

The Faith Once Delivered ~ I

containing:

Overview
Y'shua Centered
Torah Focused
Hope Based

by
Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beloved,
While I was very diligent to write to you
Concerning our common salvation,
I found it necessary to write to you
Exhorting you to contend earnestly
For the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.
Jude 1:3

Hebrew Roots® Press
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~ Introduction ~

Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
A workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
Rightly dividing the word of truth.
II Timothy 2:15 KJV



Occasionally, *Hebrew Roots*® receives letters from people asking for our Statement of Beliefs. Some of these folks are most likely looking for a one or two page summary of what we believe and teach. However, we do not take this approach because, as we see it, there are at least two problems with people condensing their belief system into a few paragraphs. The first problem, about which we are concerned, is the fact that such a document can lead to a misunderstanding of what people actually believe, because something may not be fully explained. In addition, once people commit to creating such a document, there often arises another problem. When someone grows in "**grace and knowledge**," (II Pet. 3:18), a new understanding may contradict one of the doctrines, to which they previously held, that was printed in their Statement of Beliefs. Then the Statement of Beliefs would need to be updated and redistributed. For this reason, we choose to take the approach of not using a condensed Statement of Beliefs. We prefer to write in-depth articles that express both our understandings, and sometimes our doubts.

We often make the statement: "In our opinion ..." It is likely that some of our readers are frustrated by this approach because they want to know, in a few words, what we believe. However, we believe that an honest searcher of truth will understand that personal beliefs change over time as an

individual grows in the "**grace and knowledge**" of God's word.

This booklet (along with the next one in this series) is the result of over ten years of publishing numerous articles and presenting many talks on various Biblical and historical subjects. Thus, we now have a rather lengthy synopsis as to what we Believe -- but in general terms, rather than condensed doctrinal statements.

We encourage you to search the Scriptures and to prove everything that is taught within their pages, to your own satisfaction:

"These [Bereans] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."
(Acts 17:11)

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

(I Thess. 5:21 KJV)

After a brief *Overview* of the need to have faith in the promises found in Scripture, this booklet addresses the first three of seven identified attributes of the "**faith once delivered**" -- that our Faith is: *Y'shua Centered, Torah Focused, and Hope Based*. Volume II will cover the remaining four attributes identified as: *Overcoming Oriented, Righteousness Rooted, Spirit Led, and Love Directed*.

Shalom!

Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beit Shalom, 2014

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Hebrew Roots ® began in 1996 as a printed religious publication which explores the Hebrew Roots of the Christian Faith. *Hebrew Roots*® is supported entirely by prayers and freewill donations.

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~ Overview ~

Beloved,
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Jude 1:3



Over 1900 years ago *Jude*, (Yehudah יהודה in Hebrew) the half-brother of *Y'shua HaMashiach* ישוע המשיח (Yeh-shoe'-ah Hah Mah-shee'-ack = Jesus the Messiah), wrote a fiery epistle to the *Messianic Believers* of his day, warning them of the threat posed by certain men who had "crept" into the Body of Messiah and were perverting the Good News:

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and [thereby] deny the only Lord God [YHVH Elohim] and our Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]."
(Jude 1:3-4)

Jude had very strong words of condemnation for those people -- comparing them to fallen angels (v. 6), to the men of *Sodom* and *Gomorra*h (v.7), and to *Cain*, *Balaam*, and *Korah* (v. 11).

Jude's epistle gives no information concerning the identity of these men, where they were from, or exactly what they taught. What we can learn, however, is that *Jude* prophesied their ultimate outcome. Quoting from the non-canonical book of *Enoch*, *Jude* wrote:

"Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, ¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'"
(Jude 1:14-15)

It is impossible to know exactly what these men were teaching, except for the fact that they were first of all characterized as having perverted the grace (favor) of God (YHVH) into some type of "lewdness" (v.4) or, as the *King James Version* translates it, "lasciviousness." The Greek word used here is *aselgeia* (ah-sell'-gee-ah) and it is defined in *Strong's Dictionary*, as:

"unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence."

By teaching "lasciviousness," which is totally contrary to *Torah*, these men were denying the very nature of *Y'shua*. The *New International Version* renders this verse as:

"They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] our only Sovereign and Lord."

(Jude 1:4 NIV)

~ A Form of Gnosticism ~

Most probably, what these "godless" men were teaching was a form of *Gnosticism* -- an ancient type of mysticism which taught (in one of its many forms) that what a person did in the flesh was not important as long as one's "spirit" remained "pure."

This particular branch of *Gnosticism* taught that it was permissible to seek any type of earthly gratification, because those were mere physical acts -- be it excesses in food or drink, evil speech, or lewdness. What was most important to the *Gnostics* was to keep their spirit "pure." This teaching is, of course, totally contrary to the *Written Torah* which clearly teaches that a person's fleshly acts are judged by God -- as is also one's spirit (what one thinks in their heart).

These people, spoken of by *Jude*, had a form of godliness that was in accord with some of the views of individuals within the *Messianic* community, but it was a perverted form of godliness:

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will [be found] ... ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"
(II Tim. 3:1-2, 5)

When a *Believer* understands what constitutes *The Faith Once Delivered* to the Saints, then they can compare that original "Faith" against what is believed and practiced today under the general guise of "Christianity" and/or "Judaism."

This initial chapter is intended set the stage for an understanding of *The Faith Once Delivered*. For this reason, we will touch on several topics germane to the subject.

~ The Scriptures ~

The Hebrew Scriptures (commonly known as the Old Testament) are often referred to as the *Tanakh* (Tah-nakh'). This word is a Hebrew acronym derived from its three major sections (TNK):

- ◆ *Torah* (Toh'-rah or Toh-rah') - the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- ◆ *Nevi'im* (Neh-vee' eem') - the Prophets.
- ◆ *Kethuvim* (Keh-two-veem') - the Writings.

The Greek Scriptures (New Testament) are often called the *Brit Chadasha* (Breet Hah-dah-shah'), which means *Covenant New* (or New Covenant). It is important to remember that during the lifetime of *Y'shua's* original disciples (including the Apostle Paul), the only Scriptures in use were those found in the *Tanakh* (OT), for the disciples were just then in the process of writing the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). Both Jews and Gentiles learned about Messiah *Y'shua* from the Jewish sect called the *Nazarenes* (the followers of *Y'shua* of Nazareth). Because of their dependence on the *Tanakh* (OT) as the main written

source for their teachings about *Y'shua*, the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) contains 484 passages (cited a total of 695 times) which are direct quotes or clear references to specific passages in the *Tanakh* (OT).

Many scholars now believe that many of the books of the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) were originally written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek. Thus, for the most part, what we have in our English versions of the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) is a translation of a translation.

~ Terms ~

It is our practice to use some of the Hebrew names for personages found in the Bible. For example, rather than use the English name *Jesus* (*Iesous* in Greek), we use His Hebrew name *Y'shua* יֵשׁוּעַ (Yeh-shoe'-ah or Yah'-shoe'-ah). Rather than call Him *Christ*, we call Him *Messiah*. The English word *Messiah* comes from the Hebrew word *Mashiach* מָשִׁיחַ (Mah-shee'-ack #4899) which means "anointed," while the English word *Christ* comes from the Greek word *Christos* which also means "anointed." Although *Messiah* and *Christ* mean the same thing, we prefer to use the word *Messiah*, thus supporting the Hebraic roots of the Scriptures.

In order to make clear that we are referring to the Creator God of the Bible, we sometimes include *YHVH* in the text. We also might address Him as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

"And God said further to Moses, 'Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: The LORD [YHVH],* the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you:

This shall be My name forever,

This My appellation for all eternity.'" (Ex. 3:15 TNK)

~ Scripture Based Faith ~

The Bible is a Hebrew/Jewish book in all its aspects. Not only was the *Tanakh* (OT) written in Hebrew by Hebrews, so also was the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). All of the writers of the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) were Jewish with the possible exception of Luke, who may have been a Jewish proselyte.

The entire story of *The Faith Once Delivered* is found within the pages of the Holy Scriptures, which consist of both the *Tanakh* and the *Brit Chadasha*. It is important to view the Scriptures as a complete unit rather than as two separate and mutually exclusive "Testaments" -- for the *Brit Chadasha* expounds upon the story of God's Plan for man's salvation, which was begun in the *Tanakh*. In it we find important information about how our Father in heaven is working to complete His plan here on earth.

To learn about *Y'shua* through a Greek mind set can detract from the real meaning of what the Scriptures teach. Therefore, in order to properly understand the Holy Scriptures, which reveal who is going to be involved in the manifestation of God's plan, it behooves us to learn all we can about the

Hebrew culture, customs, language, and idioms of the first century, for it is only through a Hebraic mind set that we can truly understand, and thereby return to *The Faith Once Delivered*.

~ Faith ~

In order to fully understand what constituted *The Faith Once Delivered*, we must have a working definition of the English word Faith.

The *dic•tion•ary of the English Language* defines it as:

"1. Confident belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, an idea, or a thing. 2. Belief that does not rest on logical proof or material evidence [*belief or trust*], 3. Loyalty to a person or thing; allegiance. 4. The theological virtue defined as secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will. 5. The body of dogma of a religion. 6. A set of principles or beliefs."

While all of these definitions are good in and of themselves, there is an additional definition found in Scripture which helps us understand why our Faith is not nebulous but rather is quite tangible:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1)

While true Faith in the things of God is virtually unexplainable to a person who lacks it, to the one who has Faith, it is a tangible force which makes those objectives which are hoped for entirely real even before they come into existence. However, Faith is required only as long as the hoped for fulfillment has not yet occurred, for once the reality arrives, Faith or Hope, is no longer needed:

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." (Rom. 8:24-25)

The words Belief, Trust, and Confidence are all synonyms of the entity we call Faith. The Faith of a *Messianic Believer* consists of a Belief in God and the Inspired** Word of God (the Scriptures); a Trust that the promises made to Israel in the Scriptures will be kept, and a Confidence that what is promised therein will come to pass.

The prophet *Habakkuk* summed up a Believer's life in a single phrase:

"But the just shall live by his faith."

(Habakkuk 2:4)

The Apostle John confirmed it when he wrote:

"Whoever believes that Jesus [*Y'shua*] is the Christ [*Messiah*] is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. ² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God,

* The name *YHWH* [or *YHVH*] (traditionally read Adonai "the LORD") is here associated with the root *hayah* "to be." (from the *Tanakh* p.88)

** We believe all Scripture (*Tanakh* and *Brit Chadasha*) has been written by men under the inspiration of God.

that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. ⁵ Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus [Y'shua] is the Son of God? ⁶ This is He who came by water and blood -- Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth." (I John 5:1-6)

~ The Basis of Faith ~

The Faith Once Delivered is based upon belief in what the Scriptures teach, along with total Faith that God (YHVH) exists; that He is the Creator of the universe and the giver of life, that He sent His son Y'shua to die for our sins, and that He (Y'shua) was resurrected back to life by our Father in heaven, having obtained forgiveness for our sins and assurance that we too will be resurrected to life in the spiritual realm.

It is our total "Faith" in both the Father's plan and Y'shua's execution of His plan, which sustains us in this life, for it is by His grace alone that we can obtain eternal life and be included in His plans for the *Malchut Shamayim* מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם (Mahl-khoot' - #4438 -- Shah-mah'-eem - #8064 = the Kingdom of Heaven):

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua], ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus [Y'shua]."

(Rom. 3:21-26)

~ The Faith ~

The *Brit Chadasha* (NT) makes it clear that there is a another Faith in addition to our life changing Faith (trust or confidence) in Y'shua -- and what His work has accomplished

for us as individuals and the world as a whole. There is a body of Beliefs (some might call them doctrines) which constitute "The Faith." It is this body of Beliefs (or doctrines) which *Jude* spoke about when he urged the *Messianic Believers* of his day to "**contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.**"

What we have then are two separate uses of the word faith in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). One use refers to a personal Faith (Belief, Trust, and Confidence) in God's promises as taught in Scripture and as ultimately manifested through Y'shua's life, death, and resurrection. The other use refers to a Faith spoken of in Scripture as a body of Beliefs (or doctrines) that result in specific Actions, by which the Saints (Believer's in Y'shua) can be identified. As James said:

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such 'faith' able to save him? ... Indeed, just as the body without a spirit is dead, so too faith without actions is dead."

(James 2:14, 26 CJB)

~ Summary ~

The *Gnostic* beliefs which filtered into the *Messianic Community* did great damage to *The Faith* which had been delivered by Y'shua and His Disciples. It is clear from *Jude's* statement that the falling away from *The Faith Once Delivered* began rather early in the Messianic Movement while many of the Apostles were still living.

In order for us, in the 21st century, to return to *The Faith Once Delivered*, we must first of all accept the premise that it is the Holy Scriptures (both OT and NT) which contain that information. Secondly, we need to understand that there are two types of Faith; 1.) An individual life changing Faith in Messiah Y'shua, and 2.) The Faith; that body of beliefs (doctrines) and actions by which the Saints are identified.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Y'shua Centered ~

Whoever confesses that Jesus [Y'shua] is the Son of God,
God abides in him, and he in God.
1 John 4:15



First and foremost, *The Faith Once Delivered* is centered around the person and work (ministry) of Y'shua HaMashiach (Jesus the Messiah). Believers who lived prior to the time of Y'shua looked forward to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom of God (YHVH) on earth:

"By faith he [Abraham] dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:9-10)

Even as Abraham looked for the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the Kingdom, so also did all ancient men and women of faith:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11:13)

These faithful men and women knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that God would keep His promise to send them a Deliverer who would lead them into God's Kingdom. In the course of time, their Deliverer was revealed to be Y'shua, the son of Yoseif יוסף (Yoh-safe' = Joseph #3130) and Miriam מרים (Meer-yahm' = Mary #4813).

~ Looking Back, Looking Forward ~

As *Messianic Believers* in the 21st century, we have the privilege of looking back and seeing the many fulfillment's of prophecy that took place during Y'shua's First Coming. In addition, we look forward, in Faith, to that time when Y'shua will return and fulfill the remaining prophecies which will complete the promises of God:

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)

When Y'shua returns, one of the first places He will visit is the Mount of Olives here on earth:

**"And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east."** (Zech. 14:4)

The promise of Y'shua's return was reiterated by two angels at the time of Y'shua's ascension from the Mount of Olives into heaven:

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus [Y'shua], who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'" (Acts 1:10-11)

Today we look forward with great anticipation to the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Y'shua HaMashiach:

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." (Titus 2:11-14)

~ The Blueprint ~

The blueprint for God's Plan was drawn up prior to the creation of the world, and Y'shua was foreordained to be the key figure in that plan:

"He (Y'shua) indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you ²¹ who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (I Pet. 1:20-21)

Y'shua (as the Agent of His Father) was foreordained to accomplish His ministry through the auspices and under the complete authority of His Father, who originally planned and established the foundation of the earth:

**"Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last.
¹³ Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When I call to them,
They stand up together."** (Isa. 48:12-13)

In the *Brit Chadasha* (NT), the Apostle John clearly teaches that Y'shua was present in spirit form (as the Word) when the creation process took place:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (John 1:1-4)

In the *Tanakh* (OT), the Word is often equated with the Torah:

**"My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments are righteousness."
(Psalm 119:172)**

Y'shua (as the Word) preexisted with the Father:

**"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and
we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the
Father, full of grace and truth."
(John 1:14)**

**"... who was made for a little while lower than the
angels ..."
(Heb. 2:9 CJB)**

While on earth, *Y'shua* kept the *Torah* perfectly.
Therefore, He obtained the right to be called The "Living
Word;" a title He had from the beginning:

**"For to this you were called, because Christ [*Messiah*]
also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should
follow His steps:**

²² **"Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth' ..."
(I Pet. 2:21-22)**

The preexistence of Messiah *Y'shua*, as the Word, and His
participation in the creation process was confirmed again by the
Apostle Paul:

**"He [*Y'shua*] is the image of the invisible God, the
firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were
created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible
and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or
principalities or powers. All things were created through
Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in
Him all things consist."
(Col. 1:15-18)**

~ God's Plan For Mankind ~

What was the plan which God foreordained to be
accomplished on earth? His plan was to establish the *Malchut
Shamayim* (Mahl-hoot' Shah-mah'-eem = the Kingdom of
Heaven*) on earth, with *Y'shua* as its world ruling King. In
Jewish tradition it is understood that the Kingdom of God had
first been established at creation when God placed *Adam* אָדָם
(Ah-dahm' #120) in *Gan Eden* גֶּן עֵדֶן (Gahn Eh-dehn' =
Garden #1588 of Eden #5731):

**"Then the LORD [*YHVH*] God took the man and put
him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." (Gen. 2:15)**

This beautiful Kingdom was temporarily lost to mankind
when *Adam* and *Chava* חַוָּה (Hah-vah' = Eve #2332) chose to
eat of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* (Gen. 1:1 -
2:24). In order to restore the Kingdom, God provided the
atonement sacrifice for sin, *Y'shua* the Messiah (our Passover
Lamb), toward whom the entire sacrificial system pointed. The
first sacrifice found in Scripture was when:

* In the *Brit Chadasha*, the Hebrew term *Malchut Shamayim*
(Kingdom of Heaven) is used only in the book of Matthew because
he was writing primarily to a Jewish audience. The other Gospel
accounts use the synonymous term Kingdom of God. The
Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

**"... God made tunics of skin, and clothed them."
(Gen. 3:21)**

Y'shua identified the Restoration of the Kingdom of God
as being the Gospel. (The Old English word Gospel means
"Good News"). During His ministry, it was *Y'shua's* continuing
mission to bring this Kingdom Restoration message to those
whom God was calling:

**"Now after John was put in prison, Jesus [*Y'shua*] came
to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
¹⁵and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God
is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'"
(Mark 1:14-15)**

Indeed it is Good News to know that one day the evil
governments of man are going to be replaced by the righteous
government of God, so that all mankind can live together in
peace and harmony.

The descendants of Israel (formerly named Jacob) are
God's chosen people -- chosen for the purpose of beginning the
Restoration of the Kingdom of God on earth. When God called
the children of Israel out of Egyptian slavery, He led them to
Mount Sinai, where He gave them the governmental structure
and all of the laws necessary to train them in governing His
righteous Kingdom. Afterwards, they fell into idolatry and
were eventually dispersed among the nations for a prophesied
period of time. However, God's loyalty is eternal:

**"For the mountains may move
And the hills be shaken,
But my loyalty shall never move from you,
Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken
-- said the LORD [*YHVH*] , who takes you back
in love."
(Isa. 54:10 TNK)**

Y'shua's message of the Restoration of the *Malchut
Shamayim* was taken first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles:

**"And he [*Paul*] went into the synagogue and spoke
boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading
concerning the things of the kingdom of God." (Acts 19:8)**

The Scriptures teach that *Y'shua* will Restore the Kingdom
of God to earth when He returns, and this Kingdom will
initially last for a one thousand year period. Those people who
are Messiah's at His coming will live and rule with Him during
that era:

**"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first
resurrection. Over such the second death has no power,
but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [*Messiah*],
and shall reign with Him a thousand years."
(Rev. 20:6)**

After the one thousand years have been completed there
will be a Judgment, followed by another era, known in Jewish
tradition as the *Olam Haba* עוֹלָם הַבָּא (Oh-lahm' Hah-bah' =
the World to Come). This era is described in the book of
Revelation, chapters 21 & 22:

**"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first
heaven and the first earth had passed away." (Rev. 21:1)**

~ *Y'shua* is the Messiah ~

The primary belief of those who hold to *The Faith Once Delivered* is that *Y'shua ben Yosef* יֵשׁוּעַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף (Yeh-shoo'-ah behn Yoh-safe' = Jesus the son of Joseph) is the Jewish Messiah who was promised to come to Israel. The time of His coming was prophesied so accurately by Daniel that the Jews of the first century were actively looking for Messiah's arrival:

**"Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times."** (Daniel 9:25)

The first person to fully recognize that *Y'shua* was the "Anointed One" (*Mashiach* in Hebrew means "anointed") was his cousin *Yochanan* יְהוֹנָתָן (Yoh'-cah-nahn = John the Baptist #3083), son of *Zachariah*; a Priest who served in the Temple in the priestly order of *Abijah* אֲבִיָּה (Ah'-vee-yah see Luke 1:5-9):

"The next day John saw Jesus [*Y'shua*] coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'³⁰ This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'³¹ I did not know Him [*know that Y'shua was the Messiah prior to this time*]; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.'³² And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.'³³ I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:29-34)

The men who became Disciples of *Y'shua* were quick to identify Him as the promised Messiah:

"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ)." (John 1:40-41)

Y'shua plainly stated that He himself was the promised Messiah:

"The [*Samaritan*] woman [*at the well*] said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.'²⁶ Jesus [*Y'shua*] said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'" (John 4:25-26)

~ *Y'shua* is King of Kings ~

Integral to the Plan of God is the calling out of a group of people to participate in the administration of the Kingdom of God during *Y'shua's* 1000 year (millennial) reign. As already

mentioned, those who are raised up in the First Resurrection will be the ones assigned this awesome task (Rev. 20:6).

However, no man is worthy, by his own merits, to be assigned the role of reigning with Messiah *Y'shua* in the *Malchut Shamayim*, because all men (except for *Y'shua*) have sinned:

"... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ..." (Rom. 3:23)

And what exactly is sin?

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4 KJV)

And what results from sin?

"The soul who sins shall die." (Ezek. 18:20)

If a king in training is a transgressor of his own kingdom's laws, then he is not worthy to be king. This is the case with all mortal men -- those who transgress God's Law cannot be given the responsibility to govern according to God's Law in the *Malchut Shamayim*. Otherwise, it would be sort of like letting the fox guard the hen house. However, through the shed blood of *Messiah Y'shua* these specially selected individuals will be made righteous:

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,"¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:13-14)

There is yet a second obstacle. No man has ever lived for one thousand years. The oldest recorded human life span was that of Methuselah:

"So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died." (Gen. 5:27)

Today we cannot even come close to a 1000 year life span, as our days have been greatly reduced:

**"The days of our lives are seventy years;
And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away."** (Psalm 90:10)

So, how can a specially selected mortal man obtain a life of one thousand years when his current life span is only approximately 70 years? The answer is, he needs a Savior to take away his sins, which are the cause of his spiritual death, so that a change in constitution from physical to spiritual can occur:

"So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ...⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body ..." (I Cor. 15:42-44)

Y'shua said:

"For in the Resurrection, neither men nor women will marry; rather, they will be like angels in heaven." (Matt. 22:30)

~ *Y'shua* is the Savior ~

Y'shua saves us from our sins, thereby granting us not just a life span of one thousand years, but life eternal. The fact that *Y'shua* is the Savior of the world was first announced at the time of His birth:

"Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ [Messiah] the Lord.'" (Luke 2:10-11)

The first group of people to hear this Good News was the nation of Israel, for *Y'shua* came to bring the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to them:

"And when He had removed him [*King Saul*], He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, "I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My *own* heart, who will do all My will."²³ From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior -- Jesus [*Y'shua*] --²⁴ after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.'" (Acts 13:22-24)

"These twelve Jesus [*Y'shua*] sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.⁶ But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'" (Matt. 10:5-8)

Not only is *Y'shua* the Savior of Israel (God's Chosen People), He is the Savior of the entirety of the world. This was confirmed to the Samaritans, a group of people who were not a part of Israel:

"Then they [*the Samaritans*] said to the woman [*at the well*], 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ [*Messiah*], the Savior of the world.'" (John 4:42)

~ The Son of God ~

How could the man *Y'shua* be the Savior, whose death and resurrection brings the gift of eternal life to those who believe in Him? According to *The Faith Once Delivered*, these great works require that *Y'shua* be God's own beloved Son:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.'" (John 3:16-17)

Y'shua did not apply the term "Son of God" to Himself very often, but the record is clear that, on a few occasions, He did. For example, when He heard that His friend Lazarus had died He said:

"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'" (John 11:4)

At His trial before the High Priest, *Y'shua* was asked about His status:

"But Jesus [*Y'shua*] kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ [*Messiah*], the Son of God!' "⁶⁴ Jesus [*Y'shua*] said to him, 'It is as you said.'" (Matt. 26:63-64)

The phrase "Son of God" is used 46 times in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT), and all usage's pertain to the person of *Y'shua*. The last place it is used is when *Y'shua* was speaking to the Apostle John about the Church in *Thyatira*:

"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, "These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass." (Rev. 2:18)

~ The Son of Man ~

A more common term which *Y'shua* applied to Himself was "Son of Man." By consistently using this term, *Y'shua* indicated that during His time here on earth He was a mortal man who was capable of dying. One passage which clearly indicates this fact is His prophecy that He was going to die and be buried in the earth:

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.'" (Matt. 12:40)

Y'shua clearly indicated that He, the "Son of Man," was also the promised Messiah:

"When Jesus [*Y'shua*] came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?'"

"¹⁴ So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.'

"¹⁵ He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?'

"¹⁶ Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ [*Messiah*], the Son of the living God.'

"¹⁷ Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'" (Matt. 16:13-17)

~ Messianic Expectations ~

There were many first century Jews who expected *Messiah* to come and restore the Kingdom to Israel immediately. Some detractors claimed that *Y'shua* could not have been the *Messiah* because He did not fulfill all of the Messianic Prophecies found in the *Tanakh* (OT), which is true. *Y'shua* did not fulfill all of the prophecies about the *Messiah* during the time of His First Coming, specifically, He did not fulfill any of the prophecies concerning the actual establishment of the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven) on earth. *The Faith Once delivered* holds that those prophecies will be fulfilled when *Y'shua* returns.

Nevertheless, after His crucifixion, tens of thousands became Believers in *Y'shua* among the Judeans:

"After greeting them, Sha'ul described in detail each of the things God had done among the Gentiles through his efforts. On hearing it, they praised God; but they also said to him, 'You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah.'"
(Acts 21:19-20 CJB)

~ Two Comings ~

During *Y'shua's* day, some believed that Kingdom Restoration would require two *Messiahs*. In this Jewish teaching, the *First Messiah* would have to die for the sins of His people, while the *Second Messiah* would be the one to establish the Kingdom of God. According to the noted Jewish scholar Raphael Patai, in his book *The Messiah Texts*:

"A prophecy of Daniel ... is the earliest source speaking of the death of a *Mashiah* ('Anointed') sixty-two (prophetic) weeks after his coming and after the return and the rebuilding of Jerusalem." (p. 166)

The passage in question is quoted below:

**""Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.**

²⁵ **"Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.**

²⁶ **"And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; ..."**
(Dan. 9:24-26)

Patai continues:

"While it appears that Daniel had a temporal ruler in mind, whom he calls *Mashiah Nagid* ('Anointed Prince'), some two centuries later, the author of 4 Ezra unmistakably refers to the Messiah, belief in whom had developed in the meantime, when he puts words in the mouth of God to the effect that after four hundred years (counted from when?), *My son the Messiah shall die*. [4 Ezra 7:29]" (Ibid.)

(The book 4 Ezra is part of the *Apocrypha* which is found in the Roman Catholic Bible and the *Septuagint*.)

This led to a belief (common in the first century) that there would be Two *Messiahs*. The first one was to be known as *Messiah ben Joseph* מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף or *Messiah ben Ephraim* מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן אֶפְרַיִם. He was to be the "Suffering Servant"

Messiah (a reference to Isaiah 53). After his death there would come a second *Messiah* to be known as *Messiah ben David* מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד. He would be the "Conquering King" *Messiah* and one of His first acts would be to resurrect *Messiah ben Joseph*. Then *Messiah ben David* would establish the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven) on earth.

There is evidence in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) that *Yochanan* the Immerser (John the Baptist) understood the prophecies pertaining to *Messiah ben Joseph* and *Messiah ben David*:

"Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. ¹⁹ And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus [*Y'shua*], saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'"

²⁰ When the men had come to Him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"'" (Luke 7:18-20)

We have already seen that *Yochanan* knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that *Y'shua* was *Messiah ben Yoseif* because of what occurred when John baptized Him. Since that is true, why did John ask this question? No doubt it was because of the fact that it was beginning to dawn on him (based on the things which he had heard) that *Y'shua* might be both *Messiahs*. *Y'shua* confirmed *Yochanan's* suspicions:

"And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. ²² Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. ²³ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'"

(Luke 7:21-23)

Y'shua was demonstrating His position as *Messiah ben David* through the works of His Father. Those works were the miracles which were expected to be performed by *Messiah ben David*, and it signified to the disciples of *Yochanan* that *Y'shua* was to be both *Messiahs*. For this reason, *Y'shua* told them not to be offended just because the reality was contrary to their original understand and expectations:

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."
(John 14:10-11)

The two comings of *Y'shua*, as both *Messiah ben Joseph* (the Suffering Servant who takes away the sins of the world) and the future *Messiah ben David* (the Conquering King), is one of the keys to understanding *The Faith Once Delivered*. It is veiled in the *Tanakh* (OT):

"For at that time they [*the Disciples*] had no knowledge that the Writings said that he would have to come again from the dead."
(John 20:9)

Later on the Disciples came to understand that *Y'shua* would appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to deliver those who are eagerly awaiting Him:

"To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." (Heb. 9:28)

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." (John 3:16-21)

~ Summary ~

The Faith Once Delivered is centered around *Y'shua* and the work His Father has given Him to accomplish. *Y'shua* was both the Suffering Servant *Messiah ben Joseph* and He will return as the Conquering King *Messiah ben David*. He is the Savior, not just for Israel, but for the whole world. He brought the Good News concerning the Restoration of the Kingdom of God on earth. He was the Son of God who came and lived as the Son of Man and then died for our sins.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Torah Focused ~

Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
For law [*Torah*] will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest
As a light of the peoples.
Isaiah 51:4



We have just seen, in the previous chapter, that the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) is indispensable to *The Faith Once Delivered*. However, one cannot properly understand the *Brit Chadasha* without a solid Hebraic understanding of the *Tanakh* (OT), for the *Brit Chadasha* is an addendum to the *Tanakh*. It explains how and why God made a New Covenant (agreement), with the Children of Israel, how it was expanded to include Gentiles, and how it will be implemented.

As was already pointed out, the Apostles did not have the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) as a part of their teaching arsenal because it was only then in the process of being written. What they did have were the *Torah* scrolls kept safe in the local Synagogues. Many of the scrolls of the *Prophets* and *Writings* could be found in the *Beit Midrash* בֵּית מִדְרָשׁ (Bait Meed'-rahsh = House of Study) connected with the Synagogues, however their availability was not complete in all communities.

The scrolls were hand copied by Scribes and were therefore very expensive and not commonly owned. The common people had to rely on the learned men among them to teach them what was contained in the *Tanakh* (OT). This is why the Rabbis were so important to the spiritual lives of the people. It is also why they were so powerful.

The Apostle Paul confirmed the importance of "All Scripture;" not just the *Written Torah*, but also the *Prophets* and the *Writings*, when he wrote to Timothy saying:

"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."

(II Tim. 3:16-17)

The "All Scripture" Paul referred to is the *Tanakh* (OT). Therefore, it stands to reason that *The (Original) Faith* can be found within its pages. The *Tanakh* (OT) contains information about how God (*YHVH*) wants us to live. With His instruction came the exhortation to "choose life." It is our choice:

"I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live." (Deut. 30:19)

For this reason, it behooves us to study the *Tanakh* (OT), as well as the *Brit Chadasha* (NT), as an aid in learning how to properly live our lives:

"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the

ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (I Cor. 10:11-12)

~ The Patriarchs ~

The *Written Torah* is much more than just a collection of laws, it also contains a history of the creation of the earth and the people of God. For the most part, this historical account is not detailed. The information given is only what is necessary for understanding the working out of God's Plan. If one wishes to fill in some of the blanks, then it is necessary to go to non-Biblical historical accounts, if such records even exist.

Very little information is given about the pre-Flood world, even though it lasted over 1600 years. Despite this length of time, that entire era is covered within only eight chapters of the book of *Genesis*. After the Flood, historical information is still quite scarce until the time of *Avram* אַבְרָם (Ahv-rahm' = Abram #87). With *Avram*, God began a much more detailed story; a story that could be called *All in the Family*. The rest of Scripture is primarily about this one man's life and the lives of his descendants, and how they were used in the furtherance of God's Plan. (*Y'shua* was "the Seed" descended from *Avram*.)

God eventually changed the name of *Avram* (exalted father) to *Avraham* אַבְרָהָם (Ahv'-rah-hahm #85), which means "father of a multitude." *Avraham* and his wife *Sarah* שָׂרָה (Sah-rah' #8283) were childless and very old when God promised *Avraham* that his physical descendants through *Sarah* would one day be extremely numerous:

"Then He [God] brought him [Avraham] outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'" (Gen. 15:5)

Not only did *Avraham* fully trust and believe God's promise to him, he also obeyed God's commandments, hundreds of years prior to Mount Sinai:

"Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Gen. 26:5)

It was *Avraham's* faith that caused him to be obedient. *Y'shua's* half-brother *Ya'acov* יַעֲקֹב (Jacob a.k.a. James* #3290) testified to this great truth:

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26)

Despite their advanced ages, *Avraham* believed that God could and would keep His promise to give him a son through *Sarah*. Because of his faith, God declared *Avraham* to be righteous:

"And he [Avraham] believed in the LORD [YHVH], and He accounted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. 15:6)

As a result of *Avraham's* encounters with God, and because of his faith and obedience to God, *Avraham* became known as the Father of the Faithful:

* The *Book of James* was written by *Y'shua's* half brother, *Ya'acov*.

"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ..."

(Rom. 4:16)

Paul reiterated this truth in his letter to the Ephesians:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua] for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10)

When *Avraham* was 100 years old and *Sarah* was 90, she gave birth to a son whom they called *Yitzchak* יִצְחָק (Yeetz'-sock = Isaac = Laughter #3327). However, years later, God tested *Avraham's* faith by commanding him to offer his son *Yitzchak* as a Burnt Offering. *Avraham's* faith was so strong, he concluded that God could even bring his dead son back to life:

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' ¹⁹ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." (Heb. 11:17-19)

Meanwhile, *Yitzchak* proved his faithfulness to God by his willingness to be offered as a burnt offering. Jewish tradition teaches that this event (when God instructed *Avraham* to offer *Yitzchak*) occurred on *Mount Moriah*; at the place where the Temple was eventually built:

"And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. ¹¹ But the Angel of the LORD [YHVH] called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' So he said, 'Here I am.' ¹² And He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'" (Gen. 22:10-12)

While Scripture calls *Yitzchak* a "lad" at the time of this event, a careful study of Biblical chronology indicates that *Yitzchak* was, in all probability, 37 years old at that time.

Yitzchak married *Rivkah* רִבְקָה (Reev'-kah = Rebecca #7259), and she bore twin sons *Esav* עֵשָׂו (Ee-sahv' = Esau) and *Ya'acov*. Although *Esav* was the eldest, circumstances caused the birthright and the blessing to pass to *Ya'acov*.

Ya'acov eventually married sisters; *Leah* לֵאָה (Lay'-ah #3812) and *Rachel* רָחֵל (Rah-khel' #7354). They, in turn, each gave *Ya'acov* their handmaids, *Bilhah* בִּלְהָה (Beel'-hah #1090), and *Zilpah* זִלְפָּה (Zeel'-pah #2153), to be concubines (lower status wives). *Ya'acov* had children by all four of his wives, and fathered twelve sons and at least one daughter. Each one of the twelve sons became the progenitor of a tribe; hence the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

As an adult, *Ya'acov* ("supplanter" or "heel grabber") had his name changed by God to *Yisrael* יִשְׂרָאֵל (Yees-rye-ehl' = Israel #3478), which means "God prevails" (see Gen. 32:28).

These three men, *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Ya'acov* (whose name God changed to *Yisrael*) are called the Patriarchs of the children of Israel. *Sarah*, *Rivkah* (Rebecca), *Leah*, and *Rachel*, are known as the Matriarchs of Israel.

~ The Calling of Israel ~

The Patriarchs and Matriarchs of the children of Israel all lived a nomadic life. Even though they had been promised the land of Canaan as their permanent possession, this promise was not to be fulfilled for a period of over 400 years.

In the meantime, the children of Israel ended up in Egypt during the great Canaanite famine, where they eventually became slaves to the Pharaoh. Then God called another member of the family, *Moshe* מֹשֶׁה (Mow-shay' = Moses #4872) to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Their ultimate destination was the land which had been promised to the Patriarchs many centuries previous.

At this point, God was in the process of building this family (which had grown in numbers to 600,000 men of fighting age, plus their wives, children, and elderly), into a nation. However, before they could function as a nation, the children of Israel needed to have both a governmental structure and a basic set of laws. God gave all of this to them, through *Moshe*, at Mount Sinai, where they spent nearly a year, during which time *Moshe* was instructed by God in the commandments, statutes, and judgments which were to be used in governing His people Israel, and the strangers among them:

"Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD [YHVH] your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ..." (Deut. 31:12)

"You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the LORD [YHVH] your God." (Lev. 24:22)

~ God's Instruction Book ~

The initial giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai included a general summary of the instructions. This summary (written on stone) consisted of ten areas which were to be the guiding principles by which the children of Israel were to live. We know them today as the *Ten Commandments*, but in Hebrew they are actually called the *Ten Words*:

"So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments [Words]; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone." (Deut. 4:13)

In addition to the *Ten Commandments*, a number of statutes and judgments were given so the children of Israel would know how to properly apply the commandments:

"And the LORD [YHVH] commanded me [Moshe] at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you

might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess." (Deut. 4:14)

All of these laws (commandments, statutes, and judgments), taken together, form what are known as the *mitzvot* מִצְוֹת (meets'-vote = commands -- the singular is *mitzvah* מִצְוָה) or *Torah* instruction. These laws were initially recorded in the *Book of Exodus* and reiterated in the *Book of Deuteronomy*.

While there were punishments given for the breaking of certain *mitzvot*, that was not the primary focus of the *Torah* (law or instruction) the way it is in modern jurisprudence. The English word law gives a wrong impression, because it implies police, arrests, trials, jails, and punishment.

Instead of viewing the *mitzvot* (commands) as laws which, if broken, bring about harsh punishment, it is more correct to view the *mitzvot* as instructions given by a loving Father to help His beloved children stay out of trouble:

**"They shall come with weeping,
And with supplications I will lead them.
I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters,
In a straight way in which they shall not stumble;
For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim is My firstborn."** (Jer. 31:9)

A good title for the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) is "*God's Instruction Book*." The *Torah* (and for that matter all of Scripture, both OT and NT) is the owner's manual which God (YHVH) gave mankind, instructing us how we should conduct our lives. While the *mitzvot* were to provide basic training for the children of Israel, God's Plan is that eventually all the nations of the earth will come under *Torah* government as well:

"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD [YHVH] my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. ⁶ Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' ⁷ For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD [YHVH] our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? ⁸ And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law [Torah] which I set before you this day?" (Deut. 4:5-8)

~ The Fall of Israel ~

God created a governmental system for the children of Israel, but they were not up to its proper execution. Instead of following the commandments of God and receiving abundant blessings, they transgressed the *Torah* laws, thereby committing sin:

"And the LORD [YHVH] said to me, 'A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁰ They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.'" (Jer. 11:9-10)

The definition of sin (iniquity) is found in both the *Tanakh* (OT), and the *Brit Chadasha* (NT):

"If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD [YHVH], ..." (Lev. 5:17)

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4 KJV)

God promised the children of Israel (as a nation) that transgressing His *mitzvot* (commandments) would eventually bring about physical discipline:

"But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, ¹⁵ and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, *but* break My covenant, ¹⁶ I also will do this to you: ..." (Lev. 26:14-16)

After a long litany of increasingly more stringent disciplines, the ultimate curse was to be their expulsion from the Promised Land:

"I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste." (Lev. 26:33)

On the other hand, if the children of Israel obeyed God's *mitzvot* (commandments), they were promised blessings beyond measure:

"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, ⁴ then I will give you rain in its season, the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. ... ⁶ I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; ... ⁷ You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you. ... ⁹ For I will look on you favorably and make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My covenant with you. ... ¹¹ I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. ¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people." (Lev. 26:3-4, 6-7, 9, 11-12)

~ The Dispersion of Israel ~

The eventual outcome of Israel's transgressions was exile from the Promised Land. The first exile afflicted the House of Israel (the northern ten tribes) circa 722 BCE:

"In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria [*the capitol*] and carried Israel [*the northern ten tribes*] away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

⁷ "For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD [YHVH] their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, ⁸ and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made."

(II Kings 17:6-8)

To date, the House of Israel (the so-called Lost Tribes of Israel) is yet to return to the Promised Land. God called this separation a divorce for the cause of adultery (idol worship):

"Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel [*the northern kingdom*] had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah [*the southern kingdom of the Jews*] did not fear, but went and played the harlot also." (Jer. 3:8)

About 135 years later, God sent the House of Judah (the southern kingdom) into exile for 70 years because of her "harlotry." However, there is no record that God ever divorced the House of Judah:

"Thus says the LORD [YHVH] of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ... ¹⁰ For thus says the LORD [YHVH]: 'After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.'" (Jer. 29:4, 10)

Some members of House of Judah were allowed to return to the Promised Land where they rebuilt the Temple which had been destroyed by the Babylonians. They continued to live there for several centuries, including during the time of *Y'shua*. However, in 70 CE the Romans destroyed the Temple once more and this time the Jews of the House of Judah were dispersed among the nations of the world.

~ Rebuilding the Nation ~

This second exile of the House of Judah was much longer than the first, for the House of Judah did not begin returning to the Promised Land until the late 19th and early 20th century. Finally, in 1948 the modern state of Israel was established, thus beginning the fulfillment of God's promise to return both houses of Israel back to the Promised Land:

"For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD [YHVH], 'that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.'" (Jer. 30:3)

Part and parcel with this final return of the two Houses (Israel and Judah) will be the final fulfillment of the New Covenant:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD [YHVH], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD [YHVH]. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD [YHVH]: I will put My law [Torah] in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

(Jer. 31:31-33)

What is different about this New Covenant? It is not that God will be their God and they will be His people, for the children of Israel had that very same relationship with Him when they entered the Promised Land some 3500 years ago. Rather, God has promised to put His law in their hearts and in their minds so that God's Torah commands (*mitzvot*) will be ever before them and always with them.

~ Y'shua Was Torah Observant ~

Some say that because Y'shua fulfilled the Law by keeping it perfectly, Believer's today do not need to follow its precepts. However, Y'shua Himself was very clear that He came to uphold the *Torah Mitzvot* (the commandments of the Law):

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo*]."
(Matt. 5:17)

The Greek word for "fulfill" (in Matt. 5:17) is *pleroo*, which means, among other things, to "complete." In other words, Y'shua came to "fulfill the *Torah* by "completing" it. He showed us how to follow its precepts properly. He definitely did not come to "do away" with it or to "destroy" it. The *Bible in Basic English* renders this verse more properly:

"Let there be no thought that I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets. I have not come for destruction, but to make complete." (Matt. 5:17 BBE)

~ Y'shua Was Jewish ~

Y'shua was raised from birth in a traditional Jewish home in the land of Israel. This is made very clear in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). First of all, Yosaif (Joseph) and Miriam (Mary) had Y'shua circumcised on the eighth day of His life:

"And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, [see Lev. 12:3] His name was called Jesus [Y'shua], the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." (Luke 2:21)

Not only did Y'shua's parents have Him circumcised, they also went to the Temple in Jerusalem to perform the purification rites which the *Torah Mitzvot* required of a woman who had just given birth:

"Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD [YHVH]'), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.'"
(Luke 2:22-24)

The command to perform this purification ceremony is found in Leviticus 12:2-6.

Please notice the direct correlation made between what is called "the law of Moses" and the "law of the Lord." There is absolutely no difference between the law of Moses and the law of the Lord, for they are one and the same law. It is simply two different names for the same *Torah Mitzvot* (commands).

~ The Disciples Were Jewish ~

All of Y'shua's disciples were familiar with the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) because they were all raised in Jewish homes. Whether they were all observant as young men is unknown, but if they were not, they had ample opportunity to repent and return to *The Faith Once Delivered* when they heard and responded to the preaching of John the Baptist and Y'shua:

"John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

(Mark 1:4)

"I [Y'shua] did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

(Matt. 9:13)

It is clear that Simon Peter observed the food laws of Leviticus 11 in a strict manner, for when, in a vision, God commanded him to eat the unclean things, he responded:

"Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

(Acts 10:14)

Although this vision was given to Peter to teach him not to call any man unclean, we are also able to see that he was observant of the food laws of Leviticus 11:

"Then he said to them, 'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' ... ³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.'"

(Acts 10:28, 34-35)

By indicating that he had never eaten anything "common," Peter was saying that he refrained from eating 1.) "clean" meat that had not been slaughtered according to the Kosher standards of the day, and 2.) "clean" meat for which the proper tithes had not been paid.

~ Tradition ~

The *Pharisees* claimed that Y'shua broke the Sabbath by healing on that day:

"And He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ² So they watched Him closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. ³ And He said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Step forward.' ⁴ Then He said to them, 'Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they kept silent. ⁵ And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him."

(Mark 3:1-6)

However, there are no *Torah Mitzvot* which prohibit healing on the Sabbath. By healing on the Sabbath, Y'shua was

breaking with the *Oral Traditions* of the most strict school of the *Pharisees*; the *School of Shammai* (Shahm-my'). At that time they were the major *Pharisaic* school, and held control over many of the Synagogues.

In another instance *Y'shua* specifically condemned these *Pharisees* for teaching their *Oral Traditions* as if they were God's commandments:

"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."

(Matt. 15:7-9)

One of the major causes of the enmity that existed between Jew and Gentile were the *Oral Traditions* of the *Pharisees* which forbade observant Jews to have any kind of social intercourse with Gentiles, especially if it involved eating a meal together. *Y'shua's* death and resurrection had the effect of abolishing these manmade rules called, in the Greek, *dogma*:

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances [dogma], so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity."

(Eph. 2:14-16)

Because the rules that caused this enmity between Jew and Gentile were man made rather than God made, Paul taught that *Y'shua's* death on the cross allowed both to be reconciled to God through their mutual Faith in Messiah. Therefore, since the observance of the *Oral Traditions* had no bearing on their relationship with God, neither should it have any bearing on their relationship with each other. Thus the *dogmas* (traditions or decrees made by men) were abolished. Only the commandments of God remained.

It is evident that Paul was a *Torah* observant Jew from statements he made near the end of his life:

"... he [Paul] answered for himself, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.'"

(Acts 25:8)

Not only had Paul kept the laws of the *Torah*, he also kept the "customs of our fathers:"

"So when they had come together, he said to them: 'Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, ...'"

(Acts 28:17)

Although Paul taught that Gentile converts were not bound to keep the *Oral Traditions*, he kept them himself as long as they did not contradict the *Written Torah Mitzvot*. One difference between Paul (who called himself a *Pharisee*) and the *Pharisees* of the *School of Shammai* was that Paul belonged

to the more liberal *School of Hillel* (Hill-lehl') whose oral tradition allowed such things as healing on the Sabbath.

~ The Law Still Exists ~

Y'shua's message from beginning to end was that people should repent of their sins (their past transgressions of the law) and live a true *Written Torah* observant life style. He said that the law would never be done away until heaven and earth pass away:

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

(Matt. 5:18)

Since *Y'shua* did not "do away" with the *Torah Mitzvot* and did not teach His followers to abandon the *Written Torah*, then it follows that it is still in effect today:

"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. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

(Matt. 5:19-20)

That is why we are to walk in "newness of life." Even as *Y'shua* said:

"Go and sin no more."

(John 8:11)

~ Summary ~

The Faith Once Delivered is *Torah Focused*. It was defined for us when God gave the children of Israel the *Written Torah Mitzvot* (commands) as the basic set of rules (God's Instruction Book) for the establishment of the government of the nation of Israel (which was to be a forerunner and type of the Kingdom of God on earth).

The children of Israel fell into idolatry and were eventually removed from the Promised Land and dispersed throughout the world. It then became the calling of a *Torah* observant Jew named *Y'shua ben Yoseif* (the Son of God and the Son of Man) to announce the Restoration of the Kingdom of God.

Y'shua demonstrated to mankind how the *Torah* was intended to be observed. He gave His life to bring forgiveness of sins to Israel and, by extension, to the Gentiles as well; so that we who desire to be reconciled to God can repent of our past sins and thereby obtain that reconciliation.

Having been forgiven for our past sins does not excuse us from following the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands), for the *Written Torah* commands are still in effect and are relevant for *Messianic Believers* today. In fact, they are an integral part of *The Faith Once Delivered*.

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~ Hope Based ~

For whatever things were written before
Were written for our learning,
That we through the patience and comfort
Of the Scriptures might have hope.
Romans 15:4



Without hope all is lost. Hope is the spiritual oxygen which keeps the flame of the human spirit thriving. It is common knowledge, in the health professions, that when a seriously ill person gives up hope they are in imminent danger of dying. Likewise, when a person gives up their Spiritual Hope; when they lose their Faith, Trust, and Confidence in God, they are in danger of dying spiritually.

~ Hope Is Essential ~

The Scriptures are clear that hope is essential for the Believer. This was true for those who lived before the time of *Y'shua* as well as those who came later. Prior to the time of Messiah, the people of God looked forward with hope to His coming. The early Believers did not understand all of the things to which today's Believers are privy, but they had an undying Hope and Trust (Faith) that God (*YHVH*) was in ultimate control of what occurred on earth and that His promises of salvation were sure:

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. ... ¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them." (Heb. 11:13, 16)

The bodies of those men and women of Faith have returned to dust. Nevertheless, they will one day have a part in the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven a.k.a. Kingdom of God), when *Y'shua* returns to reestablish it on this earth. Thus, even though their bodies are dead they still have hope:

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵ I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. ¹⁶ This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men." (Acts 24:14-16)

King David was a man who exemplified Hope and Trust in the God of Israel:

**"The LORD [*YHVH*] is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusted [*batach*] in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him."** (Psalm 28:7)

The Hebrew word *batach* בָּטַח (bah-takh' #982), translated here as "trusted," can also be translated as "hope" or "hoped" or "to feel safe." David had "hope" in God and as a result he rejoiced and sang praises to the Almighty.

~ Hope Deferred ~

Hope in the future is a comfort for a person's heart, because it reinforces the fact that their present trials will not last forever. ("This too shall pass.") However, when hope is tied to a specific time and place, and is not fulfilled as expected, it causes a depressed frame of mind. As King Solomon said:

**"Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life,"**
(Prov. 13:12)

Once one's hope has been realized, then comes joy and satisfaction that all is well. However, in order to avoid causing discouragement, it is the better part of wisdom that we do not set our own dates for the expected return of *Y'shua* as King of kings and Lord of lords, or any other prophetic fulfillment for that matter.

Although some prophesies have specific timelines connected to them, that does not mean people will believe them. Jeremiah prophesied during the time of the downfall of the House of Judah; when they were taken captive by the Babylonians. He told them the captivity was not permanent, but would last only 70 years. Nevertheless, to those taken captive, the future looked bleak indeed and the people of that generation had no hope of returning:

**"By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
² We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it."** (Psalm 137:1-2)

Despite their bitter lament, the singers directed the hope of the people back toward Jerusalem, "the city of the Great King:"

**"⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill*!
⁶ If I do not remember you,
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth --
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy."** (Psalm 137:5-6)

This particular captivity had a definite ending date after which God once again brought them back to the Promised Land.:

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD [*YHVH*], thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:11-13)

Many of the people of Judah did not believe Jeremiah when he prophesied they would be taken captive by the Babylonians. But it happened. Many did not believe him when

he said their captivity would only last for 70 years, but a remnant returned to Jerusalem right on schedule.

This prophesy applied to the people of that day, and we believe it also applies to the House of Judah today. However, their second dispersion lasted nearly 1900 years (from 70 CE into the 20th century). Yet, during all that time, the Jewish people retained their hope. In fact, every year they ended the Passover *Seder* by proclaiming "Next year in Jerusalem!" Now, once again, they are in the process of returning to the Promised Land. This time God is gathering them from all the nations:

"I will be found by you, says the LORD [YHVH], and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD [YHVH], and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive."
(Jer. 29:14)

~ The Death of Hope ~

Those who only have their hope in this life know, from personal experience, that physical life will one day end. This lack of hope for their future can only bring sorrow to their human spirit:

"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope."
(I Thess. 4:13)

When a person dwells too long on the negative aspects of life, hopelessness is bound to set in. People who find themselves in a state of hopelessness have lost their faith in something. They may even feel that God does not love them, or that He does not exist.

~ The Life of Hope ~

It is true that God will discipline individual Believers (and nations) by withdrawing His blessings from them for a time, but that does not mean He does not love that individual, for God loves them dearly and is working to get their attention so they will make some much needed changes in their life:

"For whom the LORD [YHVH] loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." [Duet. 8:5]

"⁷ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons."
(Heb. 12:6-8)

Rather than allowing chastisement to engender hopelessness, a Believer needs to see it as loving correction from our heavenly Father, for the chastening of God is meant to bring the individual to repentance. Once repentance is achieved, then God forgives and the matter is forgotten:

"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."
(Heb. 12:11)

A better way to handle these situations is for each Believer to judge their own behavior against the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands), and make the necessary adjustments in their life. If we do not want the judgment of God to fall upon us, we can repent and seek forgiveness before it comes to the point where chastisement is needed. Nevertheless, it is better to be chastened by God than to be condemned with the rest of the world:

"For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world."
(I Cor. 11:31-32)

~ Hope Defined ~

In order for a Believer to be hopeful, it is necessary for them to define that for which they are hoping. True hope is not just a vague "feeling" that everything will turn out "all right." Hope is well defined in the Scriptures, the sure Word of God:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
(Heb. 11:1)

The Scriptures teach that as Believers in Messiah *Y'shua* we have already become "Children of God:"

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"
(I John 3:1)

This means that all *Messianic Believers* are part of a great family. As such, we are all Children of God the Father, and joint heirs with the Messiah *Y'shua*, who is His Firstborn Son:

"All who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to bring you back again into fear; on the contrary, you received the Spirit, who makes us sons and by whose power we cry out, *"Abba!*" (that is, "Dear Father!"). The Spirit himself bears witness with our own spirits that we are children of God; and if we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Messiah -- provided we are suffering with him in order also to be glorified with him.

"I don't think the sufferings we are going through now are even worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us in the future."
(Rom. 8:14-18 CJB)

What does the future hold for the Children of God? The Apostle John wrote:

"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He [*Y'shua*] is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
(I John 3:2)

What should a person do who has this incredible hope? Once again, it was the Apostle John who gave us the answer:

"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure, ..."
(I John 3:3)

Not only are Believers to purify their hearts, Paul said that we are to purify our flesh as well. Being pure involves more

than just thinking "pure" thoughts, it includes living a clean life in the flesh:

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (II Cor. 7:1)

~ Living Hope ~

As our Hope grows, through Faith and Understanding, it becomes a Living Hope. The Apostle Peter wrote about this Living Hope, saying it was tied directly to the fact that *Y'shua* had been resurrected from the dead and that, as Believers, we have that same hope:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (I Pet. 1:3-5)

As Children of God, we are guaranteed a position of authority (joint heirs) in the Kingdom of God:

**"And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth."** (Rev. 5:10)

Our hope is strengthened by the fact that *Y'shua* died and was resurrected back to life and He now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven:

"... looking unto Jesus [*Y'shua*], the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2)

Because *Y'shua* has attained this exalted position in heaven, a major part of our Living Hope is *Y'shua's* promise that He will share, with us, His throne in the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven):

"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." (Rev. 3:2)

~ Resurrection Hope ~

Through the resurrection of *Y'shua*, we have been "born again" to that Living Hope. We know that our death is not permanent -- that even though we will die physically, we shall live again. The prophet Isaiah spoke clearly about resurrection:

"Your dead shall live;

Together with my dead body they shall arise.

Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;

For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,

And the earth shall cast out the dead.

²⁰ **Come, my people, enter your chambers,**

And shut your doors behind you;

Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,

Until the indignation is past." (Isa. 26:19-20)

Paul gave testimony about the resurrection when, at his hearing before the Procurator Felix, he said:

"I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." (Acts 24:15)

This truth (which is almost beyond human comprehension) should give all of us incredible hope for the future. No matter what our present lot in this life, if we have accepted the atoning blood sacrifice of *Y'shua* we are able to look forward to that glorious time when we will be resurrected to eternal life in the Kingdom of God:

"Then Jesus [*Y'shua*] said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ... ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven -- not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.'" (John 6:53-54, 58)

Many (in *Y'shua's* day were not able to understand this teaching and as a result turned away:

"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." (John 6:66)

(It is most interesting that this particular verse about forsaking *Y'shua* is numbered 6:66.)

~ Sustaining Hope ~

As the world becomes increasingly evil and as it erupts into more and more violence, the faith and hope of many are shaken. New Believers may experience the temptation to abandon this difficult path of righteous living and instead take the path of least resistance. *Y'shua* spoke of it when He said:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matt. 7:13-14)

As Believers in Messiah *Y'shua*, and as Children of the Living God, we are being trained for service in the *Malchut Shamayim* (The Kingdom of Heaven). *Y'shua* is going to return, and He is going to establish a world ruling government. This is the true *New World Order* which is needed to bring peace on earth.

~ The Hope of the Regathering ~

When the Children of Israel left Egypt, they were promised their own land (amidst the other nations of the world) where they could live according to the Laws of God. They failed in their attempts and were dispersed throughout the nations. However, He promised to gather them back to the land and put a new spirit within them:

"Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a

little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone."

"¹⁷ Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'" ¹⁸ And they will go there, and they will take away all its detestable things and all its abominations from there. ¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (Ezek. 11:16-20)

As a result of the disobedience of Israel, we now have a better promise, the Holy Spirit which guarantees our salvation:

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1:13-14)

There is a great hope for both the children of Israel and for the Gentiles who believe in Messiah *Y'shua*. The Deliverer will come:

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will 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.'**

²⁸ Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God *are* irrevocable. ³⁰ For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, ³¹even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. ³² For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all." (Rom. 11:25-32)

When *Y'shua* returns He will establish the *Malchut Shamayim* over all the earth:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus [*Y'shua*] and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ [*Messiah*] for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [*Messiah*], and shall reign with Him a thousand years." (Rev. 20:4-6)

These great promises of God were written so that we might have the Faith and Hope that we need to persevere through the trials of this life:

"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." (Rom. 8:24-25)

The King is coming. Our hope will one day be realized:

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

~ Summary ~

Hope is essential for the Spiritual well being of the Children of God. The details of our Hope are found throughout the Scriptures, but are primarily expounded within the pages of the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). We have a Living Hope, one that continues to grow as we pray, study, and draw closer in spirit to our Father in Heaven. By constant contact with the Father through the gift of the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit), our Living Hope is sustained.

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