the Parushim who had believed, and were saying, It is necessary for you to circumcise them and you should command them to observe the Torah of Moshe.

COMMENTS:

Here the opponents argument is only abbreviated. Here it is stated as:

"It is necessary for you to circumcise them
and you should command them to observe the Torah of Moshe."

Why does it say this? This on the surface does not even look like the same argument they were making in Acst 15:1. However if we recall our remez it makes perfect sense. This is a statement of chronology:

[first] It is necessary for you to circumcise them
and [second] you should command them to observe the Torah of Moshe.

Now we can see that they are still making the same argument as in 15:1.

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6. And the emissaries and elders were gathered to look into this matter.
7. And when there had been much debate, Shimon stood up and said to them, Men, our brothers, you know that from the first days from my mouth, Eloah chose that the Gentiles should hear the word of the b'sorah and trust.
8. And Eloah, who knows what is in hearts, gave testimony concerning them and gave to them the Ruach HaKodesh as [he did] to us.
9. And he made no distinction between us and them, because he purified their hearts by trust.

COMMENTS: Kefa addresses the opponant's position as fully stated in Acts 15:1. He points to evidence (from Acts 10-11) that salvation preceeds circumcision.

10. And now, why do you tempt Eloah so that you place a yoke upon the necks of the talmidim which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?
11. But by the favor of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah we believe to have life, like them.

COMMENTS: The "yoke" her in context is NOT the Torah (although often the Torah is likened to a yoke). The context here is clear. Kefa is calling the argument of Paul' opponants a "yoke". Thus the "Yoke" in this passage involves earning salvation by works such as circumcision.

Kefa appeals to the patriarchs as an example. Abraham for example was saved by trust first in Gen. 15:6 and was circumcised LATER in Gen. 17.

Now Kefa has given two case examples:

1. Cornelius and his house (Acts 10-11)
2. The patriarch (especially Abraham) (Gen. 15:6 & Gen. 17)

In both cases Kefa points out that salvation preceeded circumcision. (although in at least one of them circumcision still came later).

12. And all the assembly was silent and listened to Paul and Bar Nabba who were recounting everything Eloah had done by their hands: signs and mighty deeds among the Gentiles.

COMMENTS: This parallels verse 3 where Paul is recounting conversions. Paul is likening these cases to the two case examples that Kefa has presented.

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13. And after they were quiet, Ya'akov stood up and said, Men, our brothers, hear me.
 14. Shimon recounted to you how Eloah began to choose from the Gentiles a people for his name.
 15. And to this the words of the prophets agree, like that which is written,
 16. After these [things] I will return and set up the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild that which has fallen of it and I will raise it up,
 17. So that the remnant of men might seek YHWH, and all the Gentiles, on whom my name is called, says YHWH who made all these [things].
 18. The works of Eloah are known from old.
 19. Because of this I say, They should not trouble those who from the Gentiles have turned toward Eloah.
 20. But let it be sent to them that they should separate [themselves] from the uncleanness of that which is sacrificed [to idols] and from sexual immorality and from that which is strangled and from blood.
 21. For Moshe, from the first generations, had proclaimers in every city in the synagogues, who read him on every shabbat.

COMMENTS: A fuller version of the ruling is given below where veres 20 is expanded so I will comment upon it there.

However it is significant that Ya'akov presumes that these gentiles will be hearing [the Torah] of Moshe proclaimed in the synagogues on Shabbat.

Ya'akov seems to say here that the gentiles would need to maintain a minimum standard of purity and learn the Torah BEFORE becoming circumcised. Remember the issue being heard involves chronology of three things:

1. Becoming circumcised
2. Obtaining salvation/eternal life
3. Instruction in the Torah of Moshe

The above chronology is that of Paul's opponents. The beit din is determining if this is true or if another chronology should be followed, namely:

1. Obtaining salvation/eternal life
2. Instruction in the Torah of Moshe
3. Becoming circumcised

Paul's opponents placed circumcision first in the chronology, while Paul placed it last.

The beit-din agrees with Paul.

22. Then the Emissaries and elders, with all the assembly, chose men from them and sent to Antioch, with Paul and Bar Nabba, Y'hudah who was called Bar Sabba, and Sila, men who were chiefs among the brothers.

23. And they wrote a letter by their hands [saying] thus: The emissaries and elders and brothers, to those who are in Antioch and in Syria and in Cilicia, brothers who are from the Gentiles, shalom.

24. It has been heard by us that men from us have gone out and disturbed you with words and have upset your nefeshim while saying that you must be circumcised and observe the Torah, which we did not command them.

COMMENT: Again note the chronology of Paul's opponants:

- [1] you must be circumcised
- [2] and observe the Torah

Each of the three times their position is stated it is abbreviated more (15:1, 5 & 24)

If we put them altogether to get the fullest form of their argument we get:

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of the Torah, you are not able to have life [eternal]."
[therefore] It is necessary for you to circumcise them [first]
and [second] you should command them to observe the Torah of Moshe.

-
25. Because of this, all of us, while gathered together, purposed and chose men and sent to you, with our beloved Paul and Bar Nabba,
26. Men who have committed themselves on behalf of the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.
27. And we have sent with them Y'hudah and Sila who will tell you these same [things] by speech.
28. For it was the will of the Ruach HaKodesh and also of us that a greater burden should not be placed on you, outside of those [things] that are necessary,
29. That you should abstain from that which is sacrificed [to idols] and from blood and from[that which] is strangled and from sexual immorality, that as you keep your nefeshim from these, you will do well. Be steadfast in our Lord.

COMMENTS: Note the phrase "a greater burden" this is not an exhaustive list but the furthest paramaters. The questionable areas made clear. There was no doubt as to whether gentiles could murder or steal so these are not listed. Thus the furthest limits of idolatry would extend to include eating meat offered to idols etc. With this in mind these closely parallel the seven laws of Noach. Also thse would set purity rules which would allow these gentiles to interact with the Torah observant community while learning the Torah.

*...since they are still fettered by the Law
--circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest—
they are not in accord with Christians....
they are nothing but Jews....
-Epiphanius; Panarion 29*

Chapter 7

The Torah

Torah Observance or Torah Optional?

Although most Messianic Jews today maintain that the Torah was not abolished by Messiah this teaching is not universal. Moreover many Messianic Jewish leaders who claim to advocate Torah observance do not wear tzitzit and some will even go out to eat with congregational members on the Sabbath.

(NOTE: In the material below it is important to know that the words JUST and RIGHTEOUS (JUSIFY AND MAKE RIGHTEOUS) are the same in Hebrew).

A Messianic Jewish leader (whose name I will not give) recently criticized SANJ in a public statement saying:

... some of the fundamental differences I see
between SANJ and between <his Messianic ministry>.
If its ok I'd like to address those at this time.
I'd like to show you the philosophy we have developed
over the years in teaching Torah...

There is a fundamental principle upon which this--
all of this stands upon. The fundamental principle
all of this stands upon is number one: our identity.

How do we see ourselves before Messias?
Do we see ourselves as righteous individuals?
Righteous before him through the blood of Messiah?
Do we? That's a question.

Yes-- No-- Do I have any answers?

We do?
Then is there anything we can do to be more righteous in his sight?

Is there any amount of Torah Observance that we can apply to our life that can make us be more righteous in the eyes of Abba? Is there?

No. So we are fundamentally, constitutionally righteous before God. Amen?

So that means one thing. That there is nothing that we can do to change our presence, our stand before him.
(A Messianic Jewish Leader)

RESPONSE:

The above logic looks real good on the surface. However it contains a fundamental logic error which makes all of the difference in the world. This is the error of EQUIVICATION.

The error of EQUIVICATION occurs when an ambiguous word is used to mean one thing in the premise, but something else in the conclusion. Two examples:

A record is an album of music.
The criminal had a record.
Therefore the criminal had an album of music.

All stars are energized by fusion.
Tom Cruise is a big star.
Therefore Tom Cruise is energized by fusion.

Now the concept behind the word "righteous" in the Scriptures is the Hebrew word TZADIK.

There is a common misunderstanding that pits James 2:18 against Rom. 4:1-5; Gal. 3:6-9

The problem here is misunderstanding the Semitic text. The Hebrew and Aramaic word TZADAKA (Just/Righteous) is an ambiguous word with many meanings. This word can mean "to display righteousness" and it can mean be a synonym for "salvation."

For example Jn. 7:29 "the people... and the publicans justified God, being immersed with the immersion of Yochanan." Here it is clear that TZADAKA refers to a "display of righteousness" and NOT salvation, since the people clearly were not bring salvation to God. Another example of this usage is in Isaiah 32:17 "work of righteousness

When Paul says Abraham was justified by faith (Rom. 4:1-5; Gal. 3:6-9) he speaks in the context of "salvation" and refers to Gen. 15:6. This is the same usage as in Psalm 71:15 where TZADAKA is used in poetic parallelism as a synonym for "Salvation" (YESHUA).

When Ya'akov (James) says that Abraham was justified by works he speaks in context of a display of righteousness (James 2:18) and refers to an event in Gen. 22 which took place many years AFTER Abraham had ALREADY been justified by faith (in Gen. 15:6).

In the Hebrew/Aramaic there is absolutely NO conflict between Paul and Ya'akov here.

Ok now that we understand the two ambiguous words here and properly understand what Ya'akov and Paul are saying we can also see the clear error in the statement we quoted above.

In the premiss the speaker uses "Righteous" as a synonym for Salvation:

Do we see ourselves as righteous individuals?
Righteous before him through the blood of Messiah?

But in the conclusion the speaker uses the word Righteousness to refer to a display of righteousness or righteous deeds:

Then is there anything we can do to be more righteous in his sight?
Is there any amount of Torah Observance that we can apply to our life that can make us be more righteous in the eyes of Abba? Is there?

No. So we are fundamentally, constitutionally righteous before God. Amen?

So that means one thing. That there is nothing that we can do to change our presence, our stand before him.

Now the truth is this. We do see ourselves as righteous (saved) individuals. However we can also be more righteous (display of good deeds) than we are right now if we become more Torah Observant. This is CLEARLY taught in the Scriptures:

And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before YHWH our Elohim, just as he commanded us. (Deut. 6:25)

...if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully-- he is righteous... (Ezek. 18:9)

...it is those who obey the Torah who will be declared righteous. (Rom. 2:13-- WOW! You mean Paul said THAT?!?!)

Now I ask you again:

...is there anything we can do to be more righteous in his sight?
Is there any amount of Torah Observance that we can apply to our life
that can make us be more righteous in the eyes of Abba? Is there?

YES! The "fundamental principle" of the "philosophy" of many in the Messianic Jewish movement is based on a totally false idea.

...sin is the transgression of the Torah...
...let no man deceive you.
he that does righteousness is righteous,
even as he is righteous.
He that commits sin [transgression of the Torah]
is of the devil...
(1Yochanan 3:4, 7-8)

Let no man deceive you.

What is the Torah?

There is a lot of talk these days about getting back to the "New Testament Church." But the real truth is, there are two things the "New Testament Church" did not have: A "New Testament" and a "Church". The believers of the "New Testament Church" met in synagogues (Acts 15:21; James 1:1; 2:2) and had no book known as the "New Testament" because it had not been written and compiled yet. Thus when a believer from the "New Testament Church" referred to "The Scriptures" he was speaking of the Tanak ("Old Testament") for they were the only Scriptures he had. Thus when Paul wrote to Timothy:

All *Scripture* is given by inspiration of God,
and is *profitable for doctrine*, for reproof,
for *correction*, for instruction in righteousness:
That the man of God may be perfect,
thoroughly furnished to all good works.
(2Tim. 3:16-17)

Paul was referring to the Tanak, the only Scriptures they had. Moreover when Paul spoke to the Bereans in Acts 17:11 we are told of them:

These were more *noble* than those at Thessalonica,
in that they received the word with all readiness of mind,
and searched *the Scriptures* daily,
whether those things were so.

Paul was saying that the Bereans were noble because they did not believe what Paul said simply on the authority of Paul. They were looking to see if what Paul was teaching could be found in the Scriptures. Remember, they were looking in the Tanak, the only Scriptures they had at the time. Paul said that it was noble of them to only accept his teaching if it lined up with the Tanak. That means that whenever we study the New Testament we should ask ourselves this question: "Can you get here from there?" (There being the Tanak). If you think you understand something in the New Testament in such a way that it contradicts the Tanak, then you need to realize that you are misunderstanding it.

Now as you read this book I am going to ask you to be a noble Berean. I am going to ask you to look in the Tanak to see if what Paul and the other New Testament writers teach is found there. I am going to ask you to understand what the New Testament says in light of what the Tanak says.

The word "TORAH" is commonly translated in our Bibles as "Torah", but is that really a good translation of the word Torah? The Hebrew word "TORAH" (Strong's Heb. #8451) means guidance or instruction. TORAH comes from the Hebrew root verb YARAH (Strong's 3384) meaning "to instruct". YARAH was also an archery term referring to shooting an arrow and as a term meaning "to lay a foundation." Torah therefore is guidance, like the straight path of an arrow to its target. Torah is our foundation. It is important to understand the real meaning of the Hebrew word Torah. Because while some might say "God's Torah is not for today" no one would say that "God's instruction and guidance are not for today."

This book is about Torah, it is about God's guidance for us. This book is about laying foundation and about setting ourselves on target like an arrow. This book will give you aim, direction, foundation and a target.

The Greek word for TORAH used in the Septuagint (Greek "Old Testament") and the Greek New Testament is NOMOS. This parallels the Aramaic Bible (the Peshitta) which has NAMOSA from the Semitic root NIMMES meaning "to civilize" and from which we also get the modern Hebrew word NIMOS or NIMUS meaning "politeness." At the core of TORAH are the precepts of civilisation. From God's perspective, without Torah we are uncivilized.

The mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah are categorized under three categories:

MISHPATIM (judgements) Strong's 4941

EDYOT (testimonies) Strong's 5715

KHOKIM (statutes; decrees) Strong's 2706

The **MISHPATIM** are the moral and ethical commandments. These deal with what is fundamentally right and wrong.

The **EDYOT** are commandments that give testimony to YHWH. These include the Shabbat, the festivals the teffilin, the Mezuzah etc.

The **KHOKIM** are commandments with no apparant rational. For example the commandment not to mix wool and linen.

For All your Generations Forever

Now we have already shown that in studying the New Testament we must ask ourselves "can you get here from there?" ("there" being the Tanak (Old Testament)). If we understand something in the New Testament in such a way that it contradicts the Tanak, then we must be misunderstanding it. Now there are many who understand many New Testament passages in such a way as to believe and teach that the Torah has been abolished. Let us be like noble Bereans and let us look in the Tanak to see if this is so (Acts 17:11). After all Paul tells us that the Tanak is "**profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for **correction**, [and] for instruction" (2Tim. 3:16). So what does the Tanak say? Was the Torah to be for all generations, forever? or would it one day be abolished? If the Torah would one day be abolished, then we should be able to find this taught in the Tanak. As Noble Bereans we should be checking to see if the things we have been taught can be found in the Tanak. By contrast, if the Torah would not be abolished, but would be for all generations forever, then we should be able to find that information in the Torah as well. Since the Tanak is profitable for doctrine and corection, perhaps we can seek the truth on this issue from the Tanak:

...it shall be a statute **forever**
to their **generations**....(Ex. 27:21)

...it shall be a statute **forever** to him
and his seed after him. (Ex. 28:43)

...a statute **forever**... (Ex. 29:28)

...it shall be a statute **forever** to them,
to him and to his seed
throughout their generations. (Ex. 30:21)

It is a sign between me
and the children of Israel **forever**. (Ex. 31:17)

There is no shortage of passages in the Torah which specify that the Torah will not be abolished but will be for all generations forever. (For more see: Lev. 6:18, 22; 7:34, 36;

10:9, 15; 17:7; 23:14, 21, 41; 24:3; Num. 10:8; 15:15; 18:8, 11, 19, 23; 19:10 and Deut. 5:29)

Moreover the Psalmist writes:

Your word is truth from the beginning:
and ***every one of your righteous judgements
endures forever.***
(Psalm 119:160)

Furthermore the Tanak tells us that the Torah is not to be changed or taken away from:

You shall not add to the word
which I command you,
***neither shall you diminish a thing from it,
that you may keep the commandments***
of YHWH your God which I command you.
(Deut 4:2)

Whatever thing I command you,
observe to do it: you shall not add thereto,
nor ***diminish from it.***
(Deut. 12:32)

So if we are "Noble Bereans" we will find that the Tanak teaches that the Torah will not be abolished but will endure for all generations forever. This teaching from the Tanak is profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof and for correction.

The Messiah echos this teaching:

Do not think that I have come
to destroy the Torah or the Prophets.
I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.
For assuredly, I say to you,
till heaven and earth pass away,
one yud or one mark will by no means
pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled.
Whoever therefore breaks one of the least
of these commandments, and teaches men so,
he will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven;
but whoever does and teaches them
will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.
(Matt. 5:17-19 see also Lk. 16:17).

As does Paul:

Do we then abolish the Torah through trust?
Absolutely not! We uphold the Torah!
(Rom. 3:31)

Despite the fact that David was saved by faith alone (Rom. 4:5-8) he loved the Torah and delighted in it (Ps. 119: 97, 113, 163). Paul (Paul) also delighted in the Torah (Rom. 7:22) and called it "holy, just and good." (Rom. 7:12). There is nothing wrong with the Torah that God should want to abolish or destroy it, in fact both the Tenach and the New Scriptures call the Torah "perfect" (Ps. 19:7; James 1:25).

The Torah is even called in the New Testament "the Torah of Messiah" (Gal. 6:2). To say that the Torah was not forever and is not for all generations, is to call God a liar.

Another popular teaching in the church is a teaching that God only gave the Torah to Israel to prove that they could not keep it. For example one book states:

...Israel, in blindness and pride and self-righteousness, presumed to ask for the law; and God granted their request, to show them that they could not keep his law...
(*God's Plan of the Ages*; Louis T. Tallbot; 1970; p. 66)

Now let's think this through for a moment. God gives Israel the Torah. He says he will place curses upon Israel if they fail to keep the Torah (Lev. 26 & Deut 28-29). He sends prophets to warn Israel of pending destruction because of their continual failure to keep Torah. Eventually God allows Babylon to invade Jerusalem and the Jews to be taken into captivity, because of their failure to keep Torah. Then he comes along and says "Nah, I was only fooling. I just gave you the Torah to prove you could not do it." What kind of God would that be? Of course as noble Bereans we can simply look in the Tanak to see if this popular teaching is true. Let us see what the Tanak says on this issue:

For this commandment which I command you this day
it is not to hard for you, neither is it far off.
It is not in heaven, that you should say:
" Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us,
and make us to hear it, that we may do it?"
Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say:
"Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us,
and make us hear it, that we may do it?"
But the Word is very near to you, in your mouth,
and in your heart, **that you may do it.**
(Deut. 30:11-14)

The fact that the Torah can be kept is confirmed as well in the New Testament which tells us that Yeshua was tempted in all things just as we are and he did keep the Torah (Heb. 4:15).

Paul Misunderstood

Paul is greatly misunderstood as having taught that the Torah is not for today. I have met a great many who feel uncomfortable with his writings. Some of these have even, like the Ebionites of ancient times, removed Paul's from their canon (Eusebius; Eccl. Hist. 3:27:4). This belief that Yeshua may not have abolished the Torah, but that Paul did, has been propagated since ancient times. The "Toldot Yeshu" for example, an ancient hostile Rabbinic parody on the Gospels and Acts, accuses Paul of contradicting Yeshua on this very issue (Toldot Yeshu 6:16-41; 7:3-5). At least one modern Dispensationalist, Maurice Johnson, taught that the Messiah did not abolish the Torah, but that Paul did several years after the fact. He writes:

Apparently G-d allowed this system of Jewish ordinances to be practiced about thirty years after Christ fulfilled it because in His patience, G-d only gradually showed the Jews how it was that His program was changing.... Thus it was that after G-d had slowly led the Christians out of Jewish religion He had Paul finally write these glorious, liberating truths. (Saved by "Dry" Baptism!; a pamphlet by Maurice Johnson; pp. 9-10)

Kefa warns us in the Scriptures that Paul's writings are difficult to understand. He warns us saying:

...in which are some things hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. (2Pt. 3:15-16)

Paul knew that his teachings were being twisted, he mentions this in Romans, saying:

And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"? -- as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say." (Rom. 3:8)

Paul elaborates on this slanderous twist of his teachings, saying:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!..." (Rom. 6:1-2)

and

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Torah but under grace? Certainly not!" (Rom. 6:15).

So then, Paul was misunderstood as teaching that because we are under grace, we need not observe the Torah.

Upon his visit to Jerusalem in Acts 21 Paul was confronted with this slanderous twist of his teachings. He was told

You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who believe, and they are all zealous for the Torah; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. (Acts 21:20-21)

In order to prove that this was nothing more than slander, Paul takes the nazirite vow and goes to make offerings (sacrifices) at the Temple (Acts 21:22-26 & Num. 6:13-21) demonstrating that he himself kept the Torah (Acts 21:24). Paul did and said many things to prove that he both kept and taught the Torah. He:

- circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:1-3)
- took the nazirite vow (Acts 18:18; 21:17-26)
- taught and observed the Jewish holy days such as:
 - Passover (Acts 20:6; 1Cor. 5:6-8; 11:17-34)
 - Shavuot (Pentecost) (Acts 20:16; 1Cor. 16:8)
 - fasting on Yom Kippur (Acts 27:9)
 - and even performed animal sacrifices in the Temple (Acts 21:17-26/Num. 6:13-21; Acts 24:17-18)

Among his more notable statements on the subject are:

- "Neither against the Jewish Torah, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all." (Acts 25:8)
- "I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers." (Acts 28:17)
- "...the Torah is holy and the commandment is holy and just and good." (Rom. 7:12)
- "Do we then nullify the Torah through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we maintain the Torah." (Rom. 3:31).

Was Paul a Hypocrite?

Being confronted with the various acts and statements of Paul which support the Torah, many of the "Torah is not for today" teachers accuse Paul of being hypocritical. Charles Ryrie, for example, footnotes Acts 21:24 in his Ryrie Study Bible calling Paul a "middle of the road

Christian" for performing such acts. Another writer, M.A. DeHaan wrote an entire book entitled "Five Blunders of Paul" which characterizes these acts as "blunders." "These teachers of lawlessness" credit Paul as the champion of their doctrine, and then condemn him for not teaching their doctrine. If Paul was really a hypocrite, could he honestly have condemned hypocrisy so fervently (see Gal. 2:11-15). Consider some of his own words:

For do I now persuade men, or G-d?
Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men,
I would not be a servant of the Messiah.
(Gal. 1:10)

For you yourselves know, brothers,
that our coming to you was not in vain.
But even after we had suffered before
and were spitefully treated in Philippi,
as you know, we were bold in our G-d
to speak to you the Good News of G-d in
much conflict. For our exhortation did not
come from deceit or uncleanness,
nor was it in guile. But as we have been
approved by G-d to be entrusted with

the Good News, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but G-d who tests our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness-- G-d is witness. (1Thes. 2:1-5)

If Paul was a hypocrite, he must have been one of the slickest con-men in history!

"Works of the Torah" and "Under the Torah"

Much of the confusion about Paul's teachings on the Torah involves two scripture phrases which appear in the New Testament only in Paul's writings (in Rom. Gal. & 1Cor.). These two phrases are "works of the Torah" and "under the Torah", each of which appears 10 times in the Scriptures.

The first of these phrases, "works of the Torah", is best understood through its usage in Gal. 2:16. Here Paul writes:

knowing that a man is not justified by
WORKS OF THE TORAH but by faith in
Yeshua the Messiah, even we have believed
in Messiah Yeshua, that we might be justified
by faith in Messiah and not by the
WORKS OF THE TORAH; for by the WORKS OF
THE TORAH no flesh shall be justified.

Paul uses this phrase to describe a false method of justification which is diametrically opposed to "faith in the Messiah". To Paul "works of the Torah" is not an obsolete Old Testament system, but a hearsay that has never been true.

The term "works of the Torah" has shown up as a technical theological term used in a document in the Dead Sea Scrolls called MMT which says:

Now we have written to you some of the
WORKS OF THE TORAH, those which we
determined would be beneficial for you...
And it will be reckoned to you as righteousness,
in that you have done what is right and good
before Him...
(4QMMT (4Q394-399) Section C lines 26b-31)

The second of these phrases is "under the Torah". This phrase may best be understood from its usage in Rom. 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not

UNDER THE TORAH but under grace." Paul, therefore, sees "under grace" and "under the Torah" as diametrically opposed, one cannot be both. The truth is that since we have always been under grace (see Gen. 6:8; Ex. 33:12, 17; Judges 6:17f; Jer. 31:2) we have never been "under the Torah". This is because the Torah was created for man, man was not created for the Torah (see Mk. 2:27). "Under the Torah" then, is not an obsolete Old Testament system, but a false teaching which was never true.

There can be no doubt that Paul sees "works of the Torah" and "under the Torah" as categorically bad, yet Paul calls the Torah itself "holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12), certainly Paul does not use these phrases to refer to the Torah itself.

The Belt of Truth

There is a spiritual battle taking place. A battle between light and darkness. A battle between truth and deception. Paul writes:

Put on the whole armour of God, that you may
be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against principalities, against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places.
Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,
that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,
and having done all, to stand.
(Eph. 6:11-13)

Paul goes on to describe the parts of this armour as:

- The Belt of Truth
- The Breastplate of Righteousness
- The Shoes of the Goodnews of Peace (Shalom)
- The Shield of Faith
- The Helmet of Salvation
- The Sword of the Word

Now Paul is making a play on words here. The Aramaic word for "Armour" is **ZAYNA** while the Aramaic word for "wiles" is **TZEN'TA**. Paul is contrasting the **ZAYNA** with the **TZEN'TA**. The four fixed (non mobile) pieces of armour correspond to the four wiles of HaSatan which are depicted in the Tanak:

- Deception/Lies (Gen. 3)
(Belt of Truth)
- Temptation/Pride (1Chron. 21:1)
(Breastplate of Righteousness)
- Oppression (Job)
(Shoes of Peace)
- Accusation (Zech. 3:1-5)
(Helmet of Salvation)

Now we will not cover each of the items here, instead we will concentrate only on the belt of truth.

Now it should be understood that the armour Paul is speaking of is not Roman armour, it was not inspired by Roman Soldiers. The armour was originally inspired by the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 11:5; 52:7 and 59:17) as well as the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon (5:17-20). Therefore the subject of this passage is ancient Hebrew armour and not Roman armour at all. Now ancient Hebrews wore a skirtlike garment. Before going into battle a Hebrew warrior would gird himself with the a belt, he would gather his skirt-like garment up and tuck it up under his belt to allow free movement. This prevented him from getting tripped up in his own garment while trying to fight.

Now when he was on trial before Pilate Yeshua said:

For this I have been born,
and for this I have come into the world,
to bear witness of the truth.
Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.
(John 18:37-38)

To this Pilate asked the all important question:

What is truth?
(John. 18:38)

Let us look back to the Tanak to find the answer to Pilate's question:

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
and your Torah is truth.
(Psalm 119:142)

You are near, O YHWH,
and all your commandments are truth.

(Psalm 119:151)

This definition explains many phrases in the New Testament:

"Obey the truth" (Gal. 3:1)

"But he that does truth..." (Jn. 3:20)

And I rejoice that I found your children
walking in the truth, as we have received
a commandment from the Father.

(2Jn. 1:4)

The Tanak definition of truth gives whole new meaning to Yeshua's words:

For this I have been born,
and for this I have come into the world,
to bear witness of the truth.
Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.
(John 18:37-38)

Yeshua came to bear witness of the Torah, those who hear the Torah hear his voice. This leads us to another important saying from Yeshua:

Then Yeshua said to those Jews who believed
on him, if you continue in my word,
then are you my disciples indeed.
And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.
(John 8:31-32)

Paul, however, speaks of those "who changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25)
Now if Messiah came to bear witness of the truth then what has HaSatan to bear witness to? The scriptures tell us:

He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning,
and abode not the truth in him.
When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own:
for he is a liar, and the father of it.
(John 8:44)

...HaSatan, who deceives the whole world...
(Rev. 12:9)

When HaSatan speaks a lie, he is merely speaking his native language.

Now if the Torah is truth, then what is HaSatan's lie? His lie is that there is not a Torah, that the Torah has been done away with. There is a Greek term for this teaching. This term is *ANOMOS* (Strong's Greek #459). *ANOMOS* is made up of the Greek prefix A- (there is not/without) with the Greek word *NOMOS* (Torah). *ANOMOS* means "without Torah" or "Torah-lessness." While Messiah came to bear witness to the Torah, HaSatan comes to bear witness of *ANOMOS* (Torah-lessness). Two entire books of the New Testament (2Kefa and Jude) are dedicated to combating this false *ANOMOS* teaching. Yeshua tells us that these teachers will be called "least" in the Kingdom (Mt. 5:19).

Now lets take a look at how the Bible uses this term *ANOMOS*:

...I [Yeshua] will profess to them, I never knew you,
depart from me, you that work *ANOMOS*.
(Mt. 7:23)

...and they [angels] shall gather out of his Kingdom
all things that offend, and them which do *ANOMOS*.
(Mt. 13:41)

And many false prophets shall rise,
and shall deceive many.
And because *ANOMOS* shall abound,
the love of many shall grow cold.
(Mt. 24:11-12)

For the mystery of *ANOMOS* does already work...
And then shall the *ANOMOS* one be revealed,
whom the Lord shall consume
with the spirit of his mouth,...
whose coming is after the working of HaSatan
with all power and **lying** wonders,
and with all **deceivableness**...
because they received not the love of **truth**...
That they might be damned
who believed not the **truth**...
(2Thes. 2:7-12)

Many people have been taken in by the *ANOMOS* teaching. In fact two of Christendom's largest theological sub-sets, Dispensationalism and Replacement Theology, submit detailed theories to explain why they teach that the Torah is not for today.

Dispensationalism is a form of Pre-Millennialism which replaces the eternal "covenants" with finite "ages". Two of these finite ages are "The Age of Torah" which basically encompasses "Old Testament times", and "The Age of Grace" which basically encompasses "New Testament times". According to these Dispensationalists, during "Old Testament times" men were under Torah, but during "New Testament times" men are

under grace. Some Dispensationalists, called "Ultra-Dispensationalists", even teach that men were saved by Torah in "Old Testament times," but are saved by grace in "New Testament times." As a result, Dispensationalists teach that "the Torah is not for today" or "we have no Torah."

Replacement Theologians teach that G-d has replaced Israel with the Church; Judaism with Christendom; The Old Testament with The New Testament; and Torah with grace. As a result, they too teach that "the Torah is not for today" or "we have no Torah."

Now you may be saying to yourself: "Ok, so they teach Torah-lessness, but don't the Torah-less teachers of 2Peter & Jude go so far as to teach sexual immorality? Surely the Torah-less teachers of within the church would never use their "the Torah is not for today" teaching to promote sexual immorality." Wrong! Some of Christendom's teachers have already carried the "the Torah is not for today" reasoning to its fullest and logical conclusion. A sect of Christendom known as "The Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches" has published a tract which does just that. The nameless author of the tract writes:

Another Scripture verse that is used to show that the Bible condemns the gay lifestyle is found in the Old Testament Book of Leviticus, 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with a man as thou would with a woman." Anyone who is concerned about this prohibition should read the whole chapter or the whole Book of Leviticus: No pork, no lobster, no shrimp, no oysters, no intercourse during the menstrual period, no rare meats, no eating blood, no inter-breeding of cattle, and a whole host of other laws, including the law to kill all divorced people who remarry.

As Christians, our law is from Christ. St. Paul clearly taught that Christians are no longer under the Old Law (for example in Galatians 3:23-24); that the Old Law is brought to an end in Christ (Romans 10:4); and its fulfillment is in love (Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14). The New Law of Christ is the Law of Love. Neither Jesus, nor Paul, nor any of the New Testament Scriptures implies that Christians are held to the cultic or ethical laws of the Mosaic Law. (Homosexuality; What the Bible Does and Does not Say; Universal Fellowship press, 1984, p. 3)

Thus Christendom's teaching that "the Torah is not for today" is already being used to "turn the grace of our God into perversion." (Jude 1:4; see also 2Pt. 2:18-21)

There is indeed a spiritual battle taking place. It is a battle between the truth and a lie. It is a battle between light and darkness. It is a battle led by the one who came to bear witness to the Torah, and the one who comes to bear witness to Torah-lessness. The Torah is truth. The belt of truth is the belt of Torah. Gird yourselves with the belt of Torah that you may withstand the Torah-less one.

Freedom from Bondage

In the last chapter we learned that the Torah is Truth (Ps. 119:142) and that Yeshua said:

... if you continue in my word,
then are you my disciples indeed.
And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.
(John 8:31-32)

Therefore the Torah brings freedom. This is completely contrary to what most people have been taught. The common wisdom is that the Torah is bondage and that "freedom in Christ" means freedom from Torah. For example one author writes:

Many Christians today would return to Sinai.
They would put upon the church the yoke of
bondage, the Law of Moses.
(God's Plan of the Ages; Louis T. Tallbot; 1970; p. 66)

However as we shall see the scriptures teach that exactly the opposite is true.

The central story of Judaism is that of the Exodus from Egypt. The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. God promised to bring them out of bondage and give them freedom. Upon leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, YHWH led them to Mt. Sinai where he delivered the Torah to them. Note that the theme of this central story is that God promised freedom from bondage and gave the children of Israel Torah. Now why would YHWH lead the people out of bondage in Egypt, lead them to Mt. Sinai, and deliver them right back into bondage again? And why would he at the same time promise them freedom. God is no liar. He promised the people freedom and he gave them Torah because the Torah is freedom from bondage. The Torah is truth (Ps. 119:142) and the truth will make you free (John 8:31-32).

This truth is proclaimed by the Psalmist:

So shall I keep your **Torah** continually forever and ever,
And I will walk in **freedom**: for I seek your precepts.
(Psalm 119:44-45)

As well as by Ya'akov HaTzadik (James the Just) who called the Torah "the Torah of *freedom*" (James 1:25; 2:12).

However the *ANOMOS* teachers today teach that the Torah is bondage and that Torah-lessness is freedom. They have exchanged the truth (Torah) of God for a lie (Torah-lessness) (Rom. 1:25). Of these 2Peter 2:19 states:

While they promise them freedom,
they themselves are servants of corruption:
for of whom a man is overcome,
of the same is he brought into bondage.

according to Kefa these men "turn from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2Peter 2:21) they promise freedom but deliver bondage.

By contrast Yeshua said:

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you,
and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in
heart; **and you shall find rest for your souls.**
For my yoke is easy, and my load is light.
(Mat. 11:28-30)

Now many of the teachers of Torah-lessness use this this passage as a proof text. To them this passage refers to freedom from the bondage of Torah. However notice the boldfaced portion. This boldfaced portion of Yeshua's statement is a quotation from the Tanak. A quotation which gives a great deal of context to Yeshua's statement. Lets look at this Tanak passage:

Thus said YHWH, stand you in the ways, and see,
and ask for the old paths, where is the good way,
and walk therein, **and you shall find rest for
your souls.** But they said, we will not walk therein.
(Jer. 6:16)

Notice that this "way" which gives "rest" is "the old path". Now lets read a little further down in Jer. 6 to obtain more context:

But they said, we will not walk therein (Jer. 6:16)...
...they have not hearkened unto my words,
nor to my Torah, but rejected it.
(Jer. 6:19)

Notice that the "old path" that brings "rest for your souls" to which they said "we will not walk therein" (Jer. 6:16) is identified by YHWH as "my Torah". This takes us up a bit further in the text of Jeremiah:

...they are foolish, for they do not know the way of YHWH, the requirements of their God. So I will go to the leaders and speak to them; surely they know the way of YHWH, the requirements of their God." But with one accord they too had broken off the yoke and torn off the bonds. (Jer. 5:4-5 see also Jer. 2:20)

Here we find that the "yoke" which brings rest is the yoke which was being rejected. The yoke of Torah. Now lets look again at Yeshua's saying:

Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; **and you shall find rest for your souls.** For my yoke is easy, and my load is light. (Mat. 11:28-30)

The yoke that Messiah asks us to take on ourselves, the yoke that will give us rest for our souls is the Torah. The Torah is freedom from the bondage of Torah-lessness. The freedom of Torah is freedom from the bondage to sin that results without Torah. Without Torah there is no true freedom, only bondage. True liberty does not include a license to sin (Rom. 3:8; 6:1-2, 15)

A Light in a Dark Place

As we said earlier there is a spiritual battle taking place between light and darkness. Paul writes:

...what communion has light with darkness?
And what concord has Messiah with Belial...
(2Cor. 6:14b-15a)

Throughout the New Testament there are extended metaphores revolving around light and darkness. Believers are called "sons of light" (Lk. 16:8; Jn. 12:36; Eph. 5:8; 1Thes. 5:5). The full armour of God is also called the "armour of light" (Rom. 13:12). The New Testament speaks of those "who walk in darkness" (Jn. 8:12; 12:35).

But what does this idiomatic use of the terms light and darkness mean? For the answer let us turn to the Tanak:

For the *commandment is a lamp*;
and the *Torah is light*...
(Prov. 6:23)

Your word is a *lamp* to my feet,
and a *light* to my path.
(Psalm 119:105)

To the *Torah* and to the testimony;
if they speak not according to this word,
it is because there is no *light* in them.
(Isaiah 8:20)

...for a *Torah* shall proceed from me,
and I will make my judgement to rest
for a *light* of the people.
(Isaiah 51:4)

So according to the Tanak the Torah is a light for our paths. Those that walk in the Torah walk in the light. This is why the New Testament speaks of those who walk in darkness (Jn. 8:12; 12:35; 1Jn. 1:6; 2:11). These are those who do not walk by the light of Torah. Of these John writes:

And if we say that we have fellowship with him,
and walk in darkness,
we are liars and we do not walk in truth.
(1Jn. 1:6)

Notice that John equates "walking in truth" with walking in the light. As we noted previously "the Torah is truth" (Ps. 119:142) thus if "walking in the light" means "walking in truth" then both phrases refer to walking in the Torah. This takes us back to our passages from the Tanak given above. John also confirms this by writing the parallel statements:

...walking in truth.
...walk according to his commandments.
(2Jn. 1:4, 6)

Now lets look back at a moment to the full armour of God. As we have noted Paul also calls this armour the "armour of light" (Rom. 13:12). According to Paul we are involved in a spiritual battle with "the rulers of the darkness of this world." (Eph. 6:12) and thus he instructs us to put on this "armour of light" (Eph. 6:13 & Rom. 13:12)

Now several of the items of the "armour of light" also tie in with the Torah:

- **The Belt of Truth**

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
and your *Torah* is *truth*.
(Psalm 119:142)

You are near, O YHWH,
and all your *commandments* are *truth*.
(Psalm 119:151)

- **The Breatplate of Righteousness**

What great nation is there that has
statutes and judgements as *righteous*
as this whole *Torah* which I am setting
before you today?...
(Deut. 4:6)

- **The Shield of Faith**

Remove the false way from me,
and graciously grant me your *Torah*.
I have chosen the way of *faith*;
I have placed your ordinances before me.
(Psalm 119:29-30)

- **The Sword of the Word**

...For the *Torah* will go out from Zion;
and the *word* of YHWH from Jerusalem.
(Isaiah 2:3)

Thus the Armour of Light is the armour of the Torah which lights our path. There are two paths before us, one of darkness and one of light. On the one hand one may "walk in darkness" on the other hand one may "walk in the light" of Torah. The "sons of light" put on the "armour of light" and walk in the light of Torah, while the "sons of darkness" walk in the Torah-lessness which is the darkness of this dark world.

Torah and Grace

Another misunderstanding common in the church today is the concept that Torah and Grace are mutually exclusive ideas. For example one author writes:

A believer can not be under law and
under grace at the same time.

(God's Plan of the Ages; Louis T. Tallbot; 1970; p. 83)

Now let us be noble Bereans to see if this is true. Let us ask ourselves: "How were people saved in 'Old Testament' times? Were they saved by works or by grace?"

The fact is that often when Paul speaks of how we are saved by grace through faith he often cites the Tanak to prove his point. Two of his favorite proof texts for this concept are from the Tanak:

And he believed in YHWH;
and he counted it to him as righteousness.
(Gen. 15:6 = Rom. 4:3, 22; Gal. 3:6)

...the just shall live by his faith.
(Hab. 2:4 = Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11)

So Paul is arguing from the Tanak that one is saved by faith alone apart from works. In fact the real truth is that men of the "Old Testament" times were just as under grace as we are today:

But Noah found *grace* in the eyes of YHWH.
(Gen. 6:8)

...you have also found *grace* in my sight....
...for you have found *grace* in my sight...
(Ex. 33:12, 17)

...and now I have found *grace* in your sight...
(Judges 6:17)

The people... found *grace* in the wilderness...
(Jer. 31:2)

Thus as noble Bereans we learn from the Tanak that people in "Old Testament" times were saved by grace through faith. They could not have earned their salvation any more than we could today, as Paul writes:

Knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law, but by the faith of Yeshua the Messiah, even we have believed in Yeshua the Messiah, that we might be justified by the faith of Messiah, and not by works of the law; and by the works of the law shall *no flesh* be saved.
(Gal. 2:16)

In fact the "New Testament" contains more commandments than the "Old Testament". The New Testament contains 1050 commandments [as delineated in Dake's Annotated Reference Bible; By Finnis Jennings Dake; N.T. pp.313-316] while the "Old Testament" Mosaic Law contains only 613 (b.Makkot 23b; see Appendix). Thus faith and grace are in the "Old Testament" and law and works can be found in the New Testament. People in Old Testament times were saved by grace through faith just like people in New Testament times. Now many anomians will agree to this fact on the surface, but lets follow this thought through to its fullest conclusion. Lets go beyond the surface and really think this through. If what we have shown to be true is true, then the people in the wilderness in the days of Moses were saved by grace through faith. Now lets look at the full impact of that statement. That means that people were under grace, and saved by faith alone and not by works, when Moses was stoning people to death for violating the Torah! Obviously then being saved by grace through faith in no way affects Torah observance.

So if grace and faith do not negate the observance of Torah, then what is the true nature of faith and grace? What is faith? What is grace? Let us once again turn to the scriptures for answers.

Now part of the reason that many people have come to think that there is more "grace" in the New Testament than in the Old Testament is a translation bias in the KJV and many other english versions.

There are two words for "grace" in the Hebrew Tanak. The first word is CHEN (Strong's 2580/2581) which means "grace or charm". The other word is CHESED (Strong's 2616/2617) which carries the meaning of "grace, mercy or undue favor."

These two words closely parallel the meanings of the two Greek words used for grace in the Greek Bible. These are CHARIS (Strong's 5485/5463) which means "grace or charm" and ELEOS (Strong's 1651/1653) meaning "grace, mercy or undue favor."

Obviously Hebrew CHEN = Greek CHARIS and Hebrew CHESED = Greek ELEOS. Now the KJV tends to translate CHEN/CHARIS as "grace" but tends to translate CHESED/ELEOS as "mercy". Now when we think of "grace" in biblical terms we are usually thinking of the concept of CHESED/ELEOS "undue favor".

Now if we follow with the KJV translation scheme then it appears that there is much more grace in the New Testament than the Tanak, since CHEN only appears 70 times in the Tanak while CHARIS appears 233 times in the New Testament. But remember, the concept of "undue favor" is actually CHESED/ELEOS. CHESED appears 251 times in the Tanak, while ELEOS appears only 50 times in the New Testament. If anything there is far more "grace" in the Tanak than in the New Testament.

Now let us turn to the Tanak to get a better understanding of what grace really is. According to the Scriptures there is a close connection between "grace" and the "fear of YHWH":

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his grace (CHESED)
toward those who fear him.
(Psalm 103:11)

Oh let those who fear YHWH say,
"His grace (CHESED) is everlasting."
(Psalm 118:4)

By grace (CHESED) and truth
iniquity is atoned for,
and by the fear of YHWH
one keeps away from evil.
(Proverbs 16:6)

And the fear of YHWH, according to the Tanak, includes Torah observance:

...that he may learn the fear of YHWH his God,
to keep all the words of this Torah
and these statutes, to do them:
(Deut. 17:19)

...that they may hear, and that they may learn,
and fear YHWH your God,
and observe to do all the words of this Torah.
(Deut. 31:12)

Therefore there is clearly no conflict between grace and Torah. In fact the Torah is closely connected to grace.

The next word we need to examine is "faith". The Hebrew word is EMUNAH. EMUNAH can mean "belief, faith or trust" and is best translated "trusting faithfulness". When we speak of "faith" in YHWH we are not merely speaking about "belief" but "trusting faithfulness".

If someone were to ask you if you are faithful to your spouse, you would not reply by saying "Yes, I believe my spouse exists." That is because it is clearly not an issue of what you believe but in whether you are faithful. Imagine a man who stays out late at night every night committing adultery with various women. Each night he comes home to his wife and tells her how much he loves her, and insists that since he believes in her existence that he therefore is faithful to her. Is this man faithful to his wife? Absolutely not!

This understanding is confirmed to us in the Scriptures as follows:

Remove the false way from me,
and graciously grant me your *Torah*.
I have chosen the way of *faith*;

I have placed your ordinances before me.
(Psalm 119:29-30)

Now I want to make it clear that we are not saying that one earns ones salvation by keeping Torah. At times I have been asked "Do I have to keep Torah to be saved?". I reply by saying "Of course not.... do you have to get cleaned up to take a bath?"

You may ask, "Well if we don't keep the Torah for salvation, then why do we keep the Torah?" First of all, keeping the Torah SHOWS our faith (Titus 3:5-8; 1Jn. 2:3-7; James 2:14-26). Secondly there are rewards for keeping the Torah (Titus 3:8). The Psalms tell us that it "restores the soul" (Ps. 19:7). Yeshua promises that those who keep the Torah and teach others to do so will be called first in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 5:19). Additionally, Jews who keep the Mosaic Torah are given a long list of other promises (Deut. 28).

Now if the Torah is good and everlasting then it stands to reason that it should be observed. Paul tells us that we should not use grace as an excuse to sin (Rom. 6:1-2, 15) and that the only way to know sin is through the Torah (Rom. 7:7). Yeshua tells us that if we love him we will keep his commandments (Jn. 14:15, 21, 23-25; 15:10). The fact that we are saved by faith is all the more reason that we should keep the Torah, as the Scriptures tell us:

..not by works of righteousness which we have done,
but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing
of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom
he poured out on us abundantly through Yeshua the Messiah
our Savior, that having been justified by his grace we should
become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This is a faithful saying, and I want you to affirm constantly, that those
who have believed in God should be careful to ***maintain
good works***. These things are good and profitable to men.
(Titus 3:5-8)

And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his
commandments. He who says, "I know him," and does not
keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in
him. But whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is
perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He
who says he abides in him ought himself to walk just as he walked.
Brothers, I write ***no*** new commandment to you,
but an ***old commandment*** which you have had ***from the
beginning***. The ***old commandment*** is ***the word which you
heard from the beginning***.
(1Jn. 2:3-7)

*...they are simply complete Jews....
They have no different ideas,
but confess everything
exactly as the Torah proclaims it
and in the Jewish fashion—
except for their belief in Messiah,..
-Epiphanius; Panarion 29*

Chapter 8

Israel

Replacement Theology

One of the greatest misunderstandings of the Church/Israel relationship is called "Replacement Theology". This theology teaches that the Church has been given the promises made to Israel, because of Israel's unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah. Thus these theologians teach that the Church has replaced Israel and the Jews have no future in G-d's plan. This theology guises itself under a number of names: "Dominion Theology"; "Kingdom Now Theology"; "Covenant Theology"; and "Reconstructionalist Theology". This theology is held to by all Postmillennialists, all amillennialists and some Premillennialists.

One of the major problems with replacement theology is that it falsely leaves G-d guilty of not keeping his promises to literal Israel to whom they pertain (Rom. 9:3-4). These promises include:

* PROMISE OF LAND (Gen. 12:7; 13:15-16; 17:7-8).

* PROMISE TO REGATHER ISRAEL AND RESTORE THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL WITH MESSIAH AS KING. (Deut. 30:1-5; Is. 9:6-7; 11:1-16; Jer. 23:5-6; see also: Deut 28:1-14; 2Sam. 7:4-14; 1Chron. 17; Ps. 89; Is. 2:1-4; 14:1; 25:1-27:13; 56:1-18; 60:1-22; 62:1-12; 65:17-25; 66:7-9; Jer. 16:14-15; 30:1-33:26; Ezkl. 33:1-39:29; 40:1-48:35; Hosea 11:1-14:9; Joel 2:18-3:21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:1-8ff; 7:11-20; Zeph. 3:9-20; Hag. 2:20-23; Zech. 14; Dan. 2:44.)

One of the key points of Replacement theology is its false claim that G-d has rejected Israel. The Scriptures, however, are very plain. G-d promised in the Tanak not to reject Israel, saying:

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day,
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,

Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar;
The LORD of hosts is His name:
"If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the LORD,
"Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease
From being a nation before Me forever."
Thus says the LORD,
If the heavens above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out below,
Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel
For all they have done." declares the LORD.
(Jer. 31:35-37)

G-d has also stated in the New Scriptures that he has not rejected Israel, as we read in Romans:

I say then, has G-d cast away His people? Certainly not!...
G-d has not cast away His people...
have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not!...
do not boast against the branches. But if you boast, remember
that you do not support the root, but the root supports you."
(Rom. 11: 1-2, 11, 18)

This "boasting" is Replacement theology which is twice condemned in the New Scriptures saying:

I know of the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not,
but are a congregation of Satan."
(Rev. 2:9; 3:9.)

For those who would promote replacement theology, remember "...do not boast against The branches ... you do not support the root, but the root supports you." (Rom. 11:18) for G-d says "I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a congregation of Satan." (Rev. 2:9; 3:9)

Church/Israel Dichotomy

Another misunderstanding of the Church/Israel relationship is known as "Church/Israel Dichotomy. Church/Israel dichotomy is the position held by Dispensational Premillennialists (called Dispensationalists). This teaching was first put forward by John Darby during the 19th Century.

Church/Israel Dichotomy teaches that the Church and Israel are two totally different groups with no members in common. According to this teaching, when a member of Israel (a Jew) becomes a member of the Church (a Christian) he is no longer a member of Israel (a Jew).

Church/Israel Dichotomy came about as a result of false Dispensationalist teachings. Dispensationalism teaches that the history of man can be broken down into various compartmentalized "ages" or "dispensations." One of these is called "The Age of Law", this "Age of Law" is said to have ended with the founding of the Church and the beginning of a "Church Age" in Acts chapter 2. During this "Church Age"

Dispensationalists teach that the Old Testament Law does not apply. This "Church Age" of no Law will, they say, end with the start of the seven year Tribulation (Dan. 9:27). The Dispensationalists admit that the Law is in effect during the Tribulation, since the sacrifices and offerings are continued during this time (Dan. 9:27). As a result Dispensationalists invented a Pre-Trib Rapture to separate the Church Age from the Tribulation so that the Church is raptured away and Israel remains for the Tribulation. To make this theory work, Dispensationalists had to make the Church and Israel two totally separate groups, so that everyone was either raptured away as part of the Church, or remained behind as Israel to enter the Tribulation. Thus Church/Israel Dichotomy was invented.

One of the verses used by Church/Israel Dichotomists is 1Cor. 10:32,

"Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the Church of God." The Dichotomy Theologians argue that these must be three distinct groups, with no common members. The truth is that there is no indication of this, for example "signs, wonders and miracles" (2Cor. 12:12) are not three distinct things with no common sets.

Another text used by Dichotomists is Eph. 2:14-16. However in this text we see only the destruction of enmity, not the birth of dichotomy.

Another verse used by Dichotomists is Col. 3:11 "...there is neither Greek nor Jew..." however, if we look at a parallel passage in Gal. 3:28 we also read "There is neither Jew nor Greek... neither male nor female..." Yet males and females continue to exist as a distinct group with differing obligations (see 1Tim. 2:12-14; Titus 2:3-5.) The true meaning of this text is that Jews and Gentiles are both saved in the same way (Acts. 15:11; Rom. 3:22; 10:12) and are therefore both part of the same Body of Messiah (1Cor. 12:13).

“One Faith Two Expression” Theology

This theory which is popular in many “Messianic Jewish” circles teaches that Messianic Judaism and Gentile Christianity are two authentic expressions of the one true faith. Messianic Judaism is the authentic Jewish expression of that faith and Gentile Christendom is the authentic Gentile expression of that faith. Thus it is widely taught in Messianic Judaism that Messianic Jews and Gentile Christians are united together in a single “Church”.

For example let us again examine the *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*. A circle graph on page 45 shows Messianic Jews as well as Gentiles and "Jews who are saved and freely choose to express their faith in a non-Jewish context." as being in the "Church" together. Stern then writes:

...the small circle represents the Jews and the large circle the Church, but now they overlap. The intersection of the two circles represents Messianic Jews. ... the remainder of the Church circle represents Gentile Christians.
(*Messianic Manifesto* page 46)

And a few pages later he writes:

The Messianic Jew has two non-neurotic roles to play in the Church. ... the issues raised in this book need to be brought to the attention of all in the Church, Gentile Christians as well as Messianic Jews. ... The second role he has to play is being instrumental in fostering Jewish evangelism, helping the Church...
(*Messianic Manifesto* p. 71)

The same view is repeated by Messianic Jewish Leader Daniel Juster on page 35 of his 1995 book *Jewish Roots*.

This ultimately implies that when Gentile Christianity violates Torah, observes Pagan festivals like Christmas, Easter etc; observe Sunday worship, place a steeple (phallic symbol) on their building etc. that these things are valid for their cultural expression of the one true faith and are on a par with Torah Observance, the Biblical festivals, the Seventh Day Sabbath etc.. Thus Pagan customs are placed as equal to the commandments of Elohim.

For example the Messianic Jewish book *Take Hold* has:

Question: How do I politely and without offense answer the question why one observes Saturday as the Shabbat instead of Sunday?

We offer this suggestion: There is nothing wrong with worshipping on Sunday. There is nothing biblically wrong with going to a place of worship on a Sunday and becoming as much involved as one desires.

It is, however, biblically incorrect to call Sunday, or any other day than the seventh day, "Shabbat". ...

Thus we suggest that you merely inform your friends (nicely, of course!) that you do not have a problem with worshipping on a Sunday just as long as they do not insist that it be called “the Sabbath.”

(**Take Hold**; Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz; pp. 239-240)

Nazarene Judaism has a totally different stance on these issues. Nazarene Judaism maintains that Torah Observance, the Jewish festivals Seventh Day Sabbath etc. are NOT JUST a Jewish expression of the one true faith. They are the ONLY expression of the one true faith while Christmas, Easter, Sunday Worship are pagan, apostate customs and NOT a Gentile expression of the one true faith.

Unlike much of Messianic Judaism, Nazarene Judaism does NOT accept Gentile Christianity as an alternate Gentile expression of the one true faith.

“Two House” Theology

Before discussing this section I want to say that there are various teachers teaching various things which they are calling “Two House” theology. There may be those who teach theologies which they call “Two House” theology but who do not agree with the “Two House” theology I am discussing in this section. However there is a theology being taught under the name of “Two House” theology which teaches that the Church and Israel are the two Houses of Israel. This theology maintains that the “Church” is Christianity and is Ephraim (“The House of Israel”) while “Israel” is Rabbinic Judaism and the “House of Judah”. One popular book which promotes “Two House” theology is *Restoring the Two Houses of Israel* by Eddie Chumney (1999). The back cover of this book reads in part:

Who are the two houses of Israel? ...
Today, they are known by the names of
Christianity (House of Israel) and Judaism (house of Judah).

After the death of Solomon the Kingdom of Israel was divided into a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom became known as the House of Israel; Joseph or Ephraim. The Southern Kingdom became known as the House of Judah. The Northern Kingdom rebelled against the rightful king, High Priest and Temple. They established their own non-Davidic King, their own High Priest and their own Temple at a new location in the Northern Kingdom. They were unwilling to submit to the rulership of the House of Judah. They, in effect, started their own new religion. An Ephraimite religion, under Ephraimite authority.

In Jeremiah Chapter 3 the two houses of Israel are discussed. Notice that Israel and Judah are allegorical sisters in this prophecy (Jer. 3:6-7) In Jer. 3:8 YHWH says:

And I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Yisra'el

had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Yehudah did not fear, but went and committed whoring too.
(Jer. 3:8 - The Scriptures Version)

However YHWH did not divorce Judah as well, as that would have left no remnant. Instead the Prophet Hosea compares the two Houses of Israel this way:

"Ephrayim has surrounded Me with lying,
and the house of Yisra'el with deceit.
But Yehudah is still wandering with El,
and is true to the Set-apart One."
(Hosea 11:12 - The Scriptures Version)

Now at this point I want to establish that there is only one true faith (Eph. 4:5) which was once and for all delivered to the set apart ones (Jude 1:3) and that one true faith is the Nazarene sect of Judaism.

This brings us to the encounter between Yeshua and an Ephraimite woman (a Samaritan). There is no doubt that this Samaritan woman is to be counted as an Ephraimite because she refers to "our father Jacob" (Jn. 4:12) and Yeshua makes no attempt to correct her on this point. (Note she mentions the two different places of worship on different mountains in 4:20). Then Yeshua tells her her religion is false and that the Jewish religion is the one true faith saying:

"You worship what you do not know.
We worship what we know,
because the deliverance is of the Yehudim.
"But the hour is coming, and now is,
when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth,
for the Father also does seek such to worship Him.
(Jn. 4:22-23 - The Scriptures Version)

Yeshua makes it clear that the "true worshipers" are the Jews who practice Judaism "in spirit and truth" as opposed to an Ephraimite religion. ("in spirit and truth" - a reference to the Torah - see Ps. 119:142, 151; Ezek. 36:27).

Now the question is: What is the prophetic hope of the House of Israel? Is there to be a last days restoration of a distinct and separate House of Israel (as opposed to the House of Judah) or is the hope of divorced Ephraim to be joined to the House of Judah?

One of the most beautiful prophecies of the reunion of the two houses of Israel is the "two sticks" prophecy in Ezekiel 37:15-20. In this prophecy each of the two houses of Israel are symbolized by two "sticks" which are brought together and made as one (Ezek. 37:15-18) the text goes on to specify that YHWH will:

...take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick,... (Ezek. 37:19)

Now lets look at another prophecy in Zech. 8:23:

Thus said YHWH of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all languages of the nations take hold, yea, they shall take hold of the edge of the garment of a man, a Yehudite, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you ."

Now lest anyone think that the "Jew" (Yehudite) in this passage is a certain Jew, such as the Messiah, I must point out that in the Hebrew the word "you" in "let us go with "you" and "Elohim is with you" is PLURAL and therefore refers not to an individual Jew, but to the House of Judah. No doubt the number "ten" here implies the lost ten tribes of Ephraim. Not that Ephraim says to Judah:

"let us [Ephraim] go with you [Judah]
for we [Ephraim] have heard that YHWH is with you [Judah]."

Finally let us look at the olive tree prophecy of Romans 11. This prophecy parallels the two "sticks" prophecy of Ezekiel 37 (note that the word STICK in Ezek. 37 is ETZ which also means "tree").

Rom. 9 begins the contrast of the "Jews" and "Gentiles" by quoting Hosea 2:25(23); 2:1 (1:10) in Rom. 9:25-26. But if we look up the context of the people "which were not my people" which he calls "my people" in Hosea we find that they are the "children of Israel" (Hosea 2:1 (1:10)) as opposed to "the children of Judah" (Hosea 2:2 (1:11)) So if Paul is quoting Hosea in context and contrasting Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 9:24) using Hosea 2:1-2 (1:10-11) then the "Jews" of Rom. 9:24 are the "Children of Judah" of Hosea 2:2 (1:11) and the "Gentiles" of Rom. 9:24 are the "children of Israel" of Hosea 2:1 (1:10). If this is true then as this contrasting pair advances into Rom. Chapter 11 the two trees are the two Houses.

Now the uncultivated olive tree in Romans 11 is clearly therefore Ephraim and the cultivated olive tree is clearly that of Judah. This prophecy tells us that branches from the tree/stick of Ephraim will be broken off and grafted into the tree/stick of Judah, are to be fed by the root of the tree/stick of Judah and are not to boast against the natural branches (Jews)."

As a Nazarene Jew I certainly encourage Ephraimites to "take hold" of the House of Judah, and be joined to the stick of Judah and grafted into the House of Judah. We know that many Ephraimites are doing just this. We also encourage Ephraim NOT to fall into

Ephraim's ancient error of attempting to establish a separate Ephraimite movement apart from Judaism.

The original followers of Yeshua were the ancient Nazarene sect of Judaism, the true House of Judah, and we invite Ephraimites to take hold, be joined to us and grafted into Judah rather than establish Ephraimite movements apart from Judah.

The Truth: The Assembly of Israel

Now having examined some of the various misunderstandings concerning the “Church” and Israel, let us examine the truth.

Now you might think, from examining most English translations of the New Testament that the English word “Church” must be a unique theological technical term which one would think would correspond to a unique theological technical term in the Greek NT (I refer to the Greek because that is the source text for most English NT editions). This is simply not the case. The English word “Church” which is a unique theological technical term, corresponds to the Greek word Ekklesia which is not a unique theological technical term at all, but simply a Greek word which means “assembly”. This same Greek word is used for “assembly” throughout the LXX (Greek version of the Tanak). This Greek word is even used to describe an unruly mob in Acts 19:32-41.

According to Webster’s English dictionary “Church” refers to “all Christians considered as a single body” or “a particular sect or denomination of Christians” (none of the other definitions are applicable here). So the English word “Church” refers to “all Christians” while EKKLESIA just means “assembly”. The English word “Church” actually comes from the Old English KIRK which was used to refer to pagan temples.

I want to emphasize that Christians have borrowed the word “Church” from paganism, used it as a technical term to refer to “Christians” and then inserted it as a technical term in the NT where no such technical term existed in the source text from which they were translating. Ekklesia does *not* mean “Church”. “Church” refers to a body of Christians while EKKLESIA just means “an assembly”.

So what “assembly” is generally referred to in the NT passages which are generally translated “Church”? Lets look at some clues:

1. The “Church” is not (as many claim) a body which was born in Acts chapter 2. Note that the new believers in Acts chapter 2 were “*added* to the church” (Acts 2:47 KJV) so the “Church” (actually “assembly”) already existed before Acts 2:47.
2. In Acts 7:38 the KJV refers to the Assembly of Israel in the wilderness as the “Church in the wilderness”.

3. In Colosians 1:18 and Eph. 1:22-23 the “church” (EKKLESIA) is identified as an allegorical “body of Messiah”.
4. In Matthew 2:15 Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1 “out of Egypt I have called my Son” in which “my Son” refers to Israel (Hosea 11:1) and which Matthew allegorically identifies as the Messiah.
5. Hosea 11:1 “out of Egypt I called my Son” (see item 5 above) refers back to Ex. 4:22-23 in which Israel is identified as YHWH’s “firstborn son”.
6. Col. 1:18 identifies the “church” with the “body [of Messiah]” and identifies the Messiah as the “firstborn”.
7. Hebrews 12:23 refers to the “church” as the “church of the firstborn” and ties this to Israel at Mount Sinai.
8. Wherever the Tanak refers to “The Assembly of Israel” the LXX (ancient Greek version of the Tanak) translates the word “assembly” as EKKLESIA.

From these points taken together we may conclude that in general, when the NT refers to the so-called “Church” it is not referring to a group of Christians, but to the “Assembly of Israel” who are the allegorical body of Messiah (the allegorical Son) the Assembly of the firstborn.

It is important to note that this concept differs from replacement theology in a very important way. Replacement theology identifies the “Church” as an entity born in Acts 2 which is made up of Christians, a body which replaces Israel. By contrast Nazarene theology maintains that the Church is not identifiable with Christians, was not born in Acts chapter 2 and does not replace Israel. Instead the word “church” is a mistranslation of “assembly” and refers to the Assembly of Israel which continues to be Israel and is not replaced by a new Christian body. (One must however bear in mind that by this thinking the Nazarene sect of Judaism is the true representative of Judaism and not Rabbinic Judaism).

*They disagree with Jews
because they have come to faith in Messiah...
-Epiphanius 29*

Chapter 9

Yeshua the Messiah

Yeshua MUST be Messiah (regardless of whether or not any other "Messianic Prophecies" are validly speaking of Yeshua)

Isaiah 29 ties the apostasy of Judah to a sealed book (29:10-12) but with the revealing of that sealed book comes an enlightenment and restoration (29:18).

Now it is very important to realize that according to Isaiah 29 our people (Judah) are in a state of general blindness/slumber until the sealed book is revealed (29:10-14, 18).

Now Isaiah does not tell us what the book is or when it is revealed. However that information is given elsewhere in the Tanak. Daniel writes of his own book:

But you, O Daniel, shut up the words,
and seal the book to the time of the end...
...Go your way Daniel: for the words are closed up
and sealed till the time of the end.
(Dan. 12:4, 10)

So this "sealed book" would seem to be at least in part, the Book of Daniel and it seems to be come unsealed in the last days. Remember Daniel wrote after the days of Isaiah so Daniel knew about the sealed book of Is. 29:10-12, 18 when he wrote Dan. 12:4, 10.

So lets bring together Is. 29:10-14, 18 with Daniel 12:4, 10. What do we learn from these two sections of the Tanak taken together? We learn that our people Judah are in an apostasy until some information hidden in the Book of Daniel (and perhaps some other books) is revealed in the last days and the revealing of that information opens their eyes.

This means that mainline Judaism is in apostasy but in the last days there is a restoration of Judah when certain hidden (sealed) information in Daniel is revealed.

So what information is sealed in Daniel? The restoration of our people is usually tied to Messiah... could this hidden information in Daniel relate to the identity of Messiah?

Interesting the Talmud states:

The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Jonathon ben Uzziel under the guidance of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi... and a Bat Kol (voice from heaven) came forth and exclaimed, "Who is this that has revealed My secrets to mankind?"... He further sought to reveal by a Targum the inner meaning of the Ketuvim, but a bat kol went forth and said, "Enough!". What was the reason?-- Because the date of the Messiah is foretold in it.

(Babylonian Talmud; b.Megillah 3a)

Now the only prophetic book of the Ketuvim is Daniel and this is also a book of the Ketuvim for which no Targum was evr made. The following quote from Josephus also supports the theory that Daniel is the book in question:

We believe that Daniel conversed with God; for he did not only prophecy of future events, as did the other prophets, but also determined the time of their accomplishment.

(Josephus; Antiquities 10:11:7)

Now the Qumran community found just this information (the time of the Messiah) in the Book of Daniel:

The visitation is the Day of Salvation that He has decreed through Isaiah the prophet concerning all the captives, inasmuch as Scripture says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion "Your ELOHIM reigns"." (Isa. 52;7)

This scriptures interpretation : "the mountains" are the prophets, they who were sent to proclaim God`s truth and to prophesy to all Israel. "The messengers" is the Anointed of the spirit, of whom Daniel spoke; "After the sixty-two weeks, a Messiah shall be cut off" (Dan. 9;26)

(From 11Q13)

So now we have learned that there is good reason to believe that the sealed information in the Book of Daniel which opens the eyes of Judah when it is revealed in the last days is the time of Messiah sealed up in Daniel 9:24-27.

Now lets recap:

Anyone can see from Is. 29 that the apostasy of Judah ends with the revealing of a sealed book.

Anyone can see from Daniel 12 that this sealed book is (at least in part) the Book of Daniel.

Anyone can see that the information sealed up in Daniel is (at least in part) the time of Messiah.

Anyone can see that this information is to be found in Daniel 9.

Now here is Daniel 9 unsealed:

DAN 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

DAN 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel has been doing some Tanak study. He has been reading Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10. He has read about the 70 year exile.

The reason for a 70 year captivity had been that YHWH was punishing us for having forsaken the Torah. He punished us with the curses of Deut 28-29 and Lev. 26 as the Torah had warned us. The key issue here was that of the violation of the Sabbath of the Land (Ex. 21:2; 23:11; Lev. 25:2, 20; 26:2, 34; Deut. 15:1)

According to the Torah, if we as a people did not keep the sabbath of the land every seven years we would be cursed (Lev. 26 esp. verse 34)

DAN 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

DAN 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

DAN 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

DAN 9:6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

DAN 9:7 O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

DAN 9:8 O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

DAN 9:9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

DAN 9:10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

DAN 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

DAN 9:12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

DAN 9:13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

DAN 9:14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

DAN 9:15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

DAN 9:16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

DAN 9:17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

DAN 9:18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

DAN 9:19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

Daniel is very concerned. It has been 70 years and he wants to go home! He is a very old man by now. But he has worried because he knows his Torah. He knows that the Torah warns that if Israel still does not repent after the curse is enacted that Israel will have the punishment multiplied by seven (Lev. 26:18) Daniel is hoping that YHWH will not be enacting the next level punishment. For that would mean $70 * 7$ or another 490 years!

DAN 9:20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

DAN 9:21 Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

DAN 9:22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

DAN 9:23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

DAN 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Daniel learns that there will indeed be at least another 490 years of curses for Israel. The "weeks" here are not seven DAYS but seven YEARS. In fact the Hebrew word here actually just means "seven [somethings]"

DAN 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

7 "weeks" here would be 49 years (a Jubilee cycle) plus threescore and two weeks ($3*20+2=62$) is 69 "weeks" or 483 years.

But remember we are not counting years here but actual sabbath year cycles which are specific seven year blocks. In other words this is actually a count of how many sabbath year cycle blocks fall between these two points.

Our starting point is "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" which is Ezra 7:11-16 and gives us a start date of 457 BCE. Between that date and the Messiah 69 sabbath year cycle blocks would fall.

DAN 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Messiah is cut off after the 62 "weeks" which follow the 7 weeks. This elaboration allows us to see that the division of these two blocks (the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks) was to show that after the 7 weeks "the street shall be built again, and the wall" but the Messiah would not come until after the 62 week block following that.

The Messiah would be "cut off" at that time. This is an idiom meaning that he would be executed. He would not be executed for himself, but for others. Then the people of a prince destroy Jerusalem after that time.

DAN 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Remember there were 490 years or 70 "weeks" but we have so far covered only 483 (or 69 "weeks").

This is because the big test of our trust in YHWH is the Sabbath of the land. This is where Israel SHOWS our trust in YHWH by trusting him to provide. The curse would not end until we reinstitute the sabbath of the land (2Chr. 36:21).

So YHWH in his infinite mercy would send the Messiah seven years BEFORE the 490 years would end to call us to repent and return to Torah in time to reinstitute the sabbath of the land BEFORE the 490 years are over. (See my paper THE KINGDOM OFFER)

The curse will not end until we as a people repent and show that by reinstituting the sabbath of the land. When we do that we will finally kick off the last seven years of the curse we have lived with all of this time.

There is so much to learn from this chapter. Including the nature of the Kingdom offer and the layout of the last seven years. But most importantly is the time that the Messiah would come and be "cut off".

Now if our start point is 457 BCE and 69 "weeks" must fall between this point and the death of Messiah, then Messiah would have to be executed sometime in a window from 26 C.E. to 40 C.E. (depending on how the sabbath year cycles fall.

So if Yeshua was NOT the Messiah that would be "cut off, but not for himself" during that window... then who was?

Messiah would be executed in a window of time somewhere between 26 and 44 C.E.. And he would arrive in accordance to the completion of a series of sabbath-year-cycles and jubilee cycles. Now these cycles indicate "the year of release". So let's look for more clues about this Messiah who is cut off at such a time.

Let's look at Isaiah 60:22-61:2

60:22 A little one shall become a thousand,
and a small one a strong nation:

I YHWH will hasten it in its time.

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation:" is the Kingdom represented by a stone in Dan. 2:34-35, 45 which "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 3:35).

"I YHWH will hasten it in its time." refers to the "Kingdom offer"

61:1 The Spirit of Adonai YHWH is upon me;
because YHWH has anointed me to proclaim

good tidings to the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of YHWH, and the day of vengeance of our ELOHIM, to comfort all who mourn;

Here we have an anointed one, a "Messiah" who comes in accordance with the jubilee and seven year cycles to proclaim liberty to captives. It is also significant as we will soon find that he makes this proclamation to "Zion" (Is. 61:3). This Messiah comes to REDEEM.

Lets see if Isaiah speaks any more about this figure who makes a proclamation of redemption to Zion. In Is. 52:7 we also read about a figure who also proclaims good tidings to Zion. This proclamation appears in Is. 53 and also involves one who comes to redeem (Is. 53:4-5, 11-12) and is cut off, but not for himself (53:8; 53:4-5, 11-12) just like the figure in Daniel. The figure must be the Messiah of Daniel 9 and Is. 61.

I wonder how this Messiah dies? Perhaps the prophets give me some clue. Zechariah writes:

12:10 ...they shall look upon me whom they have pierced...

According to both the Talmud (b.Sukkot 52a) and the Targum, this "pierced one" is the Messiah. Now Zechariah 12:10 takes place at the coming of Messiah as king, but they notice that he was the same one whom they had "pierced" or "thrust through". Lets read on and see if Zechariah gives us any clues as to who this is and just how he was pierced. As we read further Zech 12:10-14 speaks of the people mourning over having pierced this guy. Zech 13: 1-4 takes place at the initiation of the Messianic age. The Messiah is judging idolaters and false prophets. No wonder they are now mourning over this pierced one! Then in verses 5-6 we get a detailed scene of one of these judgements:

5 And he shall say, "I am no prophet, I am a husbandman; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth."

6 And he [the defendant] shall say to him [Messiah], "What are these wounds in your hands?"

Then he [the Messiah] shall answer: "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

Zech 13:6 points us back to 12:10 regarding how they mourn when they see he is the pierced one.

So now we have a Messiah who would be "cut off" sometime between 26 and 44 C.E. not for himself but to redeem others. This execution would involve having his hands pierced.

Now lets look at Zech. 13:2. Notice that this guy will "cut off the names of the idols out of the land" (13:2). Sounds like the same guy about whom Micah 5:13 says "Your

graven images also will I cut off". This guy is born in Beit-Lechem (Bethlehem) according to Micah 5:2 (and the Targum to Micah 5:2 says this is Messiah).

OK lets summarize:

According to Isaiah 29 our people (Judah) are in a state of general blindness/slumber until the sealed book is revealed (29:10-14, 18).

Daniel tells us that his book is sealed until the last days (Dan. 12)

The sealed information in Daniel's book would appear to be the time of Messiah in Dan. 9.

Daniel 9 unsealed reveals to us that Messiah would be "cut off" for others sometime between 26 and 44 CE.

This passage points us to various other prophecies about this figure which also tell us that he is born in Beit-Lechem, and executed by having his hands pierced.

Who could this be?

Conclusion

So where do we go from here in the restoration of Nazarene Judaism? There is a need for more more Nazarene books, websites an institutions. Consider starting a Nazarene Torah study in your home. We need to train up Nazarene leaders and establish Nazarene congregations. Currently there are Nazarene Torah studies and congregations meeting throughout the USA, South Africa, Indonesia, Canada and even Israel. Beit Netzarim Yeshiva is training up a generation of Nazarene Rabbis. Books need to be written on various related subjects. More research needs to be done in areas such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Second Temple Era Judaism, Rabbinic Literature, Jewish Hermeneutics, Hebrew and Aramaic NT origins as well as Nazarene History imbedded in the writings of the Rabbis and so-called “Church Fathers.”

This book is not the end of this research it is the beginning.

*The Jews insist upon a literal interpretation
of the Scripture based on thirteen rules,
but we know that the spiritual interpretation
is far superior.
-Jerome; Fourth Century*

Appendix 1

Hermeneutics

"**Hermeneutics**" comes from the Greek words "**hermes**" (message) and "**pneuma**" (spirit) meaning literally "[to obtain] the message of the Spirit. Hermeneutics is "the study of the methodological principles of interpretation." Now many object to the concept of "iterpreting" the Bible. However the word "interpret" means "to explain or tell the meaning of: present in understandable terms." It is therefore very important that we "interpret" the Bible. To interpret the Bible means to "understand" the Bible. Now while there are some who would say that the Bible does not need to be interpreted, who would argue that the Bible should not be understood?

Jewish Hermeneutics vs. Christian Hermeneutics

Now one of the major differences between Christianity and Judaism lies in the area of hermeneutics. Judaism has a very systematic refined rules understanding the Scriptures. Christianity differs not in having an alternate set of agreed upon rules, but in having no agreed upon rules whatsoever! This distinction was well illustrated by the fourth century Christian "Church Father" Jerome when he wrote:

The Jews insist upon a literal interpretation
of the Scripture based on thirteen rules,
but we know that the spiritual interpretation
is far superior.

The New Testament itself actually advocates the use of hermeneutic rules. Paul writes:

Study to show yourself approved to Elohim,
a workman that needs not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the Word of Truth.
(2Tim. 2:15)

Notice that Paul here indicates that there is a right way to interpret the scriptures. This would also therefore imply that there is a "wrong" way to interpret the scriptures (see 2Pt. 3:15-17). Now if there is a right way and a wrong way to interpret the scriptures, then that would also imply that there are rules.

Now before we begin to learn those rules we must first learn some basic terms and concepts.

Being Objective

To begin with it is important to understand the difference between "*objective*" and "*subjective*." "Objective" means "existing independent of mind" while "subjective" indicates that which comes from a person's point of view." That which is objective is factual without being dependent on any person's perspective. While that which is subjective is dependent on a point of view. Facts are objective. Opinions are subjective. The New Testament tells us that we should understand the scriptures objectively rather than subjectively:

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture
is of any private interpretation;
for prophecy never came by the will of man,
but set-apart men of Eloah spoke
as they were moved by the Ruach HaKodesh.
(1Peter 1:20-21)

Many in Christendom however have developed do-it-yourself do-your-own-thing interpretation. They will often have Bible studies in which they ask "what does this verse mean to you?" Many will often say "to me this verse means..." The Jewish response is to ask "Ok, so if you were not here what would this verse mean?"

Two other terms which we should cover are *eisegesis* and *exegesis*:

Eisegesis: Reading ones own ideas into a text.

Exegesis: Drawing ideas out of the text.

Making Arguments

In interpreting the text you will generally find yourself formulating "*arguments*." In this case the term "argument" does not indicate a heated discussion. In hermeneutics an "argument" is a collection of propositions, one of which (the conclusion) is claimed to follow from the others (the premisses). In biblical hermeneutics an argument is also called an *exegesis*.

An argument is generally formulated in two parts. The first is called the "*premiss*" and the second is the "*conclusion*". The proposition which is claimed to follow from the other proposition is the conclusion. An argument can usually be laid out in an "if/then" format as follows:

If the premises is true
then the conclusion must be true.

(however the words "if" and "then" may not actually appear)

In Rabbinic literature an argument is called a "*din*" (judgement); a premiss is called "*nadon melammed*," (that which teaches) "*tehillat din*," (starting point of the judgement) or "*Ikra din*" (basic point of the judgement) and a conclusion is called "*ba min hadin*," (that which comes from judgement) "*sof din*" (the end of the judgement) or "*lamed*" (a learned thing).

PaRDeS: Four Levels for Understanding the Scriptures

The Hebrew/Aramaic word PARDES is spelled in Hebrew and Aramaic without vowels as PRDS. PaRDeS refers to a park or garden, esp. the Garden of Eden. The word appears three times in the Aramaic New Testament (Lk. 23:43; 2Cor. 12:4 & Rev. 2:7).

The word PRDS is used in Jewish hermeneutics as an acronym (called in Judaism "notarikon"¹²²) for:

[P]ashat (Heb. "simple")

[R]emez (Heb. "hint")

[D]rash (Heb. "search")

[S]od (Heb. "hidden")

In Jewish hermeneutics these four terms indicate the four levels of understanding of the scriptures. Each layer becomes deeper and more intense than the last. Digging deeper and deeper into these four levels of understanding is like digging through the layers of an onion. Each layer is more intense than the last.

THE PASHAT

¹²² See the 30th Rule of Eliezer in Chapter 6

The first level of understanding is PASHAT (simple). The Pashat is the simple, basic, literal meaning of the text. It is similar to what Protestant hermeneutics calls "Gramatical Historical Exogesis" and also similar to what Protestant Heremeneutics calls "The Literal Principle." Generally speaking the Pashat of a passage is either an axium itself or the conclusion of a sound deductive argement.

The PASHAT is the plain, simple meaning of the text; understanding scripture in its natural, normal sence using the customary meanings of the words being used, in accordance with the primary exegetical rule in the Talmud that no passage loses its PASHAT (b.Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a). While there is figurative language (like Ps. 36:7) symbolism (like Rom. 5:14); allegory (like Gal. 4:19-31) and hidden meanings (like Rev. 13:18; see also 1Cor. 2:7) in the Scriptures, the first thing to look for is the literal meaning or PASHAT.

The following rules of thumb can be used to determine if a passage is figurative and therefore figurative even in its PASHAT:

1. When an inanimate object is used to describe a living being, the statement is figurative.

For Example: "The name of YHWH is a strong tower..." (Prov. 18:10)

2. When life and action are attributed to an inanimate object the statement is figurative.

For Example: "...the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Isaiah 55:12)

3. When an expression is out of character with the thing described, the statement is figurative.

For Example: "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of your wings," (Ps. 17:8)

The PASHAT is the keystone of Scripture understanding. If we discard the PASHAT we lose any real chance of an accurate understanding. We are left with a no-holds-barred game of pure imagination in which we are no longer objectively deriving meaning from the Scriptures (exogesis), but subjectively reading meaning into the scriptures (eisogesis) (see 2Pt. 1:20-21; 1Tim. 4:3-4). Thus the Talmud twice warns us:

"No passage loses its PASHAT"
(b.Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a).

THE REMEZ

The next level of understanding is called in Hebrew REMEZ (hint). This is the implied meaning of the text.

A conclusion reached through inductive reasoning would be a REMEZ understanding. On the REMEZ level details in the text are often regarded as implying a deeper truth than that conveyed by its PASHAT. In many cases a "corollary" would be a REMEZ understanding. A corollary is a sound conclusion that is drawn from a premis which was itself the conclusion of another sound argument. An example of implied "REMEZ" meaning may be found in Ex. 21:26-26-27 where we are told of our liability regarding eyes and teeth. By the "REMEZ" understanding we know that this liability also applies to other parts of the body as well.

THE DRASH

The next level of understanding the Scriptures is called in Hebrew "drash" meaning "search", this is the allagorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. On the DRASH level creativity is used to search the text in relation to the rest of the Scriptures, other literature, or life itself in such a way as to develop an allagorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. This process often involves eisogesis (reading ideas into the text) of the text but should be constrained by having some foundation in sound exegesis as well. The term "midrash" generally refers to a commentary which is built upon drash understandings.

Three important rules of thumb in utilizing the drash level of understanding a scripture are:

[1] A drash understanding can not be used to strip a passage of its PASHAT meaning, nor may any such understanding contradict any PASHAT meaning of any other scripture passage. As the Talmud states "No passage loses its PASHAT." (b. Shab. 63a; b.Yeb. 24a)

[2] Let scripture interpret scripture.
Look for the scriptures themselves to define the componets of an allegory.

For example Mt. 13:3-9 gives the parable of the seed. One need not speculate about what the elements of this parable mean because the text goes on in 13:18-23 to define the meanings of

the primary elements of this parable.

Another Example: Rev. 1:12-16 mentions seven candlesticks and seven stars. Rev. 1:20 tells us what they represent.

Another example: Rev. 17:2-8 mentions seven heads, seven mountains, a beast with ten horns, a woman and waters. Rev. 17:9-18 explains what all of these elements refer to.

[3] The primary components of an allegory represent specific realities. We should limit ourselves to these primary components when understanding the text.

SOME EXAMPLES OF DRASH UNDERSTANDINGS:

Mt. 2:14-15 gives a drash understanding of Hosea 11:1:

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of YHWH by the prophet, saying: "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Now if we go look at Hosea 11:1 we will see that in the PASHAT the "son" of Hosea 11:1 is Israel:

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

This is a drash use of the text which allegorically likens Messiah to Israel.

Rom. 5:14 (14-21) gives a drash understanding of Gen. 3:1-24 comparing Adam with Messiah.

"Puffed up" in I Cor. 4:6 implies a drash understanding of unleavened bread (see Exodus 12).

Gal. 4:24(21-31) gives a drash understanding of Gen. 17-22 comparing Sarah and Isaac with the Torah and comparing Hagar and Ishmael with the "under the law" heresy.

Col 2:17 indicates a drash level meaning to the Jewish festivals.

Heb. 8:5 gives a drash understanding which compares the Levitical priesthood with the priesthood of Messiah.

Heb. 9:9, 24 gives a drash on the Tabernacle which compares the Tabernacle with the heavenly holy of holies.

Heb. 10:1 gives a drash understanding which compares elements of the Torah with the death of Messiah.

Heb. 11:19 gives a drash understanding of Gen. 22:1f

1Pt. 3:21 gives a drash understanding of the events in Gen. 6-9

SOD

The final level of understanding the Scriptures is called in Hebrew "SOD" meaning "hidden". This understanding is the hidden, secret or mystic meaning of a text. (See I Cor. 2:7-16 esp. 2:7). This process often involves returning the letters of a word to their prime-material state and giving them new form in order to reveal a hidden meaning. An example may be found in Rev. 13:18 where the identity of the Beast is expressed by its numeric value 666. As on the drash level this process often involves eisogesis (reading ideas into the text) of the text but should be constrained by having some foundation in sound exegesis as well. See the 29th rule of Eliezer in Chapter 6.

THE SEVEN RULES OF HILLEL

The Seven Rules of Hillel existed long before Hillel, but Hillel was the first to write them down. Hillel and Shamai were competitive leading figures in Judaism during the days of Y'shua's youth. Hillel was known for teaching the Spirit of the Law and Shamai was known for teaching the letter of the Law. Whole books have been written about the similarities between the teachings of Y'shua and those of Hillel. Y'shua's teaching largely followed that of the School of Hillel rather than that of the School of Shamai.

For example, Y'shua's famous "golden rule":

Whatever you would that men should do to you,
do you even to them,
for this is the Torah and the Prophets.
(Mt. 7:12)

This reads very closely with Hillel's famous statement:

What is hateful to you,
do not do to your neighbour
that is the whole Torah...
(b.Shabbat 31a)

Upon Hillel's death the mantle of the School of Hillel was passed to his son Simeon. Upon Simon's death the mantle of the school of Hillel passed to Gamliel. This Gamliel spoke in defense of the early Nazarenes (Acts 5:34-39) he was the teacher of Shaul/Paul (Acts 22:3). In 2Tim. 2:15 Paul speaks of "rightly dividing the word of truth." What did Paul mean by this? Was he saying that there were right and wrong ways to interpret the scriptures? Did Paul believe there were actual rules to be followed when interpreting (understanding) the Scriptures? Was Paul speaking of the Seven Rules of Hillel? Paul was certainly taught these rules in the School of Hillel by Hillel's own grandson Gamliel. When we examine Paul's writings we will see that they are filled with usages of Hillel's Seven Rules (several examples appear below). It would appear then that the Seven Rules of Hillel are at least part of what Paul was speaking of when he spoke of "rightly dividing the Word of Truth." (2Tim. 2:15). As with any rules it is important when using the rules, that your exegesis is sound.

The Seven Rules of Hillel:

The First Rule of Hillel

Kal V'Khomer (light and heavy)

Kal v'khomer is the first of the seven rules for understanding the scriptures written by Hillel. Hillel did not invent the rules, in fact they are so old we see them used in the Tenach.

The kol v'komer thoughtform is used to make an argument from lesser weight based on one of greater weight. It may be expressed as:

If X is true of Y
then how much more X must be true of Z
(Where Z is of greater weight than Y)

The conclusion of a kol v'khomer argument is often, but not always, signalled by a phrase like "how much more..."

The Rabbinical writers recognize two forms of kol v'khomer:

kal v'khomer meforash - In this form the kal v'chomer argument appears explicitly.

kal v'khomer satum - In which the kal v'khomer argument is only implied.

There are several examples of kal v'khomer in the Tenach:

Behold the righteous shall be recompensed
in the earth:
much more the wicked and the sinner.
(Prov. 11:31)

And:

If you have run with footmen
and they have wearied you,
then how can you contend with horses?
(Jer. 12:5a)

Other Tenach examples to look at:

Dt. 31:27; 1Sam. 23:3; Jer. 12:5b;
Ezkl. 15:5; Esther 9:12

There are also many examples of this usage in Rabbinic literature:

...His body shall not remain all night on the tree,
but you will surely bury him on the same day,
for he who is hanged is a curse against God.
(Dt. 21:23)... If thus is the Omnipresent distressed
on account of the blood of the wicked when it is
shed, how much more so on account of the blood
of the righteous!...
(m.Sanhedrin 6:4-5)

Other examples:

Num. 12:14 & b. BK 25a

Lev. 21:16-21 & Num. 8:24-25 & b.Hul. 24a

There is also an important limitation to the *kal v'khomer* thoughtform. This is the *dayo* (enough) principle. This is that the conclusion of an argument is satisfied when it is like the major premis. In other words the conclusion is equalized to the premise and neither a stricter nor a more lenient view is to be taken. As the Mishna states:

It is sufficient for the inferred law
to be as strict as that from which it is inferred

(m.BK 2:5)

In the Gemara to this portion of the Mishna Rabbi Tarfon rejected the *dayo* principle in certain cases (b.BK 25a).

There are several examples of kal v'khomer in the New Testament.

Y'shua often uses the kal v'khomer form of argument. For example:

If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath,
so that the Law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with
me because
I made a man completely well on the sabbath?
(Jn. 7:23)

And:

What man is there among you
who has one sheep,
and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath,
will not lay hold of it and lift it out?
Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful
to do good on the Sabbath.
(Mt. 12:11-12)

Other examples of Y'shua's usage of kal v'khomer are:

Mt. 6:26, 30 = Lk. 12:24, 28
Mt. 7:11 = Lk. 11:13
Mt. 10:25 & Jn. 15:18-20
Mt. 12:12 & Jn. 7:23

Paul uses kal v'khomer in:

Rom. 5:8-9, 10, 15, 17; 11:12, 24
1Cor. 9:11-12; 12:22
2Cor. 3:7-9, 11
Philip. 2:12
Phil. 1:16
Heb. 2:2-3; 9:13-14; 10:28-29; 12:9, 25

The Second Rule of Hillel

G'zerah Shavah
(Equivalence of expressions)

An analogy is made between two separate texts on the basis of a similar phrase, word or root.

Tenakh example:

By comparing 1Sam. 1:10 to Judges 13:5 using the phrase "no razor shall touch his head" we may conclude that Samuel, like Samson, was a nazirite.

"New Testament" example:

In Hebrews 3:6-4:13 Paul compares Ps. 95:7-11 = Heb. 3:7-11 to Gen. 2:2 = Heb. 4:4 based on the words "works" and "day"/"today" ("today" in Hebrew is literally "the day"). Paul uses this exegesis to conclude that there will be 6,000 years of this world followed by a 1,000 year shabbat.

This involves using information from one such passage to assist in interpreting the other. This is not quite the same thing as inferring a rule based on the two passages together. That is the fourth Rule of Hillel.

In modern Rabbinic Judaism the Second Rule of Hillel is somewhat restrained. Due to the fact that the rule can be easily abused it has been determined in modern Rabbinic Judaism that this argument can only be used if you received it from your teacher. However this is a very useful rule and there is no reason to restrict this rule so long as the exegesis derived from it is sound.

The Third Rule of Hillel

Binyan ab mikathub echad

(Building of the father from one text)

One explicit passage serves as a premise or starting point so as to constitute a rule (father) for all similar passages or cases.

Example:

In the Book of Hebrews (9:11-22) Paul creates a rule from Ex. 24:8 (=Heb. 9:20) that "blood" is required in the making of a covenant. Since blood was required in making the Mosaic Covenant, Paul argues that blood is required in the renewing of the Covenant or the "New Covenant" (Jer. 31:31-34)

The Fourth Rule of Hillel

Binyan ab mishene kethubim

(Building of the father from two or more texts)

Two texts or provisions in a text serve as a premise for a general conclusion.

A Tenach example:

Ex. 21:26-27 speaks of only eyes and teeth, however by use of the fourth rule of Hillel we can recognize that the provision applies to other body parts as well.

A "New Testament" example:

In Heb. 1:5-14 Paul cites:

Ps. 2:7 = Heb. 1:5
2Sam. 7:14 = Heb. 1:5
Deut. 32:43/Ps. 97:7/(Neh. 9:6) = Heb. 1:6
Ps. 104:4 = Heb. 1:7
Ps. 45:6-7 = Heb. 1:8-9
Ps. 102:25-27 = Heb. 1:10-12
Ps. 110:1 = Heb. 1:13

in order to build a rule that the Messiah is of a higher order than angels.

The Fifth Rule of Hillel

Kelal uferat

(the general and the particular)

A general statement is first made and is followed by a single remark which particularizes the general principle.

When a general principle precedes a specific example it is said that there is nothing in the general which is not in the specific. The general principle adds nothing, it simply provides the framework of logic. One example from the Tanak is in the Torah command regarding losses:

In like manner shall you do with his ass
and so shall you do with his raiment
and with any lost thing of your brother's.

The appearance of the general principle implies that the details given are just examples, and that the precept actually applies to all types of losses, without exception.

A New Testament Example:

Woe to you, scribes and P'rushim, hypocrites!
which tithe mint, and rue, and cummin,
and have neglected those things which are
weightiest in the Torah:

Judgement, loving-kindness and trust.
Those things ought you to have done,
neither to have rejected these.
(Mt. 23:23)

We can determine by using this rule that judgement, loving-kindness and trust are just examples and that the precept presented here applies to all of the "things which are weightiest in the Torah."

The Sixth Rule of Hillel

Kayotze bo mimekom akhar
(analogy made from another passage)

Two passages may seem to conflict until a third resolves the apparant conflict.

Tenach examples:

Lev 1:1 "out of the tent of meeting" and

Ex. 25:22 "from above the ark of the covenant between the chrubim" seem to disagree until we examine Num. 7:89 where we learn that Moses entered the tent of meeting to hear YHWH speaking from between the cherubim.

1Chron. 27:1 explains the numerical disagreement between
2Sam. 24:9 and 1Chron. 21:5.

Ex. 19:20 "YHWH came down upon Mount Sinai"

seems to disagree with:

Dt. 4:36 "Out of Heaven He let you hear His voice"

An expanation is given in Sifra 1:7 which points out that
Ex. 20:19 (20:22 in some editions) reconciles the two by telling us that G-d brought the heavens down to the mount and spoke.

"New Testament" example:

Paul shows that the following Tenach passages SEEM to conflict:

The just shall live by faith
Rom. 1:17 = Hab. 2:4)

with

There is none righteous, no, not one...
(Rom. 3:10 = Ps. 14:1-3= Ps. 53:1-3; Eccl. 7:20)

and:

[G-d] will render to each one according to his deeds.
(Rom. 2:6 = Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12)

with

Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;
Blessed is the man whom YHWH
shall not impute sin.
(Rom. 4:7-8 = Ps. 32:1-2)

Paul resolves the apparant conflict
by citing Gen. 15:6
(in Rom. 4:3, 22):

Abraham believed G-d,
and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

Thus Paul resloves the apparant conflict by showing that under certain circumstances, belief/faith/trust (same word in Hebrew) can act as a substitute for righteousness/being just (same word in Hebrew).

The Seventh Rule of Hillel

Davar hilmad me'anino
(Explanation obtained from context)

Some pointers:

1. Who is speaking?
2. Who is being spoken to?
3. Obtaining context from poetic forms
4. Use the overall context to understand the passage.

Example:

Gal 5:2 says "... if you be circumcised, Messiah shall profit you nothing."

Christians often take this out of context.

Question: Who is speaking?

Answer: Paul

Question: Who is being spoken to? Who does "you" refer to?

Answer is in Gal. 4:21 "you who desire to be under the law"

("under the law" is a term Paul uses to describe a false teaching that was never true; it does not refer to the "Old Testament" system).

Thus the "you" in Gal. 5:2 refers to a group of people who were wanting to enter a false theology, it does not refer to me and you.

THE THIRTEEN RULES OF ISHMAEL

Now the Seven Rules of Hillel are of great importance to us because:

1. They were first penned by Hillel BEFORE Messiah's coming
2. They are used by Messiah and other NT writers.
3. Paul speaks of "rightly dividing the word" and since he was a student of Gamliel (grandson of Hillel) and since he used the seven rules of Hillel, it appears that "rightly dividing" referred at least in part, to the seven rules of Hillel.

Now the 13 rules of Ishmael were first penned by Ishmael AFTER the first century (though they likely existed long before they were penned). However, they are important to us none the less for two reasons:

1. They seem to have some intrinsic value.
2. We must be able follow the reasoning of the Rabbis of the Mishna and the Talmud who often rely on these rules.

(All of the examples I will give on the 13 rules of Ishmael are from Rabbinic halakhah and may or may not be sound arguments.)

As with the use of any such rules the thirteen rules of Ishamael should be used to formulate sound arguments.

THE THIRTEEN RULES OF ISHMAEL

The First Rule of Ishmael
(same as 1st rule of Hillel)

The Second Rule of Ishmael
(same as 2nd rule of Hillel)

The Third Rule of Ishmael
(same as 3rd & 4th rules of Hillel)

The Fourth Rule of Ishmael
(same as 5th rule of Hillel)

The Fifth Rule of Ishmael
perat ukhelal
(particular and general)

If the specific instances are stated first and are followed by the general category, instances other than the particular ones mentioned are included.

EXAMPLE: Ex. 22:9 "...an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, OR ANY BEAST" beasts other than those specified are included.

The Sixth Rule of Ishmael
kelal uferat ukhelal i attah dan ella ke-ein ha-perat
(general, particular, general)

If a general category are stated first and is followed by specific instances and then a general category then you may derive only things similar to those specified.

EXAMPLE: Dt. 14:26 Other things than those specified in Dt. 14:26 may be purchased, but only if they are food or drink like those specified.

The Seventh Rule of Ishmael

kelal she-hu tzarikh liferat uferat she-hu tzarikh li-khelal
(The general requires the particular and the particular the general)

Specification is provided by taking the general and the particular together, each requiring the other.

EXAMPLE: "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn (masc.)" (Dt. 15:19) with "whatsoever opens the womb" (Ex. 13:2) A firstborn male would have been understood as included in the term "all the firstborn" even if a female had previously been born to that mother. Thus the particular limiting expression "whatever opens the womb" is stated. But this term would not have excluded one born after a previous c-section birth, hence the general term "all the firstborn" (b.Bek. 19a)

The Eighth Rule of Ishmael

davar she-hayah bi-khelal ve-yatza min ha-kelal lelammed lo lelammed al atzmo yatza ella lelammed al hakelal kullo yatzo
(if a particular instance of a general rule is singled out for special treatment, whatever is postulated of this instance is to be applied to all the instances embraced by the general rule.)

EXAMPLE: "A man, also, or a woman that devines that by a ghost or a familiar spirit, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones" (Lev. 20:27) Divination by a ghost or a familiar spirit is included in the general rule against witchcraft (Dt. 18:10f). Since the penalty in Lev. 20:27 is stoneing it may be inferred that the same penalty applies to other instances within the same general rule. (b.San. 67b)

The Ninth Rule of Ishmael

davar she-hayah bi khelal ve-yatza liton to'an echad she-hu khe-inyano yatza lehakel ve-lo lehachmir
(when particular instances of a general rule are treated specifically, in details similar to those included in the general rule, then only the relaxations of the general rule and not its restrictions are to be applied in those instances.)

EXAMPLE: The law of the boil (Lev. 13:18-21) and the burn (Lev. 13:24-28) are treated specifically even though these are specific instances of the general rule regarding plague spots (Lev. 13:1-17) Therefore the general restrictions regarding the Law of the second week (Lev. 13:5) and the quick raw flesh (Lev. 13:10) are not applied to them (Sifra 1:2)

The Tenth Rule of Ishmael

davar she-hayah bi-khelal ve-yatza liton to'an acher she-lo khe-inyano yatza lehakel-lehachmir.

(When particular instances of a general rule are treated specifically in details dissimilar from those included in the general rule, then both relaxations and restrictions are to be applied in those instances)

EXAMPLE: The details on laws of plagues in the hair or beard (Lev. 13:29-37) are dissimilar from those in the general rule of plague spots. Therefore both the relaxation regarding the white hair mentioned in the general rule (Lev. 13:4) and the restriction of the yellow hair mentioned in the particular instance (Lev. 13:30) are applied (Sifra 1:3)

The Eleventh Rule of Ishmael

davar she-hayah bi-khelal ve-yatza lidon ba-davar he-chadash i attah yakhol lehachatziro li khelalo ad she-yachazirennu ha-katav li-khelalo be-ferush.

(when a particular instance of a general rule is singled out for completely fresh treatment, the details of the general rule must not be applied to this instance unless Scripture does so specifically.)

EXAMPLE: the guilt offering of the leper requires the placing of the blood on the ear, thumb, and toe (Lev. 14:14) Consequently, the laws of the general guilt offering, such as the sprinkling of the blood on the alter (Lev. 7:2) would not have applied, were it not for the Torah passage "For as the sin offering is the priest's so is the guilt offering" (Lev.14:13), i.e. that this is like other guilt offerings (b.Yev. 7a-b)

The Twelfth Rule of Ishmael

davar ha-lamed me-inyano ve-davar ha-lamed mi-sofo.

(The meaning of a passage may be deduced from (a) its context, or (b) from a later reference in the same passage)

The first part of this rule is Hillel's seventh rule.

EXAMPLE: "thou shall not steal" in Ex. 20:13 must refer to the capitol case of kidnapping, since the other two offenses mentioned with it: "You shall not murder" and "you shall not commit adultery" are both capitol offenses (Mekh., BaChodesh, 8, 5)

EXAMPLE: "I put the plague of leporasy in a house of the land of your possession" (Lev. 14:34), refers only to a house built with stones, timber, and mortar, since these materials are mentioned later in verse 45.

The Thirteenth Rule of Ishmael

shenei khetuvim hamakhchishim zeh et teh ad she-yavo ha-katuv ha-shelishi ve-yakhria beineihem.

(two verses contradict one another until a third verse reconciles them.)

This is **VERY** similar to the sixth rule of Hillel.

THE THIRTY-TWO RULES OF ELIEZER

The 32 rules of Eliezer were first written by Eliezer ben Jose HaGallil (but existed before they were written). Since they post date 30 C.E. they are not automatically authoritative to us as Nazarenes. I am teching them for two reasons:

1. In certain cases certain of them may be valid methods of reasoning and can be carefully used in our own expositions especially on the drash or sod level.
2. We must be able to understand and follow the reasoning of the Rabbinic sages so that we can properly analyze what they have written so that we can weigh the value of their conclusions.

As with the rules of Ishmael, here I use examples often drawn from Rabbinic halacha. I do not mean to imply by this that the examples are sound arguments.

Before covering the 32 rules of Eliezer we must cover in brief the great debate on hermeneutics between Ishmael and Akiva.

Akiva taught that since G-d is all knowing that when he speaks, every word and even every letter is divinely inspired and has some implication. There is, according to Akiva, some real reason why G-d has chosen to say what he has to say with exactly the words and letters he divinely chose to use.

Ishmael taught that when G-d speaks to man he speaks as a man does with another man, on a simple level so that man may understand his words.

Now Ishmael's 13 rules had been well grounded, but Akiva's methods opened the door to less grounded rules. Many of these less grounded rules are found in the 32 rules of Eliezer. Moreover certain of the 32 rules of Hillel operate best on a drash or sod level. As always these rules should be used only in the making of sound arguments. Even when they are used on a drash or sod level they should be well grounded.

The First Rule of Eliezer

ribbui
(inclusion)

The Hebrew particles AF, GAM and ET indicate an inclusion or amplification.

This rule comes from the school of Akiva which taught that every word in Torah has significance.

EXAMPLE:

"You shall fear YHWH your ELOHIM" (Dt. 10:20)
Since the Hebrew here opens with ET
it is ruled that this mitzvot is extended
to include reverence for scholars.
(b.Pes. 22b)

EXAMPLE:

"God created the heavens..." (Gen. 1:1)
Since the Hebrew ET appears it is said in
Midrash Rabbah that the "Heavens" include
here the sun, moon and stars.

EXAMPLE:

"You shall wear away (gam atah) and this people
that are with you." (Ex. 18:18) "gam" and "atah"
include "Moses" and "Aaron." (Mek. 59b).

EXAMPLE:

"and they (the adulterers) shall both of them die"
(Dt. 22:22) gam in this passage is an inclusion
so that the execution is not postponed until after
childbirth but the embryo is included in the
execution.
(m.Arakhin 1:4 & b.Arakhin 7a)

MORE EXAMPLES:

GAM in Dt. 26:13 (m.Ma'aser Sheni 5:10)

GAM in Num. 18:28 (m.Terum. 1:1)

The Second Rule of Eliezer

mi'ut

(exclusion)

The Hebrew particles AK, RAK and MIN point to a limitation, exclusion or diminuation.

This rule also comes from the school of Akiva which taught that every word in Torah has significance.

EXAMPLE:

"And Noah only (AK) was left..."
in Gen. Rabbah is taken to mean that Noah
did not escape unharmed but was injured.

EXAMPLE:

"And you shall be only (AK) joyful" (Dt. 16:15)
b.Sukka 48b says "That includes the eve of the
last festival day. Perhaps also the first festival day?
This one is excluded by AK."

The Third Rule of Eliezer

ribbui achar ribbui

When two "inclusion" particles (see rule 1) are joined.

EXAMPLE:

1Sam 17:36 "... smote both (gam at) the lion
also (gam) the bear." is said to mean that three
other beast were killed not just the lion and bear.

In Halacha however it is said that two inclusion terms indicate instead an exclusion (b.Men. 89a)

The Fourth Rule of Eliezer

mi'ut achar mi'ut

When two "exclusion" particals (see rule 2) are joined.

Halachicly two "exclusion" particals indicate an implication of inclusion as in rule 1.

The Fifth Rule of Eliezer

kol v'chomer meforash

First rule of Hillel occurs in a text.

The Sixth Rule of Eliezer

kol v'chomer satun

First rule of Hillel applied to a text.

The Seventh Rule of Eliezer

same as Hillel's second rule.

The Eighth Rule of Eliezer

binyan av - same as 3rd & 4th rules of Hillel

The Ninth Rule of Eliezer

derek khetzarah
(abbreviated or elliptical phraseology)

EXAMPLE:

1Chr. 17:5 where "to another" is implied.

The Tenth Rule of Eliezer

davar shehu shanui
(Repetition is used to bring out a point)

EXAMPLE:

b.Hul. 115b The commandment "You shall not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" is repeated three times (Ex. 23:19; 34:26 & Dt. 14:26) to forbid three things: eating; benefiting and seething. Also Akiba taught (m.Hul. 8:4)

that the three repetitions refer to the idea that
foul, game and unclean animals do not come
under this prohibition.

The Eleventh Rule of Eliezer

siddur shennechelakh

A context disrupted by sof pasukh (or any other injunctive accent) is joined.

EXAMPLE:

Ex. 13:3b has:
"...there shall no unleavened bread be eaten."

Ex. 13:4a has:
"This day..."

In the Midrash Mek. to this passage Rabbi Yose HaGallil joins the end of verse 3 to the beginning of verse 4 to form the phrase:

"There shall no unleavened bread be eaten this day."

To argue that Israel in Egypt abstained from leavened bread for only that one day.

The Twelfth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHEVA LELAMMED WENIMSA LAMED

Something is adduced for comparison, but in this process fresh light is shed upon it.

Compare this with Hillel's 7th rule.

In b.San. 74a it is stated that when faced with death one may commit any sin to save ones life except idolatry, incest and murder. Regarding the last two of these Rabbi [Y'hudah] makes the observation that if rape may be compared to murder (Dt. 22:25-26) and we should be killed rather than murder, then we should allow ourselves to be killed rather than commit rape.

EXAMPLE:

In the Sifra on Lev. 19:10 by connecting,
against the context, LO T'LAKKAT with the

following LAANI it is deduced that the owner must not be partial to one poor man over others by helping him glean.
(also see b.Git. 12a)

The Thirteenth Rule of Eliezer

KELAL SHE'ACHARAW MA'ASEH WE'ENO'ELLO PERATO SHEL RI'SHON

When a general is followed by an action, then that is the particular of the former.

This is very similar to the fifth rule of Hillel.

"These are the words which you shall speak" (Ex. 19:6) [general]

"You shall be to me a Kingdom of Priests" (Ex. 19:6) [particular]

"This is the statute of the Torah" (Num. 19:2) [general]

"that they bring you a red heifer" (ibid)[particular]

"This is the ordinance of the Passover"(Ex.12:43) [general]

"no alien..." (ibid) [particular]

The Fourteenth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR GADOL SHANITLAH BEKATON MIMMENNU LEHASHMI'A HA'OZEN
BEDEREK SHEHI' SHOMA'AT.

Something important is compared with something trivial, that a clearer understanding may be had.

For example in Deut. 32:2 the Torah is compared to rain.

The Fifteenth Rule of Eliezer

The 15th Rule of Eliezer is the same as the 13th Rule of Ishmael.

The Sixteenth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR HAMEYUCHAD BIMKOMO

"Significant use of an expresion."

EXAMPLE:

Num. 15:18 "In your coming into the Land" is unique from the other phrases in scripture like "and when you come" or "when the Lord will bring you." The divergent expression here, Ishmael said, is to teach you that Israel was obligated to set apart challa (Num. 15:20) immediately after entering the land. Ishmael taught that this term

The Seventeenth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHE'ENO MITPARESH BIMKOMO UMITPARESH BEMAKOM ACHER

A circumstance not clearly enunciated in the principal passage is referred to in another passage.

This rule especially applies to supplementing a Torah passage from a non-Torah passage.

EXAMPLES:

The Description of Gan Eden in Gen. 2:8 may be supplemented from Ezek. 28:13.

Num. 3 may be supplemented from 1Chron. 24:19 where the courses of the Priests are given.

The Eighteenth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHENNE'EMAR BEMIKSHATO WEHU NOHEG BAKOL

A specific case of a type of occurrences is mentioned, although the whole type is meant.

EXAMPLE:

Dt. 23:11 "that which chances by night" because the accident had in mind is likely to occur most frequently by night. (Sifre on Deut. 20:5f.) but an accident at any time is intended to be covered.

The Torah states that a man who builds

a new house and not dedicated it is exempt from military service. (Deut. 20:5)
The Torah only speaks of "building" but the commandment is seen as applying to inheriting, buying or receiving as a gift. This also applies to the military exemption of him who plants a vineyard (Deut. 20:6).

The Nineteenth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHENNEEMAR BA-ZEH WEHU' HA-DIN LACHABERO

A statement is made with regard to one subject, but it is also true in regards to another subject.

EXAMPLES:

Hosea 6:6 What is true of mercy here is also true of the knowledge of Elohim.

According to Midrash Mek. On Ex. 21:18
If one smites the other with a stone or with a fist
R. Nathan says: He compares the stone to the fist and the fist to a stone. As the stone must be ponderous enough to kill, so also the fist; and as the fist becomes known, so must also the Stone become known. When therefore the stone is mingled among other stones and when
Even one stone is too small to cause death, the slayer goes free.

The Twentieth Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHENNEEMAR BA-ZEH WEENO INYAN LO ABAL HU' INYAN LACHABERO

A statement does not go well with the passage in which it occurs, but is in keeping with another passage and may then be applied to that passage.

Some Jewish interpreters thus teach that Deut. 33:7 does not refer to Judah, but to Simeon.

The 21st Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHEHUKKASH BISHTE MIDDOT WEIATAH NOTHEN LO KOAH
HAYAFEH SHEBBISHTEHEN

Something is compared with two things and so only the good properties of both are attributed to it.

In Ps. 92:13 the righteous are compared to palm-trees because they bear fruit, but since they have no shade a further comparison is made to a cedar which bears no fruit but produces shade.

The 22nd Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHECHAVERO MOKIACH ALAW

A proposition which requires to be supplemented from a parallel proposition.

EXAMPLE:

According to some interpreters AL (alef-lamed)
should be supplied in front of T'YAS'RANI
in Psalm 38:2.

The 23rd Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHEHU MOKIACH AL CHABERO

A proposition serves to supplement a parallel proposition.

EXAMPLE:

Sifre on Deut. 11:12 says:
A land which YHWH your God cares for.
Rabbi said: Does he care for this land only,
and not for all lands? We certainly read
Job 38:26: to cause it to rain on a land
where no man is, on the wilderness,
wherein there is no man. What then does
this word signify, ia land which YHWH
your God cares for? Because of this His caring
He cares for other lands besides theirs.

The 24th Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHEHAYAH BIKELAL WEYASHA MIN HAKELAL LELAMMED ‘AL
‘ASHMO YASHA

A proposition is in force with haggadic interpretation.

For example the specific stressing of
“Jericho” in Joshua 2:1 because this
passage is aggadic the stressing of Jericho
is purely idiomatic.

The 25th Rule of Eliezer

DAVAR SHEHAYAH BIKELAL WEYASHA MIN HAKELAL LELAMMED ‘AL
CHABERO

This rule is a modification of the eighth rule of Ishmael.

EXAMPLE:

According to b.Shab. 70a:

The prohibition Ex. 35:3 to kindle fire
on the Sabbath is implied already in Ex. 35:2
(which prohibits work.) Why is it stressed?
In order to compare therewith and to say to you,
“Just as one becomes guilty by kindling fire,
which is a main item of labor, so also one
becomes guilty by performing any other
single main item of labor.

The 26th Rule of Eliezer

MASHAL
(Parable)

EXAMPLES:

Yeshua’s parables.

The Olive Tree parable (Rom. 11).

The parable of the two women (Gal. 4:21-31)

The 27th Rule of Eliezer

NEGED

Corresponding significant number.

EXAMPLE:

The Children of Israel suffered a year for a day.
Forty years (Num. 14:34) for each of the forty days
(Num. 13:25) of their apostasy.

Yeshua fasted forty days in the wilderness.

Yeshua had twelve talmidim
corresponding to the twelve patriarchs.

The 28th Rule of Eliezer

MA'AL

Paronomasia. A pun, a wordplay.

EXAMPLES:

In Amos 8:1 there is a wordplay between KETZ (Summer Fruit) and KATZ
(end) The same wordplay appears in Mt. 24:14, 32 .

The 29th Rule of Eliezer

GEMATRIA

Numerology, "theomatics."

The Sefirot of the Tree of Life are connected by 22 paths. Each of these 22 paths corresponds to one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alef-bet (alphabet). Each of these 22 paths represents a relationship between two of the Sefirot and a combination of two of the Sefirot. As a result each Hebrew letter is more than just a letter, it is a relationship between two Sefirot as well as a combination between two of the Sefirot.

In fact Kabbalistic tradition has it that the 22 letters were involved in the creation of the universe. This is the Kabbalistic understanding of Gen. 1:1:

Bershit bara Elohim [ALEF-TAV] hashamayim v'[ALEF-TAV] haeretz

In the beginning G-d created ALEF-TAV the heavens and ALEF-TAV the earth.

ALEF and TAV are the first and last letters of Hebrew and are understood in Kabbalistic understanding here to be an abbreviation for the whole Hebrew ALEF-BET through which the universe was created.

This is what was meant by Yochanan's statement in Rev. 1:8; 21:66 and 22:13. Although the Greek has ALPHA and OMEGA in these passages, the Aramaic text of these passages has ALEF and TAV.

Since the 22 letters of Hebrew each represent a relationship between two of the Sefirot as well as a combination of two Sefirot. And since the 22 letters were themselves involved in the creation, every Hebrew word is more than a word, it is a matrix of relationships and combinations among the Sefirot. Therefore on a Kabbalistic level Hebrew words are looked at as a series of such paths. This leads to several important methods of seeking out hidden messages in the text of the Scriptures.

These are among others GEMATRIA and NOTARIKON

GEMATRIA - In Hebrew each letter has a numerical value. Gematria examines Hebrew words and letters in the text in light of their numerical value. Some Christians have taken to calling this "Theomatics."

EXAMPLES:

"Shiloh comes" in Gen.49:10 = 358 which is also the gematria (numerical value) of "Messiah" as a result the Targums (Aramaic paraphrases) paraphrase SHILOH in this passage as "Messiah" and the Talmud tells us that "Shiloh" is one of the names of the Messiah.

In Gen. 17:5, 15 YHWH changes AVRAM'S name to AVRAHAM and SARAI to SARAH.

AVRAM = "High Father" and SARAI = "dominant one"

YHWH took the YUD out of SARAI. (YUD=10) and He divided it in two making to HEYS (HEY = 5).

Thus AVRAM became AVRAHAM (Father of a multitude) and SARAI became SARAH (lady, princess)

In order for AVRAM to become AVRAHAM, SARAI had to go from being dominant to being a lady.

In Mt. 1:1, 17 Messiah is the son of David. Messiah is the son of 14 generations because David = 14. Three sets of 14 generations are given because $14 \times 3 = 42$ and $42 = \text{ELOAH}$ (God) since Messiah is also the Son of God.

The number of the beast is 666 (Rev.13:18)

The 30th Rule of Eliezer

NOTARIKON

An acronym; anagram or acrostic. Taking the first or last letters of the words of a phrase and joining them to make a new word or, conversely, expanding a word into a phrase.

For example the word GREVOUS (NiMReTZeT) in 1Kn. 2:8 is understood in the Talmud (b.Shab. 105a) to mean:

N-OEF (adulterer)
M-O'AVI (Moabite)
R-OZEAH (murderer)
TZ-OER (enemy)
T-O'EVAH (abomination)

The first three letters of Torah are BEIT-RESH-ALEF which stand for BEN, RUACH and ABBA (Son, Spirit and Father).

The 31st Rule of Eliezer

MUKDAM SHEHU' MECHAR BA'INYAN

Something which precedes that is placed second.

EXAMPLE:

In 1Sam. 3:3 the words "In the Temple of YHWH" go with the words "was not yet gone out" despite the fact that the phrase "and Samuel was laid down to sleep" intervenes.

The 32nd Rule of Eliezer

MUKDAM U-ME'UCHAR SHEHU' BEPARASHIOT

Many biblical sections refer to a later time than that which precedes, also vice versa.

By this rule it is argued that Numbers 7
precedes Numbers 1 in chronology of time.

This rule explains the chronological "problems" in comparing the Synoptic Gospels.

FORMS OF MIDRASHIC EXEGESIS

In addition to knowing and understanding the rules and principles of hermeneutics it is also important to recognize the forms of *Midrashic exegesis*. Two prominent types of *Homiletic Midrashic Exegesis* are *Proem* and *Yalammedenu*.

"Proem" is a Greek word meaning prelude. In *Proem Homiletic Exegesis* an introductory text is given, a sermon is built on this introductory text often using additional texts. The sermon closes with a final text which usually repeats or alludes to the initial text. This process usually involves Hillel's second rule, G'ZARA SHEVA (equivalent expressions) through which catchwords or keywords link the sermon together, being found in the initial text, the final text, often in the additional texts, and in the exposition itself.

An example of *Proem Homiletic Exegesis* can be found in the New Testament in Romans 9:6-26:

Keywords: seed, children/son & called.

Initial Text: Gen. 21:12 = Rom. 9:6-8

Second Text: Gen. 18:10 = Rom. 9:9

Exposition: Rom. 9:10-28

Final Text: Is. 1:9 = Rom. 9:29

Another form of *Midrashic Exegesis* is called *Yalammedenu Homiletic Midrash*. This form of midrash is very similar to the *Proem Midrash*, but it begins with a question or problem. A New Testament Example is:

Keywords: tradition, commandment & honor

Question/Problem: Mt. 15:1-3

Initial Texts: Ex. 20:12; 21:17 = Mt. 15:4

Exposition: Mt. 15:5-6

Final Text: Is. 29:13-14 = Mt. 15:7-9

Now it is very helpful to look at the exposition in terms of the initial, additional and final texts, and especially pay heed to the keywords as they reveal the main topic. One should

look at each of the texts and seek to find out what they have in common and how their keywords relate in meaning to each other, and as to how this helps us understand the exposition. We must realize that the purpose of the exposition is to interpret these sets of texts in light of one another.