

Nazarene Scripture Studies

Volume Two

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By Norman B. Willis

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May the name of Yahweh be glorified.

In Yeshua's name, amein.

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Preface

People often ask me what version of Scripture I use. Normally I quote from the New King James Version (NKJV), basically because it is widely trusted and fairly easy to read I correct the names and terms to the Hebraic forms, however, for reasons I will explain in this book. When I feel it is helpful to clarify something, or to give additional information, I will place my words in brackets.

Unless noted otherwise, all Hebrew and Aramaic quotes from the Tanach (Old Testament) are from the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT). Unless noted otherwise, all quotes in Aramaic for the Renewed Covenant (New Testament) are from the Eastern Peshitta. For Greek I will normally quote from the BibleWorks Greek Text (BGT). If I quote anything else, I will try to let you know.

For historical reasons that are too complex to explain here, the Protestant world has come to believe that the apostles first wrote their epistles in Greek. This is not accurate. As we explain in this book, the church fathers tell us the epistles were written in a Semitic tongue (Hebrew and/or Aramaic). They were translated into Greek afterwards. However, the Hebrew and/or Aramaic originals are no longer with us, and there is evidence that some of the Greek texts are older than the Aramaic. For that reason, I sometimes use the Greek texts.

It is true that all of the texts we have today have been altered over time (including the so-called “original” Hebrew Masoretic Text). It is important to know this because anti-missionaries will oftentimes point to some of the discrepancies between the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Renewed Covenant texts, and then

suggest that the Renewed Covenant is wrong because it does not agree with the Hebrew Masoretic text. Without getting into too much detail here, even the Hebrew Masoretic Text disagrees with itself in places, having been written by men. It is also important to realize that the Hebrew Masoretic Text dates back only to 900-1100 CE, and it is the result of an Orthodox Jewish attempt to *fix* or *standardize* the texts in keeping with Orthodox Jewish traditions (one of which is to reject Yeshua’s deity). This is not cause for despair. We simply have to realize that some changes and alterations have been made over the course of centuries, and then understand that Yahweh is faithful to give us what we need, when we need it—and that by careful scholarship we can deduce what has been changed and why.

I have chosen to use the Hebraic names and terms for reasons I hope will be clear by the time you finish reading this study. In many places, Yahweh (Jehovah) tells us that He is very zealous for His name, and He promises to reward those who know His name.

Tehillim (Psalms) 91:14

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name."

How to pronounce the divine name is a subject of some discussion. I pronounce His name as Yahweh (or Yahuweh), and I will write “Yahweh” in this book. If you feel convicted of another pronunciation, simply substitute it as you read.

In Hebrew, the term for *God* is *Elohim*. I will try to use that term in this book because the word *God* is actually the name of a pagan deity, and we are told not to use the names of other deities (e.g., Exodus 23:13).

Because this book is a primer, and because many people will read it on the Internet, I will try to explain the names at the start of each chapter. The first time I write “Yahweh” I will put “(Jehovah)” after it, and the first time I write “Elohim” I will put “(God)” after it, and so on—then I will switch to the Hebraic terms for the rest of the chapter. I realize this can be a little tiresome if you are reading this as a printed book, but I ask your patience with this practice because when people stumble upon a web page through an internet search, or if they are sent a web page by a friend, it helps them a lot if the terms they are reading are explained.

We are all learning and growing together as Yahweh leads and guides us by His Spirit, and I am always looking to improve my studies, to make them more complete, and easier to read. If you have questions, or if you have constructive suggestions as to how we can make these studies better, please write me and let me know at contact@nazareneisrael.org.

May Yahweh bless you for proving all things.

Amein.

Listening Halt

Today I'd like to talk about what the US Army Special Forces has in common with both sheep, and us.

In the Special Forces, we trained for many different kinds of missions, but one of our missions called for being inserted 800 to 1200 miles behind enemy lines (usually via parachute). It is kind of a risky situation. When you put one of 12 guys roughly 1000 miles behind enemy lines, you have to be wise. You need to avoid the enemy, almost at all costs. If the enemy finds you, you can't possibly run fast enough on foot (laden down with heavy rucksacks and gear) to get away from his artillery, his dog teams, and/or his helicopters. If you run into the enemy, you are dead men. Your only hope of survival is to detect the enemy before he detects you, so you can avoid him altogether.

How you avoid the enemy depends a lot on the situation. When visibility is good (such as in the desert) you have to stop at all ridgelines, and visually look down into the valley before you move into it. When visibility is good, you scout out ahead of you by vision. But when visibility is bad, you cannot scout the terrain ahead of you out by sight: you have to use your hearing instead.

When visibility was poor (such as in jungles, or even in forests), one of the means we used to avoid trouble was called the *listening halt*. We normally tried to be as quiet as was reasonable, but when visibility was poor, about every 15 minutes we would stop, sit completely quiet, and listen. This was not a time for fidgeting or daydreaming, but of listening as carefully as one could.

Yahweh likens us to sheep. Sheep are perhaps like Special Forces teams in low-visibility terrain, because they don't have very good eyesight: they cannot see very far ahead. They are also perhaps like the Special Forces in that if an enemy comes upon them, they are easily overpowered. If a sheep is overtaken by a wolf or a bear, more than likely, that sheep is going to die. Sheep survive, then, by listening carefully for the enemy, and by listening for the voice of their shepherd, to lead them away from danger.

We are a little like Special Forces teams because we live in Satan's world. Until Yahweh calls us back to dwell in His land, we are all behind enemy lines, in a sense. None of us can afford to take the enemy head on. The enemy has the home court advantage, and he is much stronger than we are. For that reason we need to avoid coming into contact with the enemy, just as Yeshua tells us to pray that we be not led into temptation, but that we be delivered from the evil one.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 6:13

13 "And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

One of our best means to avoid falling prey to the enemy is by practicing the listening halt. What do we mean by that?

When our forefathers left Egypt after the first Passover, Yahweh said that if we would hear His voice and obey His covenant, that we would be a special treasure to Him, and that we would also be to Him a kingdom of priests and a set apart nation.

Shemote (Exodus) 19:5-6

5 "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a set apart nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Obedying Yahweh's voice and keeping His covenant is not easy. It is no small thing. Before we do anything else, first we have to genuinely love both Yahweh the Father, and our fellow man (at least as much as we love ourselves). Without this love, none of the other commandments mean anything.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Torah?"

37 Yeshua said to him, "'You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Torah and the Prophets."

After we have genuine, abiding love towards both Yahweh and our fellow man, then there are some specifics that we need to do as well. Yeshua reminds us that even though we have justice and mercy and faith, we still ought to do these specifics.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 23:23

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, but have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

But once we have this abiding heart of love, and once we remember to do everything else the Torah says to do, what does Yahweh mean back in Exodus 19:5, when He says that in order to be a "special treasure" to Him, we need to obey His voice?

Shemote (Exodus) 19:5

5 "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine."

Scripture is a written record of Yahweh's utterances from times past. Surely we need to obey the record of Yahweh's words in Scripture, just as a child needs to do what his mom and dad told him last year; and yet there is also something else. Isaiah 30:21 speaks of a still small voice that exists in addition to Scripture.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 30:21

21 Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it,"

Whenever you turn to the right hand

Or whenever you turn to the left.

This still small voice is what the prophets hear: they have to quiet their flesh and their thinking, in order to hear it. We laud the prophets for being so disciplined, and for obeying Yahweh even in the face of great trials, and yet

ironically, even from earliest times, our flesh has never liked obeying Yahweh's voice.

All the way back in the garden of Eden, Havvah (Eve) knew what to do, but she chose instead to listen to the voice of the Enemy, who implied, "No, you don't need to do what Yahweh says! Just do what YOU think is right! Follow your own thoughts! That is because YOU can be like Elohim, knowing what is good and what is evil, by way of *your own* thoughts!"

B'reisheet (Genesis) 3:4-5

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil."

And of course, because Havvah was human, she fell for it, because the nature of men is to want to do what we want, and justify it using our reasoning intellect (rather than just listen to Yahweh, and obey Him).

In his flesh, any child would prefer do what *he* thinks is right, rather than listen to his parents: that is just how children are built. It takes training and self-discipline for a child to realize that he is going to be a lot better off if he listens to his parents' advice, than if he blunders ahead with his own inexperienced thoughts and urges. (Sadly, many never really do learn that lesson.)

Yahweh has always wanted us to seek His face, hear His voice, and obey the written record of His words (i.e., Scripture). Yet when the papacy arose, the bishop of Rome (i.e., the pope) taught us not to seek Yahweh's face, or listen for His voice. The pope also told us not to study the written record of Yahweh's words, because we

might misinterpret it. Instead, the pope taught our forefathers to follow the Catholic Catechism (i.e., the pope's torah).

Even though it comes from a different angle, the secular world has taught us pretty much the same thing. The Enlightenment of the 16th and 17th centuries taught us to turn away from Scripture, and to rely instead on our reason (i.e., our thoughts). It taught us to find the solutions to all of the problems by way of our own human intellect. This pattern is also taught to our children in the government schools. Rather than praying and listening to Yahweh, and asking Him to show us the way, the government schools teach our children to trust in their own right arm (or in their own frontal lobes). This is clearly against what Scripture teaches, which is to trust Yahweh with all of our hearts, and to lean not on our own understanding.

Mishle (Proverbs) 3:5-8

5 Trust in Yahweh with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear Yahweh and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones.

Not long after Yahweh told our forefathers that they would be His special treasure if they would just listen for His voice and obey it, our forefathers told Moshe that it was too scary to listen to Yahweh; therefore they wanted Moshe to serve as an intermediary.

Shemote (Exodus) 20:19

19 Then they said to Moshe, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die."

Consider the irony in that this refusal to hear Yahweh's voice took place at the handing-down of the Torah, which was the precursor to the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2; and just as our forefathers were too scared to hear Yahweh's voice directly in the Wilderness of Sinai, today many of our people are still scared to let His Spirit rule over their lives. Is it because they are afraid of what His Spirit would tell them to do?

As you go throughout your day, take lots of listening halts. About every 15 minutes or so, take just a minute to stop, clear your mind, and listen for what He might be trying to say to you. And then, be careful not to rebel against what His voice tells you to do. This is always a challenge, because His Spirit will almost invariably tell us to do something our flesh does not like to do, such as to give something to the poor, or to be nice to someone who is cruel to us. His voice might tell us to support a ministry that feeds us spiritually, or not to respond in anger (because the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of Elohim).

Ya'akov (James) 1:19-20

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;
20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of Elohim.

We will know His voice because it is a still, small voice. It does not contend. We can only hear it when we discipline our own heart and mind to be quiet. In order to

hear it, we have to stop our heart and our mind from racing.

And when we do hear His voice, then no matter what it tells us to do, we have to be joyful to hear it. We must be careful not to harden our hearts against it, for that is the way of rebellion.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 3:15-19

15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moshe?

17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

And whenever we find ourselves in a tight spot (or a "narrow place," as Scripture calls it), then rather than thinking our way through, let us take a moment to stop, pray, and then quiet our minds and our hearts, and listen. Let us discipline ourselves to take the time to let Yahweh's answer come to us. This does not mean that we should not think at all: it only means not to allow our thinking get in the way of listening for Yahweh's clarity.

The clarity that Yahweh gives whenever we hear and obey His voice is what Scripture calls *wisdom*. This kind of wisdom leads to great happiness.

Mishle (Proverbs) 8:34

34 Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.

When we listen continuously to Yahweh's voice, and do whatever He says, we will find blessings, and true happiness. This kind of wisdom and happiness is His true goal for all those who keep their attentions focused continuously on Him.

Once Saved, Always Saved?

The popular Christian doctrine of “once saved, always saved” says that once we accept Yeshua’s sacrifice for our sins, it no longer matters what we do. It says that because we are now under grace, that we can knowingly break (or disregard) the Torah, and that we will still make it into His kingdom.

“Once saved, always saved” is a form of replacement theology, which is why the replacement theology church so eagerly embraces it. It says (essentially) that Yeshua come to do away not only with the Torah, but also with all punishments for breaking the Torah—and therefore that as long as we believe on Him, we will never suffer punishment for sin.

It is very ironic that some Messianics teach “once saved, always saved.” It directly contradicts Yeshua’s words in Matthew 5:17-19, where He tells us plainly not to think that He came to do away with even the least part of the Torah.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but (only) to fulfill.

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled.

19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Once saved, always saved” also violates 1 John 3:4-6, which tells us that whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and that sin is lawlessness.

Yochanan Aleph (1 John) 3:4-6

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.

6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

If sin is lawlessness, then lawlessness (Torahlessness) is sin. Therefore, when someone tells us that we can violate the Torah on purpose (because we are “covered by His blood”), they are not only teaching against the Torah, they are also teaching against Hebrews 10:26-31, which says not to trample the blood.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 10:26-31

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected the Torah of Moshe dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of Elohim underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of favor (grace)?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says Yahweh. And again, "Yahweh will judge His people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living Elohim.

What Hebrews 10:26-31 says is that if we sin willfully after we come to the knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any atonement for our sins, because we are not just trampling the letter of Torah, we are trampling on Yeshua's sacrifice.

It helps if we understand what Yeshua's sacrifice was really all about. As we saw in "[Yahweh's Heart in Marriage](#)" (in the [Covenant Relationships](#) collection), Yahweh divorced His bride Ephraim for committing idolatry (which is spiritual adultery).

Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 3:8-9

8 "Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also."

In the West, when we divorce our spouse, we figure that we are done with him or her forever. This is very much unlike Yahweh, who loved His spouse so much that He sent His Son Yeshua to redeem her from her former sins, buying her at a price, and washing her clean by His blood.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 6:20

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify Elohim in your body and in your spirit, which are Elohim's.

The problem with "once saved, always saved" is that it assumes that because Yeshua paid the penalty for our former sins, we now have a license to sin. This is sometimes called, *greasy grace*, or *sloppy agape*, and while we have come to expect it from the church, it is also common in the Messianic movement.

So what is wrong with greasy grace, and sloppy agape? Well, Yahweh forbid that this should happen, but imagine that your daughter-in-law should commit a crime. If you go and pay her bail (to get her out of jail), does that mean she can go and commit more crimes? Or doesn't it mean (rather) that now she really needs to watch her step, since she is only out on bail?

And (Yahweh forbid), if your daughter-in-law does go and commit more crimes, is she still going to be in your favor (grace)? Or rather, does it mean that she does not yet really appreciate the sacrifice you have made for her, and the need to obey the law (i.e., Torah)?

We discuss this in more detail in "[About Sacrifices](#)" (which is part of [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 1](#)), but contrary to the "once saved, always saved" doctrine, we know that it is very possible to say that we follow Yeshua, and still not inherit eternal life. This is because in Matthew 7:21-23, Yeshua tells us that when He returns, He will tell *many* of His followers that because they did not keep the Torah, He will reject them. He will say that He never knew them because they practiced lawlessness (Torahlessness).

Mattityahu (Matthew) 7:21-23

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Master, Master,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Master, Master, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

As we explain in [Nazarene Israel](#), the reason Yeshua says He will reject those who do not keep the Torah is that the Torah is the bridal contract, by which the bride (Israel) must refine herself. Whoever does not keep the bridal contract is not part of the bride.

Where many people get hung up is the fact that Yeshua died for all of our sins, past, present and future. This is absolutely true—but as we explain in "[About Sacrifices](#)" (in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 1](#)), Yeshua only died for *unintentional* sins. He never died so we could live in blatant rebellion. This is a reflection of Numbers 15, which tells us that it was unintentional sin that the animal sacrifices atoned for.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 15:22

22 "If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which Yahweh has spoken to Moshe — "

The penalty for intentional sin (i.e., rebellion) was always certain death.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 15:30-31

30 "But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on Yahweh, and he shall be cut off from among his people.

31 Because he has despised the word of Yahweh, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him."

Yeshua's sacrifice was never intended to serve as a "Get out of Jail Free" card. Had Yeshua's sacrifice been a license to sin, then Yeshua would not have told the man He had healed from paralysis to go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him.

Yochanan (John) 5:14

14 Afterward Yeshua found him in the Temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

Yeshua took the penalty for every sin we committed in ignorance. Truly, Yahweh will overlook things that we did in ignorance, but from now on He wants us to keep the bridal contract, so we can be part of His bride.

Ma'asei (Acts) 17:30-31

30 "Truly, these times of ignorance Elohim overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

So let us honor the sacrifice that Yeshua made, and not do things that we know are wrong. Let us do what we know is right.

About Righteous Judgment

In John 7:24, Yeshua tells us not to judge according to appearances, but to judge with righteous judgment.

Yochanan (John) 7:24

24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

There is both righteous and unrighteous judgment, and we have to be careful which one we use. In Matthew 7:1-6 Yeshua teaches us that if we judge righteously Yahweh will judge us as being righteous, but if we judge unrighteously Yahweh will judge us as unrighteous.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 7:1-5

1 "Judge not [unrighteously], that you be not judged [as being unrighteous].

2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye;' and look, a plank is in your own eye?

5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Many Christians believe this passage means we should never judge anyone ever, but this is plainly contrary to the Torah, and also to the Apostle Shaul's (Paul's) writings.

Scripture tells us that Moshe (Moses) served the nation as a judge.

Shemote (Exodus) 18:13

13 And so it was, on the next day, that Moshe sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moshe from morning until evening.

Was Moshe a Torah-breaker, in that he sat to judge the people? Let it not be! For Moshe's father-in-law Yithro (Jethro) saw that he was doing this not to the people, but for the people.

Shemote (Exodus) 18:14-16

14 So when Moshe's father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

15 And Moshe said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of Elohim.

16 When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of Elohim and His instructions."

Moshe's father-in-law saw that what Moshe was doing was good, in that it helped the people to apply Yahweh's instructions to their lives. The only problem was that Moshe was trying to do it all alone. Therefore, Moshe's father-in-law told Moshe to appoint other ethical men to serve as judges and rulers beneath him, so that the service of judging the people could be carried out more efficiently. That would serve all the people better.

Shemote (Exodus) 18:17-26

17 So Moshe's father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do is not good.

18 Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.

19 Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and Elohim will be with you: Stand before Elohim for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to Elohim.

20 And you shall teach them the statutes and the instructions, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.

21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear Elohim, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

22 And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you.

23 If you do this thing, and Elohim so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

24 So Moshe heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

25 And Moshe chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

26 So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

We know that Yahweh wants us to appoint judges and officers in all of our gates because He tells us to. Only, He wants us to appoint righteous judges and officers

(and not unrighteous ones), so that the people will be judged with just (and not unjust) judgment.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:18

18 "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which Yahweh your Elohim gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment."

Christianity teaches us that it is almost a sin to judge our neighbors. However, this is contrary to the Torah, which tells us to judge our neighbors in righteousness.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 19:15

15 "You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor."

Isaiah tells us to seek *judgment* (משפט), and even tells us to *judge* (שָׁפֵט) the fatherless. What is that about?

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 1:17 17 "Learn to do good; Seek judgment, Rebuke the oppressor; Judge the fatherless, Plead for the widow."	(17) לְמַדּוּ הַיָּטִב דַּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁרוֹ חָמוּץ שָׁפֵטוּ יְתוּם רִיבוֹ אֶלְמָנָה
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The Hebrew word for *justice* (משפט) is the same as the Hebrew word for *judgment* (משפט), and the English terms can be used interchangeably with regard to the Hebrew word. It speaks of giving Yahweh's verdict.

OT:4941 mishpat (mish-pawt'); from OT:8199; properly, a verdict (favorable or unfavorable)

pronounced judicially, especially a sentence or formal decree (human or [participant's] divine law, individual or collective), including the act, the place, the suit, the crime, and the penalty; abstractly, justice, including a participant's right or privilege (statutory or customary), or even a style:

KJV - adversary, ceremony, charge, crime, custom, desert, determination, discretion, disposing, due, fashion, form, to be judged, judgment, just (-ice, -ly), (manner of) law (-ful), manner, measure, (due) order, ordinance, right, sentence, usest, worthy, wrong.

Do we want justice (משפט) for the fatherless? If so then we need to judge them (יִפְטֹן). We need to make known Yahweh's verdict. By extension, this is also to govern righteously for them (on their behalf).

OT:8199 shaphat (shaw-fat'); a primitive root; to judge, i.e. pronounce sentence (for or against); by implication, to vindicate or punish; by extension, to govern; passively, to litigate (literally or figuratively):

KJV - avenge, that condemn, contend, defend, execute (judgment), (be a) judge (-ment), needs, plead, reason, rule.

It is ironic that the Christian conception of judgment is so negative, because the Hebraic concept of judgment is that of making Yahweh's ways and His judgments known. This is something Yahweh wants us to do.

Yehezqel (Ezekiel) 20:4

4 "Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge

them? Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers."

If people live according to Torah, then why would they fear His judgment/justice? Why would we not be eager to have Yahweh's judgments proclaimed in the body?

Yahweh sometimes sends prophets (such as Jonah) to warn those out in the nations to repent and turn back to Him. However, if the nations do not repent and turn back to Yahweh (as evidenced by their submission to His authority), then there is really no way to judge (deliver justice to) them. Only those who are inside of Israel (and who submit to Elohim's authority) can be judged (served with justice).

Shaul applies this same principle in his letter to the Corinthians, telling them that we are not to judge those who are outside the body, but only to judge those who are inside (and who claim to submit to Yahweh).

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 5:9-13

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person.

12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?

13 But those who are outside Elohim judges.
Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person."

Shaul also told the Colossians only to let the body of Messiah judge (i.e., teach or lead) us with regards to what foods we eat, and what festival days we keep (seeing as these things have prophetic implications).

Qolossim (Colossians) 2:16-17

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,
17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the Body of Messiah.

Most English versions alter the language of Colossians 2:16-17 (above). This may be due to the fact that most Christian churches do not understand that in Hebraic thought, to judge is to provide justice (and leadership). Shaul tells us that we need to provide this kind of leadership and judgment in house, so that our people do not need to seek it in the outside world.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 6:1-6

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the set-apart ones?

2 Do you not know that the set-part ones will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

3 Do you not know that we shall judge messengers [angels]? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the assembly to judge?

5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?

6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

In verse 2 Shaul tells us the set-apart ones will judge the world, and in verse 3 he tells us we will even judge the messengers (angels). But if we will even judge the messengers, then why should we look outside the assembly for just judgment? Is there no one among us who speaks according to Yahweh's voice?

In the study "[About Speaking in Tongues](#)," in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 1](#), we explain both types of prophecy. What both types of prophecy have in common is the requirement to speak according to Yahweh's voice (rather than our flesh). When we die to our flesh and speak according to His voice, then our judgments will be righteous and true because we will speak only His words. However, when we judge according to the flesh, we cannot help but judge unjustly because the flesh is incapable of perfection. We will almost invariably project ourselves into the picture.

Romim (Romans) 2:1-3

1 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge [according to the flesh], for in whatever you judge another [according to the flesh] you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things [because you project your own flaws onto the other person].

2 But we know that the [righteous] judgment of Elohim is according to truth against those who practice such things.

3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of Elohim?

Many of us have listened as a friend criticized another person, only to notice that the charges seem to apply to both parties. Psychologists call this phenomenon of painting our own attributes onto others *projection*, and it is common whenever we speak according to our emotions (and our own spirit), rather than listening for His words, and speaking according to His voice.

Yahweh's Spirit can lead one to say both complimentary and uncomplimentary things, but either way it takes a conscious, disciplined effort to put aside one's own thoughts, and speak according to the Spirit.

Matthew 12:33-37 tells us that trees (i.e., men) are known by their fruit. If we speak according to His voice, then our fruit/speech is good (serves Him); but if we speak our own words, our tree is not good because our speech is idle (does not serve Him).

Mattityahu (Matthew) 12:33-37

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Our purpose in judgment is never to condemn others, but only to help our brothers and sisters learn and grow in Him. If our purpose in judging another is to condemn (rather than to help a brother who is lost), then we do not know what spirit we are of, for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Luqa (Luke) 9:54-56

54 And when His disciples Ya'akov and Yochanan saw this, they said, "Adon, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Eliyahu did?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of.

56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

As we explain in "[The Matthew 18 Process](#)" (included in [Covenant Relationships](#)), the purpose of judgment is not to find anyone guilty, or to kick them out of the assembly. Rather, the purpose is to help our brothers and sisters get into a right standing with their Creator, so that things will go better for them on the Day of Judgment. There will be times that we have to put outside the assembly those who refuse to play by the rules, but the process itself should be like that of a loving father talking with his children, and helping them correct their attitudes. If the children refuse to behave correctly, then they lose some of their privileges (and in this case it is typically the privilege to assemble); but as soon as they repent and make restitution according to the Torah (and set all of their relationships right), their assembly privileges can resume.

Earlier we saw that when the man in Corinth was committing sexual immorality with his father's wife, Shaul wrote to the assembly in Corinth and told them to put the man outside (1 Corinthians 5). However, once the man had repented of his sin, he came back into right standing with Yahweh; and so Shaul wrote to the Corinthians again, and told them to let him back in.

Qorintim Bet (2 Corinthians) 2:6-11

6 This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,

7 so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Messiah,

11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Shaul was clearly acting as a judge here, but he was judging according to the Spirit. His purpose was to build up Yahweh's people (and thereby build up Yahweh's kingdom) by insisting that Yahweh's standards be upheld. It was righteous judgment, and although it may not have been pleasant at the time, it led to the best end result for all parties.

In the article "[Lashon Hara: the Evil Tongue](#)" (in the [Covenant Relationships](#) study), we explain that righteous speech builds up and edifies Yahweh's people. Sometimes we must say negative things in the short term in order to set things right. However, if we just

go about speaking badly of other people without an intention of correcting a wrong situation, then that speech is not glorifying, and it constitutes unjust judgment.

Ya'akov (James) 4:11-12

11 Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother [according to his emotions] speaks evil of the Torah and judges the Torah. But if you judge the Torah, you are not a doer of the Torah but a judge.

12 There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another [after the flesh]?

The ideal is to speak according to His Spirit at all times, whether we are saying good or saying bad. Ideally, we should take all of our own thoughts captive to the obedience of the Messiah, so we can hear and speak according to His voice, and thus partake of the tree of life.

Qorintim Bet (2 Corinthians) 10:3-7

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in Elohim for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Elohim, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Messiah,

6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Taking every thought into captivity to the obedience of the Messiah is the walk of a lifetime, but it yields great

rewards, and is tremendously pleasing to our good heavenly Father and His Son.

Yeshua the Celibate Nazirite

When Yahweh made mankind, He gave us a powerful urge to reproduce.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 1:28

28 Then Elohim [God] blessed them, and Elohim said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...."

Yahweh put this inclination right into our flesh, making the sex drive one of the most powerful of all our drives (second perhaps only to the will to live).

Yahweh also made us social animals, which is why it is not good (and not easy) for us to be alone.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 2:18

18 And Yahweh Elohim said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him."

Yahweh also made women to be companions for their men. Women not only help their men in their work, but they also help them by raising children.

Tehillim (Psalms) 127:3-5

3 Behold, children are a heritage from Yahweh, the fruit of the womb is a reward.

4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So are the children of one's youth.

5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;
they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with
their enemies in the gate.

In Scripture, many things are a double-edged sword. In practical terms, most men and women probably do need to get married, and raise up children in the way they should go.

Mishle (Proverbs) 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

Just speaking in practical terms, if the Patriarchs had not married and raised families, there would likely be no Israel today. To be celibate seems to fly in the face of this common-sense approach. It is also clear that society functions best when human beings take part in society; and yet without taking anything away from the calling of the majority, Scripture does speak very highly of a different path that many (if not most) of Israel's prophets are called to. This is the path of the celibate Nazirite.

The celibate vow and the Nazirite vow are two separate vows. One can be celibate without being a Nazirite, and one can be a Nazirite without being celibate. However, the two often go together because a Nazir (נָזִיר) is one who is *separated* from normal Israelite life in order to perform a special service unto Yahweh.

OT:5139 naziyr (naw-zeer'); or nazir (naw-zeer'); from OT:5144; separate, i.e. consecrated (as prince, a Nazirite); hence (figuratively from the latter) an unpruned vine (like an unshorn Nazirite).

The reference at OT:5144 refers to someone who *abstains* from normal life in order to fulfill some divine mission (or some set-apart purpose).

OT:5144 nazar (naw-zar'); a primitive root; to hold aloof, i.e. (intransitively) abstain (from food and drink, from impurity, and even from divine worship [i.e. apostatize]); specifically, to set apart (to sacred purposes), i.e. devote.

It is important to understand the principles at work behind the blessings. One can be *separated* either willingly or unwillingly. The first use of the term *nazir* occurs in Genesis 49, where it tells us that Joseph became nazir (נָזִיר) when he was separated from his brothers (in order to fulfill a special purpose for Yahweh).

<p>Genesis 49:26 26 The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separated from his brothers.</p>	<p>בְּרַכַּת אָבִיךָ (26) גָּבְרוּ עַל בְּרַכַּת הוֹרֵי עַד תְּאֵוֹת גְּבַעַת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶינָה לְרֹאשׁ יוֹסֵף וּלְקַדְקֹדַד נָזִיר אָחָיו :</p>
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Joseph's separation also serves as a foreshadowing of how the lost ten tribes of Israel (Ephraim) would later be separated from their heritage in Israel, in order to fulfill a special mission. Yeshua alludes to Ephraim's separation in the parable of the prodigal son.

Luqa (Luke) 15:11-24

11 Then He said: "A certain man [Yahweh] had two sons [Judah and Ephraim].

12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, [i.e., was separated] and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

14 "But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

20 "And he arose and came to his Father. But when he was still a great way off, his Father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the Father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."

In Joseph's case the separation came about because of his boastfulness, and in the prodigal son's case the separation was self-inflicted. In Ephraim's case the separation was also self-inflicted, and yet Yahweh is still faithful to bless us when we turn from our own lives in the world, and seek Him.

It is the turning away from the world in order to draw closer to Yahweh that is important. Whenever we are separated from our brothers and sisters in Israel (or from our lives in the world) a huge void is created, and we have to fill that void with something. If we fill the void with His Spirit, then we will receive blessings; but if we fill that void with something else, then it can actually be worse for us than before.

Luqa (Luke) 11:24-26

24 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

25 And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order.

26 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

We are even called to set ourselves emotionally apart from family members who do not walk according to His Spirit (whether or not they claim to believe).

Mattityahu (Matthew) 10:34-39

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';

36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

When we turn away from the things of the world and draw closer to Yahweh, Yahweh blesses us. In fact, the more we turn away from the world and the closer we draw to Him, the more He can bless us. This principle is very reliable, yet for most people there is probably a practical limit to the amount they can set themselves apart from the world. If the job of a family is to raise up children to serve Him, then they need to spend time with their children, and raise them the right way. At least to some practical extent this means taking part in the world (at least enough to provide for the mother and the children).

When one becomes a celibate Nazirite, one holds aloof from the world even to the point of not raising a family. One lays down one's right to reproduce in order to have more time to serve Yahweh and His people. To see this, let us study the precepts of the Nazirite vow in Numbers 6. These are:

- 1) To abstain from all alcohol
- 2) To abstain from all grapes and grape products
- 3) To refrain from cutting one's hair
- 4) To avoid contact with corpses

- 5) Not to become unclean at anyone's death (not even for one's father or mother)
- 6) To dedicate all one can to Yahweh and His work (both time and money)

At first it may not be apparent how these six precepts lead one to hold aloof from the world, but hopefully it will become more apparent as this study progresses. Let us analyze the chapter in segments.

Abstain From Alcohol and Grape Products

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:1-8

- 1 And Yahweh spoke to Moshe, saying,
- 2 "Speak to the children of Yisrael, and say to them, 'When a man or woman does separate, by making a vow of a Nazirite, to be separate to Yahweh,
- 3 he separates himself from wine and strong drink - - he drinks neither vinegar of wine nor vinegar of strong drink (of grapes), neither does he drink any grape juice, nor eat grapes or raisins.
- 4 All the days of his separation he does not eat what is made of the grapevine, from seed to skin.
- 5 All the days of the vow of his separation a razor does not come upon his head. Until the days are completed for which he does separate himself to Yahweh, he is set-apart. He shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.
- 6 All the days of his separation to Yahweh he does not go near a dead body.
- 7 He does not make himself unclean [through mourning] for his father, or for his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to Elohim is on his head.
- 8 All the days of his separation he is set-apart to Yahweh."

Israelites partake of grapes, wine and alcohol on the Shabbat and festivals because they celebrate Him. Yet Yeshua tells us not to be drunk when He comes, lest we be appointed our portion with the non-believers.

Luqa (Luke) 12:42-46

- 42 And the Master said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?
- 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.
- 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has.
- 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk,
- 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

We can understand the word *drunk* both in literal and spiritual contexts, but it is in the spiritual context that Yahweh foretells woe for the "drunkards of Ephraim."

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 28:1-3

- 1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine!
- 2 Behold, Yahweh has a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with His hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim,
will be trampled underfoot....

Hosea tells us that Ephraim is worshipping other mighty ones and is eating his celebratory raisin cakes when he should be turning back to Yahweh.

Hoshea (Hosea) 3:1

1 Then Yahweh said to me, "Go again, love a woman loved by a friend, and an adulteress, according to the love of Yahweh for the children of Israel, though they are turning to other mighty ones, and love their raisin cakes."

Scripture gives clues that Yeshua, Yochanan HaMatbil (John the Baptist/Immerser) and Shaul (Paul) were probably all celibate Nazirites. For example, Luke tells us that Yochanan HaMatbil was to drink no wine or strong drink at all.

Luqa (Luke) 1:15

15 "For he shall be great before Yahweh, and shall drink no wine and strong drink at all."

This is the same kind of language that Yahweh uses to describe the Nazirite vow in Numbers 6.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:2-3

2 "Speak to the children of Yisrael, and say to them, 'When a man or woman does separate, by making a vow of a Nazirite, to be separate to Yahweh,

3 he [or she] separates himself from wine and strong drink - - he drinks neither vinegar of wine nor vinegar of strong drink [of grapes], neither does he drink any grape juice, nor eat grapes or raisins.'"

Also, we are told that John came wearing only a garment made of camel's hair, and a leather belt. In addition to this, his food was locusts and wild honey.

Marqaus (Mark) 1:6

6 Now Yochanan was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

That John wore only a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt, and that he trusted in Yahweh to provide for his nourishment, suggests he may have already given his worldly belongings to Yahweh. Note the parallel to the language used in Numbers 6:21.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:21

21 This is the Torah of the Nazirite, who vows to Yahweh the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide. According to the vow [that] he takes, so he shall do according to the Torah of his separation.

We are also given clues that Yeshua was a Nazirite before His ministry began because it seems He may have ended a Nazirite vow at the time He began His ministry (by turning water into wine).

Yochanan (John) 2:1-4

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galil [Galilee], and the mother of Yeshua was there.

2 Now both Yeshua and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Yeshua said to Him, "They have no wine."

4 Yeshua said to her, "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come [to separate my Nazirite Vow]."

While the Nazirite vow can last for life, it does not have to. It can last for a set length of time (i.e., a set number of days) or it can last until some event transpires (e.g., until Passover of next year).

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:8

8 All the days of his separation he is set-apart to Yahweh.

It may be that although Yeshua was still under his Nazirite vow, when His mother said there was no wine, Yeshua decided to end His vow early in order to make some. If so, this would likely show that Yeshua had compassion on the people, and was focused upon serving their needs.

Yahweh tells us that if someone dies very suddenly beside a Nazirite (i.e., in an instant), he must shave his head, and then go up to the temple.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:9-20

9 "And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it.

10 Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the Tabernacle of meeting;

11 and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day.

12 He shall consecrate to Yahweh the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled."

Additionally, if the Nazirite ends his vow normally (such that "the days of his separation are fulfilled") then he still must shave his head and go up to the temple, where he makes certain animal sacrifices for ritual purification.

13 "Now this is the Torah of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the Tabernacle of meeting.

14 And he shall present his offering to Yahweh: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering,

15 a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings.

16 'Then the priest shall bring them before Yahweh and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering;

17 and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to Yahweh, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering.

18 Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

19 'And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the

hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair,
20 and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before Yahweh; they are set apart for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.”

If Yeshua really did end His Nazirite vow early in order to make wine for the wedding guests, then we would expect to see Him go to Jerusalem shortly after, to offer the sacrifices for purification. Notice, then, that this is exactly what Yeshua did in John 2:13.

Yochanan (John) 2:11-14

11 This beginning of signs Yeshua did in Qana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

12 After this He went down to Kephrah Nahum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; but they did not stay there many days.

13 Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem.

Since by definition a Nazirite is supposed to stand aloof from the things of the world, and since Yeshua’s ministry was to call sinners to repentance, it would be easier for Yeshua to reach the people after he had separated His vow.

Luqa (Luke) 5:31-32

31 Yeshua answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

It would be easier for Yeshua to call sinners to repentance if He could be in and amongst them. This drew a lot of criticism from those around Him, but wisdom is justified by her works.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 11:18-19 (Peshitta)

18 “For Yochanan came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her works."

Refrain from Cutting One’s Hair

In some Eastern religions, those who dedicate their lives to spiritual pursuits show they have renounced the world by shaving their heads. In contrast to this, the Nazirite does not even bother to shave his head. Beyond the necessities of good personal general hygiene, the Nazirite does not care about pleasing the face of man.

Galatim (Galatians) 1:10

10 For do I now persuade men, or Elohim? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Messiah.

This is not to say that the Nazirite must never care for his appearance; just that he does not allow the opinions of others to affect him.

Avoid Contact with Corpses

The Torah tells us that corpses are unclean.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 22:4-7

4 “Whatever man of the descendants of Aharon, who is a leper or has a discharge, shall not eat the

set apart offerings until he is clean. And whoever touches anything made unclean by a corpse, or a man who has had an emission of semen,

5 or whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be —

6 the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the set apart offerings unless he washes his body with water.

7 And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the set apart offerings, because it is his food.”

There are contaminants in the material world, and we become ritually unclean because of them. However a Nazirite must do his best to avoid ritual defilements, including corpses, and even mourning.

Funerals are not really held for the benefit of the departed, but the living. While mourning for the loss of a loved one is scriptural, and while the feelings of grief and the uncertainty that death brings are certainly understandable, the Nazirite is supposed to put his faith in Yahweh, and trust that all things work together for good for those who love Elohim, and are called according to His purpose.

Romim (Romans) 8:28

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love Elohim, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

While we are permitted to mourn the loss of our father or mother, the Nazirite is not supposed to do so. He is not supposed to waste any time on things that are beyond

his control. Rather, he is just to trust that Yahweh is in charge, and work for the kingdom.

Give One's All to His Work, and Trust in Him

The idea behind being separated from life is that the Nazirite is to give his all to Yahweh. Numbers 6:21 tells us that the Nazirite is supposed to give or do whatever his hand is able, in order to help build His kingdom.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:21

21 This is the Torah of the Nazirite, who vows to Yahweh the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide. According to the vow [that] he [or she] takes, so he shall do according to the Torah of his separation.

Yeshua must have given whatever inheritance He had to the temple, for He had no place to stay.

Luqa (Luke) 9:58

And Yeshua said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the heaven have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

In Hebrew, to *bury one's father* is an idiom meaning “to collect an inheritance.” Yeshua's advice to the young man who wanted to bury his father was a very *Nazirite* thing for Him to say.

Luqa (Luke) 9:59-60

59 And He said to another, “Follow Me,” but he said, “Master, let me first go and bury my father.”

60 And Yeshua said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead; but you go and announce the reign of Elohim.”

If the Nazirite knows that Yahweh is completely and totally sovereign, and if he truly has no cares for the things of the world, why should he delay preaching the Good News until after he collects an inheritance? Yahweh is faithful to provide all that we need to serve Him, so why delay starting one's ministry?

Luqa (Luke) 9:61-62

61 And another also said, "Adon, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Yeshua said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of Elohim."

The Nazirite must be so focused, and so intent upon building Yahweh's kingdom here on earth that he simply does not desire to do anything that does not directly build Yahweh's kingdom. His life is to do Yahweh's work.

Yochanan (John) 5:17

17 Yeshua said, "My Father works until now, and I [also] work."

Even though Yeshua had technically separated His Nazirite vow earlier, His attitude was still very Nazirite, so to speak. While others were celebrating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage (all of which indicate a focus on the things of the material realm), Yeshua remained focused on the things of Yahweh.

Samsonite and Dedicated Nazirites

The Orthodox rabbis consider that there are two types of Nazirites. The Talmud calls the first type Samsonite Nazirites, and the second it calls Dedicated (or Separated) Nazirites.

The reason for the name Samsonite Nazirite is that Shimshon (Samson) did not set the best example of what a Nazirite should do. For example, Shimshon took both of his wives from the Philistines.

Shophetim (Judges) 14:1-3

1 Now Shimshon went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."

3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Shimshon said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."

After his first wife was killed (by the Philistines, no less—see Shophetim 15:6), Shimshon then consorted with another Philistine, a harlot by the name of Delilah.

Shophetim (Judges) 16:1

1 Now Shimshon went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

While it is true that Shimshon did not cut his hair, he loved Delilah so much that he eventually gave in to her pestering, and revealed the secret of his great strength to her. That is when she betrayed him.

Shophetim (Judges) 16:16-17

16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death,

17 that he told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to Elohim from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

Historically, those who took a Nazirite vow for thirty to ninety days or so (in order to dry out from alcoholism) were called Samsonite Nazirites. They took the vow as a temporary measure to break an addictive habit.

In contrast to this, Scripture gives us many examples of so-called Dedicated Nazirites. For example, the description of Eliyahu HaNavi (Elijah the Prophet) as a "hairy man" likely indicates that he was likely a Dedicated Nazirite.

Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 1:7-8

7 Then he said to them, "What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?"

8 So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It is Eliyahu the Tishbite."

In Psalm 22, Yeshua pays a vow.

Tehillim (Psalm) 22

From You is My praise in the great assembly, I pay My vows before those who fear Him.

It also seems likely that Yeshua reinstated His vow at the Last Supper.

Luqa (Luke) 22:17-18

17 And taking the cup, giving thanks, He said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves,

18 For I say to you, I shall certainly not drink of the fruit of the vine until the reign of Elohim comes."

Notice that Yeshua did not drink of the cup and then pass it: He simply passed the cup, telling His disciples that He would not partake of the celebratory fruit again until the reign of Elohim had come. This is in keeping with the Nazirite attitude of laying down one's opportunities in life, in favor of working for the Father.

Luke also tells us that Yeshua did not partake of the sour wine (vinegar) while He was upon the stake (cross), even though He thirsted greatly.

Luqa (Luke) 23:36-37

36 And the soldiers were mocking Him too; coming and offering Him sour wine,

37 and saying, "If you are the Sovereign of the Yehudim, save yourself!"

Also:

Mattityahu (Matthew) 27:33-34

33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, "Place of a skull,"

34 they gave Him wine mixed with bile to drink. And after tasting, He would not drink it.

The reason Yeshua would not drink it was that He had taken the Nazirite vow again at the Last Supper.

As we explain in [Nazarene Israel](#), the Apostle Shaul also separated a Nazirite vow at Acts 18:18.

Ma'asei (Acts) 18:18

18 And having remained many days more, having

taken leave of the brothers, Shaul sailed to Syria, having shaved his head; for he had [taken] a vow.

The Nazirite vow is the only vow in Scripture that calls for shaving the head. We also know that Shaul separated a second Nazirite vow when he went up to Jerusalem in Acts 21, for Ya'akov (Jacob) commanded him to pay the expenses of four other men who were also being purified of their Nazirite vows.

Ma'asei (Acts) 21:23-24

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow.

24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Torah.

Shaul also abstained from marriage.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 9:3-5

3 My defense to those who examine me is this:

4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?

5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Master, and Kepha?

It makes sense that the reason Shaul abstained from marriage was in order to have more time and flexibility to serve Yahweh and His people.

So what are we to make of the calling of the celibate Nazirite? Like many other things in Scripture, it is a two-edged sword. While Scripture tells us that a righteous wife and children are a blessing from Yahweh, Yeshua

also tells us that those who can receive the celibate vow should receive it.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 19:10-12

10 His taught ones said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is good not to marry."

11 "Not all receive this word, but only those to whom it has been given.

12 For there are eunuchs [meaning deformed] who were born so from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs [meaning castrated] who were made so by men; and there are eunuchs [meaning celibate] who have made themselves eunuchs [meaning celibate] for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it."

In addition to giving more time and flexibility to serve Yahweh's people, celibacy is also desirable for the ironic reason that it is not good for men to be alone. Celibacy greatly increases our level of refinement, which causes us to have to draw much closer to Yahweh for support. It is this drawing close which pleases Him so much.

However, when people are called to the marital path, they should not attempt to be abstinent, unless both parties willingly agree to it beforehand.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 7:1-9

1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

2 Nevertheless, because of [the need to avoid] sexual immorality, let each man [who is not called to celibacy] have his own wife, and let each woman [who is not called to celibacy] have her own husband.

3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

5 [So that the other party does not err,] Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6 However I say this as a concession, [and] not as a commandment.

7 For I wish that all men were even as I myself. However, [I am not superior, for] each one has his own gift from Elohim, one in this manner and another in that.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am [meaning celibate];

9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn [either with passion, or in Gehenna, as a result of disobedience].

It is desirable to take a celibate vow and/or a Nazirite vow, in that we are then separated from normal life. Affliction brings refinement, which brings us closer to Yahweh. However, some words of caution are in order.

Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) 5:4-5

4 When you make a vow to Elohim, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed —

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

Sometimes people learn about these vows and take them immediately, without thinking about the impact it will have on their life. It can happen that young people underestimate the impact of their biology. What may not seem so difficult in one's twenties and thirties may become very difficult a decade or so later, yet Yahweh expects us to keep our words. A vow is a vow; and it is better not to vow, than to vow and not to pay.

(For more information, please see also the study "[Abstinence, Celibacy, and Nazirites](#)," which is part of the [Covenant Relationships](#) study.)

About Inspiration and Scripture

What constitutes Scripture? And what is it that makes Scripture inspired? The answer may be different than we think.

The Apostle Kepha (Peter) implies that Shaul's (Paul's) writings are Scripture, seeing as he compares Shaul's writings with the "rest of the Scriptures."

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-16

15 and consider that the long suffering of our Adon is salvation — as also our beloved brother Shaul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

In the *Nazarene Israel* study we show that the people who twisted Shaul's writings in the first century are the same people who twist them now—the replacement theology Christians. However, our point here is that Kepha could not have said that the Christians twist the Apostle Shaul's writings right along with the rest of the Scriptures unless Shaul's writings were Scripture.

But what exactly does it mean that Shaul's writings are Scripture? Does it mean that every word Shaul ever wrote was inspired and infallible? Many in the church teach this, based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17. We will look at the New King James Version here.

Second Timothy 3:16-17, NKJV

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

According to the New King James Version (and most other mainstream translations), we should be able to form infallible doctrine based solely off of the Apostle Shaul's writings, seeing as

1. Kepha tells us Shaul's writings are Scripture
2. all Scripture is inspired

But wait—not so fast. The American Standard Version (ASV) gives us a very different reading. The specific reading in the ASV implies that it is only those Scriptures which are inspired of Elohim which are profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, etc.

Second Timothy 3:16-17 ASV

16 Every Scripture inspired of God [is] also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.

17 That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

If we will think about it, it makes a huge difference whether all of Shaul's writings are inspired (i.e., they come directly from Elohim), or if Shaul's writings are only the words of a man who was trying to do his best to serve Elohim. If the latter is the case then certainly, while Shaul's words would have enduring value, they could never be on par with Elohim's words.

We want to get at the truth here, so let us dig into both the Peshitta Aramaic and the Greek. The reason for including the Greek is that while I believe in a Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic) inspiration of the Renewed Covenant (New Testament), the Peshitta does not seem to be the inspired original, as it contains a great many Hellenisms and other corruptions. Instead, the Peshitta seems to be a backwards translation from the early Greek texts, which makes the older Greek more valuable for textual analysis.

The Peshitta Aramaic seems to support the ASV rendering of this passage. It does not tell us that “all” Scripture is inspired. Rather, it tells us only that those things which were written by the Spirit are profitable for matters of doctrine.

<p>2 Timothy 3:16 All writing that by the Spirit was written, profitable is for teaching, and for reproof, and for correction, and for instruction that is about uprightness....</p>	<p>PEH 2 Timothy 3:16 כל כתב דברוחא אתכתב מותרנא הו ליולפנא ולכוונא ולתורצא ולמרדותא :דבכאנותא</p>
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This begs the question, “How do we know what has been written by the Spirit?” What makes sense is that the words of Yahweh and Yeshua are inspired, and also those words Yahweh spoke through the prophets. In other words, everything Elohim says is profitable for doctrine. However, this does not justify the conclusion that every single word that the apostles ever spoke was inspired.

Since the Peshitta is probably a translation from the more ancient Greek, let us take a look at the Greek. It

will also read closer to the ASV, so long as we are careful to translate correctly. I have made bold the Greek word καὶ to draw your attention.

<p>2 Timothy 3:16 16 All Scripture given by inspiration of Elohim, [is also] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness....</p>	<p>BGT 2 Timothy 3:16 πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ,</p>
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The New King James translators chose to translate the word καὶ as a simple “and.” However, while this word does mean “and,” it probably does not mean a simple “and.” Rather, in this context it probably translates more like “and therefore” or “so then.”

NT:2532 kai (kahee); apparently, a primary particle, having a copulative and sometimes also a cumulative force; and, also, even, so then, too, etc.; often used in connection (or composition) with other particles or small words:

KJV - and, also, both, but, even, for, if, or, so, that, then, therefore, when, yet.

The ASV translation, “is also” is much more accurate. It does not elevate Shaul to demigod status. Rather, it lets us conclude that while Shaul’s words are indeed set-apart Scripture, and while they have been preserved for our instruction, they are not (in fact) equal to (or greater than) the words of Yahweh or Yeshua.

If this conclusion is accurate, it would help us to make sense of passages in which Shaul first tells us what

Yahweh says, and then also tells us his opinion (and identifies the two as being different from each other).

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 7:10-12

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but Yahweh: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I, not Yahweh, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

This distinction allows us to resolve a lot of other issues as well. For example, if literally every single word the apostles ever spoke was inspired, then how do we explain Kepha's denials of Yeshua?

Marqaus (Mark) 14:29-30

29 Kepha said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be."

30 Yeshua said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."

One can explain Kepha's error away on the basis that the Spirit had not yet been poured out. However, if everything Kepha ever spoke after the Day of Pentecost was inspired, then how do we explain the fact that Shaul was able to rebuke Kepha to his face when he came to Antioch, because he was to be blamed?

Galatim (Galatians) 2:11-13

11 Now when Kepha had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

12 for before certain men came from Ya'akov, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Bar Naba was carried away with their hypocrisy.

If we understand that it is only Elohim's words that are inspired of the Spirit, then it makes it much easier to understand how elect men such as Kepha and Bar Naba (Barnabas), could be led away in hypocrisy. It would also make it easier to understand how it was that Ya'akov (James) could call Shaul to account over the widespread misinterpretation of his epistles.

Ma'asei (Acts) 21:18-24

18 On the following day Shaul went in with us to Ya'akov, and all the elders were present.

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which Elohim had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified Yahweh. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Torah;

21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake [the Torah of] Moshe, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have [also] taken a [Nazirite] vow.

24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads

[to end their vows], and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Torah.”

Even if we set aside questions about the Renewed Covenant (New Testament) for the moment, it helps to understand that Iyov’s (Job’s) wife was not speaking according to the Spirit when she said Iyov should just curse Elohim and die.

Iyov (Job) 2:9

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse Elohim and die!"

Iyov’s wife’s words are undeniably Scripture. However, because her words were not inspired of the Spirit they are not profitable for doctrine.

The words of Korah and his men are likewise Scripture, but are not profitable for doctrine.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:3

3 They gathered together against Moshe and Aharon, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is set apart, every one of them, and Yahweh is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Yahweh?"

What shall we say then? When Yahweh or Yeshua speak, it is profitable for doctrine. Likewise, when Yahweh speaks through His servants the prophets, it is likewise profitable for doctrine. However, at other times we have to understand that we are reading the words of men. While their words are a part of Scripture, and while

their words are certainly valuable, we cannot always base doctrine on them.

For example, consider the four species that Yahweh says we are to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) with.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:40

40 “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your Elohim for seven days.”

In the days of Ezra and Nehemia they told the people to perform the commandment, but they got some of the details wrong. They named five species instead of four (and only two of them were the same).

Nehemiah 8:14-15

14 And they found written in the Torah, which Yahweh had commanded by Moshe, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month,

15 and that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written."

Are these words Scripture? Unquestionably, yes. However, are they profitable for doctrine? No, they are not, because Yahweh was not actively speaking through Nehemia when he was writing it (at least not as He speaks through one of His prophets). It is in this context

that we should bring up the question of the Talmud and the so-called Oral Torah.

Scripture tells us that when the Torah was given at Mount Sinai, "Moshe wrote all the words of Yahweh." All the words Moshe received, he wrote.

Shemote (Exodus) 24:4

4 And Moshe wrote all the words of Yahweh. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

In contrast to this, Judaism teaches that Moshe only wrote down some of the words Yahweh spoke; but that for some reason, the rest was transmitted orally.

Pirkei Avot (Verses of our Fathers) 1:1

Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua; Joshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly. They [the men of the Great Assembly] said three things: Be deliberate in judgment; develop many disciples; and make a fence for the Torah.

The phrase "make a fence" for the Torah means to add to the Torah, to make sure that no one transgresses it. However, this doctrine violates Yahweh's Torah in and of itself because Yahweh tells us not to add anything, or take anything away.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

2 "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim, which I command you."

The way Yahweh words things, He seems to imply that if we want to keep His commandments, then we have to be careful not to alter them in any way. This makes sense, for it goes without saying that a servant obeys his master. Whoever the servant believes his master to be, the servant will seek to keep his commands.

If we truly believe that we are Yahweh's servants, then we will seek to fulfill His desires. However, if in fact we truly believe that the rabbis are our masters, then we will seek to keep their commandments (i.e., Talmud). In this light, let us note that the rabbis tell us to be more careful to obey the Talmud than the Torah. (Note: the numbers in the passage below are for footnotes.)

Talmud – Mas. Eruvin 21b

My son, be more careful 14 in [the observance of] the words of the Scribes than in the words of the Torah, for in the laws of the Torah there are positive and negative precepts; 15 but, as to the laws of the Scribes, whoever transgresses any of the enactments of the Scribes incurs the penalty of death.

The rabbis teach it is more important to obey Talmud than Torah because they believe that when Yahweh gave the Torah to Israel, He also bestowed full power to change the Torah however they deem necessary. They consider their authority so complete that they have no need to listen to heaven (Yahweh) anymore.

Talmud - Mas. Baba Metzia 59b

Said R. Jeremiah: [Because] the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, After the majority must one incline.

The rabbis believe they have the authority to establish a new “Torah law” in each generation. For this reason, rather than look to Yahweh’s Torah, they believe the majority opinion of the rabbis is literal “Torah law” for their generation. However, this is the exact opposite of what Yahweh says in Exodus 23:2, where He tells us not to follow after the majority “to do evil.”

Shemote (Exodus) 23:2

2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice.

To alter the Torah (or even make up one’s own Torah) is the opposite of what Yahweh says to do.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it, nor take away from it."

While the Oral Torah was not formally compiled until 220 CE, many of the same traditions already existed in Yeshua’s day. Yeshua had never said anything good about these traditions. Instead, He gave the scribes (Karaites) and the Pharisees (Orthodox) a scathing rebuke for pretending to worship Yahweh, while making up their own commandments.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 15:1-9

1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Yeshua, saying,
2 "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders [i.e., the oral traditions and the Talmud]? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition?

4 For Elohim commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to Elohim" —

6 then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of Elohim of no effect by your tradition.

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

In addition to the examples we have already seen, there are many truly sickening “right rulings” in the Talmud, which fly in the face of all that is decent and good. For example, the Talmud tells us that a woman may have sex with beasts and still marry a high priest (Yevamot 59b). The Talmud also tells us that if a man has sex with a boy nine years of age or less, it does not qualify as sin (Sanhedrin 54b). Furthermore, it teaches us that “When a grown-up man has intercourse with a little girl, it is nothing” (Ketuvot 11b).

While we love our Jewish brothers and want only the best for them, we should also recognize that there was a reason Yeshua called those who teach Talmud “sons of hell” who appear as “whitewashed tombs” before men. To teach that Yahweh’s instructions should take a back seat to the commandments of men is evil.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 23:15-28

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'

17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'

19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

20 Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.

21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.

22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of Elohim and by Him who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."

It should be obvious that anything that contradicts the words of Yahweh does not come from Yahweh. (Not only is it not inspired, it is not Scripture.)

So what have we said? There is Scripture, and then there is *inspired* Scripture. In order to qualify as being inspired, the passage has to record either Yahweh or Yeshua speaking, either directly or through the mouth of a prophet.

While all Scripture that is not inspired still has value, the words of men must always take a secondary place to the words of Yahweh and His Son. If we approach Scripture with this in mind, then we can understand how to reconcile difficult passages, where the words of men do not seem to line up with the words of Elohim.

About Tassels (Tzitzit)

Scripture tells us to make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which we cover ourselves, so that we might look upon them, and remember to do all of His commandments.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 15:37-40

37 Again Yahweh spoke to Moshe, saying,
38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.

39 And it shall be unto you for a tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, to do them; and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined,

40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be set-apart to your Elohim (God.)"

The language seems to imply that these tassels need to be part of our regular clothing, such that we can look on them and be reminded to keep His commandments all of the time. If we only put them on when we go to Sabbath service it does not really fulfill this command. Further, since verse 38 tells us to make these tassels on the corners of our garments throughout our generations, this commandment would apply to us whether we are in the dispersion or in the land.

It is easier to wear tassels in Israel because they are a common sight. In the dispersion many people don't like to wear them, because they are conspicuous. However, we need to realize that we cannot worry about what the

world thinks. We cannot be friends with Yahweh and also be friends with the world, because Yahweh and the world are opposites. Therefore, we have to choose.

Ya'akov (James) 4:3-6

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with Elohim? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim!

5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

6 But He gives more favor (or grace.). Therefore He says: "Elohim resists the proud, but shows favor unto the humble."

Yahweh is a jealous Elohim, and He is jealous for is our undivided attention and loyalty. It may be that He gives us some commands that are diametrically opposed to what our flesh wants to do, just to see if we will choose to obey Him, or blend in with the world. In other words, He makes us choose between the world and Him, just to see what we value; therefore we need to choose life, rather than choosing the world.

In Numbers 15:38 (above), Yahweh tells us we should put the tassels on the four corners of our garments. The word in Hebrew is *kanaph* (כנף), meaning "edge," "border," or "wing." This same word *kanaph* (כנף) is also found in Malachi 4:1-2.

Malachi 4:1-2

1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all of the proud, (yes), all who do wickedly will be stubble! And the

(1) כִּי הִנֵּה הַיּוֹם בָּא
בֵּעֵר כְּתַנּוּר | וְהָיוּ כָל
יְדָיִם וְכָל עֵשֶׂה
רְשָׁעָה קֶשׁ וְלֶהֱט
אֶתֶם הַיּוֹם הַבֶּא

day which is coming shall burn them up," says Yahweh of hosts, "That will leave them neither root nor branch.
 2 But to you who fear My Name, the Sun of Righteousness (Yeshua) shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat, like stalled calves."

אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַעֲזֹב לָהֶם
 שָׂרֵשׁ וְעֵנָף :
 (2) וְזָרְחָה לָכֶם יְרֵאֵי
 שְׁמִי שֶׁמֶשׁ צְדָקָה
 וּמְרִפָּא בְּכַנְפֶיהָ |
 וַיֵּצְאוּתֶם וּפְשִׁיתֶם
 כְּעֵגְלֵי מְרֻבָּק

The Sun of Righteousness is Yeshua, and the wings (כנפים) of Malachi 4:1-2 refer to the wings of His garments. This explains the healing of the woman with the issue of blood.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 9:20-22

20 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

21 For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well!"

22 But Yeshua turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well!" And the woman was made well from that hour.

Is it possible the woman with the issue of blood knew that the Sun of Righteousness would have healing in the wings of the garments; and that is why she took hold of the tzitzit on the hem of His garment? Yeshua's wings or tassels would not have any power of healing in and of themselves, but Yahweh would make her whole because of her faith.

In Hebraic thought, the wing of a garment represents authority. In Ruth 3:8-11, it represents the authority of a husband, and his covering.

Ruth (Root) 3:8-11

8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet.

9 And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Root (Ruth) your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing (כַּנְפֶיךָ), for you are a close relative."

10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of Yahweh, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a *virtuous woman*."

When Boaz cast the wing (KJV: skirt) of his garment over Ruth he was literally taking her under his wing. He was using his authority to cover, shield, and protect her.

First Samuel 24:1-5 also shows us that the wing/corner of one's garment can represent power and authority. In this case it represents the power and authority of a king.

Shemuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 24:1-5

1 Now it happened, when Shaul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi."

2 Then Shaul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Shaul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

4 Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which Yahweh said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner (כנף) of Saul's robe.

5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

When David cut off the corner (or wing) of Shaul's robe he would have cut off Shaul's tassel. In so doing he would also have symbolically cut off the symbol of King Shaul's power and authority.

Scripture gives us two words for these tassels. The word found at Numbers 15:37 is the more well-known of the two words. That word is *tzitzit* (צִיצִית).

<p>Numbers 15:37-40 37 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And it shall be unto you for a tassel, that you may look upon it and</p>	<p>(37) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : (38) דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרָת אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וּנְתַנּוּ עַל צִיצִית הַכַּנֶּף פָּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת : (39) וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ</p>
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<p>remember all the commandments of Yahweh, to do them; and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be set-apart to your Elohim (God.)"</p>	<p>וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וְעַשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתְּרוּ אַחֲרָי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרָי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם : (40) לִמְעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעַשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם</p>
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When we look up the meaning of the word *tzitzit*, we see it refers to a floral or wing-like projection.

OT:6734 tsiytsith (tsee-tseeth'); feminine of OT:6731; a floral or wing-like projection, i.e. a forelock of hair, a tassel:
KJV - fringe, lock.

When we look up the reference to OT:6731, we can see it refers to a burnished plate, or a flower.

OT:6731 tsiyts (tseets); or tsits (tseets); from OT:6692; properly, glistening, i.e. a burnished plate; also a flower (as bright-colored); a wing (as gleaming in the air):
KJV - blossom, flower, plate, wing.

When we look up the reference to the root word at OT:6692, we see that it refers to a blossom.

OT:6692 tsuwts (tsoots); a primitive root; to twinkle, i.e. glance; by analogy, to blossom (figuratively, flourish):
KJV - bloom, blossom, flourish, shewself.

This word *tzitzit* (צִיצִית) literally means “flowers,” and it is used this way in Isaiah 28:4.

<p>Isaiah 28:4 4 And the glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valley, like the first fruit before the summer, which an observer sees; He eats it up while it is still in his hand.</p>	<p>(4) וְהִיְתָה צִיצִית נָבֵל צָבִי תִפְאַרְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עַל רֹאשׁ גֵּיא שְׁמָנִים כְּבִכּוּרָה בְּטָרִם קִיץ אֲשֶׁר יֵרְאֶה הָרֹאֶה אוֹתָהּ בְּעוֹדָהּ בְּכַפּוֹ יִבְלָעֶנָּה</p>
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Ironically, most who people say they put tzitzit in the four corners of their garments do not embroider blue flowers. Rather, they make woven cords that look somewhat more like chains. This is the definition of the other word for tassels, which is *g'dilim* (גְּדִלִים).

<p>Deuteronomy 22:12 12 "You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself."</p>	<p>(12) גְּדִלִים תַּעֲשֶׂה לָךְ עַל אַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת כְּסוּתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּכְסֶּה בָּהּ</p>
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Strong's Hebrew Concordance defines *g'dilim* as a tassel or a festoon, in the sense of twisting thread.

OT:1434 gedil (ghed-eel'); from OT:1431 (in the sense of twisting); thread, i.e. a tassel or festoon:
KJV - fringe, wreath.

When we look up the root word at OT:1431, we see that it refers to something twisted.

OT:1431 gadal (gaw-dal'); a primitive root; properly, to twist [compare OT:1434], i.e. to be (causatively make) large (in various senses, as in body, mind, estate or honor, also in pride):
KJV - advance, boast, bring up, exceed, excellent, be (-come, do, give, make, wax), great (-er, come to ... estate, things), grow (up), increase, lift up, magnify (-ifical), be much set by, nourish (up), pass, promote, proudly [spoken], tower.

The *g'dilim* (גְּדִלִים) is frequently rendered as “chains,” which also require an interweaving, braiding, or twisting of some sort. However, the New King James renders *g'dilim* as “wreaths” in 1 Kings 7:17.

<p>1 Kings 7:17 17 He made a lattice network, with wreaths of chainwork, for the capitals which were on top of the pillars: seven chains for one capital and seven for the other capital.</p>	<p>(17) שְׁבָכִים מַעֲשֵׂה שְׁבָכָה גְּדִלִים מַעֲשֵׂה שְׂרָשְׁרוֹת לְכַתְרֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל רֹאשׁ הָעַמּוּדִים שְׁבָעָה לְכַתְרֹת הָאַחַת וְשְׁבָעָה לְכַתְרֹת הַשֵּׁנִית</p>
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Wreaths, however, are also braided or interwoven. One issue that arises is about who is to wear tassels. Some of our Jewish brothers get upset when women

wear tassels. Opposite this, many Ephraimites believe that women should wear tassels, because Yahweh tells the *children of Israel* (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) to wear tassels, rather than just the men.

<p>Numbers 15:37-40 37 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And it shall be unto you for a tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, to do them; and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be set-apart to your Elohim (God.)"</p>	<p>(37) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר : (38) דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל כְּנָפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנָתַנּוּ עַל צִיצִית הַכֶּנֶף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת : (39) וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ וְזָכַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתְּרוּ אַחֲרַי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם : (40) לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי וְהֵייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם</p>
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If the purpose of the tassel is to serve as a reminder to do all of Yahweh's commandments, then why would this be important only for the men (and not for the women)?

The women have the job of training the next generation of Israel, therefore it would seem very important that the women should wear them (and to do otherwise would seem to put the next generation of Israel at risk).

The issue revolves around the definition of the word "children," which is *b'nai* (בְּנֵי). A son is a *ben* (בֶּן), and *b'nai* (or *b'nei*) is plural of ben. A daughter is a *baht* (בַּת) and daughters (plural) are called *b'noht* (בָּנוֹת).

If one is referring only to daughters (and no males are present) the term is *b'noht* (בָּנוֹת) (daughters). However, if even one single male is present the term is *b'nai* (בְּנֵי) (sons). Even if there are ten thousand women and only one man the term is *b'nai* (בְּנֵי) (sons). Therefore, one cannot exclude women based on the term *b'nai*. This is especially true when one realizes that Yahweh uses the word *z'char* (זָכָר) when He wants to specify males only. For example, Yahweh tells us that *all your males* (זָכָרְךָ) need to go up to Jerusalem three times a year for the pilgrimages.

<p>Deuteronomy 16:16 16 Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed."</p>	<p>(16) שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה כָּל זָכֹרְךָ אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר בְּחַג הַמִּצּוֹת וּבְחַג הַשְּׁבִעוֹת וּבְחַג הַסֻּכּוֹת וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה רִיקִים</p>
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But if both men and women are to make tassels in the

corners of their garments, then is there any special color of blue that the tassels need to be made from? The Orthodox claim that the Hillazon sea snail (*Murex trunculus*) was the ancient source of the blue dye for set-apart garments and the tabernacle. However, even with modern extraction methods, it takes approximately 29 *Murex trunculus* sea snails to make enough blue dye for just one set of tzitzit. When the children of Israel left Egypt they numbered some 600,000 men on foot.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:37

37 Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.

Just one set of tassels for 600,000 men, the children of Israel would have needed 17,400,000 *Murex trunculus* sea snails. Where would the children of Israel have found 17,400,000 sea snails in the middle of the wilderness of Sinai? This is just not possible from a logistical standpoint. While *Murex trunculus* dye was used in ancient Phoenicia for dyeing fabric blue or purple, it was so rare that only royalty could afford it. Beyond this, there is no archaeological record of *Murex trunculus*-dyed cloth in Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

In contrast, blue cloth dyed from the indigo plant was very common in Egypt at the time of the Exodus, and it would also have been readily available to the people as they were leaving Egypt. The Indians and the Chinese were experts with indigo dye even in ancient times, and it is likely that the Hebrew word for blue used in Numbers 15-37-40 may itself be borrowed from Indian Sanskrit. The Hebrew word is *techelet* (תְּכֵלֶת) and the Indian name is *kala*. Note the similarity between *te-kala* and *te-chelet*.

[It is also not given that purple cloth from that time frame was dyed from *Murex trunculus*. The Hebrew word for purple (or reddish-violet) is *argaman* and/or *argevan*. Some scholars believe this is related to the Indian Sanskrit words *ragamen* and *ragavan*, both of which derive from the Indian word *raga*, meaning “red.” We might add that to use purple dyed cloth from *Murex* snails for the tabernacle curtains would have suffered from the same challenges that doom the *Murex*-blue-dye theory. There simply was not enough of it at that time.]

So far we have seen that the command to wear tzitzit is applicable today, and that it applies equally for men, women and children. We have also seen that the most likely source for the blue dye was the indigo plant. The only thing left to discuss, then, is our Orthodox brethren’s concept of needing to be uniform in the manner of tying the tassels.

Our Orthodox brothers place a great deal of importance on uniform dress. They believe that if one is a Haredi Pharisee then one is supposed to dress a certain way; whereas if one is a Breslov Hasid then one is supposed to dress a different way. Our Orthodox brethren take these things very seriously, and they consider that there is even spiritual importance to the styles used. Those in the know can tell at a glance what another Jew believes (or does not believe) just by looking at his clothing.

The Orthodox rabbis assert that they have the right to dictate dress codes for all Israel, because Yahweh said we are supposed to listen to the priests and the Levites that exist in those days.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:8-13

8 "If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed,

between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses.

9 And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge there in those days, and inquire of them; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.

10 You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which Yahweh chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you.

11 According to the sentence of the Torah in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you.

12 Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before Yahweh your Elohim, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously."

The reason Yahweh said to listen to the priests and the Levites is that they were supposed to speak according to Yahweh's instructions (rather than make their own). Yahweh is very plain that He does not want us to add or take anything away from His instructions.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

It is true that there are some matters in which we must be uniform. For example, Scripture tells us to shun

idolaters, adulterers, blood and strangled meats.

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:19-21

19 "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to Elohim,

20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moshe has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

We need to be uniform in the things that Yahweh has commanded. For example, we all need to be modestly dressed; but does that mean we need to wear the same clothing, right down to the way we tie our tassels (and even our shoes)? Our Orthodox brothers would argue that yes, we have to tie our tassels (and our shoes) however they say, or else we are not fulfilling Yahweh's commandment. However, this is to add to His commandments, which He prohibits.

Yahweh gives us a commandment to put a tassel with a blue thread in the four corners of the garment with which we cover ourselves. So long as we have a tassel with a blue thread in each of the four wings of our garment, then we are fulfilling His command.

Loving Judah

It is important that we love our brothers in Judah. While we do have some differences with them, and while we are presently denied an ability to live in the land of Israel, we need always to show our Jewish brothers the kind of love that we would like to be shown. If we ever lose sight of this, then we have lost sight of the Torah.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 7:12

12 “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Torah and the Prophets.”

Judah has blocked us out of the land, and continues to deny us the ability make Aliyah (immigration). Yet, when someone else does us wrong, that does not give us an excuse to do them wrong, or to hate them. Two wrongs just don't make a right. They never have, and never will.

In [Nazarene Israel](#) and [Revelation and the End Times](#), we show how there are two houses of Israel: Ephraim and Judah. We also show that at the time of this writing, the bulk of Ephraim is still essentially lost in the replacement-theology church system (which tells them that the church has replaced Judah). This is tragic because it leads many in Ephraim to hate and disparage their Jewish brothers. This is not pleasing to our Father, who loves both of His children very much.

To those of you who are fathers, how do you like it when your children do mean things to each other? And does it matter to you if they allegedly have excuses?

Many of our Jewish brothers simply do not know who their Messiah is. This is because our heavenly Father

Yahweh has not revealed it to them yet. He will, in His perfect time.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 14:12

12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of Elohim and the faith of Yeshua.

This verse tells us that the saints are those who keep both Yahweh's commandments and the faith of Yeshua. Part of keeping the faith of Yeshua is not to do wrong. It is not to do evil to anyone, even if they have done evil to us. It will be a great day when all in Ephraim understand this, for we also have done many evil and awful things to the Jews. Just like two children with a feud, or like the Hatfields and the McCoys, we find reasons or excuses to do each other evil. It has to stop somewhere, and we are the only people whose behavior we can control.

Every Ephraimite and Jew who does not diligently seek to walk in the fullness of truth is not presently in covenant; yet they still have an opportunity to redeem themselves, due to Yahweh's eternal favor and mercy. This irony was not lost on Yeshua or the apostles, which is why some passages describe both Ephraim and Judah as being part of Israel, while other passages say they have been (temporarily) cut off.

Romim (Romans) 9:1-5

1 I tell the truth in Messiah, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Set-apart Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Messiah for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Torah, the service of Elohim, and the promises;

5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Messiah came, who is over all, the eternally blessed Elohim. Amein.

In "[Yahweh's Heart in Marriage](#)" (included in [Covenant Relationships](#)), we show that Yahweh treats divorce as a temporary condition. It is never permanent. While He may have sent Ephraim away and given her a bill of divorcement, she remains His wife by covenant. The divorce is only intended to last until she repents, and we can assume that whatever disfavor brother Judah has in Yahweh's eyes is also temporary. While Yahweh may have to turn His favor away from us temporarily in order to get us to comply with His wishes, He never abandons His people completely. To do so would be contrary to His nature.

We are made in Yahweh's image. How do we treat our children? If they do something wrong, we talk with them. If they continue, we may spank them. If they do something wrong in society, then they might even go to prison, but does that mean we ever stop loving them?

Is there ever a time when we stop loving those who come forth from our loins? Sadly, some of us have stopped loving our children, but Yahweh says that He will never do this. He loves His children always, and is always ready to take us back when we repent, and begin to do right.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 49:15

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you."

Judah has done wrong to Ephraim, and Ephraim has done wrong to Judah; yet it amazes me when people try to say that our Jewish brethren are not really Jews saying that true Jews are really either black, or British, or non-Ashkenazi. We show how these arguments do not work both in the [Nazarene Israel](#) study, and in other places.

Another argument that Ephraimites sometimes make is that "the Jews are not truly Jewish because they are actually Russian Khazars." It is true that many Khazars (and Germans, French, Arabs, etc.) did graft into Judah over the centuries, but this argument has no bearing whatsoever on their status as Israelites because, as we will see below, Israelite identity has never been established by genetics, but rather by practice of our faith.

Citizenship in the nation of Israel has always been spiritual, rather than racial (or genetic). It does not depend on one's ancestry (or on the color of one's skin), but on allegiance to Yahweh (and His Son). This is why, even though Ruth had originally been a Moabitess, she was considered an Israelite from the moment she gave her allegiance to Yahweh.

Root (Ruth) 1:16

16 But Root said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your Elohim, my Elohim."

Yahweh does not care about the flesh, but the heart. When Ruth converted, she was no longer thought of as

a Moabitess; and King David came from her lineage only two generations later.

Yochanan HaMatbil (John the Immerser) told the Pharisees not to boast in their genetics, or to say, "We have Avraham (Abraham) as our father," because Yahweh does not want anyone to glory in their flesh. He wants us to show fruits worthy of repentance.

Luqa (Luke) 3:8

8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Avraham as our father.' For I say to you that Elohim is able to raise up children to Avraham from these stones."

Zechariah 12:10 gives us perhaps one of the strongest witnesses that our Jewish brothers and sisters are, in fact, Jews (and are loved of Yahweh).

Zecharyah (Zechariah) 12:10-14

10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

11 In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

12 And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves;

13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves;

14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves."

While it is not absolutely conclusive that this passage refers to the Jews who live in Jerusalem today, it clearly shows that there will be a people who

1. Pierce (Yahweh/Yeshua)
2. Live in Jerusalem (and throughout the land of Israel)
3. Have Levites in their lineage

There is only one group of people who fits all these criteria, and they are the Jews who live in Israel.

Yahweh will continue to work with our Jewish brothers and sisters, to show them who He is. While we do not know exactly when that will take place, there are many indications that it may happen soon. Already the Israeli Supreme Court has ruled that certain classes of Messianic Jews can return back home to the land of Israel, and from there the right to return home will more than likely be extended to other classes of believers (in His time).

We are in transition, hoping to build good relationships with our Jewish brothers and sisters. It only makes sense that we should be as good to them as we can, doing unto them as we want them to do unto us. And yet some would also point out that Scripture tell us not to receive those who do not accept Yeshua into our homes, or greet them.

Yochanan Bet (2 John) 7-11

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Yeshua Messiah as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Messiah.

8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Messiah does not have Elohim. He who abides in the doctrine of Messiah has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

The word *shalom* refers to something that is perfect, whole, or complete. For example, in Hebrew, when you pay a bill, you *shalem* (make peace). There is a debt, and when we pay, the situation is made whole, or complete. There are no longer any issues, so there is shalem/shalom.

I remember when I first noticed that my Jewish friends (who do not believe in Yeshua) would not say shalom to me. If I said shalom to them, they would respond with something else. At first I did not understand why they would do this, and I kept saying shalom to them, trying to get them to say it back to me. Then one day I realized that the reason they were not saying shalom back to me was not that they wished me ill or anything like that, but that they were just being honest. Even though we were friends, the reality is that there was an issue between us (and obviously, that issue is Yeshua). Even if they were to say shalom, there would still be an issue. So, even though we all want to continue being friends, it fell to me to realize just how important it is in the Hebraic mind to be honest and correct in our speech.

So now, rather than say shalom to them, I typically use that word only with Nazarene Israelites. I use it with

those who keep both the commandments of Elohim and the faith in Yeshua.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 10:11-13

11 "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

12 And when you go into a household, greet it.

13 If the household is worthy, let your shalom come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your shalom return to you."

We just have to listen closely, and be honest with ourselves (and with Yahweh) as to whether true shalom really exists between ourselves and someone else. If there is true peace and a sense of real wholeness as brothers, then we can bid them shalom. Or if there is no real sense of connectedness and peace, then we should let our greeting return back to us. Yet at no time does this need to become a reason for condemnation, or for doing anything displeasing to our good heavenly Father.

May Yahweh restore His people, and build the bonds of friendship and relationship between them. In Yeshua's name, amein.

The Lunar Sabbath Error

In [The Torah Calendar](#) study we explain the calendar Yahweh tells us to keep in Scripture. One thing we see is that the days begin at evening. This can be seen by the simple fact that Genesis 1 tells us the evening and the morning constitute a day.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 1:19

19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

This is verified in that Yahweh tells us the Day of Atonement lasts from evening to evening.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:32

32 "It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

Genesis 1:14-19 tells us that the sun, moon, and stars were made for signs, seasons, days, and years. The sun, the moon, and the stars divide the day from the night.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 1:14-19

14 Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;

15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

16 Then Elohim made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

17 Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And Elohim saw that it was good.

19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

In [The Torah Calendar](#) we also saw that the month begins with the sighting of the first crescent sliver of the new moon. We know that this was the calendar system used in Yeshua's time because the historical record given in the Talmud shows that in the first century there were witnesses to the sighting of the first crescent sliver of the new moon. One only uses witnesses when there is something to see (whereas in most versions of the Lunar Sabbath theory there is nothing to see).

Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 23b

How do they test the witnesses? The pair who arrive first are tested first. The senior of them is brought in and they say to him, "Tell us how you saw the moon, in front of the sun, or behind the sun? To the north of it, or to the south? How big was it, and in which direction was it inclined? And how broad was it?"

If he says "In front of the sun," his evidence is rejected. After that they would bring in the second and test him. If their accounts tallied their evidence was accepted, and other pairs were only questioned briefly, not because they were required at all, but so that they should not be disappointed, [and] so that they should not be dissuaded from coming.

We can know that the Lunar Sabbath calendar is wrong because it does not go by the visible sighting of the first

crescent sliver. This is crucial as the calendar is central to worship. If the barley-new-moon calendar that was in use in the first century had not been right, Yeshua would have had to say something about it because He had to be in Jerusalem at the right time for His sacrifice on the cross/stake. Further, the apostles also had to be in the upper room when the Spirit was poured out in Acts 2, or they would not have received the indwelling of the Spirit. Yet both Yeshua and His apostles were in the right places at the right times, and we know that they were keeping time by the barley-new-moon calendar. This alone ought to be enough to end the discussion, but for those who want the full proof, we will continue.

Yahweh worked for six days, and on the seventh day He completed all of His work. Therefore He blessed the seventh day, and set it apart.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 2:1-3

1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.

2 And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and set it apart, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.

This passage gives us a basic pattern of counting to six, and then resting on the seventh day. We will see this same pattern again in Exodus 16.

Shemote (Exodus) 16:22-26

22 And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moshe.

23 Then he said to them, "This is what Yahweh has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a set-apart Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'"

24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moshe commanded; and it did not stink, nor were there any worms in it.

25 Then Moshe said, "Eat that today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh; today you will not find it in the field."

26 "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

Some of the Israelites refused to rest on the count of seven, which made Yahweh upset.

Shemote (Exodus) 16:27-30

27 Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they found none.

28 And Yahweh said to Moshe, "How long do you refuse to keep My commands and My laws?"

29 See! For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

Lunar Sabbatarianism teaches that the commandment is not to count to six and rest, but rather to rest by the phases of the moon. There are many variations of this teaching, but in general, they all seek support from Genesis 1:14-19, which tells us that the moon plays a role in the establishment of the calendar.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 1:14-19

14 Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;

15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

16 Then Elohim made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

17 Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And Elohim saw that it was good.

19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Many scholars have speculated that the light and darkness that were created on the first day refer to spiritual light and darkness (i.e., good and evil, rather than visible light). Yet the main thing we need to see here is that the moon was not created until the fourth day. If Yahweh began His count on the first day, but the moon was not even created until the fourth day, then Yahweh cannot have based His count on the phases of the moon.

Sometimes Lunar Sabbatharians allege that the count to seven was lost in the Babylonian Exile, but this is not correct. As we saw before, Yeshua (who came after the Babylonian Exile) kept the barley-new-moon calendar.

The most common version of the Lunar Sabbath theory has the month beginning when the moon is dark, on what is typically called the lunar conjunction. This is also called a *no moon*, or a *dark moon*.



This theory is based on the concept that one should hypothetically be able to look up into the nighttime sky and know when the Sabbath is, based on the phases of the moon. As beautiful as this concept might sound, it is not what Yahweh says to do. There are also practical limitations because in the land of Israel, the conjunction (dark moon) normally lasts two days, and can last up to 3.5 days (or more, if there are clouds). Which of these days should be used as the starting point for our count? This is not a small problem, and there is no way for the Lunar Sabbatharians to reconcile the apparent discrepancy, as Yahweh never says anything about it. This is why, in practice, people who keep the Lunar Sabbath refer to computer-generated charts based on modern astronomical data. They need these kinds of charts, so their people will not want to celebrate the Sabbath on all different days; but these kinds of charts did not exist in ancient times.

Another major issue concerns the preparation day, which is the day just before the Sabbath. This is the day when Yahweh told all Israel to prepare food for two days, so that they have fresh food to eat during the Sabbath (when they are not supposed to cook).

Shemote (Exodus) 16:22-23

22 And so it was, on the sixth day, that they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each

one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moshe.

23 Then he said to them, "This is what Yahweh has said: 'Tomorrow is a Sabbath rest, a set-apart Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake what you will bake today, and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be kept until morning.'"

The following chart illustrates why the Lunar Sabbath is so hard (if not impossible) to keep. While the moon can sometimes loom large in the sky, usually it is small, and not easy to read (even on clear nights when there are no clouds). But even more importantly, the phases of the moon are not discreet. In the following chart, the upper left hand quadrant would represent a Sabbath, because it is a moon phase (first quarter). However, the next moon phase comes eight days later (second row down, second from the left), making an eight day week. Perhaps one could have guessed that the preparation day should have been held on day 7 (assuming there were no clouds), but then notice that the moon is full for two whole days. Which one of these two days should be kept as the lunar Sabbath? There is no way to know because Yahweh says nothing about how to resolve this kind of problem (and in fact, the whole construct is not what He commands.



Assuming we choose to go with the first of the two full moon days as our Sabbath, then it is another seven days to the next moon phase; but in the third row down, first column (day 13), would you have known to hold your preparation day here?

Continuing on, there are two days in which the moon is completely dark (days 20 and 21). Thus the preparation day would be the last day in the third row (day 19), yet the true dark moon day is not until two days later, in the fourth row down, second from the left (day 21).

Another problem is that there is approximately 29.5 days from one new moon to the next, which does not divide evenly by 4. When we divide 29.5 days by 4, we come up with an average of +/- 7.375 days in an average lunar week. Since it is nonsensical to have a week that lasts 7.375 days, in practice, every third lunar week has to be eight days long (in fact, we see two examples of an eight day week in the chart above). Yet Yahweh never tells us that a week can have eight days. Yahweh commands a seven day week.

Where this version of the Lunar Sabbath theory really gets messy is in its timing of the festivals, because it says that the festivals should all fall on the phases of the moon. That is, it says the Passover, the Omer (Wave Sheaf), the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, and the Pentecost should all fall on Lunar Sabbaths. Initially this theory looks great, but it falls apart under scrutiny because not only does it contradict the Torah, it also disagrees with the record of Yeshua's resurrection.

There is a question as to whether Yeshua died on the Passover or on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. We discuss both options in [The Torah Calendar](#), but we believe He was almost certainly put to death on the Passover, as Messiah our Passover died for us.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 5:7

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Messiah, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

After being cut off in the middle of the week, Yeshua was then in the earth for three days and three nights.

Marqaus (Mark) 8:31

31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Yeshua was then raised either on the Sabbath or very early on the first day of the week (perhaps at twilight, when the Sabbath gave way to the first day of the week). He was not raised in the middle of the week.

Marqaus (Mark) 16:9

9 Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

The problem is that Lunar Sabbath theory says that the Passover and the Sabbath both take place on moon phases. This has Yeshua dying on a moon phase, and being raised on another moon phase three days later. For this theory to work, the moon phases need to take place three days apart (which is impossible). There is no remedy for this.

1 st day	2 nd day	3 rd day	4 th day	5 th day	6 th day	7 th day Shabbat
8 th day	9 th day	10 th day	11 th day	12 th day	13 th day	14 th day Passover
15 th day	16 th day	17 th day Resurrection	18 th day	19 th day	20 th day	21 st day Shabbat
22 nd day	23 rd day	24 th day	25 th day	26 th day	27 th day	28 th day Etc.

The Pentecost has similar problems. In Hebrew the Pentecost is called *Shavuot*, which means "the Feast of Weeks." The Torah says to count seven complete Sabbaths (7 x 7 = 49), to add a day (to make 50 days), and then to hold the feast.

Leviticus 23:15-16 15 "And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.	(15) וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאְכֶם אֶת עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעַת שַׁבָּתוֹת תְּמִימֹת תִּהְיֶינָה : (16) עַד מִמַּחֲרַת הַשַּׁבָּת הַשְּׂבִיעִת תִּסְפְּרוּ
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<p>16 Count fifty days, to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to Yahweh.”</p>	<p>חֲמִשִּׁים יוֹם וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַיהוָה</p>
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The problem is that the lunar calendar has to have an 8 day week every 3 weeks (on average). After 7 weeks there will be either 2 or 3 of these 8 day weeks, thus adding an extra 2 or 3 days to the count. Instead of the 50 days that Yahweh commands, the lunar omer count will normally last either 52 or 53 days.

For the same reasons, every 3 years (on average) the 7 days of Unleavened Bread will actually last 8 days. Further, because the flight paths of the celestial bodies are irregular, we can never predict these things. It is an erratic problem the lunar Sabbatarians cannot resolve.

To bring the count down to 50, some begin their weekly count with the first crescent sliver of the new moon. The problem here is that it throws the other counts off. The week after Passover is very short (4 or 5 days), while the week before the new moon is very long (10 or 11 days). And worst of all, all of this requires altering the Torah, which Yahweh expressly forbids.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

2 “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you.”

Another variant has three weeks of 7 days each, with the final week being stretched out until the next month begins. The problem here is that the lunar month is

approximately +/- 29.5 days long, which in practical terms means that roughly half of the months will be 29 days long, while the other half of the months will be 30 days long. This means the final week has to be either 8 or 9 days long, depending on whether it is a 29 or 30 day month. In the chart below, first we see depicted a 30 day month, and then a 29 day month.

Moon	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	Moon	2	3	4	5
6	7	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	Moon	2	3	4

There are too many variations of Lunar Sabbath theory for us to track them all down here. All of them are fatally flawed because they do not follow the command Yahweh gave us in the Torah, which is to count to six, and then rest, as He did.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 2:1-3

1 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished.

2 And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3 Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and set it apart, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.

Yahweh doesn't like it when we won't do as He asks.

Shemote (Exodus) 16:28-30

28 And Yahweh said to Moshe, "How long do you refuse to keep My commands and My laws?"

29 See! For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

If we love Yahweh, and we want to please Him, then what is wrong with just following Yahweh's example, and doing what He asks us to do?

The Equinox Error

This study explains why it is not necessary to set the head of the year according to the vernal equinox (and indeed, why it is wrong to do so).

When we live in the land of Israel, all Israelite males must come up to Jerusalem three times a year; and Yahweh says not to appear before Him empty-handed.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16

16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed."

In addition to our normal tithes (which we discuss in [Torah Government](#)), during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Yahweh wants us to bring Him a special offering called the wave sheaf offering (or *omer*, in Hebrew). Yahweh says not to eat any of that year's crops until after we have presented Him with this special omer (sometimes called the *firstfruits* offering.)

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:10-11, 14

10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.'

11 "He shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it...."

14 "You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have

brought an offering to your Elohim; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

In [The Torah Calendar](#) we show that Yahweh does not want all of the barley to be ripe before we present Him with the omer. He just wants us to show our faith and love for Him by bringing Him the very first of the edible barley before we eat any of it ourselves. (In ancient times this could be a very big show of faith, because the people could run out of food in winter.)

If you take barley that is not hard ripe (but is still a little green), it has enough water in it that if you parch it in fire, it will yield a tasty meal similar to puffed wheat. Barley that is at this stage of development is called *aviv* (אַבִּיב) barley. The New King James Version calls this "in the head," because that is where the development is going on.

Shemote (Exodus) 9:31 31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head and the flax was in bud.	וְהַפְּשֵׁתָהּ (31) וְהַשְּׁעֵרָה נִכְּתָה כִּי הַשְּׁעֵרָה אֲבִיב וְהַפְּשֵׁתָהּ גְּבַעַל
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It is really cool of Yahweh to allow us to bring Him barley that is not yet fully ripe, so we can start to eat of our crops as soon as possible. Yet clearly, there has to be something there to eat. If we would not want to upset an earthly king by bringing him an offering that could not be eaten, then how much more should we bring an edible offering to the King above all kings?

It stands to reason, then, that the best way to keep from bringing Yahweh a worthless offering is to wait until after we have already physically sighted aviv barley in the land of Israel before declaring the head of the year. If we do things that way, then there is no possibility of upsetting Yahweh, by presenting him with an inedible omer. This method is simple and foolproof, both of which are characteristics Yahweh likes. So why do things any other way?

For some reason, some people want to do things another way. Just as there are lunar Sabbatarians, there are also proponents of trying to merge the Greek concept of the equinox into Scripture.

An *equinox* is defined as that point in time when the day and the night are of equal length. This concept was first established by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus of Rhodes, who died in 127 BCE. The whole idea of finding an equinox was natural for a Greek, because the religious Greeks pay attention to things like the Zodiac, and the movements of the heavenly bodies in general. Yahweh said this was because He gave the worship of the sun, the moon and the stars as a heritage to all of the other people under the heavens; but that we should take care not to do the same.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:19

19 "And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which Yahweh your Elohim has given to all the [other] peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage."

Some people think the word *tekufah* (תְּקוּפָה) refers to an equinox in the Tanach (Old Testament), because that

is how the word is used today. However, that is not accurate. Today the English word *gay* is taken to mean something completely different than it meant a hundred years ago. As we will show, that is also the case with the word *tekufah*, since the concept did not even exist in the years when the Tanach was written.

Strong's Concordance defines a *tekufah* as a complete cycle of time (i.e., a complete circuit) or a "revolution," without any mention of an equinox.

OT:8622 *tequwphah* (tek-oo-faw'); or *tequphah* (tek-oo-faw'); from OT:5362; a revolution, i.e. (of the sun) course, (of time) lapse:
KJV - circuit, come about, end.

The root word at OT:5362 means "to strike," referring to how the sun bursts forth in the dry desert air, changing the temperature quickly, and encompassing everything with its heat.

OT:5362 *naqaph* (naw-kaf'); a primitive root; to strike with more or less violence (beat, fell, corrode); by implication (of attack) to knock together, i.e. surround or circulate:
KJV - compass (about, -ing), cut down, destroy, go round (about), inclose, round.

Neither definition says anything about an equinox. Neither one makes any kind of reference at all to equal parts night and day. They only mention going around, circulating, completing a circuit, or making a compass. In other words, they refer to completing a cycle of time (of whatever length).

The word tekufah (תְּקוּפָה) is only found four times in Scripture, and we will look at all four. The first instance is Psalms 19:6 (19:7 in Hebrew versions).

Tehillim (Psalms) 19:1-6

1 The heavens declare the glory of Elohim; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

2 Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.

4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit [tekufah] to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Equinox theorists suggest verse 6 refers to an equinox because it talks about how the sun travels a circuit from one end of the sky to the other. However, the definition of an equinox is when the day and the night are of equal length, and this passage says nothing at all about that.

<p>Tehillim (Psalms) 19:6 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.</p>	<p>(6) מְקֵצָה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצְאוֹ וְתְקוּפָתוֹ עַל קְצוֹתָם וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחַמָּתוֹ</p>
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Clearly, the word *tekufah* does not mean *equinox* in this context, because if we try to substitute the word *equinox* into the reading, we get nonsense.

Tehillim (Psalms) 19:6 (Nonsense version)

6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its equinox to the other end; and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Yes, the sun does rise in the east, and it sets in the west; but this does not mean the Torah commands us to begin our calendar after the equinox (when the day and the night are equal parts in length); and to suggest that it does is to seriously distort the text.

The word tekufah is also used in Exodus 34:22. Yahweh tells us to observe the Feast of the Ingathering (i.e., Tabernacles) at the end of the year (*tekufat hashanah*, תְּקוּפַת הַשָּׁנָה). Equinox advocates say this refers to the fall equinox, but what it really says is that by the Feast of Ingathering (i.e., Tabernacles) the year has made a complete circuit.

<p>Shemote (Exodus) 34:22 22 "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end [circuit, completion]."</p>	<p>(22) וְחַג שִׁבְעַת תַּעֲשֶׂה לְךָ בְּכוּרֵי קִצִּיר חֲטִיִּם וְחַג הָאֲסִיף תְּקוּפַת הַשָּׁנָה</p>
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We know that this word cannot mean “equinox” for the same reasons we saw before: if we substitute the word *equinox* into this passage, we get an absurdity.

Shemote (Exodus) 34:22 (Nonsense version)
 22 "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's equinox."

We need to understand that the word tekufah does not mean the same thing as the word *end* (in most European languages). Rather, it refers to the completion of a cycle (and in this case, the completion of the cycle of the three annual pilgrimage feasts). This is a poetic meaning, and we should not mangle it.

The next use is in 1 Samuel 1:20, where it says that "in the process of time" (*l'tekufat hayamim*) Hannah conceived and bore a son.

<p>1 Samuel 1:20 20 So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from Yahweh."</p>	<p>(20) וַיְהִי לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים וַתֵּהָרַחַן וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן אֶת שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מִיְהוָה שְׁאַלְתִּיו</p>
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The literal meaning of *l'tekufat hayamim* is "in the course of days." In this case it refers to Hannah's term of pregnancy, and if we try to plug the term *equinox* in here we get total nonsense.

1 Samuel 1:20 (Nonsense version)
 20 So it came to pass in the equinox of days that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked for him from Yahweh."

Finally, the word tekufah also appears in 2 Chronicles 24:23, which tells us about how the army of Syria came against Judah and Jerusalem at the *tekufat hashana*, or the "cycle of the year." The New King James Version translates tekufat as "in the spring."

<p>2 Chronicles 24:23 23 So it happened in the spring [tekufat] of the year that the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.</p>	<p>(23) וַיְהִי לְתַקְוֹת הַשָּׁנָה עָלָה עָלָיו חֵיל אֲרָם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם וַיִּשְׁחִיתוּ אֶת כָּל שָׂרֵי הָעָם מֵעַם א וְכָל שְׁלָלָם שָׁלְחוּ לְמֶלֶךְ דַּרְמָשְׁק</p>
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This is a translation error. To see this, let us compare it against 1 Kings 20:26, which speaks of *l'teshuvat hashanah*, or the "return of the year" (לְתִשְׁבַּת הַשָּׁנָה). This word is translated identically as "spring."

<p>1 Kings 20:26 26 So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel.</p>	<p>(26) וַיְהִי לְתִשְׁבַּת הַשָּׁנָה וַיִּפְקֹד בֶּן הַדָּד אֶת אֲרָם וַיַּעַל אֶפְקָה לְמִלְחָמָה עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל</p>
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Neither tekufat nor teshuvat mean spring, yet both are translated as "spring" in the New King James Version because armies normally went out to war in the spring. However, the army did not wait for the equinox to pass

before they went out on campaign. They could not have cared less whether or not the days and nights were of equal length. Only, they waited for the spring rains to pass, so they could travel on dirt roads without getting bogged down in the mud.

Clearly, none of the four places where the word tekufah is used in Scripture refers to an equinox. Instead, they refer to the sun's daily course through the sky, the completion of the three annual pilgrimage festivals, Hannah's forty week gestation, and the time when kings went out to war. Yet amazingly, some still insist this is proof that we cannot begin the year until after the equinox has passed, based on Genesis 1:14-19.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 1:14-19

14 Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons [וּלְמִוְעָדִים], and for days and years;

15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.

16 Then Elohim made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.

17 Elohim set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And Elohim saw that it was good.

19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Equinox advocates argue that when Genesis 1:14 says the sun and the moon are used to divide the day from the night, this is referring to the equinox (when the day and the night are of equal length). This seems like a real

stretch. If Yahweh wants us to go by the equinox, why does He not just say so? And how can Yahweh be commanding us to use the equinox, when the idea was invented some 1,500 years after the giving of the Torah (by the Greeks, no less)?

In response, equinox advocates attack the aviv barley method, retorting that the commandment to establish the head of the year by the barley is not directly stated in the Torah either. However, their argument does not work, because as we have already seen, there is a need to make sure that the barley is edible (aviv) before we can hold the wave sheaf offering, while the equinox is completely irrelevant to the wave sheaf.

Let us also look at Exodus 9:31 again, where we are told that the barley was already in the head (aviv).

Shemote (Exodus) 9:31

31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head [aviv] and the flax was in bud.

Scripture makes a point of telling us that the first month of the year came soon after the barley was aviv.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:2

2 "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."

The same cannot be said for the equinox.

We could stop here, but it is helpful to see how the rabbis first decided to bring the equinox into their intercalation process, in which the head of the year is established. (Just the fact that the equinox has not always been included in the rabbinic intercalation process says

something important, but so does the manner in which the equinox first came to be included.)

Rabbi Gamliel (Gamaliel) was Shaul's (Paul's) teacher.

Ma'asei (Acts) 22:3

3 "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamli'el, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' Torah, and was zealous toward Elohim as you all are today!"

Gamliel was also a contemporary of Yeshua.

Ma'asei (Acts) 5:34

34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamli'el, a teacher of the Torah held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while.

The historic record in Babylonian Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 11b, then, tells us that about 50 CE, Gamliel began establishing the head of the year based not just on the barley, but also on the state of the fledgling doves and the newborn lambs.

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 11b

It once happened that Rabban Gamliel was sitting on a step on the temple mount, and the well-known scribe Yochanan was standing before him with three cut sheets [of parchment] lying before him. He [Gamliel] said to him [Yochanan]... "take the third [sheet] and write to our brethren, the exiles of Babylon and to those in Media, and to all the other exiled [sons] of Israel, saying: 'May your peace be great forever! We beg to inform that the doves are still tender, and the lambs are still young, and the

aviv [barley] is not yet ripe. It seems advisable to me and to my colleagues to add thirty days to this year.'"

This passage perfectly illustrates how the rabbis see their authority with regard to Torah. The rabbis do not believe it is their job to follow the Torah of Moshe to the letter. Rather, they believe Yahweh gave Moshe the authority to establish "Torah law" however he saw fit; and that when Moshe died, the authority to establish "Torah law" then transferred to his successors (i.e., Joshua, and so on). Because the rabbis see themselves as heirs to this authority, they have no qualms about changing the Torah to suit themselves, as when Gamliel did when he took the fledgling doves and the newborn lambs into account (over and beyond the barley).

The Talmud also records how Gamliel's son, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel I, was faced with a similar situation a generation later, and issued an identical ruling, postponing the start of the calendar year based on factors other than the aviv barley. Rabban Yannai quotes Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel below.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 11a

R. Yannai said in the name of R. Shimon b. Gamliel: "We beg to inform you that the doves are still tender, and the lambs are still young, and the aviv is not yet ripe. I have considered the matter and thought it advisable to add thirty days to this year."

From approximately 50-80 CE, the head of the year was no longer being based on the barley alone, but was being based on a total of three agricultural factors.

1. The state of the barley

2. The state of the fledgling doves
3. The state of the newborn lambs

From a certain standpoint this decision made sense. The barley, the doves, and the lambs all need to be at a certain state of maturity before the Passover and the wave sheaf can be offered. However, if we will stop to think about it, when the barley is aviv, the lambs and the fledgling doves will also be ready, so really there was never a need to widen the scope beyond what Yahweh commands. Yet the way the rabbinical mind works, once a “legal precedent” had been established for widening the scope to take other agricultural factors into consideration, it was a simple matter to widen the scope a little more, to include the equinox.

Flavius Josephus’ works are dated circa 90 CE, some 60 years after Yeshua’s death. While writing for a Roman patron, Josephus said that the Jews would establish the start of their calendar year in the Roman month of Xanthicus.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 3:10:5, circa 93-94 CE, Whiston Translation

“In the (Greco Roman) month of Xanthicus, which by us is called Nisan, and is the beginning of our year, on the fourteenth day of the lunar month, when the sun is in Aries (for in this month it was that we were delivered from bondage under the Egyptians)....”

While Josephus was once a highly respected priest, we need to remember that Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 CE, and at the time Josephus wrote *Antiquities* he was writing to please a Greco-Roman patron. Since he depended upon pleasing this Greco-Roman patron for

his livelihood, he probably framed his explanation in terms his patron could easily understand.

It is probably precisely due to the Roman subjugation that Latin terms such as *equinox* made their way into the Talmud at all. The first use of the term *equinox* is found in Talmud Tractate Sanhedrin 11b, which is dated circa 100 CE, some 30 years after the fall of Jerusalem (and maybe some 1,600 years after the giving of the Torah). [Note: to *intercalate* is to insert a day or a month into a calendar.]

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 11b

“Our rabbis taught: ‘Based on three things is the year intercalated: on the aviv, on the fruit of the trees, and on the equinox. Based upon two of them the year is intercalated, but based on one of them alone the year is not intercalated; but when the Aviv is one of them, everyone is pleased.’”

Everyone was pleased when the aviv barley was one of the factors used in determining the head of the year, but this is not the same as taking extreme care to stick to the letter of Yahweh’s Torah. In fact, this passage is a perfect illustration of the kind of thing Yahweh prohibits at Deuteronomy 4:2, where He tells us not to add to His laws, so that we can keep His laws (rather than our own laws).

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

2 “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim, which I command you.”

Notice how the specific language implies that if we add to Yahweh’s commandments, they are no longer His

commandments, but our own. This is exactly what our rabbinical brothers (both Orthodox and Messianic) do when they decide for themselves what the “Torah law” for the day is (instead of clinging to Yahweh’s Torah).

Our Jewish brothers and sisters continued to determine the head of the year from the temple mount, so long as they still had free access to Jerusalem. However, after the Jews were mercilessly crushed in the aftermath of the Bar Kochba revolt circa 135 CE, the Romans then banned the Jews from entering any part of Judea (southern Israel). Because the rabbis could no longer enter the warmer regions, such as the Gaza and the Jordan Valley (where the barley ripens the soonest), it was no longer possible for the rabbis to base the head of the year on the aviv barley. Yet since the rabbis had already established a “legal precedent” of basing the head of the year on something other than the barley, they were now mentally primed to embrace a man-made calendar in which the head of the year was based primarily on the equinox.

Change often happens slowly. It is interesting to note that even after 135 CE (one hundred years after Yeshua’s ministry), the rabbis still taught that it was not ideal to establish (or intercalate) the head of the year before aviv barley was found. We know this because Tractate Sanhedrin 12a (which dates after 135 CE) speaks of a time when Rabbi Akiva intercalated three years in advance. The reason he did this was because he was in prison after the Bar Kochba revolt, facing execution. (Though his role in the Bar Kochba revolt was not clear, he was executed in 137 CE.)

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 12a
“Our rabbis taught: We may not in the current year, intercalate the following year, nor intercalate three

years in succession.

R. Shimon said: [However,] it once happened that R. Akiva, when kept in prison (following the Bar Kochba Revolt) intercalated three years in succession.”

Rabbi Akiva may have felt it was necessary to establish the start of the year three years in advance because the nation was in total disarray. He may have felt that it was necessary to buy time for his brothers to recover from their miserable defeat at the hands of the Romans, and to establish new leadership.

Rabbinical Judaism, however, is legally oriented, and it holds that any ancient legal precedent gives grounds for a similar (or repeat) decision (even if that decision goes against the Torah of Moshe). Thus it was that when the Romans banned the Jews from entering Judea (i.e., southern Israel, where the barley ripens the soonest), they had to retreat to the Galilee, and look for some other way to establish the head of the year. Since there was already a precedent involving the use of the equinox, and since they could no longer see when the first of the barley became aviv, they felt they had good cause to intercalate the years in Galilee. This may explain a later entry in Sanhedrin 11b, which some scholars believe was written after the Bar Kochba Revolt (i.e., after 135 CE, but before 200 CE).

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 11b
Our rabbis taught: Years may only be intercalated in Judah; but if it was intercalated in the Galilee, it stands.

In 200 CE the Sanhedrin officially moved to the Galilee in order to find relief from Roman persecution (here euphemistically referred to as “the Evil Eye”):

Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 1:18:3b

“It once happened that 24 villages from the domain of Rabbi [Judah the Prince] came together to intercalate the year in Lod [near the present Ben Gurion airport, near Tel Aviv]. The Evil Eye [i.e. Roman soldiers] entered them, and all of them died on a single occasion. From that time they removed the intercalation of the year from Judah and permanently established the rite in Galilee.”

Euphemisms, such as “the Evil Eye,” were generally used to avoid being punished for recording the sins of the Roman Empire (as such things were typically punished by death). However, the story continues in our time. Having been barred from Jerusalem and Judea, the rabbis had little choice but to adopt new means of declaring the head of the year. Eventually, in the fourth century CE the rabbis created a calendar called the Hillel II calendar, which uses a brilliant mathematical algorithm to approximate the date the barley actually comes ripe in the land. Interestingly, this algorithm never declares the head of the year before the vernal equinox. Although it has issues, most years it approximates the appearance of the new moon within a day or two.

Even though our Jewish brethren are now back in the land, the rabbis still use the Hillel II calendar to this day (2013 CE), and this is a problem. While the Hillel II calendar was a brilliant solution during the years that brother Judah was unable to observe the ripening of the barley in the land of Israel, now that they are once again able to directly observe the barley harvest, the time has come (and now is) to return to keeping the Father’s Torah the way He says to keep it (based on the aviv barley alone).

How Long is a Hebrew Day?

Genesis 1 tells us that a day is made up of both an evening (nighttime) portion, and a morning (“daylight”) portion. For example:

B’reisheet (Genesis) 1:31b

31b So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Leviticus 23:32 also tells us that the Day of Atonement lasts from one evening to the next. This confirms that the Hebrew day lasts from evening to evening. (The Day of Atonement is here called a “sabbath,” meaning a day of rest).

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 23:32b

32b “On the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall celebrate your sabbath.”

Today we think about a day lasting 24 hours, but the term “hour” is not used in the Torah. This word is a later construction by the Egyptians, Greeks, and the Romans. However, Yeshua uses the term, telling us that there are 12 “hours” in a day (verse 9), and that there is also a nighttime portion (verse 10).

Yochanan (John) 11:9-10

9 Yeshua answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

The concept of an *hour* is Egyptian. Originally in Egypt the sundial divided the daylight into 10 portions, plus two “twilight hours” (morning and evening), for a total of twelve portions. In Yeshua’s time the Romans also divided the sun’s shadow into 12 “hours.” According to this method, an hour was not 60 minutes long, as we think of it today. Rather, an hour was however long the sun cast its shadow between those particular marks on a sundial. Hours varied in length, being longer in the summer and shorter in the winter. However, what we need to see here is that while Yeshua used that term in the days of the Roman occupation (because people were familiar with the term), it has nothing to say about the way Yahweh originally defined a day as being a nighttime portion, followed by a daylight portion (and lasting for what today we would call “24 hours”).

Because some mistakenly believe the term “day” can only refer to a 12-hour period of daylight (and not the 24 hours of night-and-then-day), numerous elaborate theories have been constructed about the calendar. Some of these include the belief that the day begins at morning, the belief that the day begins at noon, and the belief that Yom Kippur is actually two days long, etc. It is not our purpose to detail these theories here, but all of these many theories fall apart if we realize the term “day” refers both to a (+/-) “12-hour” period of daylight, and also to the 24-hour period of darkness and light that lasts from evening to evening.

It may also be helpful to realize that rabbinical Jews today maintain that there are four calendar years:

1. A “sacred” calendar
2. A civil calendar
3. A calendar for kings, and
4. A calendar for trees

In the first century our Jewish brothers also maintained a separate clock, which began about 6AM (“waking hours”). For example, Yeshua was put to death about the “ninth hour” on this “waking hours” clock.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 27:45-46

45 Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

46 And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My El, My El, why have You forsaken Me?"

[Note: the Peshitta reads, “For this I was born.”]

The “sixth hour” would have corresponded to 12 Noon, and the “ninth hour” would have corresponded to about 3PM, or what the Torah calls, “between the evenings” (the “first evening” being at noon, when the sun started its decline, and the “second evening” being at sunset).

For more information on the calendar, please see [The Torah Calendar](#).

Circumcision and the Passover

This study shows how the Torah and the Prophets both require all native-born males in Israel to be physically circumcised. Those who join themselves to the nation of Israel may join in the Sabbath in an uncircumcised state, but they may not partake of the Passover without first having become physically circumcised.

In Hebrew, a covenant is called a *brit* (בְּרִית). *Strong's Concordance* refers to it as a compact (i.e., a promise) that is made due to a cutting (i.e., a sacrifice).

OT:1285 beriyth (ber-eeth'); from OT:1262 (in the sense of cutting [like OT:1254]); a compact (because made by passing between pieces of flesh): -confederacy, [con-] feder [-ate], covenant, league.

When we look up the reference at OT:1262, we see that it refers to a selection being made.

OT:1262 barah (baw-raw'); a primitive root; to select; also (as denominative from OT:1250) to feed; also (as equivalent to OT:1305) to render clear (Ecclesiastes 3:18).

As we continue looking up the references, we see that this selection refers to a winnowing process in which one or a few are selected from among many.

OT:1250 bar (bawr); or bar (bar); from OT:1305 (in the sense of winnowing); grain of any kind (even while standing in the field); by extens. the open country.

When Yahweh cuts a covenant with us, He is selecting us from among many possible candidates. And when He has made His selection, He establishes or confirms His covenant with some kind of a sacrifice that involves cutting (and hence, blood). An example of this is how Yahweh cut a covenant with Avram (Abram), even when he was still in an uncircumcised state.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 15:8-14

8 And he said, "Yahweh Elohim, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.

11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Avram drove them away.

12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Avram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him.

13 Then He said to Avram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.

14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions."

Yahweh made this covenant with Avram before the covenant of circumcision in Genesis 17; and when he again chose Avram, this time he was to make the cutting in his own flesh, shedding his own blood.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 17:5-14

5 "No longer shall your name be called Avram, but your name shall be Avraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be Elohim to you and your descendants after you.

8 Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their Elohim."

9 And Elohim said to Avraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

10 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;

11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.

13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person

shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

In Hebraic thought, covenants are huge. When one does not uphold his part in a covenant, he is worthy of death. This may be why Yahweh even sought to kill Avram's descendant Moshe (Moses), when he had not circumcised his son Gershom (as his forefather Avraham had promised).

Shemote (Exodus) 4:24-26

24 And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that Yahweh met him and sought to kill him.

25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!"

26 So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!" — because of the circumcision.

In Exodus 12, Yahweh instructed Moshe how the first Passover was to be done. In this instruction He tells the Israelites that no uncircumcised person should partake of the Passover meal. Also, no one who was not part of Israel should eat of it.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:43-49

43 And Yahweh said to Moshe and Aharon, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it.

44 But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it.

45 A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it.

46 In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.

47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

48 And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.

49 One torah shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.”

The Passover (Pesach) and the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) are two very different feasts. While Sukkot is an *open* feast (in which we encourage the nations of the world to join us), the Pesach is *closed*, and only Israelites may eat of it. No hired servant or sojourner may partake of the Pesach, but only those who actively seek to serve Yahweh.

Romim (Romans) 3:28

28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the Torah.

A man is justified by faith, apart from the works of the Torah. However, in order to partake of any covenant, there must be a cutting in flesh, accompanied by the shedding of blood. Exodus 12:48 (above) tells us that before we can participate in the Pesach, all males in our household must be physically circumcised, with the cutting and the shedding of blood being made in our own flesh. Without this physical cutting in our own flesh, the covenant of circumcision is not established.

In Deuteronomy 12, Yahweh says how He wants things done when we live in the land of Israel.

Deuteronomy 12:1
1 "These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which Yahweh Elohim of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the soil.”

(1) אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר
תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת
בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיךָ לָךְ
לְרִשְׁתָּהּ | כָּל הַיָּמִים
אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם חַיִּים עַל
הָאֲדָמָה

In chapter 16, He tells us that we are not to hold the Passover in the same manner as we did in Egypt, but that we are to go to the place where Yahweh chooses to place His name, and offer the sacrifice there.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1-7

1 "Observe the month of the aviv, and keep the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, for in the month of aviv Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night.

2 Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, from the flock and the herd, in the place where Yahweh chooses to put His name.

3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.

4 And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which Yahweh your Elohim gives you;

6 but at the place where Yahweh your Elohim chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.

7 And you shall roast and eat it in the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents."

In "[About Sacrifices](#)" (in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 1](#)) we show that Jerusalem is the place where Yahweh most recently chose to place His name. He chosen Jerusalem once more (in 1948), and He will choose Jerusalem yet again, in the future. However, we cannot make the Pesach sacrifices there at the moment, because there is no standing temple, and no cleansed Levitical priesthood. Yet still we will see that before our males can partake of the Pesach, they must be physically circumcised, even in the dispersion.

Some say Yeshua's sacrifice did away with the need for physical circumcision. However, this contradicts Yeshua's own words in Matthew 5:17-18, where He tells us not to think He came to abolish the Torah.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled.

19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but

whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

In verse 18, Yeshua tells us that He has not come to do away with even the smallest thing about the Torah; and the covenant of circumcision is far from the smallest thing.

The second witness is Ezekiel's prophesy that when the temple is rebuilt, no one who is uncircumcised in heart or in flesh may enter Yahweh's sanctuary.

Yehezqel (Ezekiel) 44:6-9

6 "Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations.

7 When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it — My house — and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations.

8 And you have not kept charge of My set apart things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you.""

9 Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel."

If Yeshua tells us not to think that He has done away with any part of the Torah, and if Ezekiel tells us that no one will enter Yahweh's temple if he is not physically circumcised, then clearly, the torah of circumcision has not been done away with. Therefore, all Israelite males should be eager to take part in this covenant, so they can uphold their part of the covenant.

Some men are circumcised as infants, while others are not. When those who are not already circumcised get saved, some of them are eager to get circumcised, while others are (perhaps understandably) not eager. However, Exodus 12:48-49 is clear that all of the males in a man's house must be physically circumcised before they can partake of the Pesach.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:48-49

48 "And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to Yahweh, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land.

For no uncircumcised person shall eat it.

49 One torah shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."

In the [Nazarene Israel](#) study, and in [Acts 15 Order](#), we show that those who are already filled with Yahweh's Spirit can enter the assemblies on Shabbat in a physically uncircumcised state so long as they willingly abstain from four death-penalty offenses in Torah:

1. Idolatry
2. Sexual immorality (including wrongful divorce)
3. Strangled meats
4. Blood

The assemblies, then, serve as a form of *outreach* in the dispersion. If those who already have Yahweh's Spirit want to come for Sabbath fellowship, they can. However, they may not partake of the Pesach until after all of the males in a household are circumcised.

If this seems challenging, we need to remember that the standards are higher in the land. In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, when our Jewish brethren came back to the

land, they had to put away any wives and children who refused to keep the whole Torah. This was very tragic, and terribly sad.

Ezra 10:2-8

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have trespassed against our Elohim, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.

3 Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our Elohim to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our Elohim; and let it be done according to the Torah.

4 Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it."

5 Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath.

6 Then Ezra rose up from before the house of Elohim, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and when he came there, he ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

7 And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity, that they must gather at Jerusalem,

8 and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

It may be very emotional to us, but Yahweh wants us to keep His land pure. He wants us not to be in any kind of a covenant with anyone who is not in the faith, and this desire takes on urgency when we live in His land. He tells us that if we marry the wrong kind of people, our children will forget to worship Him, and His anger will be aroused to destroy us suddenly.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:1-4

1 "When Yahweh your Elohim brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

2 and when Yahweh your Elohim delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other elohim (gods); so the anger of Yahweh will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly."

To be clear, the dispersion is a confusing situation. It can happen that we may find ourselves yoked together with a non-believer. Shaul (Paul) tells us that in his (non-binding) opinion, so long as we live outside the land of Israel, we should not feel compelled to divorce the non-believer. Rather, if the non-believer is pleased to dwell with us, it would be better for us to remain together with them, in an effort to get them saved. Yet clearly, the spouse and children should not partake of the Pesach

until after they are saved, and all of the males in the household are circumcised.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 7:12-16

12 But to the rest I, not Yahweh, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But Elohim has called us to peace.

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

Yet as important as it is for us to perform outreach in the dispersion, it is even more important that uphold the standards Yahweh sets in His Torah. Some say Shaul may not have upheld these standards, in that Corinth was a *mixed* congregation, and Shaul did not say anything about the requirement of physical circumcision for holding the feast.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 5:6-8

6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Messiah, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Others suggest that Shaul would not have felt the need to mention physical circumcision, since it was already understood by the congregational leadership in Corinth (and therefore did not bear repeating). Yet regardless of whatever Shaul either may or may not have done in the past, we are required to obey Yahweh's Torah.

When Shaul came up to Jerusalem in Acts 21, it is clear that Ya'akov (James) wanted Shaul to clear up any and all confusion about his beliefs regarding the need for physical circumcision. Note specifically verse 21, in which Ya'akov complains that some were saying that Shaul was teaching against physical circumcision. To remedy this situation, Ya'akov told Shaul to pay the animal sacrifices of four other men (apart from himself) who were also separating their Nazirite vows.

Ma'asei (Acts) 21:17-24

17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 On the following day Shaul went in with us to Ya'akov, and all the elders were present.

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which Elohim had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified Yahweh. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Torah;

21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moshe, saying that they ought not to

circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a (Nazirite) vow.

24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Torah."

Some believe Shaul really did preach against physical circumcision, and Ya'akov was correcting him in Acts 21. Others believe that Shaul did not really preach against physical circumcision, but that his letters were easily misunderstood, as Kepha (Peter) also says.

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-17

15 and consider that the long suffering of our Adon is salvation — as also our beloved brother Shaul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked....

We tend to believe the latter; but whatever the case, it is clear that when Yahweh finally brings the house of Israel back to the land of Israel, all males will have to be

physically circumcised, so we can perform the Pesach in Yahweh's temple, according to His Torah.

Yehezqel (Ezekiel) 44:6-9

6 "Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations.

7 When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it — My house — and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations.

8 And you have not kept charge of My set apart things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you."

9 Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.'""

About the Passover Seder

When Israel was in Egypt, Yahweh told Israel to keep the Passover by taking a lamb on the tenth of the month, and then offering it up on the afternoon of the fourteenth. Our forefathers were to sacrifice their lambs in the mid-afternoon, and apply the blood to their doorposts. Then they were to eat the Passover in haste, fully clothed, with their staves in their hands, as if ready to leave Egypt at any moment.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:7-11

7 “And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

8 Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

9 Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire — its head with its legs and its entrails.

10 You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.

11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is Yahweh’s Passover.”

They were also told to observe it as an ordinance for themselves and their sons forever.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:24

24 “And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.”

Yahweh is so specific that we might easily conclude we should do the same thing now. However, Yahweh later modified His instructions. In Deuteronomy 12, Yahweh starts a long monologue, in which He talks about how He wants us to keep the Passover whenever we live on the soil of Israel.

Deuteronomy 12:1

1 "These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which Yahweh Elohim of your fathers is giving you to possess, all the days that you live on the soil."

(1) אֵלֹהֵי הַחֻקִּים
וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר
תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹתֵיךָ לְךָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ |
כָּל הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם
חַיִּים עַל הָאֲדָמָה

This monologue continues in Deuteronomy 16, where Yahweh tells us that when we are in the land, we may not sacrifice the Passover in any of our gates, but that we are to go up to the place where He chooses to make His name dwell, and sacrifice the Passover there. Verse 7 says we are to stay the night there, and then in the morning we can return to our tents.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:1-7

1 "Observe the month of the aviv, and keep the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, for in the month of the aviv Yahweh your Elohim brought you out of Egypt by night.

2 Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to Yahweh your Elohim, from the flock and the herd, in the place where Yahweh chooses to put His name.

3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.

4 And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which Yahweh your Elohim gives you;

6 but at the place where Yahweh your Elohim chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt.

7 And you shall roast and eat it in the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents."

When we live in Israel, we need to go up to Jerusalem, but what do we do when we live in the dispersion? Shaul (Paul) did not go up to Jerusalem for some fourteen years. What did he do in the meantime?

Galatim (Galatians) 2:1

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

Shaul undoubtedly ate the Passover in the dispersion because he tells the Corinthians to keep the feast.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 5:8

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and

wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The question is not whether Shaul kept the feast in the dispersion, but *how* Shaul kept the feast. Did he keep it as a modified Exodus 12 service? Or did he keep it like a traditional rabbinical Passover seder? And what should we do, today?

Shaul came from a rabbinical background. He was steeped in the traditions of the rabbis, and the rabbis believe that Yahweh did not just give Moshe (Moses) the Torah, but that Yahweh gave Moshe the authority to set Torah for his generation. Since the rabbis see themselves as heirs to this authority, they believe they have the authority to set Torah for their generation; and because the rabbis like set traditions, when they were separated from the temple they created a Passover *seder* service, to establish traditions for themselves.

The term seder means "order of service," and the rabbis believe their order of service supersedes the one Yahweh gave in the Torah. It is true that it helps to have some form of tradition, but the rabbinical seder seems to contradict almost everything Yahweh says. While Yahweh says to eat lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, the rabbis tell us to place a shank bone on a platter, alongside an egg. They also place a lot of emphasis on four cups of wine, and the hiding of an *afikomen* (a piece of unleavened bread). And, while Yahweh said to eat the Passover fully clothed and ready to flee, the rabbis tell us to eat the Passover while reclining, and in a leisurely manner.

Some say the Last Supper looks like a rabbinical seder in that it was a leisurely affair in which the disciples reclined, and drank wine (for more details, please see

[“The Passover and Unleavened Bread,”](#) in [The Torah Calendar.](#)) However, this is not proof that the Last Supper was a seder service, as Israelites have always broken bread and taken wine at all of their Sabbath and festival gatherings (except for Yom Kippur) going all the way back to Melchizedek.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 14:18

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of Elohim Most High.

Even if Yeshua hypothetically did hold the Last Supper as a seder meal (which is not a given), since it was the night before Passover, we do not have any reason to contradict the things Yahweh commands us to do in His Torah (such as eating in haste with our belt on our waist, shoes on our feet, and ready to leave “Egypt” at a moment’s notice). Yet because we cannot make animal sacrifices right now, we cannot keep the Exodus 12 service exactly as Yahweh states. Therefore, what should we do?

Some say that if we cannot keep the whole Torah, we should not keep any of it. (This makes no sense. If we cannot keep all of the laws of society, does that mean we should keep none of them?) Others suggest we should keep the rabbinic traditions, so as to be in unity with our Orthodox brothers and sisters (which sounds lovely until we stop to realize that this is a call to unite with those who put Yeshua to death, and who keep us in exile). Others believe we should follow Hezekiah’s example, and keep as much of the Torah as we can, while asking Yahweh’s forgiveness for the rest.

Divre HaYamim Bet (2 Chronicles) 30:1-27

1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to Yahweh Elohim of Israel.

2 For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month.

3 For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem.

4 And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly.

5 So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to Yahweh Elohim of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner.

6 Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: "Children of Israel, return to Yahweh Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against Yahweh Elohim of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see.

8 Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to Yahweh; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve Yahweh your Elohim, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you.

9 For if you return to Yahweh, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for Yahweh your Elohim is gracious and merciful, and will not turn His face from you if you return to Him."

10 So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them.

11 Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.

12 Also the hand of Elohim was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of Yahweh.

13 Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.

14 They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast them into the Brook Kidron.

15 Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of Yahweh.

16 They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of Elohim; the priests sprinkled the blood received from the hand of the Levites.

17 For there were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover lambs for everyone who was not clean, to sanctify them to Yahweh.

18 For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good Yahweh provide atonement for everyone

19 who prepares his heart to seek Elohim, Yahweh Elohim of his fathers, though he is not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary."

20 And Yahweh listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

21 So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised Yahweh day by day, singing to Yahweh, accompanied by loud instruments.

22 And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of Yahweh; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to Yahweh Elohim of their fathers.

23 Then the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days, and they kept it another seven days with gladness.

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves.

25 The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of

Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

27 Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came up to His set apart dwelling place, to heaven.

In verse 18, many of the people had not cleansed themselves, and yet Yahweh still provided atonement, probably because they were making an effort. Then verse 23 tells us that the people kept the feast an additional seven days, and Yahweh blessed them, showing that Yahweh typically smiles on honest efforts to obey His commandments.

Some will favor the rabbinical seder service, but my feeling is that we should stay as close to the Exodus 12 service as we can without making a literal sacrifice of a lamb. Yet if you feel like you should take a lamb on the tenth of the month, and then butcher it on the fourteenth either as a memorial, or as a teaching tool for your children, then let the children make him into a pet for four days. As gruesome as that might sound, the whole point is to help the children understand how Yeshua was sinless, and never did anything mean to anyone; yet He still had to suffer and die because of our sins.

Some people think of the temple sacrifices as a holy barbecue with the Creator, but in reality they are a stark object lesson about the wages of sin. The temple sacrifices are supposed to be felt deeply, as if one's family pet is put to death. The idea is for your children to understand what it might feel like for Yahweh to have to give up His Son, so that we might live.

Whether you take a live lamb as a pet on the tenth of the month, or simply buy lamb from the store, Exodus 12:21

tells us that the Passover service is to be performed by households.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:21-22

21 Then Moshe called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.

22 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning."

According to verse 22, once the sun goes down, whoever is at your house should spend the night.

Shemote (Exodus) 12:3-7

3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

4 And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it."

One of the purposes of the Passover is to help our children understand what sin does. It is also to help them to know who Yeshua is, as well as who they are. Children enjoy re-enacting the plagues, and painting (imaginary) blood on the doorposts, to protect them from the plagues. Help them to understand how Yeshua is the door.

Yochanan (John) 10:7-9

7 Then Yeshua said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

One thing you should not do is eat the meal in a slow, leisurely fashion. Rather than reclining at the Passover, (as if we have arrived at permanent freedom), we are to eat the Passover in haste, with our loins girded, ready to flee "Egypt" at Yahweh's command. This is because all of Yahweh's festivals still have future fulfillments.

The Passover is a *miqra qodesh*, or what *Strongs' Concordance* calls a set-apart rehearsal.

OT:4744 *miqra'* (mik-raw'); from OT:7121; something called out, i.e. a public meeting (the act, the persons, or the place); also a rehearsal.

Shaul also tells us that the festivals are rehearsals for future events. In Colossians 2:16-17, Shaul tells us the Sabbath, festivals, and new moon days are all a "shadow of things to come." However, the King James Version (KJV) supplies two words in italics (*days* and *is*) which invert the true meaning of this passage.

Colossians 2:16-17, KJV 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the sabbath <i>days</i> : 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body <i>is</i> of Christ.	BGT Colossians 2:16 16 Μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω ἐν βρώσει καὶ ἐν πόσει ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς ἢ νεομηνίας ἢ σαββάτων· 17 ἃ ἔστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ.
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Because of these two added words (*days* and *is*), the KJV leads us to believe no one (not even the body of Messiah) can tell us what to eat, what to drink, or what days of worship to keep, because such things are supposedly no longer important. Yet once we realize that the supplied words *days* and *is* are not in the source texts, we should take them back out. Here is the same passage from the KJV with the supplied words *days* and *is* removed.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the Sabbath; which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body of Christ.

If we read this passage carefully, we can see that there are three main ideas here (1-2-3).

1. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the Sabbath
2. which are a (prophetic) shadow of things (still) to come
3. but the body of [Messiah]

If we rearrange the clauses to make the English read better (3-1-2), we can see that what the Apostle Shaul was really saying was that we should not let anyone but the body of Messiah judge us in what we eat, what we drink, and what festival days we keep; but we *should* let the body of Messiah speak to us about these things because they are all shadows of coming prophetic events.

Let no man (but the body of Messiah) judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moons, or of the Sabbath; for the festivals are shadows of things (still) to come.
[Colossians 2:16-17, reordered]

As we explain in [The Torah Calendar](#), Yahweh works in cycles. Certain patterns work for Him, so He uses them over and over again. What He has done in the past, He will likely do again. Therefore, if we are not to allow anyone but the body of Messiah to tell us what festival days to keep, then perhaps we should not allow anyone but the body of Messiah tell us *how* to keep them either? If the Passover is a rehearsal of coming prophetic events, then why shouldn't we keep it as close to the way Yahweh says to keep it?

As we show in [Revelation and the End Times](#), the Ingathering will take place after the tribulation. In the tribulation there will be hunger, war, disease, and general societal unrest (if not outright collapse). Although Yahweh promises to take care of us, we are expected to do what we can for ourselves. While it might be cute to wear sandals and carry a literal shepherd's staff for the Passover, it seems that Yahweh originally meant was to be ready to travel at a moment's notice. (This is one reason our Jewish brothers and sisters have traditionally kept their wealth in liquid form, such as gold,

jewels, and other portable items.) While it is fine for the kids to have some fun, this rehearsal is designed to help us prepare emotionally for the times to come.

People often ask what to read. The needs of each family vary widely, and I believe this is a decision for the head of each house to make. However, if you ask me, I recommend reading the Exodus 12 account (beginning in Exodus 12 or before), and then also reading about the Last Supper through Yeshua's resurrection, either in one of the synoptic accounts (Matthew, Mark, and/or Luke), and/or in John. How much you read depends on your household, but I would advise reading about as much as you might read in a weekly Torah portion, and then have the same kind of open discussion. Yet it needs to be a special night, so your children ask why you do this once a year. How you do that all depends on your household.

I do not recommend this, but some might choose to keep the Pesach with their assembly, similar to how we will keep it at the temple when we come to His land. If you do it that way, then verse 7 would seem to indicate that you should probably spend the night inside the building (just as you would if you did it at home).

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:7

7 "And you shall roast and eat it in the place which Yahweh your Elohim chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents."

One area of discussion is the foot-washing ceremony. In [The Torah Calendar](#) we show how the Last Supper was the night before the Passover; and we show how Yeshua did not change the Torah in any way. Yet it is clear that Yeshua told us that we should wash each other's feet.

Yochanan (John) 13:13-17

13 "You call Me Teacher and Adon, and you say well, for so I am.

14 If I then, your Adon and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

We can discuss whether Yeshua meant this spiritually or literally, and there are pros and cons to each side of the argument. My belief is that Yeshua did not add a day of worship, because to do so would have been to add to His Father's Torah (which is prohibited).

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

Yahweh's Spirit is leading more and more Christians to be curious about the Passover, and they frequently want to come and participate. We should not do this, as the Passover is a *closed* festival (while the Feast of Tabernacles is considered *open*). However, there is no real issue holding a teaching seder, so long as it does not coincide with the actual Passover night.

But why teach people to keep a seder service? Why teach people to sit around a seder plate, pointing to a shank bone and an egg, when Yahweh wants us to

rehearse for the second exodus? Why teach children to hunt for an afikomen, as if the Passover is all in the past?

As long as we are in the dispersion, we are in training and preparation for the day we go back to His land. In the meantime, we need to keep as much of His Torah as we can, so that He will want to call us back home.

May Yahweh be with us all, and lead us in His paths.

About Shaul's Ministry

Some believe the Apostle Shaul (Paul) taught heresy, and they want to remove his works from Scripture. This is a mistake. Yahweh hand-picked Shaul, and said he was a "chosen vessel" to bear His name before the returning gentile Ephraimites, kings, and the children of Israel. He also said Shaul would have to suffer a great deal for His name.

Ma'asei (Acts) 9:15-16

15 But Yahweh said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Later, the Spirit told a group of prophets and teachers in Antioch to send out both Shaul and Bar Naba (Barnabas). As we will explain in [Torah Government](#), to be *sent out* on mission is to be a "sent one," which is the definition of an apostle.

Ma'asei (Acts) 13:1-3

1 Now in the assembly that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Shaul.

2 As they ministered to Yahweh and fasted, the Set-apart Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Shaul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

It is true that those who are chosen for service can fall away. For example, King Shaul (whose name means "ask") was given to the people when they asked for a king (1 Samuel 8, 9). Yet when Shaul was disobedient to Yahweh's instructions, Yahweh rejected him from being king over Israel any longer.

Shemuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 15:22-23

22 So Shemuel said: "Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He also has rejected you from being king."

However, unlike King Shaul, the Apostle Shaul was not chosen by the Israelite people, but by Yahweh Himself. Do those who want to throw Shaul's works out of the canon think that Yahweh made a bad choice for His chosen vessel? Elohim forbid! Yahweh does not make bad choices. Everything Yahweh does, succeeds.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 55:10-11

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

Shaul's job was difficult beyond measure. He had to go forth to people he knew nothing about, who did not speak his language, and explain to them why they

should not only love Yahweh and His Son, but why they should hand over their lives to Him. To do that, Shaul had to communicate with them in language that is common to all people: and that language is love.

It is easy to sit back and criticize Shaul. He says things that are easy to misinterpret, and misunderstand. Even Kepha (Peter) says the same thing.

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-17

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Adon is salvation — as also our beloved brother Shaul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked....

Yet how many of us would succeed if we were sent out into foreign lands today, to a people who know nothing of Scripture, and who do not even speak our language? How many of us would be able to accomplish the same things as Shaul was able to accomplish? And how many of us would be able to do this perfectly, without making any errors, or without making any statements that could possibly be misinterpreted? Not very many, I suspect.

We can get a better idea of the challenges Shaul faced if we understand the bigger picture of how Yahweh first began to bring the returning gentile Ephraimites back into the nation of Israel.

As we explain in [Nazarene Israel](#), the Greeks and Hellenized who came to believe on Yeshua before Acts 10 were what we might today call secular or reform Jews. This is because the first real gentile to be brought into the faith was Cornelius (in Acts 10).

Ma'asei (Acts) 10:44-45

44 While Kepha was still speaking these words, the Set-apart Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Kepha, because the gift of the Set-apart Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

“The circumcision” mentioned in verse 45 does not refer to Kepha, but to the forerunners of the one house Messianic Jews of today (i.e., those denying the Two House Theory). These are found in such one house organizations as the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA), the Union of Conservative Messianic Jewish Synagogues (UCMJS), and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). They believe a curious syncretic mixture of the Talmud and Yeshua’s teachings (which is very ironic considering that Yeshua was adamantly against all rabbinical alterations to Scripture). There are also two house versions of “the circumcision,” some of whom call themselves either (rabbinical) “Messianic Israelites” or “Nazarene Jews.” These also believe a blend of Scripture and Talmud.

“The circumcision” believed that in order to receive salvation unto life, all gentiles had to follow a specific rabbinical procedure known as the *giur* (gie-yure) process. This process says that converts must first take classes teaching the rabbinic interpretation of Torah (i.e., the Talmud), and then they could be physically

circumcised, and that it was the physical act of being circumcised that led to salvation unto life. They were therefore astonished when Yahweh gave the gift of His Spirit to an uncircumcised gentile like Cornelius, who had not followed the rabbinical giur process. And Yahweh's election of Cornelius also upset the Jews back in Judea.

Ma'asei (Acts) 11:1-3

1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of Elohim.

2 And when Kepha came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him,

3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

Kepha, however, explained that it was Yahweh who had led him to Cornelius' house, and that it was Yahweh who had chosen to give the gift of the Spirit to Cornelius and his house. Did those of the circumcision want him to try to withstand what Elohim had wrought?

Ma'asei (Acts) 11:4-18

4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying:

5 "I was in the city of Yaffo [Joppa] praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me.

6 When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Kepha; kill and eat.'

8 But I said, 'Not so, Adon! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What Elohim has cleansed you must not call common.'

10 Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea.

12 Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.

13 And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Yaffo, and call for Shimon whose surname is Kepha,

14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 And as I began to speak, the Set-apart Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.

16 Then I remembered the word of the Master, how He said, 'Yochanan indeed baptized with water, but you shall be immersed with the Set-apart Spirit.'

17 If therefore Elohim gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Adon Yeshua Messiah, who was I, that I could withstand Elohim?"

At that moment it began to dawn on those present that Yahweh did not respect the rabbinical giur process.

18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified Elohim, saying, "Then Elohim has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life!"

The Renewed Covenant was written after the Hellenic (Greek), period in which Antiochus Epiphanies ruled that the Jews must leave their children uncircumcised, under pain of death. A *Hellenist* (Greek Jew) was one who complied with Antiochus Epiphanies' order.

1 Maccabees 1:41-49

41 Moreover King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people,

42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king.

43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the Sabbath.

44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda [Judea], that they should follow the strange laws of the land.

45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days:

46 And pollute the sanctuary and the holy people:

47 Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts:

48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation:

49 To the end they might forget the Torah, and change all the ordinances.

Today, the secular and Reform Jews may or may not circumcise their children; but either way, they typically do not obey the Orthodox rabbis, and therefore the rabbis look down on them. Historically they called them "Greeks" or even "gentiles" (as a slam), and today one can hear the rabbis refer to them as *goyim* (gentiles). However, Yahweh poured out His Spirit on many of the

Hellenized in Antioch, which prompted the apostles to send Bar Naba out to them.

Ma'asei (Acts) 11:19-26

19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

20 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Master Yeshua.

21 And the hand of Yahweh was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Master.

22 Then news of these things came to the ears of the ecclesia in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

23 When he came and had seen the favor of Elohim, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with Yahweh.

24 For he was a good man, full of the Set-apart Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Master.

25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Shaul.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the ecclesia and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called "Christians" in Antioch.

In [Nazarene Israel](#) we talk about why the disciples were first called *Christians* in Antioch. Basically, this was one of the foremost beginnings of *the church* as we know it today—operating as a separate entity that is different than the Israelite synagogue. We will talk a bit more

about that in other places, but notice in Acts 13 that some prophets and teachers in Antioch heard a word from Yahweh to send Shaul and Barnabas out. Thus began Shaul's missionary voyages.

Ma'asei (Acts) 13:1-3

1 Now in the assembly that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Shaul.

2 As they ministered to Yahweh and fasted, the Set-apart Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Shaul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Meanwhile, back in Antioch, certain rabbinical brothers of "the circumcision" came down to Antioch, and began to insist that the Hellenized believers had to follow the rabbinic giur process, becoming circumcised according to what they called the "custom of Moshe (Moses)," which is not the Torah of Moshe. [In verse 5, notice how the rabbinic Jews are referred to as the "sect of the Pharisees who believed."]

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:1-5

1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moshe, you cannot be saved."

2 Therefore, when Shaul and Bar Naba had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Shaul and Bar Naba and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

3 So, being sent on their way by the ecclesia, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the ecclesia and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that Elohim had done with them.

5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Torah of Moshe."

So, basically, they all had different opinions, just as it would be today if you got the MJAA, the UCMJS, the UMJC, the MIA/ARI, Nazarene Israel, and all of the other groups together at the same conference. The difference between then and now is that the apostles understood that there had to be just one standard for entry into the assemblies, or else the assemblies would no longer be set apart unto Yahweh. So basically, the apostles realized that they needed to get everyone together in the same room, to talk. Acts tells us that there was "much dispute," and then Kepha rose up to remind everyone that Yahweh's main concern was not the giur process, but the heart. And, since the issue is the rabbinic giur process, the "yoke" referred to in verse 10 is not a reference to the Torah of Moshe, but the rabbinic rulings and teachings (i.e., the Giur process).

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:6-11

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.

7 And when there had been much dispute, Kepha rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago Elohim chose among

us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 So Elohim, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Set apart Spirit, just as He did to us,

9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore, why do you test Elohim by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But we believe that through the favor of the Adon Yeshua Messiah we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

Then Shaul and Bar Naba gave a briefing about all of the wonderful de-facto works that Yahweh was doing amongst those who were not following the rabbinical giur process.

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:12

12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Bar Naba and Shaul declaring how many miracles and wonders Elohim had worked through them among the Gentiles.

Then Ya'akov (Jacob) showed why he was looked to as the lead apostle—he understood the matter, and was able to suggest a resolution to the problem, concluding the matter in a good way. He said the converts should abstain from four things (idolatry, sexual immorality, strangled [or unclean] meats, and blood), and that they should then be allowed into the synagogues, where they would hear the Torah of Moshe, as it was read aloud in the synagogues since ancient times. If those with Yahweh's Spirit would just abstain from these four things, then over time they would learn to keep the rest of the Torah.

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:13-21

13 And after they had become silent, Ya'akov answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me:

14 Shimon has declared how Elohim at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.

15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up;

17 So that the rest of mankind may seek Yahweh, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says Yahweh who does all these things.'

18 "Known to Elohim from eternity are all His works.

19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to Elohim,

20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moshe has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Many believe Galatians 2 refers to this meeting. In it we are told that Ya'akov, Kepha, and Yochanan (John) (who all had a ministry to those who were still of the *circumcised* rabbinical persuasion) accepted Shaul as an apostle.

Galatim (Galatians) 2:1-10

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me.

2 And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that good news which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.

3 Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Messiah Yeshua, that they might bring us into bondage),

5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the good news might continue with you.

6 But from those who seemed to be something — whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; Elohim shows personal favoritism to no man — for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.

7 But on the contrary, when they saw that the good news for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the good news for the circumcised was to Peter

8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles),

9 and when James, Kepha, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the favor that had been given to me, they gave me and Bar Naba the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Now before we go further, we need to understand that a synagogue is typically served by a “ruler of the synagogue”, as seen in Acts 18:8.

Ma'asei (Acts) 18:8

8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Master with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were immersed.

In contrast, an *ecclesia* is any gathering of those who believe on Yeshua, whether or not they are part of a synagogue, or a denominational church. (That is, not every *ecclesia* is a synagogue, or a church.)

NT:1577 *ekklesia* (ek-klay-see'-ah); from a compound of NT:1537 and a derivative of NT:2564; a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both):
KJV - assembly, church.

An *ecclesia* occurs whenever two or more people are gathered together in Yeshua's name.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 18:20

20 “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

It was a huge shift when William Tyndale translated the term *ecclesia* as “assembly,” rather than following the Catholic rendition of “church,” because it gave rise to the early Protestant ideas of a *visible* church and an *invisible* church. According to this theory, the visible church was the Catholic Church, whose members might be more interested in formalities and hierarchy, than they were in a pure heart attitude. In contrast, their view the invisible church consisted of those who sought to recreate the church in a much purer form.

Because the early Protestants did not understand the Two House Theory, they did not understand that the goal is for both houses (Judah and Israel) to come together under united leadership. This lack of understanding led to a schism within Christendom between ecclesiastical reformers (e.g., Martin Luther and King James) who favor united leadership, and Presbyterian reformers, who are against united leadership. Some might define Presbyterianism as “rebellion against the leadership,” and so it should not be surprising that most Messianic Israelites are Presbyterian in nature, which is clearly seen in the fact that they are against united leadership (even though the Scriptures call for it). This is just an outgrowth of Ephraim’s rebellious nature, and we have to wait for him to outgrow it.

When Shaul and Bar Naba came to Corinth, they went into the synagogue there, hoping to be received. However, when the ruler of the synagogue (Crispus) rejected their message, they went next door, to the house of a man named Justus, and held their ecclesia there for a while. But then, when Crispus later accepted Yeshua, they closed down the meeting at Justus’ place, and moved the ecclesia back into the Corinthian synagogue. This is because their goal was not to set up a separate church system, but to help the Israelites know their Messiah.

Ma’asei (Acts) 18:5-8

5 When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Shaul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Yeshua is the Messiah.

6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood

be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7 And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped Elohim, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

8 Then [afterward] Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Master with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

After the temple was destroyed in 70 CE, the rabbis instituted the *birkhat haminim*, the “blessing” (actually a curse) over the Nazarenes. Once this had become part of the Pharisaic liturgy the Nazarenes had to choose either between cursing themselves and their families in the synagogues, or else establishing their own houses of worship (as the Torahless Christians were already doing).

In [Nazarene Israel](#) we show how the Christians and the Nazarene Israelites were two different sets of people, just as they are today. The Nazarene Israelites made an effort to keep Yahweh’s Torah, and self-identified as Israelites. In contrast, the Christians twisted the Apostle Shaul’s writings, to make it seem as if the Torah and the Prophets had been done away with.

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-17

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Adon is salvation — as also our beloved brother Shaul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people

twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked....

Some blame Shaul for purposefully establishing a new church system, separate from Israel, but this cannot be right. In Galatians 2:9, the other apostles in Jerusalem gave Shaul the right hand of fellowship.

Galatim (Galatians) 2:9-10

9 and when Ya'akov, Kepha, and Yochanan, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the favor that had been given to me, they gave me and Bar Naba the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

Shaul and Kepha also spent time together in Antioch. Kepha would have had lots of visibility on what Shaul taught, and it is clear that they corrected each other when it was called for.

Galatim (Galatians) 2:11-13

11 Now when Kepha had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;

12 for before certain men came from Ya'akov, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

The main concern that seems to have arisen is not about what Shaul taught in person, but about how his letters are easy to misunderstand, and misinterpret. In Acts 21, Shaul came up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast according to Torah. As we explain elsewhere, he was going to separate a Nazirite vow, and no one takes a Nazirite vow (found in Numbers 6) unless one believes that the Torah applies to them. Yet when he arrives in Jerusalem, Ya'akov (the lead apostle) confronts him, and tells him that there is a lot of confusion over his letters. Then he says that in order to clear up the confusion, Shaul should not only pay the 3 animal sacrifices to separate his own vow, but that he should also pay the animal sacrifices for 4 other men, for a total of 15 animals. Even today that is a lot of money: back then it was a small fortune. No one would willingly pay to sacrifice 15 animals if he thought Yeshua had come to do away with the Torah.

Ma'asei (Acts) 21:17-24

17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

18 On the following day Shaul went in with us to Ya'akov, and all the elders were present.

19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which Elohim had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified Yahweh. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Torah;

21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moshe, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a [Nazirite] vow.

24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Torah.”

It would have been cheaper for Shaul had he denied the Torah, yet he did not do that. He paid for the sacrifices to show that he still believed everything which is written in the Torah and in the Prophets.

Ma’asei (Acts) 24:14

14 “But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the Elohim of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Torah and in the Prophets.”

Some suggest Shaul was teaching against the Torah, but that he secretly recanted when Ya’akov confronted him in Acts 21. According to this theory, Kepha was merely trying to cover for Shaul when he said Shaul’s letters were (merely) “hard to understand.” However, while we cannot prove that this theory is false, it seems a counterintuitive when we consider the fact that there was never any record of doctrinal differences between Shaul and the other apostles, either before or after.

So if Shaul did not found the church system, who did? The primary culprit here was the little horn of Daniel 7 (i.e., Satan and the papacy).

Daniel 7:25-27

25 He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change the appointed times and the Torah. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.

26 'But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.

27 Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

It was prophesied that there would be a great falling away in which the saints were to be persecuted by the Church for a time, times, and half a time. As we explain in [Nazarene Israel](#), this corresponds to the 1,260 years between the time of the Roman Catholic Church formation, and the Protestant Reformation taking hold. Is it really fair to lay the blame for this at Shaul’s feet, when he lived hundreds of years before that, and when he also warned us that this would happen?

Thessaloniqim Bet (2 Thessalonians) 2:2-4

2 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Master Yeshua Messiah and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Messiah had come.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called Elohim or that is worshiped, so that he sits as Elohim in the temple of Elohim, showing himself that he is Elohim.

If Shaul was not Yahweh's servant, how could he warn us against Satan? Yeshua tells us that a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 12:24-27

24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

25 But Yeshua knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges."

In [Nazarene Israel](#) we explore how Yahweh may have purposefully allowed Shaul to write his letters in such a way that they could be easily misinterpreted by the church. Yahweh's reason for allowing this may have been because the Christian church would be able to take belief in a Jewish Messiah to the ends of the earth much sooner than the Torah-obedient Nazarene Israelites would (especially so, when one considers that the saints had to be given into the little horn's hand for 1,260 years).

Once lawless Christianity has finished taking belief in a Hebrew Messiah to the ends of the earth, Yahweh's Spirit will lead His elect to read His word and choose

between obeying His Torah (and receiving eternal life) or not. This may take place much the same way yeast leavens bread dough slowly, while fire cooks the leaven out quickly.

And after the fire of the tribulation burns the leaven out of Yahweh's people, both houses of Israel shall be reunited, and then all Israel shall be saved, as it is written: The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away unrighteousness from His people.

Romim (Romans) 11:26-27

26 And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27 For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

Then Yeshua shall take His bride, whose heart keeps the Torah in the kind of loving Spirit that Shaul suffered so long and so hard to help us understand.

Laodicea: “The People Rule”

In [Torah Government](#), we explain that originally there was no need for government because all men were literally brothers, and their fathers (the patriarchs) ruled over their families. However, even then there was murder and the fruits of the flesh.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 4:8-9

8 Now Qayin [Cain] talked with Hevel [Abel] his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Qayin rose up against Hevel his brother and killed him.

9 Then Yahweh said to Qayin, "Where is Hevel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

As Adam and Havvah's (Eve's) family continued to be fruitful and multiply, eventually it reached the point where people no longer considered themselves to be part of each other's family. Eventually, Nimrod arose. He was a “mighty hunter” before Yahweh, in that he hunted and laid in wait for other men, and so built a kingdom for himself (at the expense of others).

B'reisheet (Genesis) 10:8-10

8 Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before Yahweh."

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Because Nimrod was a selfish king, it might be easy for us to conclude that all kings are bad; and, in fact, many

people conclude just that. However, there were many good kings in Scripture, and Yahweh said many kings would come from Israel's body.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 35:11

11 Also Elohim said to him: "I am Elohim El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."

Yahweh also told Israel that they would have a king in Deuteronomy 17; but they were not to choose a king for themselves (like all of the other nations around them). Rather, they were to set for themselves the king that Yahweh told them to have.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 17:14-15

14 "When you come to the land which Yahweh your Elohim is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'

15 you shall surely set a king over you whom Yahweh your Elohim chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother."

Anarchists counter with 1 Samuel 8, which tells us that Yahweh was displeased that Israel asked for a king. Nevertheless, it is the same answer: Yahweh was not displeased that Israel should have a king; Yahweh was displeased that Israel wanted a king (i.e., government) like all the rest of the nations (instead of desiring the government that Yahweh wanted for them).

Shemuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 8:4-22

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah,

5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to Yahweh.

7 And Yahweh said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day — with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods — so they are doing to you also.

9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

10 So Samuel told all the words of Yahweh to the people who asked him for a king.

11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots.

12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants.

15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants.

16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and Yahweh will not hear you in that day."

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us,

20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of Yahweh.

22 So Yahweh said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

As we show in [Torah Government](#), Yahweh's ideal for government is a servant-king, who uses his centralized power and authority to serve Israel for good. (In the millennium, the government leader will be called the *nasi*.) However, Yahweh's people began rejecting kingship after the Enlightenment in favor of democracy, in which the people share power.

In Hebrew, the name *Babylon* is *Bavel* (בבל), and the Hebrew word picture for Bavel speaks of democracy. The Hebrew letter *beit* (ב) represents a house, while the Hebrew letter *lamed* (ל) represents authority. This is the perfect picture of all sorts of different bicameral legislatures, such as the United States House and the Senate, the English Lords and Commons, and many

other institutions in which authority is divided between more than one “house.”

ב בית (house)

ב בית (house)

ל לamed (authority)

Since democracy has more than one center of power, and since human nature is to seek power; the men in the different power centers will struggle against each other, eventually pulling the government apart. This is perhaps why Yeshua told us that every kingdom divided against itself will not stand.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 12:25

25 But Yeshua knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand."

It is widely understood that, in a democracy, people vote for their own selfish interest (whether or not it is good for the whole). Selfishness is widely understood to be part of the democratic process, and compromise (rather than purity) is seen as the essence of the deal. However, when does Yahweh ever bless compromise? Doesn't Yahweh bless those who hold out for purity instead (and punish those who compromise with evil)?

As we explain in [Revelation and the End Times](#), the red horses of Zechariah represent popular movements, such as anarchy, democracy, and other populist movements.

Zechariah (Zechariah) 6:1-3

1 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of bronze.

2 With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses,

3 with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses — strong steeds.

These are the same red horses we find in Revelation, which take peace from the earth.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 6:4

4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Nearly every populist movement (e.g., communism, socialism, Marxism, etc.) has red as its symbol. Some suggest this is why the United States has red in its flag, as it is set up on populist democratic principles in which the will of the people is done (rather than the will of Yahweh). Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of democracy is that the people seek to set a *king* over themselves of their own choosing, rather than seeking out the *king* that Yahweh would have for them.

The spirit of Laodicea is related to these kinds of popular movements. As we learn in the *Strong's Concordance* (below), the term *Laodicea* is made up of two words, *laos* (meaning “people”), and *dicea* (meaning “rule,” which is also related to the word *decision*). Thus, the spirit of Laodicea is when the people want to make the decisions (instead of following Yah's servant leadership).

NT:2992 laos (lah-os'); apparently a primary word; a people (in general; thus differing from NT:1218, which denotes one's own populace):
KJV - people.

NT:1349 dike (dee'-kay); probably from NT:1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):
KJV - judgment, punish, vengeance.

Yeshua calls these people "lukewarm." They are warm enough to care about establishing some form of governance, but they are not hot enough to want to do it the way Yahweh wants. Because they know Yeshua, but are only lukewarm, He says He will vomit them out of his mouth (i.e., reject them).

Hitgalut (Revelation) 3:14-16

14 "And to the angel of the assembly of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of Elohim:

15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.'"

It is frightening when one realizes that this is parallel language to how the land of Canaan also vomited its inhabitants out for refusing to accept Yahweh's rule.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 18:26-28

26 "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you

27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled),

28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you."

We might think that the Laodicean desire to establish their own torah for leading the assemblies is not a big deal; but if one is establishing a different torah for how to run the assemblies, then they are establishing a deception.

The spirit of Laodicea is very strong in the Messianic movement today. The Laodiceans tell us that since we are all a nation of kings and priests today, there is no need for a fivefold ministry, and that it is improper for those whom Yahweh has called to leadership to exalt themselves above the rest of the assembly. Notice, however, that this was the same argument used by Korah in his rebellion.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 16:1-3

1 Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men;

2 and they rose up before Moshe with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.

3 They gathered together against Moshe and Aharon, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is set apart, every one of them! And Yahweh is among them! Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Yahweh?"

Yahweh wants His people to follow His anointed leadership, and this is why He struck down Korah and all his company. The spiritual implications should be obvious.

Many of us have lived under democracy and other popular forms of rule for so long that we have come to think of democracy as being synonymous with Torah; and yet populist rule is really the red horse, which takes peace from the earth.

It is important not to follow anyone who exalts himself (or who blows his own horn), and there are many who exalt themselves (rather than allowing Yahweh to do it). Yet when we find someone who is doing Yahweh's work, we should support him in it, rather than try to overthrow him, and institute popular rule. Democracy is never Yahweh's way.

Are We Believers or Disciples?

Dare we ask? What's the difference between a believer and a disciple, anyway? And why would it matter?

Mark tells us that Yeshua had compassion on the four thousand believers who came to Him. Yeshua healed their sicknesses, and He also performed a miracle to feed them; but then He sent them away.

Marqaus (Mark) 8:1-10

1 In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Yeshua called His disciples to Him and said to them,

2 "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat.

3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

4 Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude.

7 They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them.

8 So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments.

9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away,

10 immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

In Mark 6, when Yeshua's disciples were weary, He told them to rest; but the crowds followed them. And having compassion on the crowd, Yeshua taught them, and fed them, and then He sent them away.

Marqaus (Mark) 6:30-45

30 Then the apostles gathered to Yeshua and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

31 And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

33 But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him.

34 And Yeshua, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late.

36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."

37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to Him,

"Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"

38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

39 Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass.

40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all.

42 So they all ate and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.

We see Yeshua feeding the believers again in John 6. In verse 15 the people wanted to make Him their king, but again he withdrew.

Yochanan (John) 6:11-15

11 And Yeshua took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."

13 Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley

loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.

14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Yeshua did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

15 Therefore when Yeshua perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

After Yeshua left the believers He walked across the lake, to rejoin His disciples; and when the people realized Yeshua had left them, they got into boats, to seek Him out again.

Yochanan (John) 6:24-26

24 When the people therefore saw that Yeshua was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Yeshua.

25 And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

26 Yeshua answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."

Why did Yeshua send the multitude of believers away, to spend more time alone with His disciples? To answer this question, first let us take a closer look at how He called His disciples to serve Him.

When His ministry was just beginning, Yeshua called out to His disciples, who recognized His anointing, and immediately left their nets, to follow Him.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 4:18-22

18 And Yeshua, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Shimon called Kepha, and Andrei his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, Ya'akov the son of Zabdai, and Yochanan his brother, in the boat with Zabdai their father, mending their nets. He called them,

22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Like their father Avraham before them, the disciples left everything in order to follow at Elohim's word.

Marqaus (Mark) 10:28

28 Then Kepha began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

The disciples took care of things that Yeshua did not need to attend to. For example, Kepha (Peter) and Yochanan (John) went to prepare the Passover meal.

Luqa (Luke) 22:8

8 And He sent Kepha, and Yochanan, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

Yeshua's disciples also went to get the donkey and colt that Yeshua would later ride. These things may seem beneath those who would later lead Yeshua's kingdom here on earth, but one imagines the disciples' hearts were glad to do anything they could to help further their Master's kingdom, no matter what it was.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 21:1-3

1 Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Yeshua sent two disciples,

2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.

3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Master has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

So while both the believers and the disciples seem to have recognized Yeshua's anointing, and while both the believers and the disciples seem to have desired to spend time with Yeshua, and learn from Him, it seems that the big difference was in their willingness to serve.

The disciples gave everything they had for the privilege of helping their Master build His kingdom. They served Elohim with all of their heart, with all of their soul, and with all of their might. And, since they loved Elohim more than their lives, Elohim spent time with them.

In contrast, the believers all sought to *get* something from Elohim. They came to get healed, they came to get fed, and they came to get free instruction. That is how Elohim saw it, whether the people were aware their motivation was selfish, or not.

So what about us, dear friends? Why are we here? Are we looking to get healed, to get fed, or to get some free instruction? Or are we here because nothing really matters to us anymore but the opportunity to spend the rest of our lives expanding Yeshua's kingdom?

Yeshua wants all of us to help build His kingdom. This is much more than just resting on Sabbath, learning, and

fellowshipping. Either Yeshua wants us to build His kingdom directly, or He wants us to help those who are.

Mattithyahu (Matthew) 28:18-20

18 And Yeshua came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in My name*,

20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amein.

[*For why we immerse only in Yeshua's name, please see "[Immersion in Yeshua's Name Only](#)," in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 3](#).]

We need to put what we know into action, because if we know what Yeshua wants us to do, but we fail to do it, it is reckoned to us as sin.

Ya'akov (James) 4:17

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good, but does not do it, to him it is sin.

We are not justified by knowledge: we are justified by His favor. That being the case, is He more likely to favor those who are doing everything they can think of, to expand His empire? Or those who read His words, but don't put them into action?

Wouldn't an earthly king likely be irritated with subjects who knew what he wanted them to do, but didn't do it?

He who has ears, let him hear.

Hearing Yeshua's Voice

As we show in the [Nazarene Israel](#) study, the original faith was called Nazarene Israel. In [Torah Government](#) we show that Nazarene Israel was unified, and that it had a clergy of servant-leadership that heard and obeyed Yahweh's voice.

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Yes Great Commission	Yes Great Commission	Some Great Commission	No Great Commission	Yes Great Commission

Nazarene Israel was replaced by Catholic Christianity. Catholic Christianity established a corrupted doctrine, and it's exalted leaders persecuted anyone who sought to develop a personal relationship with Yeshua, or the Spirit. By persecuting the saints, it was able to maintain a dominating, hierarchical unity.

When the Protestants realized that the papacy fulfilled the prophecies over the anti-Messiah, they broke away from the Catholics, and established a separate body—and then another body, and another, until the body of Messiah had become very fragmented (as it is today). While their doctrine was much better than the Catholic doctrine, they had much less real unity.

When individual Messianics realized Sunday worship was wrong they broke away from the Protestants and established a separate movement. However, they do not have a *body*, because there is no genuine unity. When one believer commits a sin against another believer, there is no body of shepherds to go to, and no way to enforce the Matthew 18 Process. While they mean well, they do not understand the relationship Yeshua established in the first century between His disciples (the corporate servants who serve the flock, who can have no personal possessions) and believers (those who are served). They are also highly resistant to re-establishing proper organization and leadership. This is perhaps because:

1. They were recently abused by the hierarchical leadership of the church
2. They are unwilling to support servant leadership of the kind the apostles practiced

The Messianics are arguably in better shape than the Catholics and Protestants, but before they can come back to the original first century structure, they need to learn how to hear Yeshua's voice, and submit to it.

Yochanan (John) 10:27

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."

Catholicism and Protestantism went wrong because men were not listening to Yahweh's Spirit. They were listening either to false spirits, or to their own intellect. This will never work. Before we can serve Yahweh our Elohim and Yeshua our Messiah the way they want to be served, we must learn to hear and obey the still small voice.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 30:21

21 Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.

The Catholics did not want anyone hearing Yahweh's voice, so they never taught it—and many Protestants never learned. However, the requirement to hear and obey Elohim's voice is all throughout Scripture. For example, consider how Yeshua tells us that we are to obey the voice of the Spirit of truth.

Yochanan (John) 16:13-15

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."

If we do not hear the voice of the Spirit of truth, then how can we be guided into all truth?

Many believers assume that when Scripture speaks of hearing Elohim's voice, it means only the written Torah. However, that is clearly not the case in Revelation.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 3:20-22

20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies."

The Spirit moves slowly, and gently. The Messianics have come a long way. They are to be congratulated for having come as far as they have. However, the next step in their progression back to the original Nazarene Israelite faith is for them to learn what it means to hear and obey Elohim's voice.

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He who has ears, let him hear.

Messianism: The Church in Transition

In [Torah Government](#), we show that the Messianic movement is essentially an extension of Protestant and independent Christianity; and because it is an extension of Protestant/Independent Christianity, the Messianics make doctrinal mistakes similar to the Protestants and independent Christians. One of the key errors Protestant and independent Christians make is that they fail to realize the difference between *disciples* and *believers*. This makes unity impossible.

In [Torah Government](#), we show how Yeshua established the *disciples* as a shepherd class (or a clergy). To become Yeshua's disciple, one had to forsake all earthly possessions, lay down one's life in the world, and join the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Luqa (Luke) 14:33

33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

If we view the Beatitudes as a "recruiting drive" for the order of Melchizedek, a lot of Yeshua's statements take on fresh meaning vis-a-vis His priesthood.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 6:19-21

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

In His recruiting drive at the very start of His ministry, Yeshua tells us that in order to save our life, and have treasure in heaven, we need to lay down our lives in the world.

Marqaus (Mark) 8:34-35

34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross/stake, and follow Me.

35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the Good News' will save it."

The ratio of believers to disciples in Yeshua's time was some 300 or 400 to 1. Only a few people were willing to forsake all possessions, and dedicate their lives to serving the rest of Yeshua's people. Ironically, while the Catholics have preserved the distinction between the disciples (clergy) and the believers (laity), this fine-but-critical point of distinction was lost to the Protestant Christians, and then to their subsequent independent cousins—and because it was lost to the Protestant and independent Christians (out of which the Messianic movement came) it is lost to the Messianics as well. This explains why the fragmentation of Protestant and independent Christianity is rife within Messianism as well.

As we explain in [Torah Government](#), the Messianic movement is a transitional faith. It serves as a leaderless "stepping stone" or a "half way house" in between Christianity and the original Nazarene faith. Because human nature is what it is, most Messianics will likely continue to reject the need for leadership until we reach seal 6 (marked by a nuclear blast in the Middle East). However, once we reach the earthquake at seal 6, we

may see an increased acceptance of Yeshua's words regarding leadership.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 6:12

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

As we explain in [Revelation and the End Times](#), the "earthquake" in Revelation 6:12 may be a "social shakeup" that will take place as national leadership structures are broken up in order to form Satan's New World Order. When the United Nations sets up a joint temple on the temple mount (under papal leadership), the Messianics will likely get serious about overcoming their loathing of leadership, and recognize that there is a difference between disciples, and believers. Although it remains to be seen exactly how this plays out, this may be one fulfillment of the Dry Bones Resurrection of Ezekiel 37. (We say "one fulfillment," because as we show in [Revelation and the End Times](#), there may be an early fulfillment after seal 6, and a late fulfillment after the cup judgments—but again that remains to be seen).

Yehezqel (Ezekiel) 37:1-14

1 The hand of Yahweh came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of Yahweh, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.

2 Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Yahweh Elohim, You know."

4 Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of Yahweh!'"

5 Thus says Yahweh Elohim to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.

6 I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am Yahweh."""

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.

8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.

9 Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'""

10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'"

12 Therefore prophecy and say to them, 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

13 Then you shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.

14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall

know that I, Yahweh, have spoken it and performed it," says Yahweh."

As we show in [Torah Government](#), while the trend since the Protestant Reformation has been one of greater acceptance of Yahweh's Torah and the Festival days, there has also been an increasing trend towards substituting merchants and book salesmen for Yeshua's shepherd (disciple) class.

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That the Messianics are just continuing the same trend towards fragmentation and leaderlessness explains why they mistakenly believe that all believers qualify as disciples. It also explains why they mistakenly believe the Great Commission is fulfilled by gathering in a room once a week, reading the Torah portion, and eating a meal together.

The Independent/Messianic rejection of leadership and organization is the opposite of what Yeshua said, but it is important for us to treat the independent Christians and Messianics in as much love as we can, while at the same time we quietly set ourselves apart from them. The independents and Messianics will stop rejecting

organization and leadership when it is Yahweh's time—not before.

Zecharyah (Zechariah) 4:6

6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says Yahweh of hosts."

When it is Yahweh's time, He will call many Catholics, Protestants, Independent Christians, and Messianics back to the original Nazarene Israelite faith. This will probably take place in stages, and also all at once (at Armageddon). Since we have no power to bring this about on our own, we just need to pray, and treat the Messianics in as much love as we can, and await the wonderful day when Yahweh brings all of His people together as one united fivefold body, under united Melchizedekian leadership, according to His word.

(For more details, see [Torah Government](#).)

Acts 15 in the Context of Unity

In [Torah Government](#) we show that both the Torah and the Renewed Covenant tell us to:

1. Unite
2. Organize
3. Appoint leadership

Yet, if the Torah and the Renewed Covenant tell us to organize and appoint leadership, but the Messianics refuse, then how can they claim to “keep the Torah”?

The Catholics, the Protestants, independent Christians, and the Messianics all pick and choose which parts of Elohim’s Torah they want to keep. The Catholics obey the Great Commission and one-body unity, but they reject their Israelite heritage and the festival days. Conversely, the Messianics accept their Israelite heritage and the festival days, but they reject the Great Commission and one-body unity. They both reject the Torah, just in different ways—but at least the Catholics are honest about rejecting the Torah.

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Ya’akov (James) tells us that if we break one part of the Torah, we have broken all of it.

Ya’akov (James) 2:10

10 For whoever shall keep the whole Torah, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

If the Messianics keep commands A and B, yet refuse commands C and D, how is that any better than the Catholics keeping commands C and D, but refusing to keep commands A and B?

But why do the Messianics refuse to keep the Torah of organization and leadership, anyway? Do they perhaps mistakenly think Acts 15 abolished the need for organization, and leadership?

In [Torah Government](#), we show how in Acts 15, the apostles ruled that the returning gentile Ephraimites did not need to follow the rabbinic gentile conversion process. Rather, the Ephraimites could join the assemblies if they would but agree to abstain from idolatry, sexual immorality, strangled (and unclean) meats, and blood. Then they could be permitted to enter into the assemblies, where they would hear the Torah being read aloud each week.

Ma’asei (Acts) 15:19-21

19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are [re]turning to Elohim,

20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

21 For Moshe has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

When returning gentile Ephraimites read Acts 15 today, it is easy to misunderstand what is being required here. If we take the apostles' words out of their greater overall context (and forget that Yahweh has always had something for His people to do), we might be tempted to think we can fulfill the requirements of Acts 15 simply by gathering over at a friend's house, reading the Torah portion for the week, sharing a meal, and talking. However, when we consider this in the greater overall context of Scripture, we can see that this would be an extreme corruption of the apostles' meaning.

Israel is Yahweh's (spiritual) army.

Shemote (Exodus) 6:26

26 These are the same Aharon and Moshe to whom Yahweh said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies."

As we show in [Torah Government](#), Israel has always been organized as an army, and Yahweh has always given Israel a mission to accomplish for Him. In Renewed Covenant times, that mission is to form a unified Melchizedekian priesthood, and unite Yeshua's faithful in one single body all around the world. Keeping this in mind, Acts 15 was not the command to sit around the coffee table and read the Torah portion with friends. Rather, what Acts 15 does is to establish four basic pre-screening requirements that have to be met before "new recruits" can join Yahweh's spiritual army Israel. What do we mean by that?

For example, if we join the U.S. Army, first we must pass a medical exam (to see if we are fit to serve). Only after we pass this medical exam can we go on to Basic Training (and finally on to our unit). When we arrive at

our unit, we enter at the bottom, and work our way up. If we are faithful, we will seek to find ways to contribute to the success of our unit, and of our nation as a whole. All Acts 15 did, then, was to lay down four basic pre-screening requirements that "new recruits" must pass, before they can enter our assemblies.

However, if we interpret Acts 15 the Messianic way, then just as soon as we pass the four requirements, we are instantly "equal" with everyone else in our unit. There is no leadership, no organization, and no chain of command. There is also nothing to do but to sit around and read technical manuals, and talk. And if we should get upset, or decide we don't like our unit, we can go home, or we can start a new army right across the street (to compete with our old one). Fragmentation becomes desirable, in order to keep everything "equal." The big problem here is that there is no requirement for unity, leadership, organization, the Great Commission, or anything else we don't want to do. We just hang out with friends, and learn, as if learning what Yeshua said to do was more important than doing it. Yeshua speaks to these kinds of believers in the Beatitudes, where He tells them that if they do not do what He says, their house will fall (and great will be the ruin of it).

Luqa (Luke) 6:46-49

46 "But why do you call Me 'Adon, Adon,' and not do the things which I say?

47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like:

48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Why do the Messianics call Yeshua "Adon," if they are unwilling to support His Great Commission?

We love our Messianic brothers and sisters, and it is terrible to think about what will happen to them, if they do not surrender, and hand their lives over to Yahweh.

Let us all pray that they will hear.

What is the Church?

As we show in [Nazarene Israel](#), the original faith of the apostles was called the “Nazarene sect” (i.e., Nazarene Israel). However, there were several other variants of the faith in the first century. One of these was called Christianity. *Christianity* is similar to the Nazarene faith, except they do not believe in keeping the full Torah.

Kepha (Peter) warns us that the Christians are not taught, and not stable, because they practice what he called the *error of Torahlessness* (lawlessness).

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-17

15 And think of the long-suffering of our Master as Salvation [literally: Yeshua], as also our beloved brother Shaul [Paul] wrote to you, according to the wisdom given to him;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them concerning these things, in which some things are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable twist, to their destruction, as also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 Then beloved, you being fore-warned, watch; lest being led by the error of Torahlessness [lawlessness] you should fall from your own steadfastness.

The problem is not that the Christians reject the whole Torah—they keep parts of it. The problem is that they reject the need to keep the Torah as Yahweh gave it. That is, they feel free to pick and choose which parts of the Torah they like, and which parts they feel do not apply. However, this is contrary to Yahweh’s warning not to change His Torah in any way.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

2 “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you.”

Yahweh implies that if we modify His instructions, then it is not really His Torah any more, but our own. This is like when children feel free to pick and choose which of their parent’s instructions they want to keep, and which they want to ignore. In such cases, it is clear that they do not really respect (or obey) their parents.

While the woman Havvah (Eve) was a literal woman, she is also symbolic of Israel—and the oldest trick in the book was when Satan told Havvah that she had the power to choose which of Elohim’s commandments she had to keep, and which she could ignore—and that she would still inherit eternal spiritual life.

B’reisheet (Genesis) 3:4-5

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die,

5 for Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil.”

A long time ago, Satan led a rebellion against Yahweh. His goal was to exalt his throne above Yahweh’s, and to have all of the messengers (angels) join with him.

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 14:12-14

12 “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!

13 For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars

of Elohim; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;
 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”

In order to join Satan in his rebellion, all we need to do is to question the need to keep Yahweh’s laws, the way He gave them. All we need to do is to decide it is alright for us to pick and choose which of His laws we want to keep, and which we do not want to keep. In Yahweh’s eyes, this is “playing Elohim,” and He classifies it as rebellion. What is scary for the Christians is that this is essentially what the Christians do, is decide which of Elohim’s laws they want to keep, and which ones they don’t need to.

If we are willing to accept it, Satan has mis-led most of the world’s Christians into a type of rebellion against Elohim and His Torah—and we are told that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (Wicca).

Shemuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 15:23

23 “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He also has rejected you from being king.”

If we understand that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and that the church is in rebellion (i.e., witchcraft), then it becomes much easier to understand certain trends that are taking place in the Christian and Messianic worlds, as illustrated in the following graphic.

Pagan/Wicca	Catholics/ United Body Of Messiah	Protestant/ Multiple Bodies of Messiah	Independent/ Separate Churches	House Church/ Messianic
Not Organized	United worldwide org.	Multiples worldwide orgs.	Separate Organizations	Not organized
Not Patriarch	Single Patriarch	Multiple Patriarchs	Separate Patriarchs	No Patriarch
Matriarchal circles	Single unified Patriarchy	Multiple Patriarchies	Separate Patriarchies	Matriarchal circles

In the [Nazarene Israel](#) study, we show how the original faith of the apostles was called Nazarene Israel, and that Christianity was a separate (but related) faith. The Roman Emperor Constantine merged Christianity with a sun worship religion called *Mithraism* to form a new faith called *Catholicism*—and Catholicism then became the official religion throughout the Roman Empire. After this, Constantine’s Catholics drove all other variations underground (including the original Nazarene faith). However, because Catholicism was first patterned after Nazarene Israel, it still had the same basic unified, patriarchal structure.

There are many reasons the Catholic Church is global. One of those reasons is that they utilize the same unified, patriarchal kind of structure that Yeshua taught His disciples to use. Even though they have all the wrong festival days, and perform many false worship practices, they employ the same core principles of unification, leadership, and organization that the apostles used. And there were other factors as well, including the fact that they average man did not have access to a copy of the Scriptures.

Scholars had asserted many times that the papacy resembled the anti-messiah, but because the average man did not have access to Scripture he could not verify these allegations for himself, and these charges never really gathered much public support. However, after the advent of the Gutenberg printing press, this was all to change. Now the laity could see that the papacy fulfilled the prophecies over the anti-messiah, and popular support for breaking away from the papacy swelled.

For many years, the Protestants tried to get the papacy to reform, because back then the people understood that Scripture requires one united body of Messiah. However, the papacy would not reform, and eventually the body of Messiah split. First it split into two parts (Catholic and Lutheran), and then it split again, and again. The Catholics refer to this as *The Great Schism*, while the Protestants refer to it as the *Reformation*. However, a problem remained in that neither party accurately represented the original Nazarene faith. The Protestants took a step closer to it by rejecting the papacy, but they took a giant leap away from it by splitting the body into many different parts. The Protestants also ignored the principle that clergy have to be *disciples*, which requires that they not have any inheritance (any worldly possessions).

Luqa (Luke) 14:33

33 “So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Protestant ministers began to draw salaries many times larger than the stipends Catholic ministers drew—and the Protestants kept an inheritance, to pass along to their children. This is contrary to Messiah’s example, and Scripture. [For more information on the distinction

between the disciples and the believers, please see [Torah Government.](#)]

After a few generations of Protestants grew up with the idea that it was alright for there to be more than one body of Messiah, and that it was alright for ministers to profit financially from ministry, Satan introduced yet another idea: that there was no need for churches and ministers to belong to one united body at all—but that we could have independent churches, and independent ministers who had no financial or doctrinal relationship to each other, and no requirement for accountability. Independent ministers promoted “independent Bible-believing churches,” even though that is a complete contradiction in terms (since Scripture requires one united body of Messiah).

The Protestants also began to allow ministers to sell every teaching for a profit. Soon, every ministry had a store, and “teachings” were bought and sold like the spiritual ham sandwiches they are—filling the stomach with the wrong kind of nutrition (and nourishing divided bodies of Messiah in unhealthy ways). One can find literally thousands of examples of this kind of marketing on the Internet today. All of this slowly shifts the focus away from serving the Messiah as a united body, onto entertainment for the congregants.

Once a few generations had grown up with the idea that it was alright for churches to be independent, Satan introduced the idea that no one needs any leadership or organization at all—but that all one needs to do is to meet at someone’s home for friendship and fellowship. The Sunday version of this is called the *house church* movement, and the Israelite version is called (Messianic Israelite) *home fellowships*.

Messianic home fellowships continue the same trend of increasing knowledge (which is good), but decreasing obedience to what they know (which is extremely bad). The trend is also to become ever more fragmented, leaderless, and disorganized.

Don't be deceived! Keep focusing on Yeshua, and seeking Him!

Pagan/Wicca	Catholics/ United Body Of Messiah	Protestant/ Multiple Bodies of Messiah	Independent/ Separate Churches	House Church/ Messianic
Not Organized	United worldwide org.	Multiples worldwide orgs.	Separate Organizations	Not organized
Not Patriarch	Single Patriarch	Multiple Patriarchs	Separate Patriarchs	No Patriarch
Matriarchal circles	Single unified Patriarchy	Multiple Patriarchies	Separate Patriarchies	Matriarchal circles

Revelation 12:13-17 tells us that when the dragon saw that he had been cast to earth, he persecuted the woman (true Israel). The woman was given two wings of an eagle, so that she might fly into the wilderness to her place. There she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. In [Revelation and the End Times](#), we explain that this explains how true Israel flees from the church system.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 12:13-15

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water [false doctrines] out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

The dragon is Satan, and the waters he spews out of his mouth represent a flood of false church doctrines, which are designed to carry the woman Israel away.

The church is operationally defined by what is called *replacement theology*. That is, she seeks to replace Israel with the church, and full Torah obedience with something less than full Torah obedience. However, this same definition also applies to Messianic Israel, because while the Messianics claim to “keep Torah,” the truth is that they feel they can pick and choose which of Elohim’s commandments they want to keep, just as Havvah did in the Garden of Eden.

Satan is a master deceiver, and the kind of deception he likes best is the one that looks as much like the truth as possible. If he can get the Messianics to think they are obeying the Torah when in reality they are obeying something less Yahweh’s Torah, then he has tricked them into partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

B’reisheet (Genesis) 3:4-5

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die,

5 for Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil."

Satan says to the Messianics, “You do not need to be one united, organized body of Messiah. You can be disunited, and you will still belong to His bride.”

Yahweh has always wanted Israel to be united, well led, and well organized. That is why the Torah tells us to organize, appoint leadership, and unify. To see this we need only to look at the example of Israel in the wilderness. Israel was not a mob of 2.4 million men, women and children on foot, nor was it some motley crew of disunited families. Israel was also not just 12 isolated tribes. Rather, Israel was one unified nation, with coordinated central leadership.

Wilderness	Nazarenes	Messianic Israel
Levitical	Melchizedekian	Merchant vendors
Organized	Organized	Disorganized
Patriarchal	Patriarchal	Matriarchal circles
Leadership	Leadership	“Whatever”
Accountability	Accountability	Anarchy
United nation	United nation	No nation
Shepherd led	Shepherd led	Sheep led

In [Torah Government](#), we show that at the time of Yeshua’s sacrifice, the Levitical order stepped down, and the Melchizedekian order stepped up. The Melchizedekian structure is slightly different from the Levitical structure, because the Levitical order is intended to run a temple, whereas the Melchizedekian order is designed to build a global spiritual army—yet both orders serve to unify the nation as one. They both have patriarchal organization and unified leadership structures. They both require corporate accountability. Neither the Levitical nor the Melchizedekian order idealizes any kind of disunity, disorder, anarchy, or avoidance of corporate accountability—and yet the Messianics idealize precisely these things—yet the Messianics cannot see that what they want is the opposite of what Yahweh commands.

To sweep the woman Israel away in the flood of false teachings, all Satan needs to do is to convince us that we do not need to keep Yahweh’s Torah as given. If he can get us to decide which parts we want to keep, and which parts we do not want to keep, then he has won. He has swept us away in the flood.

When asked why they don’t want to obey Yahweh’s Torah with regards to leadership and organization, some Messianics will say that they were abused in the church, and they see the church as being organized. Therefore, if they avoid all organization, they are able to avoid being part of the church. However, this is not true. There are several things wrong with this excuse.

When Israel was in the wilderness under Moshe and Aharon (Moses and Aaron), Israel was well organized. Does that mean Israel belonged to the church?

If the church is operationally defined by replacement theology, then refusing to do as Yahweh commands is what makes one part of the church. Therefore, if Yahweh tells us to organize, but the Messianics refuse to organize (for fear of becoming part of the church), then ironically, the Messianics have unwittingly joined the church. Yet they cannot see this, because Satan has deceived them.

It is essential that we not allow ourselves to be ruled by fear. Perfect love casts out fear, and it is this kind of perfect love that Elohim wants in His bride.

Yochanan Aleph (1 John) 4:18

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

If we love Elohim, and want to be His bride, we need to keep His commandments exactly as He gave them, trusting that He knows better than us.

Yochanan (John) 14:15

15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Avoiding Elohim's commandments, due to fear or any other reason, only plays into Satan's hands.

He who has ears, let him hear.

Come All the Way Out

Revelation 12:13-17 says that when the dragon saw he had been cast to earth, he persecuted the woman (true Israel) who gave birth to the male child (Yeshua). The woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to her place. There she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the presence of the serpent. In [Revelation and the End Times](#), we show that this symbolizes how true Israel flees from the church (i.e., replacement theology).

Hitgalut (Revelation) 12:13-17

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water [unclean doctrines] out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of Elohim and have the testimony of Yeshua Messiah.

The dragon is Satan, and the waters represent a flood of replacement theologies designed to deceive even the very elect. These replacement theologies include Catholic, Protestant, and independent Christianity, and

Messianic Israel. These four teach a false version of Torah designed to seduce the woman, and lull her to sleep. In the Christian churches this is done by telling her “the Torah was nailed to the cross,” while in Messianic Israel this is done by teaching that we do not need to obey all of the Torah commandments.

Pagan/Wicca	Catholics/United Body Of Messiah	Protestant/Multiple Bodies of Messiah	Independent/Separate Churches	House Church/Messianic
Not Organized	United worldwide org.	Multiples worldwide orgs.	Separate Organizations	Not organized
Not Patriarch	Single Patriarch	Multiple Patriarchs	Separate Patriarchs	No Patriarch
Matriarchal circles	Single unified Patriarchy	Multiple Patriarchies	Separate Patriarchies	Matriarchal circles

In [Nazarene Israel](#), we saw how the Ephraimites were scattered into the nations for disobeying Yahweh’s Torah. Once in the nations, the Ephraimites adopted pagan and Wiccan (witchcraft) worship forms. Seven hundred years later, Yahweh sent His Son Yeshua to begin a generations-long process of calling the lost Ephraimites out their captivity in the nations, but this redemption would take place over thousands of years. It is also an invisible spiritual process that is opposed by Satan and his agents in every way imaginable. Satan’s job is to provide as many stumbling blocks and false resting points as he can, so as to cause even the very elect to stop short of full 100% Torah obedience.

In [Nazarene Israel](#) we explain how Catholicism was created to unify Roman Emperor Constantine’s empire. He took the Christian variation of the original Nazarene

Israelite faith and merged it with Mithraic sun worship. The result was a new faith organized around sun-worship rites and rituals, which resembles the original Nazarene Israelite faith. The reason we know it is not a good faith to practice is that it tells us we do not need to keep all of Yahweh's Torah (which is the bridal covenant). Without keeping the whole bridal covenant, we will not be taken as His bride.

However, even though Catholicism was created as a satanic deception, Yahweh still used it to do much good. People are creatures of habit, and they do not like change (even for the better). However, the militant Roman emperors forced their subjects to practice the Catholic faith, or be put to death. Yahweh allowed this because sadly, this is what was needed to get the Ephraimites to refocus on Yeshua.

Paganism manifests in all manner of male, female, and child forms. While a full discussion of this is beyond the scope of this article, what we need to understand here is that demons come in both male and female forms. When the Ephraimites went off into paganism, they became familiar with both male and female forms of demonism. However, since sun worship is a masculine form, and since Catholicism is basically sun worship in disguise, the Catholic faith happily suppressed Wicca, and all other feminine demonic forms, including the Jezebel (basically feminist) spirit. While the Catholics carried out this suppression in brutal ways, Yahweh allowed this suppression to take place, because the Israelite faith has always been patriarchal in nature.

Wilderness	Nazarenes	Messianic Israel
Levitical	Melchizedekian	Merchant vendors
Organized	Organized	Disorganized
Patriarchal	Patriarchal	Matriarchal circles
Leadership	Leadership	"Whatever"
Accountability	Accountability	Anarchy
United nation	United nation	No nation
Shepherd led	Shepherd led	Sheep led
Mission focus	Mission focus	Fellowship focus

Yahweh loves both men and women equally, and we are told to love our wives so much that we willingly lay down our lives for them, just as Messiah did for us.

Ephesim (Ephesians) 5:25-29

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the assembly and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious assembly, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be set apart and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Adon does the assembly.

However, while men are supposed to lay down their lives for their wives, Yahweh also wants us to form a patriarchy, because it establishes the right relationship. It puts things in the right order, so that the mission can be fulfilled.

While women are relationship oriented, men are goal oriented. Society is formed about relationships, but there has to be a purpose. Elohim tells us that our purpose is the Great Commission, and unless the men lead, while we form lots of very satisfying relationships, we never accomplish His mission.

As we explain in [Torah Government](#), the reason the Levitical order had to step down at the time of Yeshua's sacrifice and the Melchizedekian order had to step up was that it was time for Israel to take the worship of Yeshua beyond a physical temple, and the borders of one single nation. The next phase in the redemption of mankind was to take the message of Yeshua worldwide, and form one single unified spiritual Melchizedekian empire. This kind of international unity can only take place when the people form a patriarchy, and rally behind Yahweh's anointed leader.

The Catholics were able to form a worldwide spiritual order precisely because they were patriarchal. Their patriarchy allowed them to unify as one single family, under one single patriarch. But then, as we explain in [Nazarene Israel](#) and elsewhere, when the prophesied time, times and half a time (1,260 years) of the bride's captivity were over, Yahweh's people began to realize that the papacy also fulfilled all of the characteristics of the anti-messiah (a false messiah). Not wanting to worship a false messiah, the Protestants broke away from the Catholic Church, and began to study Scripture for themselves. They also began to seek a relationship with Yeshua (instead of with their priest). However, while the learning and studying was highly beneficial, there was an equally-negative downside, which was that the Protestants began to reject the idea of patriarchy itself. This began an extremely negative trend toward fragmentation and division in the body.

For convenience sake, we will reprint the same table from above.

Pagan/Wicca	Catholics/United Body Of Messiah	Protestant/Multiple Bodies of Messiah	Independent/Separate Churches	House Church/Messianic
Not Organized	United worldwide org.	Multiples worldwide orgs.	Separate Organizations	Not organized
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After the Catholics came to dominate Europe, they suppressed the feminine forms of demon worship (such as Wicca, and the Jezebel spirit), while allowing other masculine forms of demonism to express themselves inside their faith. This helped re-establish a sense of unified patriarchy within the Catholic world. However, when the Protestants broke away from the Catholics, there was no longer just one single patriarchy—now there were many additional smaller patriarchies. This is as if the flood of false doctrines that spewed from the dragon's mouth broke up from being one solid stream (Catholicism) into several smaller (but still relatively large) streams, symbolic of the mainline Protestant churches.

It was good that the Protestants began to seek out a purer form of doctrine, except that one of the points of doctrine that Scripture requires is that all Israel be united. Even in the wilderness, Israel was not 600,000 individual men on foot, or even twelve separate tribes. Rather, Israel was supposed to be united as one single

patriarchal nation, properly ordered and organized into units of 10's, 50's, 100's, and 1,000's, as well as 12 tribes. We explain this in more detail in [Torah Government](#).

After a few generations of Protestants had grown up accustomed to the idea that it was not necessary for the body of Messiah to be united, we began to see separate churches, led by pastors who believed they were not accountable to any form of Melchizedekian order. Then, a few generations after that, believers began to figure they did not need any Melchizedekian leadership at all. The Sunday Christian version of this is known as the House Church movement, and the Sabbath and festivals movement is called Messianic Israel home fellowships.

Ever since the Protestant Reformation, the trend has been one of increasing in knowledge, but decreasing patriarchal organization (and the unity it brings). House churches and Messianic home fellowships make use of a matriarchal style. This allows for strong relationships, but the group size never grows—and like the Wiccans, they feel no need for any kind of patriarchal mission (such as the Great Commission).

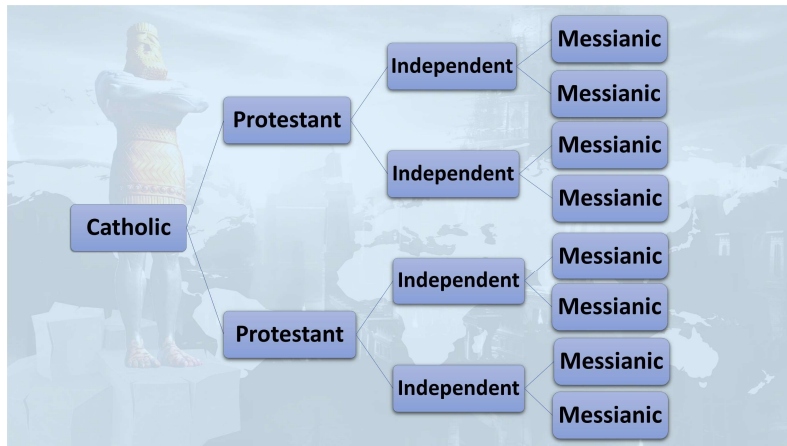
It is not that sitting in a circle automatically makes one a witch. However, with the rejection of patriarchy, the Messianics have reverted to the Wiccan organizational style. Both parties reject any patriarchal structure or leadership. Both parties prefer a matriarchal structure without ties to any larger worldwide governing body. Neither party has a sense of mission beyond praying, fellowshiping, and establishing community. It is all about fellowshiping with their circle of friends, rather than taking the message to those outside their circle.

In [Torah Government](#) we saw that the reason Yeshua wants us to unify, organize, appoint leadership, and perform His Great Commission is that He wants us to take His Good News to those who have never heard of Him. He asks us to make sacrifices, to establish the Melchizedekian priesthood worldwide. Even though Yeshua asks us to do this, the Messianics show no interest in performing the Great Commission. Ironically, they claim to have Yeshua's Spirit—but how can they have Yeshua's Spirit, if it does not lead them to want to do what Yeshua wants?

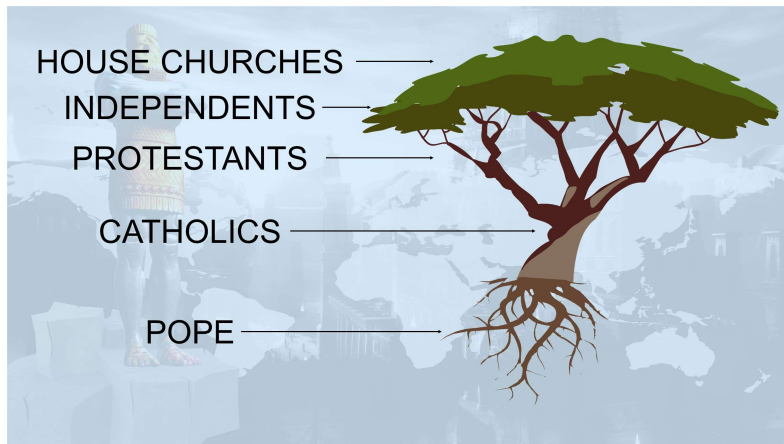
When one asks the Messianics why they don't want to do what Yeshua asks, they will give reasons why they believe the Great Commission does not apply to them. This is the same kind of denial Sunday Christians manifest when presented with Scripture verses that tell us to keep the Sabbath (and not Sunday). Both parties tell us why they do not believe these passages apply to them.

While the Messianics understand the need to keep the Sabbath, they cannot see the need to unify, organize, appoint leadership, and fulfill the Great Commission. Some of them even believe they are superior to the Christians, because they have traded patriarchy on the wrong days for matriarchy on the right days—and yet both of these are bad. Both of them represent satanic replacement theologies. Both of them are part of Satan's flood, designed to sweep the bride away into false worship.

If we turn the above chart into a line diagram, we can see how Messianic Israel is just the latest in a series of satanic replacement theologies.



Here is the same picture, rotated 90 degrees. Instead of Yeshua being the root, the root is the satanic papacy, while the fruits of the tree are all replacement theology.



In previous articles we showed how Messianic Israel is a transitional faith. The Messianics call themselves Israelites, and they claim to keep the Torah. However, they behave a lot more like the Wiccans.

Wilderness	Nazarenes	Messianic Israel
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Shepherd led	Shepherd led	Sheep led
Mission focus	Mission focus	Fellowship focus

The Messianics reject any part of the Torah requiring patriarchal orientation, or mission fulfillment. Rather than focusing on doing what Yeshua asks, their focus is all about fellowship. If they are His bride at all, they are a very selfish, immature bride. Their "worship" is all about them.

Since the Messianics are still effectively in the church, and since they have rejected patriarchy, we should expect to see numerous female demons in Messianic Israel—and we do see this. Numerous commentators have remarked on how prevalent the Jezebel spirit is in Messianic circles. For that reason, if we had to say which church of Revelation the Messianics are most closely associated with, we might choose Thyatira.

While Thyatira is devoted and displays good works, she nonetheless commits "sexual immorality" with Jezebel (verse 20). Because this is a vision, the sexual immorality is probably spiritual sexual immorality (i.e., idolatry, which is mixed worship). Mixed worship is an apt description of matriarchal Messianism.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 2:18-23

18 "And to the messenger of the assembly in Thyatira write, 'These things says the Son of

Elohim, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:

19 "I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.

20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.

21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.

23 I will kill her children with death, and all the assemblies shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."'''

Verse 22 says that those who commit adultery (mixed worship) with Jezebel will suffer great tribulation. In verse 23, Yeshua says He will kill Jezebel's children with death. This is a serious warning. The Messianics may believe they deserve a great reward for having rejected patriarchy on the wrong feast days in favor of matriarchy on the right feast days, but let us be realistic here—what kind of reward can we expect for failing to carry out Yeshua's Great Commission, organizing like witches, and saying we keep Yahweh's Torah, when in fact we only pick and choose which parts of His Torah we want to keep?

It is very difficult for believers to come out of the church system into the transitional Messianic faith, only to realize that Messianic Israel is still part of the church. We have left family and friends (spiritually, if not physically),

to discover that we have only just begun a never-ending journey of spiritual growth. However, if that is the reality, would we rather know the truth, or would we rather be lulled to sleep by the serpent, only to wake up on Judgment Day to discover (too late) that we failed to come all the way out of the church?

Sometimes people ask what they should do if they belong to a Messianic home group, and there is no Nazarene Israel fellowship nearby? There are three things to do. One is to learn more about what Yeshua wants, so we can understand His will for us. Another is to pray, and ask Yahweh to lead us into His perfect will. And then we need to listen for His voice telling us what to do—for it is only by following His voice that we can be in alignment with His perfect will.

For those desiring to know more about the patriarchal Melchizedekian order that Yeshua wants us to build for Him, please see [Torah Government](#).

Definition: Elder

In [Torah Government](#), we saw that Yeshua hand-picked His disciples. His disciples responded by laying down their lives in the world, and serving Him with all of their mind, heart, and strength.

Luqa (Luke) 14:33

33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

Yeshua later commanded His disciples to go into all nations, and raise up still more disciples, to form the Melchizedekian priesthood that was to shepherd His sheep (believers).

Mattityahu (Matthew) 28:18-20

18 And Yeshua came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in My name*,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amein

[*For why we immerse only in Yeshua's name, please see ["Immersion in Yeshua's Name Only,"](#) in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 3.](#)]

As we show in [Torah Government](#), Yeshua did not want independent ministers or independent ministries. Rather, He wanted a unified Melchizedekian priesthood, which would shepherd His sheep the world over. However, the disciples would not have to oversee each and every congregation personally. For this, they would

have the help of the congregational elders (also called bishops).

In Hebrew, an *elder* (bishop) is a zakan (זקן). The word zakan basically means, "bearded one," and it refers to a man who is old enough to have a beard). Titus 1:5 shows us that it is the apostles who appoint the elders (and not the other way around). Verses 6-9 give us the criterion apostles use to appoint (or recognize) the elders.

Titus 1:5-9

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—

6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

7 For an elder must be blameless, as a steward of Elohim, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, set-apart, self-controlled,

9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Elders are also called *bishops*, or *overseers*. Their job is to serve as role models for the rest of the families in an assembly, and help them all to grow together in love. This is not an easy task. They should be happily married, ideally to the wife of their youth. (However, if they have remarried, they should be fulfilling all of their responsibilities to others as best they can, right now.)

TimaTheus Aleph (1 Timothy) 3:1-7

1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of an elder, he desires a good work.

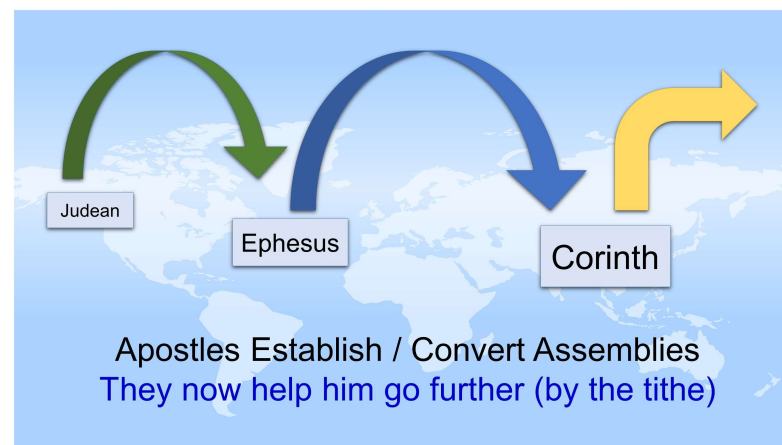
2 An elder then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;
 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;
 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence
 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the assembly of Elohim?);
 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.
 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

It is essential not to appoint anyone as an elder who is not truly an elder. Yeshua established that he who is greatest among us should be the servant of all. If we are willing to accept it, the apostles should *recognize* those who are serving the congregation, and the needs of the Great Commission.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 20:25-28

25 But Yeshua called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.
 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.
 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave —
 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The job of an apostle is either to convert or raise up assemblies. Once the assembly is started they should recognize at least one elder couple (and ideally three or more couples) who can serve as examples for the flock in his absence. Then they can go on to the next town.



In addition to providing a good example to the people, an elder also collects the people's tithes, gifts, and love offerings, to help the apostolic effort go forward. The purpose of these offerings is not to fund any lavish lifestyles, but there are real costs to ministry work (and a lot more than one might at first think).

When people buy books and tapes from merchants, they are saying that they are interested to learn more, personally. However, when we give selflessly, to help the apostles take the Good News to people we never met, it shows Yahweh a kind of love that book and tape sales can never show. It shows Yahweh that we love His Son so much that we are willing to give of our funds to help take the Good News of His Son to other people. This is true, selfless love for Yeshua, and others.

Qorintim Bet (2 Corinthians) 11:8-9

8 I robbed other assemblies, taking wages from them to minister to you.

9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

The Macedonians loved Yeshua enough to support Shaul's ministry to the Corinthians, even though those in Corinth were unwilling to support Shaul. This shows the extent of the Macedonians' love for Yeshua. This kind of love never has an opportunity to develop when each man is expected to buy his own books and tapes.

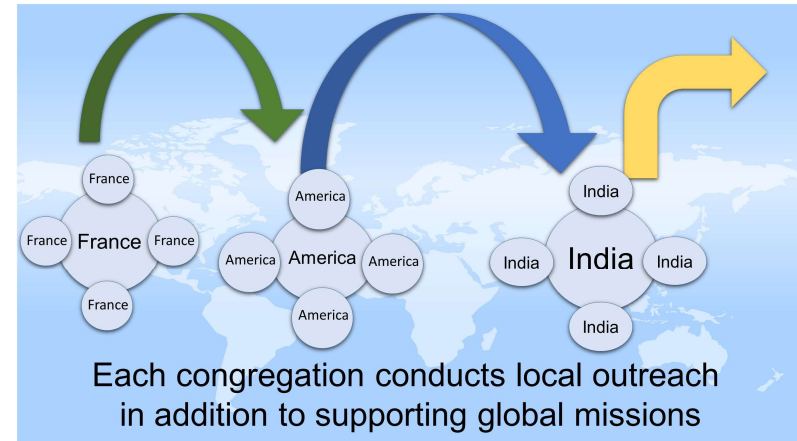
We all have the duty to go on the mission field—but if we are not called to go, then at least we can help fund those who are going.

Qorintim Aleph (1 Corinthians) 16:1-2

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints (set apart ones), as I have given orders to the assemblies of Galatia, so you must do also:

2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

And in addition to encouraging the people to support the apostolic effort worldwide, an elder should also encourage the people to perform local outreach. That is, they can witness to their local communities, just as the apostles can witness in far countries. Thus, whether we go on the mission field or not, together we can help to build Yeshua a unified kingdom.



Yeshua's body is one unified whole, and each part of the body needs to help all of the other parts of the body to do their jobs. No one who says he loves Yeshua can simply sit and read the Torah portion, and say that he has "done his duty" if he is not both conducting local outreach, and is also supporting the global outreach with his tithes, gifts, and offerings.

All of the parts of the body are responsible for all of the other parts, and each one of us needs to give of our time and our funds to help support all of the other parts. "Just sitting and reading" does not cut it. "Just sitting and reading" is to shirk out duties as parts of His body.

In Yeshua's kingdom, everyone has a job. Those who sacrifice the most are to hold the positions of greatest responsibility.

1. Disciples lay down their lives in the world, and go forth either to establish or strengthen the assemblies (as directed by the unified apostolic foundation).
2. Elders set the example in their local assemblies. They encourage everyone to support the global

apostolic effort. They also orchestrate local outreach, to further the Great Commission in their own town.

3. Congregational servants (deacons) are devout believers who assist disciples and elders in the conduct of ministry business. They support both the apostolic and the congregational efforts with their time, and with their finances.
4. Brand new baby believers just come in and get fed, but as they learn and grow in the word, they learn to help support the global and local efforts with donations of time and finances. This should not seem like a burden to them. Rather, this is just evidence of the fruit of the right Spirit.

Because Yeshua's body needs to be united, there should not be any "independent" ministers, ministries, or congregations. There should be only one single order of Melchizedek, and one priesthood of disciples united on one single apostolic foundation. All of the assemblies must be part of the same spiritual temple. This is what it means for the whole building to be fitted together, growing into a set-apart temple in Yahweh.

Ephesim (Ephesians) 2:19-22

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of Elohim,
20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yeshua Messiah Himself being the chief cornerstone,
21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a set apart temple in Yahweh,
22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of Elohim in the Spirit.

When a congregation is small, elders may volunteer their time (out of love for Yeshua). However, when the assembly grows up to the point that the elder needs to work at ministry full time, he may be supported from the people's tithes, gifts and offerings. While a deacon (congregational servant) is equivalent to Levite, an elder is equivalent to a Levitical priest. Shaul tells us that the congregational elders who rule well should have double the average income, especially if they labor in the word and doctrine.

TimaTheus Bet (1 Timothy) 5:17

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

Because elders are not disciples, they may pass an inheritance along to their children.

When our people embrace sound doctrine again, then we will have peace and order in our assemblies once again.

May it be soon, and in our day.

The Titus 1:5 Test

Are we keeping the same faith the apostles kept in the first century? One simple test is to see if we are obeying Titus 1:5. But before we get to Titus 1:5, let's back up a bit, to gain some better perspective of what is being said.

In Acts 9:15, Yahweh said that Shaul was a chosen vessel of His.

Ma'asei (Acts) 9:15

15 But Yahweh said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel."

Then in Acts 13:2-3, Yahweh's Spirit tells a group of prophets and teachers to set Shaul apart for the work to which Yahweh had called him. Shaul is then "sent out" in fulfillment of the Great Commission (which is one of the hallmarks of the apostolic office).

Ma'asei (Acts) 13:2-3

2 As they ministered to Yahweh and fasted, the Set apart Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Bar Naba and Shaul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

In [Torah Government](#), we show how there are at least 22 apostles mentioned in the Renewed Covenant. In Titus 1:5, the Apostle Shaul commands the Apostle Titus to appoint elders (*zakanim* in Hebrew) in every city.

Titus 1:5

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you —

We know the apostolic office is still for today, because in Revelation 18:20, Yahweh tells His set apart apostles and prophets to rejoice over the fall of Babylon, which will take place at trumpet 7.

Hitgalut (Revelation) 18:20

20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you set apart apostles and prophets, for Elohim has avenged you on her!"

The question we need to ask ourselves is, if the apostles were to appoint congregational elders in the first century, then isn't that also how we need to do things today, if we are going to obey Scripture?

To find out more about the Melchizedekian priesthood and congregational elders, please see [Torah Government](#), available on the Nazarene Israel website.

The Role of Congregational Elders

As we explained in [Torah Government](#) and in [Nazarene Israel](#) v4, the congregations are not to be led by rabbis, or pastors, but by congregational elders. These elders are appointed by the apostles.

The way it works is that an apostle goes to a city or town, to find out who is worthy in that town.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 10:13-15

13 “If the household is worthy, let your shalom come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your shalom return to you.

14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!”

The apostle then gathers those who are worthy in a place set apart for worship (ideally not a home). Then, while he is teaching the people, he also identifies who is capable of leading and teaching the people in his absence. He then appoints (or recognizes) those who are capable as congregational *elders* (also called *bishops*).

We discuss the role of the elders in more detail in [Torah Government](#), but Shaul gives Titus a list of qualifications. Basically, while an elder does not need to know everything, he does need to be able to teach, and to give

the people a good example of how to raise up their families in the way they should go.

Titus 1:5-9

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you —

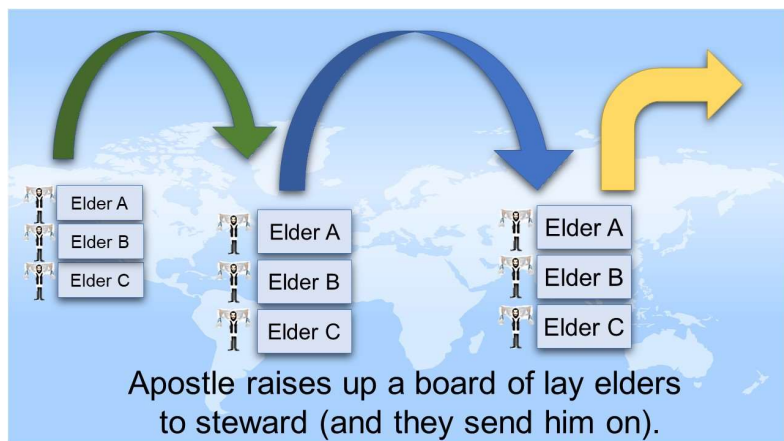
6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

7 For a bishop [elder] must be blameless, as a steward of Elohim, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, set apart, self-controlled,

9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

The relationship between the priesthood and the elders is similar to the British army regimental system. The elders are like NCO's (sergeants) who stay with the same unit their entire career, while the officers rotate through.



In [Torah Government](#) we show how the fivefold priests are not allowed to have an inheritance.

Luqa (Luke) 14:33

33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple."

This is similar to how the Levitical priesthood was not allowed to have an inheritance.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 18:20-21

20 Then Yahweh said to Aharon: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

21 Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting."

In contrast, congregational elders may have jobs, and they may also pass an inheritance along to their children. However, part of their duties in setting a good example for the people is that they should support the

priesthood joyfully with their tithes, gifts, and voluntary offerings. Since they are in positions of leadership, they need to set the example for others to follow.

Qorintim Bet (2 Corinthians) 9:1-15

1 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you;

2 for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

3 Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;

4 lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.

5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation.

6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for Elohim loves a cheerful giver.

8 And Elohim is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

9 As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever."

10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,

11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to Elohim.

12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to Elohim,

13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify Elohim for the obedience of your confession to the Good News of Messiah, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men,

14 and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of Elohim in you.

15 Thanks be to Elohim for His indescribable gift!

When the congregation grows to the point that the elder needs to work full time at the ministry, he can also be supported by the people's tithes, gifts, and offerings. However, otherwise, the funds can be used for other purposes (such as missions, taking care of the poor, widows, and orphans, etc.).

For more information, please see [Nazarene Israel v4](#), or [Torah Government](#).

The Bride's Journey Home

In [Nazarene Israel](#) we show how Avraham and Israel's children were scattered out into the world in order to fulfill the promises given to the patriarchs. Every family, every nation, and every clan had to receive of their genetics, so that the whole world could become heir to the promise of salvation in Messiah Yeshua, should they choose to receive Him.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 22:18

18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

We also show how Yeshua told His disciples to go into every nation, to find the lost and scattered of Avraham and Israel, and immerse them into His name. This was to form the nation of Nazarene Israel, which would be temporarily without a country, until after the tribulation.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 28:19-20

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in My name*,
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amein.

[*For why we immerse only in Yeshua's name, please see "[Immersion in Yeshua's Name Only](#)," in [Nazarene Scripture Studies, Volume 3](#).]

Because the Jews in the land of Israel were raised with the Torah, they realized that the Torah requires us to organize, support leadership, and have one doctrine. That is why, when there was a question over doctrine, Shaul and Bar Naba voluntarily walked for 2-3 weeks in

order to bring the matter before the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

Ma'asei (Acts) 15:1-2

1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the [rabbinic] custom of Moshe [i.e., Giur process], you cannot be saved."

2 Therefore, when Shaul and Bar Naba had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Shaul and Bar Naba and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

Shaul and Bar Naba realized that unity within the body requires doctrinal unity, and they behaved accordingly. However, outside the land of Israel, the converts either did not know what the Torah was, or they were not convicted of the need to unify, organize, and support leadership. Therefore, because the people were less responsible than Shaul and Bar Naba, Yahweh had to allow the Catholic Church to arise, to unify the converts by threat of force.



Elohim is not mocked—Yeshua had asked His people to unify in order to perform the Great Commission by way of the Fivefold ministry—and because the people were not willing to unify, Yahweh handed them over to the Little Horn, who unified them by force, and fulfilled the Great Commission for a time, times, and half a time, fulfilling Daniel 7.

Daniel 7:25

25 “And he [pope] shall speak words against [i.e., contrary to the words of] the Most High; and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he intends to change the appointed [festival] times and Torah. And they [saints] shall be given into his hand for a time, and times, and half a time.”

When the 1,260 years ended, the Protestants broke away from the Catholics. They also fled to other parts of the world (especially the British colonies). This is how Elohim continued to fulfill the Great Commission, although there was no longer the kind of bodily unity that Elohim desires.

Don't be deceived! Keep focusing on Yeshua, and seeking Him!				
Pagan/Wicca	Catholics/ United Body Of Messiah	Protestant/ Multiple Bodies of Messiah	Independent/ Separate Churches	House Church/ Messianic
Not Organized	United worldwide org.	Multiples worldwide orgs.	Separate Organizations	Not organized
Not Patriarch	Single Patriarch	Multiple Patriarchs	Separate Patriarchs	No Patriarch
Matriarchal circles	Single unified Patriarchy	Multiple Patriarchies	Separate Patriarchies	Matriarchal circles

Through many generations, the bride has continued to seek Yeshua’s face. Knowledge has increased—but without the Torah discipline to organize, unify, support leadership, and embrace one single doctrine, unity has decreased to the point where there is almost complete and total fragmentation within Messianic Israel.

Now let us look at the above chart again, and we will see what needs to be done, in order to restore the original apostolic faith.



The difference between Messianic and Nazarene Israel is that the Nazarenes understand the need to organize, support leadership, and conduct the Great Commission in a real and meaningful way. They understand that it is not enough to learn about establishing real unity in the body—but that we actually need to do it.

Ya’akov (James) 4:17

17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

About Ritual Cleanness

In this chapter we are going to talk about three different things: spiritual health, physical health, and ritual cleanness. These are three totally different things, but sometimes there are relationships between them. However, we have to be careful what conclusions we draw, because the relationships do not always hold true in reverse.

Before we begin, we need to understand that the Scriptures were written for people who lived in a culture of faith. The patriarchs and the Israelites of old may not have called it “predestination theory,” but they typically understood that Yahweh ultimately controls everything that goes on in the material world. They knew that Yahweh has the power to alter any aspect of the material world, and/or to bring about any miracle He wants. The theological implications of this are huge, but today, after the Enlightenment, most people do not accept anything as being true unless it can be “verified” by independent secular laboratory testing. If Yahweh does not choose to reveal Himself to secular scientists who operate outside of faith in Him, these secular scientists then tell the world that “Scripture is false,” and that there is no such thing as a Creator, or a Spirit. This then gets taught to our children in the secular government schools; and yet we know from experience that there really is a Creator, and that He really has the power to change or alter things in the material world at will. We also understand that He has the power to open and close the womb, to give and withhold health, and to smite with leprosy, or to cure it.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 12:9-12

9 So the anger of Yahweh was aroused against them, and He departed.

10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aharon turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

11 So Aharon said to Moshe, "Oh, my adon! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.

12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

We also know there can be a relationship between our spiritual health, and our physical health. For example, when we worry, we can get ulcers, tension headaches, migraines, heart disease, and even cancer. Although Yahweh created our bodies to be generally healthy, if we are not spiritually healthy, then our bodies can develop all sorts of physical disease. This shows that our spiritual health can impact our physical health.

Sins and transgressions can also impact our physical health. For example, if we choose to drink too much alcohol, or if we use drugs, or even if we eat unhealthy foods, it can impact not only our own health, but also that of our children. Now, because of science, we understand these things from the standpoint of cause-and-effect in the material world; yet there are also many places in Scripture where men chose to stray from Elohim's ways, and they were struck with punishment as a result. For example, Nabal was struck dead for having refused support to David and his men.

Shemuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 25:37-38

37 So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone.

38 Then it happened, after about ten days, that Yahweh struck Nabal, and he died.

This is not just “Old Testament stuff.” In the Renewed Covenant, Yahweh struck Hananyah (Ananias) dead for lying to the Spirit (and later his wife Sapphira also).

Ma’asei (Acts) 5:1-5

1 But a certain man named Hananyah, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Kepha said, "Hananyah, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Set-apart Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?

4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to Elohim."

5 Then Hananyah, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

Today, after the Enlightenment, many people either deny that these things took place, or they look for other explanations. However, in our forefathers' day it was understood that Yahweh has the power to smite people in the physical, whenever they displease Him.

There is also generational sin to consider. For example, when parents abuse their children (or divorce or abuse their spouses) it can affect the children emotionally and spiritually for generations to come.

Shemote (Exodus) 20:5b-6

5b “For I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

The results of sin can even affect one’s descendants. For example, when Elisha’s attendant Gehazi ran to take payment from Naaman the Aramean (after Elisha his master specifically refused to receive anything from Naaman’s hand), Elisha said Naaman’s leprosy would cling to Gehazi and his descendants forever.

Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 5:26-27

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go with you when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants?

27 Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow.

However, not every physical disability is the result of sin or transgression. For example, in John 9:1-3 there was a man who was blind from birth, and yet Yeshua said that this was not caused by any kind of sin.

Yochanan (John) 9:1-3

1 Now as Yeshua passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Yeshua answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of Elohim should be revealed in him."

In contrast, there are times when physical maladies seem to be caused by a spiritual disorder; and in these cases, if our faith improves then the malady will oftentimes go away on its own. For example, the woman with the issue of blood was healed because of her faith. It may be that her faith healed her spirit, and therefore her body began manifesting health.

Luqa (Luke) 8:43-48

43 Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44 came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

45 And Yeshua said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Kepha and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

46 But Yeshua said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."

47 Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

48 And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Not all physical woes are caused by spiritual disorders, but some of them are; and matters of faith can heal these disorders (whether Yahweh chooses to heal us via a

miracle, or whether He just gives us slow, steady improvement).

Shemote (Exodus) 15:26

26 and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of Yahweh your Elohim and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians, for I am Yahweh who heals you."

While modern medicine cannot explain it, there are many case histories of spontaneous remission of diseases, in which the patient credits "spiritual healing." This shows us that there is relationship between our spiritual walk, and our physical health. When we come closer to Yahweh we can be healed of our diseases.

Now we need to talk about ritual purity and cleanness, as distinct from spiritual and physical health (and also as distinct from sin and transgression). As we will see, it is very possible to be spiritually and physically healthy, and yet be ritually unclean. In fact, as we will see, even Yeshua could be ritually unclean when He was outside the temple.

In Numbers 19, Yahweh gives us instructions for making waters for purification from the ashes of a red heifer. These waters are used for purification from sin.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 19:9

9 Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.

We have to be purified with these waters in order not to defile the sanctuary of Yahweh. It is important that we not do that, lest we be cut off from among the people.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 19:20

20 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean.

At the time of this writing (2020) there is no temple and no waters of purification from a red heifer, so no one can be ritually pure today. At one level this is not a big deal, since one reason for being ritually clean is so that we do not die when we enter His tabernacle or temple.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 15:31

31 "Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.

Yet at another level, ritual purity and cleanness is a very big deal. Even though we cannot keep the whole of the Torah, many people believe we should still try to follow these rules as best we can, so that when the temple is rebuilt we will have a better idea what to do.

In Leviticus 11-14, Yahweh gives a set of instructions which deal with physical hygiene and ritual purification in a variety of circumstances. For example, Leviticus 11 tells us that it is a ritual defilement to touch the carcass of a clean animal (which we may normally eat) that has died on its own (i.e., it was found dead, or it was torn by beasts, etc.). If we touch it, then we have to wash our

clothes, and we remain ritually unclean until the sun sets.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 11:39-40

39 "And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until evening.

40 He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening."

Leviticus 12 gives the torah for purification of mothers who have given birth to children. It is often noted (with protest) that the time of purification for bearing a girl is twice that of the time of purification for bearing a boy. This might offend some people, but just as modern science has borne out Yahweh's wisdom in calling certain foods "clean" and other foods "unclean," it will probably happen that science will one day find reasons to support this as well (perhaps improved immunity).

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 12

1 Then Yahweh spoke to Moshe, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.

3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

4 She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

5 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity,

and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.

6 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

7 Then he shall offer it before Yahweh, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

8 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons — one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

If a woman is unclean and in cleansing for a male child for basically a month, and basically two months for a female child, this means that the world is supposed to give her "maternity leave" for this amount of time. It is also likely that vital mother-son or mother-daughter bonds are formed during this time. While it is certainly fair for science to look for ways to understand why this is so important, science should never question the importance or the validity of Yahweh's commands.

It is also frequently noted that the mother must bring a sin offering, whether the child is a male or a female. This may be where King David derived his famous saying that his mother conceived him in sin.

Tehillim (Psalms) 51:5

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Leviticus 13 and 14 give us instructions for purification for those with afflictions of the skin (such as leprosy). Then, in Leviticus 15 we get a set of instructions for whenever there is any kind of emission from the groin area, whether the discharge is from semen, menstrual blood, unusual menstrual bleeding (as we saw above in Luke 8 with the woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years), or venereal diseases.

First Yahweh begins with a discussion of venereal diseases in men. Notice that during the time a man has such a discharge, he is essentially quarantined, and everything he comes in contact with becomes unclean.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 15:1-15

1 And Yahweh spoke to Moshe and Aharon, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean.

3 And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge — whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it is his uncleanness.

4 Every bed is unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean.

5 And whoever touches his bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

6 He who sits on anything on which he who has the discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

7 And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

Verse 7 (above) shows us that even medical personnel who come into contact with someone who has such a venereal disease is rendered ritually unclean. It is not sinful for the doctors and nurses to become ritually unclean: it is just that they must wash their clothes and bathe in water before they can become ritually clean again (that evening). The same pertains to anyone who gets the unclean man's saliva on them, or one who touches anything that the unclean man sits or lies on.

8 If he who has the discharge spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

9 Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean.

10 Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries any of those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

11 And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

Next we see that (porous) earthenware vessels have to be broken, while wood vessels (which are not quite as porous) have to be rinsed in water.

12 The vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

Because the transmission of venereal disease normally involves sin (even if indirectly, through one's spouse), once he is cleansed, he must bring a sin offering.

13 'And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean.

14 On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before Yahweh, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest.

15 Then the priest shall offer them, the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him before Yahweh because of his discharge.

Next Yahweh talks about discharges of semen. Verse 18 tells us that even if the emission takes place with his lawful wife, it still renders both the man and the woman ritually unclean until the evening after they bathe.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 15:16-18

16 'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening.

17 And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening.

18 Also, when a woman lies with a man, and there is an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

Yahweh does not explicitly tell us to refrain from being intimate on the Sabbath and festival high days, but there are many clues that we should refrain from it. For one thing, the Sabbath and festivals are what are known as "appointed times." These are times set aside for us to be with Him. It makes sense that He would want us to be

ritually clean (rather than ritually unclean) during those times.

Further, the Torah was likely given to Israel at Mount Sinai on the first Pentecost. Yahweh made it very clear that the men of Israel were to be ritually clean at that time. They were not to approach their wives.

<p>Exodus 19:14-15 14 So Moshe went down from the mountain to the people and set the people apart, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready by the third day: Do not come near your wives."</p>	<p>(14) וַיֵּרַד מֹשֶׁה מִן הָהָר אֶל הָעָם וַיִּקְדָּשׁ אֶת הָעָם וַיִּכְבְּסוּ שְׂמֹלֵתָם : (15) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל הָעָם הָיוּ נֹכְחִים לְשִׁלְשֶׁת יָמִים אֶל תִּגְשׁוּ אֶל אִשָּׁה</p>
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In Hebrew, “by the third day” is לְשִׁלְשֶׁת יָמִים. Scholars differ as to whether the people were not supposed to come near their wives for three days, or whether they were not supposed to come near their wives any more after three days; but either way it is clear that they were supposed to abstain from marital relations during the time they were to meet with Yahweh.

Next Yahweh discusses two kinds of discharges from women. The first kind of discharge is her normal monthly flow of blood, which is not sinful. It merely causes ritual uncleanness, which means she would not be allowed into the temple during this time. Historically, Israelites lived in extended family units that all helped each other. A woman who was cleansing was to be given lots of space, and anyone who wanted to go into the temple

had to avoid touching her or anything that she sat or lied on.

Vayiqra (Leviticus) 15:19-33

19 'If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening.

20 Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean.

21 Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

22 And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

23 If anything is on her bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening.

If any man slept in the same bed with her, so that her menstrual blood got on him, he was to be unclean seven days; and it was as if he was also menstruating.

24 And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

Brother Judah traditionally observes this command by having separate beds for men and women. Many of our forefathers also had an extra bed for the husband (or the wife) during this time. Nowadays, some believe that with modern sanitary napkins and such it is okay for men and women to sleep in the same bed, provided they are not intimate during that time. Others believe that Yahweh’s purpose was partly to bring about separation between

the husband and wife for a short time, which, as we will see later, has many medical and marital benefits.

We should point out that we know verse 24 is referring to the man getting menstrual blood on him (only), and is not referring to marital relations, because the penalty for having marital relations during the woman's time of monthly cleansing was to be cut off from among the people.

<p>Leviticus 20:18 18 A man who lies with a menstruous woman and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has exposed the flow of her blood; thus both of them shall be cut off from among their people.</p>	<p>(18) וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת אִשָּׁה דָּוָה וְגִלָּה אֶת עֲרוֹתֶיהָ אֵת מִקְרָהּ הַיְעָרָה וְהִיא גִּלְתָּהּ אֵת מְקוֹר דָּמֶיהָ וְנִכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִקִּרְבַּ עַמּוֹ</p>
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Next Yahweh tells us that if a woman has a flow of blood that is irregular, either outside of her normal time of impurity, or if it runs on (much) longer than her usual time of impurity, that the uncleanness is to be treated the same as in her normal time of impurity. However, when she is healed, she is to bring a sin offering to the temple.

25 'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.

26 Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity;

and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity.

27 Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

28 'But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

29 And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

30 Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before Yahweh for the discharge of her uncleanness.

31 'Thus you shall separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.

32 This is the torah for one who has a discharge, and for him who emits semen and is unclean thereby,

33 and for her who is indisposed because of her customary impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man or woman, and for him who lies with her who is unclean."

Women do not normally menstruate during the time they are pregnant, and many even stop menstruating during the time they are lactating. Because there was either little or no birth control practiced in ancient Israel, married women were not likely ritually unclean for long periods of time. However, teenage daughters can be unclean on a regular basis, and given the demands of raising a family in a limited space, it is oftentimes not realistic that a man can avoid becoming ritually unclean

in a family environment, even with separate beds. Further, any intimate relations a man has with his wife makes both of them ritually unclean, and therefore unable to go inside of the temple without “washing and waiting.” This may be why King David established shifts for the priests, so that they lived apart from their families during their time of service.

While we should try to stay ritually clean, if we become ritually unclean outside the temple it is not that big of a deal. Yeshua lived in and amongst the people, and they touched Him on all sides. He was probably ritually unclean on a daily basis (outside of the temple).

Luqa (Luke) 8:45

45 And Yeshua said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Kepha and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

However, we know from [The Torah Calendar](#) that even though Yeshua might not have been able to remain ritually pure during the week, He did try to keep Himself set apart after His resurrection, so He could ascend to heaven and serve as the firstfruits of the wave sheaf.

Yochanan (John) 20:17

17 Yeshua said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My Elohim and your Elohim.'"

Over the years, our Jewish brethren have figured out ways to make it easier to stay ritually clean from day to day without causing unnecessary embarrassment. For starters, our Jewish brothers and sisters have a rule that

unmarried men and women do not touch. They also forego the Western style handshakes with other men. If they want to acknowledge each other they simply say, “Hello.” When they buy something in a store, the money is put down on the counter, or into a special dish. The money is then counted (twice), and any change is put back into the same dish. Because there is no physical contact, there is no transfer of ritual uncleanness. (It is also more hygienic.)

Although it may confound modern secular psychology, numerous scientific studies have shown that married couples who keep the laws of ritual purity experience markedly higher rates of marital success than those who do not. Observant Jewish women also experience a markedly lower incidence of cervical cancer, as recorded in the *Israeli Medical Association Journal*, Volume 5, pages 120-123, 2/2003. Other studies have shown similar health benefits for women.

Yahweh blesses those who keep His instructions with regard to ritual purity with more successful marriages. But what are the mechanics of it? It could be that when married couples separate and then come back together, they get to experience a new honeymoon of sorts each month. The short time apart brings forth a longing for their spouse, and then the physical coming together also brings them together emotionally as well. Such are just a few of the many hidden blessings of keeping Yahweh’s Torah.

Headcoverings in Scripture

Many Christians believe men should not cover their heads while praying. This doctrine is usually based on First Corinthians Eleven and Verse Four. In the New King James Version this passage reads:

1st Corinthians 11:4 (NKJV)

4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.

This translation conflicts with the Torah, which tells the High Priest to cover his head not just once, but twice: first with a turban, and then again with a crown.

<p>Exodus 29:6 6 You shall put the turban on his head, and put the set-apart crown on the turban.</p>	<p>(6) וְשַׂמְתָּ הַמְצַנְפֹת עַל רִאשׁוֹ וְנָתַתָּ אֶת נִזְר הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל הַמְצַנְפֹת</p>
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The High Priest's sons were also to cover their heads with turbans, but they also wore 'exquisite hats' (called "migba'ot", מִגְבָּעוֹת) underneath their turbans.

<p>Exodus 39:27-29 27 They made tunics, artistically woven of fine linen, for Aharon and his sons, 28 a turban of fine linen, exquisite hats of fine linen, short trousers of fine woven linen,</p>	<p>(27) וַיַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת הַכְּתָנֹת שֵׁשׁ מַעֲשֵׂה אֲרָג לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו : (28) וְאֶת הַמְצַנְפֹת שֵׁשׁ וְאֶת פְּאַרֵי הַמְגַבְּעוֹת שֵׁשׁ וְאֶת מְכַנְסֵי הַבָּד שֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר :</p>
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<p>29 and a sash of fine woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, made by a weaver, as Yahweh had commanded Moshe.</p>	<p>(29) וְאֶת הָאֲבִיט שֵׁשׁ מְשֻׁזָּר וְתַכְלֵת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי מַעֲשֵׂה רָקַם כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת מֹשֶׁה</p>
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Strong's Hebrew Concordance tells us the migba'ah (migba'ot for plural) was a hemispherical cap.

OT4021 migba'ah (mig-baw-aw'); from the same as OT1389; a cap (as hemispherical).

When we look up the reference at OT1389, we see that this hemispherical cap looked like a 'little hill.'

OT:1389 gib'ah (ghib-aw'); feminine from the same as OT:1387; a hillock: -hill, little hill.

This description of a 'little hill' sounds very much like the traditional large Jewish black skullcap; except that it was to be made of fine linen (rather than cotton). However, the real issue here is that the Torah tells the priests to cover their heads twice whenever serving in the Temple (as a uniform), yet most translations of First Corinthians 11:4 tell us that men should not cover their heads while praying or prophesying. This makes it seem as if the Apostle Shaul is contradicting the Torah, which we know from our earlier studies cannot be.

In this study we have tried to bear in mind how Yeshua told us not to think that He came to destroy even the least of the commandments in Torah.

Mattityahu (Matthew) 5:17-19

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled.

19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Whenever we wonder if Shaul is speaking against the Torah we need to remember how Kepha (Peter) told us Shaul's letters are difficult to understand, and that even in the first century there were those who misinterpreted Shaul's writings as being against the Torah.

Kepha Bet (2 Peter) 3:15-17

15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Adon is salvation — as also our beloved brother Shaul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you,

16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked....

Notice how Kepha tells us that Shaul's writings are scripture, in that the untaught and unstable twist them as

they do the 'rest' of Scripture. Yahweh even said that He chose Shaul as a vessel to bear His name.

Ma'asei (Acts) 9:11-16

15 But Yahweh said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel (i.e., the Ephraimites).

16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

So if we remember that Yahweh told the priests to cover their heads whenever they served Him in the Temple (as part of their uniform), and that as Yahweh chosen vessel Shaul would not have contradicted Yahweh, then let us study the meanings of the word 'covered', which really refers to wrapping one's head in a scarf.

<p>1st Corinthians 11:4 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head (wholly) covered, dishonors his head.</p>	<p>BGT 1 Corinthians 11:4 4 πᾶς ἀνὴρ προσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.</p>
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The word 'covered' in verse four is Strong's NT:2596, kata (κατά), which indicates having something 'down over the head.'

NT:2596 kata (kat-ah'); a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case [genitive case, dative case or accusative case] with which it is joined):

This is kind of confusing. What does it mean to have something 'down' on one's head? If we read further we will see that this word is related to Strong's NT:2619, *katakalupto* (κατακαλύπτεται), which refers to having one's head wholly wrapped, as with a headscarf, or a veil (verse 6, below).

<p>1st Corinthians 11:6 6 For if a woman is not (wholly) covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be (wholly) covered.</p>	<p>BGT 1 Corinthians 11:6 6 εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω.</p>
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Strong's Concordance tells us that *katakalupto* does not mean 'to cover partially', as with a hat. Rather, it means 'to cover wholly', or veil (as with a headscarf).

NT 2619: *katakalupto*: to cover wholly, (i.e., to veil).

These kinds of things strike at our appearance, and at our personal comfort, so people do not always like to hear about them. However, Scripture is Scripture, so if we remember that *katakalupto* means 'to cover wholly' (as with a woman's headscarf, or with a veil), let us plug the meaning of these words into the text, to see what the Apostle Shaul really meant.

Qorintim Aleph (1st Corinthians) 11:4
4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head wholly covered (i.e. having his head veiled, or wrapped in a woman's headscarf), dishonors his head.

And verse six:

Qorintim Aleph (1st Corinthians) 11:6
For if a woman is not wholly covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be wholly covered.

Remembering that Shaul would not have contradicted Yahweh's command that the Levites cover their heads with a turban or an 'exquisite hat' as part of their on-duty garb, what First Corinthians seems to say is that it is wrong for a man to wrap up his head in a (woman's) headscarf, or even to veil his head when he prays or prophesies, for this dishonors his head. However, he also says it is wrong for a woman not to cover her head wholly with a scarf; for that is like unto being shorn.

The language here is not generally pleasing to the flesh, but the study of headcoverings really starts to get interesting when we remember how Kepha tells us that we are members of a royal Melchizedekian priesthood. (Melek = king [i.e., royal], tzedek = righteous).

Kepha Aleph (1 Peter) 2:9-10
9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a set-apart nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;
10 who once were not a people but are now the people of Elohim, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

But if we are members of the Melchizedekian Order, then should we cover our heads as the Levitical Order was commanded to do? Some say yes, and others say no. The Torah does not specify, but what we do know

is that the rules for the Melchizedekian and the Levitical orders are different. The Levitical Order was to operate inside of a Tabernacle or Temple, while the Order of Melchizedek was designed to operate outside of one. Further, the Levitical priesthood was always to leave its garments behind whenever they left the physical set-apart place. That is, the High Priest and his sons never wore their set-apart headpieces outside of the Temple.

Just for the purposes of discussion, if Melchizedekian priests should wear head coverings, then where and when should they to be worn? Should they be worn only inside of the next Temple, since the Levites never wore them outside of the Temple? Should they be worn in synagogues (and other places set apart for worship) since those are a 'kind' of a set-apart place? The Torah simply does not address these issues. This is because the dispersion is a punishment: we cannot keep the whole Torah in the dispersion. Until He calls us back to His land and we get to build the next Temple we cannot even know how to keep the Torah properly. Yet while it is important to study, we should be very careful not to make up a bunch of rules of our own.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 12:32

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

Yahweh is clear that we are not to add or to take away from His Instructions; and if we read Deuteronomy 4:2 (below) carefully, we might also see that there is a promise involved. If we want to keep the commands of Yahweh our Elohim, then we must not add or take away from His commands.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 4:2

2 "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of Yahweh your Elohim which I command you."

One of Yahweh's commands is not to add to His word. If we do therefore add to His word, are we any longer keeping His commands? Or are we not rather keeping our own?

Could it be that Yahweh intentionally left some things unclear in the Torah, especially about what to do in the dispersion, just to see how we treat each other when we run into gray areas?

The situation is not clear because the examples we have are mixed. The Torah never tells the average man or woman to cover (or not cover) his head; yet Middle Eastern men have long covered their heads for protection from the sun, usually with a turban or other sun shade: yet at the incident of the Burning Bush, Yahweh did not tell Moshe to take the covering off of his head, but the sandals off of his feet.

Shemote (Exodus) 3:5

5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is set-apart ground."

Middle Eastern custom and tradition is that servants cover their heads, and go barefoot. Is this what Yahweh was commanding Moshe, was to become a barefoot servant before Him?

King David also covered his head and went barefoot when he fled from his son Absalom. Was this to show

Yahweh that David considered himself His servant, and that he was submitted to Him?

Shemuel Bet (2 Samuel) 15:30

30 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.

Yet the fact David covered his head tells us that he did not normally cover his head (at least not in that way). Further, we see that the Prophet Elisha did not always keep his head covered, or else the youths would not have made fun of him for being bald.

Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 2:23

23 Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

It would be convenient if Scripture told us whether to cover our heads or not, outside of a Temple. However, it does not; and unless we are specifically chosen as vessels to bear His name, we should not add to it.

Notice a fine point: Shaul's writings are not Torah, and perhaps they do not have the same weight as Yahweh's words; and yet Shaul's words are Scripture, which is given to us for our instruction (2 Peter 3:15-17, above).

So what was Shaul really saying? When we consider the overall historical context of First Corinthians we have to remember that Corinth was a port town, with the usual low moral standards. Yet much worse than that, Corinth was a center for Greek temple-cult prostitution. The

general moral standards in Corinth were so low that Shaul even had to instruct the people to forbid a man to have sex with his father's wife.

Qorintim Aleph (1st Corinthians) 5:1-2

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles — that a man has his father's wife!

2 But you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Shaul tells the Corinthians that while adultery may be accepted in Corinth, adulterers are not allowed inside of the assemblies, as synagogues are to remain set-apart from the defilements of the regular world.

The overall point of Shaul's epistle to the Corinthians, then, is that of explaining how Hebrew men and women are supposed to behave in the synagogue. Since he had to address some unusual situations he tells the people, "Here are some things that Hebrew men and women are supposed to do; and here are some things that followers of Yeshua should never do (no matter how common they might be in Corinth)."

In his usual loving, gentle way, Shaul tells the believers in Corinth not just to abstain from sex with their father's wives, but also not to cover (kata) their heads with women's headscarves. It dishonors a man's head, and the Torah forbids cross-dressing.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 22:5

5 "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's

garment; for all who do so are an abomination to Yahweh your Elohim.”

While it may not seem ‘fair’, the Torah does seem to support Shaul’s assertion that the rules are different for men and women. Levitical priests are to cover their heads on duty in the Temple, but are to leave those garments in the Temple. Further, David and Eliyahu did not always cover their heads; so it would seem as if there is no clear commandment for men to cover (or not cover) their heads. However, other passages in Torah do seem to indicate that women are to cover their heads, at least when they are inside the Temple.

In the Torah of the Jealous Husband in Numbers Five, part of the process of exonerating the wife is for the priest to uncover her head (perhaps symbolic of temporarily removing her husband’s authority). This implies that her head has to be covered in the Temple.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 5:18

18 Then the priest shall stand the woman before Yahweh, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse.

The Torah does not say whether her head is normally to be covered, or whether she covers it just for that event, but it does seem Shaul understood a woman’s headscarf to be a symbol of her husband’s authority, that she should wear whenever praying or prophesying.

1 st Corinthians 11:4-10 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having	BGT 1 Corinthians 11:4 4 πᾶς ἀνὴρ ροσευχόμενος ἢ προφητεύων κατὰ
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his head wholly covered (i.e., wrapped) dishonors his head.
5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head not wholly covered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.
6 For if a woman is not wholly covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, (then) let her (head) be wholly covered.
7 For a man indeed ought not to wholly cover his head, since he is the image and glory of Elohim; but woman is the glory of man.
8 For man is not from woman, but woman from man.
9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.
10 For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority

κεφαλῆς ἔχων καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.
5 πᾶσα δὲ γυνὴ ροσευχομένη ἢ προφητεύουσα ἀκατακαλύπτω τῇ κεφαλῇ καταισχύνει τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς· ἐν γὰρ ἐστὶν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ τῇ ἐξυρημένῃ.
6 εἰ γὰρ οὐ κατακαλύπτεται γυνή, καὶ κειράσθω· εἰ δὲ αἰσχρὸν γυναικὶ τὸ κείρασθαι ἢ ξυρᾶσθαι, κατακαλυπτέσθω.
7 Ἄνὴρ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ὀφείλει κατακαλύπτεσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα θεοῦ ὑπάρχων· ἡ γυνὴ δὲ δόξα ἀνδρός ἐστίν.
8 οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀνὴρ ἐκ γυναικὸς ἀλλὰ γυνὴ ἐξ ἀνδρός·
9 καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἐκτίσθη ἀνὴρ διὰ τὴν γυναῖκα ἀλλὰ γυνὴ διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα.
10 διὰ τοῦτο ὀφείλει ἡ γυνὴ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐπὶ

on her head, because of the angels (messengers).	τῆς κεφαλῆς διὰ τοὺς ἀγγέλους.
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Again it may seem ‘unbalanced’ or ‘unfair’ that the rules are different for women than for men, and we still have no direct commandment in the p’shat of the Torah, but there are many things about life that do not seem fair, and it is important to obey the Scriptures. So if we accept the Apostle Shaul’s words as Scripture, then it would seem that it would be best for a woman to keep her head covered (at least when she is in public), so she will be prepared whenever she wants to pray.

But what does verse ten mean, “the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels (messengers)?” The Greek word for ‘angel’ is Strong’s NT:32, ‘aggelos’ (pronounced ang’-el-os), and it has multiple meanings.

NT:32 aggelos (ang'-el-os); from aggello (meaning, to bring tidings); a messenger; especially an "angel"; (or) by implication, a pastor: KJV - angel, messenger.

The word ‘aggelos’ means ‘a messenger’, especially an ‘angel’, but also a pastor. All of these translations make sense. First, an ‘angel’ makes sense because the Nephilim are fallen angels who wrongly took the daughters of men unto themselves as wives.

B'reisheet (Genesis) 6:4 4 There were fallen ones on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when	(4) הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרַי כֵּן אָשֶׁר
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the sons of the Elohim came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.	יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדּוּ לָהֶם אֲנָשִׁים הַגִּבּוֹרִים אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם
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We will explain more about the Nephilim elsewhere, but one reason the word ‘pastor’ also works here is that in the Middle East, married women traditionally hide their beauty from everyone but their husband. This is just all considered to be part of dressing modestly, so as not to attract or arouse any unwanted male attention. This kind of thing is generally disregarded in the west, but in Hebraic society, modest dress (including covering of the hair) is considered to be a very big deal.

Men are far more visually-oriented than women, and the multi-billion-dollar hair care industry witnesses to the fact that women are aware of the attractiveness of their hair. A woman’s hair can be even more appealing than a finely turned ankle, and it is disingenuous for any woman to spend time, money and energy making her hair attractive, and then claim that it does not have a subliminal effect on men. The whole reason for her spending so much time, money and energy on her hair is specifically to make it appealing, and so the very fact that she spends this time and energy on her hair shows that she is aware of the effect it can have.

The reason young girls and single women in Hebrew society do not cover their hair is precisely because they are advertising their eligibility; yet married women typically cover their hair, so as to conceal their beauty from all but their husband. When they go out they ‘put

their hair up', and when they come home they 'let their hair down.' This 'putting the hair up' serves the same sort of visual defensive purpose as a wedding ring, except it is all the more effective because it also conceals her beauty from male eyes. If we read First Corinthians 11 with this understanding, we can see that a married woman should wear a symbol of authority on her head not only for her husband, but also for the pastor. Though he may be dedicated to overcoming the flesh, a pastor is still subject to temptations like anyone else. When a woman conceals her beauty it serves as a visual reminder of her devotion to her husband, and to Yahweh. And if even she is not married it is still right for her to cover her hair in the synagogue (just as it is proper for men to control their eyes), for the synagogue is a place set apart for prayer.

In verse thirteen Shaul asks rhetorically if it is proper for a woman to pray to Elohim with her hair exposed:

Qorintim Aleph (1st Corinthians) 11:13

13 Judge among your selves: is it proper for a woman to pray to Elohim with her head uncovered (with her hair showing)?

Many Christians believe it is completely acceptable for women to go to set-apart places with cleavage, thighs and hair showing, without considering the stumbling block that this kind of thing places in front of the men. While this may be considered acceptable in Christian circles or in Corinth, it has never been acceptable in the synagogue.

It is also not acceptable for men to decorate their hair, or to wear them in tresses. This word decorate is badly mistranslated in the New King James Version, where it

is rendered as 'long'. We will take a closer look at the definitions of the words in a moment.

<p>1st Corinthians 11:14 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the assemblies of Elohim.</p>	<p>BGT 1 Corinthians 11:14 14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾶ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, 15 γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾶ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῇ]. 16 Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>
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The word 'long' in verses 14 and 15 is the Greek word 'koma' (κομᾶ). When we look it up it does not mean 'long hair', but rather, 'decorated hair' (i.e., tresses).

NT:2863 koma/komao (kom-ah'-o); from NT:2864; to wear tresses of hair: KJV - have long hair.

The King James translators' rendering of koma as 'long hair' is clearly in error. When we look up the reference at NT:2864 we see that it again speaks of tresses, and of ornamentally dressing (or plaiting) the hair. And if we continue looking up the references we will see that it does not simply refer to long hair.

NT:2864 kome (kom'-ay); apparently from the same as NT:2865; the hair of the head (locks, as ornamental, and thus differing from NT:2359; which properly denotes merely the scalp):

When we look up the reference at NT:2359 (from which kome differs) we see that it indicates the hair of the head per se (rather than decorating the hair).

NT:2359 thrix (threeks); genitive case trichos, etc.; of uncertain derivation; hair: KJV - hair. Compare NT:2864.

In other words, koma, komao and kome all differ from thrix, which is merely 'hair.' Instead, koma, komao and kome all indicate some form of dressing, plaiting or trellising the hair (as with locks). Surely this is what Shaul told the Corinthians to avoid, for as we explain in the [Nazarene Israel](#) study, Shaul took at least two different Nazirite Vows, which call for the hair of the head to grow long. It makes no sense for Shaul to say it is improper for men to have long hair when he would have had long hair himself at that time. Rather, what makes more sense is to understand that he was telling the Corinthians that women should dress like women, and men should dress like men.

Finally, if we read this passage carefully, verse 16 tells us that the assemblies have no custom that sisters can pray or prophesy with their hair uncovered, simply because it is long, or trellised. To the contrary, the prettier it is the more it needs to be covered; and if a sister does not wish to cover her hair wholly then she should be shaven or shorn, as for her to display her beauty openly in the synagogue only serves to distract her brothers from focusing on the Father.

1 st Corinthians 11:14 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has decorated hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15 But if a woman has decorated hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the assemblies of Elohim.	BGT 1 Corinthians 11:14 14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐὰν κομᾷ ἀτιμία αὐτῷ ἐστίν, 15 γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν κομᾷ δόξα αὐτῇ ἐστίν; ὅτι ἡ κόμη ἀντὶ περιβολαίου δέδοται [αὐτῇ]. 16 Εἰ δέ τις δοκεῖ φιλόνεικος εἶναι, ἡμεῖς τοιαύτην συνήθειαν οὐκ ἔχομεν οὐδὲ αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τοῦ θεοῦ.
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So in sum, the Torah commands the Levitical priests to cover their heads whenever they are on duty in the Temple, as part of their uniform. They leave these set-apart garments behind when they go off duty, and do not take them with them.

We have seen that the Torah gives no direct command to the average Israelite man or woman to cover their heads; and we see how King David and Elisha may not have had their heads covered from day to day. However, the Torah of the Jealous Husband and First Corinthians Eleven seem to imply that a woman should cover her head if she is married; and that a woman's head should be covered in places of public worship, regardless of her marital status. At least, this is the extent of my understanding at this point in time, but I should also point out that in my role as a teacher I am not in a position to judge other human beings as to their

level of acceptance of this study, or any other. My job is merely to teach, and allow Yahweh's Spirit to be the one to convict (or not), as Yahweh sees fit.

Whenever a study is posted about headcoverings there is always an outcry that the small Jewish kippa (also called a yarmulke) derives from pagan tradition. This is true. The small Jewish kippa represents a halo, or a 'sun disk.' This is a sun worship symbol, and it needs to be avoided. However, this says nothing about the commandment for on-duty Levitical priests to cover their heads whenever they are serving in a Temple before Yahweh.

Do I cover my head? I believe I can. But should I do so in a synagogue environment? I just simply do not know. I believe Scripture is clear that when the Temple is rebuilt and the Levitical and Melchizedekian orders are merged (as the Prophet Isaiah foretold in Isaiah 66:21) then it will be the thing to do.

Would I cover my head as an on-duty priest in a renewed Temple? Absolutely: I would cover my head twice, because that is what Yahweh says to do. Would I think women should cover their heads in a Temple environment (or in any set-apart house of prayer)? Yes, I believe that would be the right thing for them to do, but in the dispersion I am loathe to do anything more than encourage it as the teaching of Scripture. As long as we remain out in the dispersion I do not believe we can make any hard and fast rules for our people to follow; but that we should just be aware of the fact that until He calls us back to His land, we cannot please Him by keeping all of His Torah.

Supporting the Work:

Nazarene Israel is reestablishing the original apostolic faith in the modern day. Yahweh tells His people to give, and He is faithful to bless those who cheerfully give to His Son's work (e.g., Exodus 25:2, Malachi 3:10, etc.).

Yeshua also tells us not to store up treasures for ourselves on earth, but to lay up treasures in heaven by being rich toward His work. He says that where we put our treasure, our heart will also be there (Matthew 6).

Shaul (Paul) also tells us that those who are taught should share with those who teach.

Galatim (Galatians) 6:6-9

6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

7 Do not be deceived, Elohim is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

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