

The Faith Once Delivered ~ II

containing:

Review
Overcoming Oriented
Righteousness Rooted
Spirit Led
Love Directed

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 first 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 *Review* of the previous articles, this booklet addresses the last four of eight identified attributes of the "**faith once delivered**" -- that our Faith is: *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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~ Review ~

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Jude 1:3

The previous booklet in this series contained four topics under the general heading of *The Faith Once Delivered*. This term was used by Y'shua's יְהוֹדָה half-brother Y'hudah יְהוֹדָה (Yeh-who'-dah = Jude or Judas):

"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James [Ya'acov], Josés [Yosi: a diminutive of Yoseif], Judas [Y'hudah], and Simon [Shim'on]? And are not His sisters here with us?"
(Mark 6:3)

The phrase *The Faith Once Delivered* is found within a powerful passage from Y'hudah's (Jude's) short epistle to the Messianic Believers of his day:

"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 deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach = Jesus the Messiah]."
(Jude 1:3-4)

We believe that if the modern Messianic movement is to ever become unified (prior to the return of Y'shua), we must come together as a body with a set of beliefs which can be held in common, while still allowing for differences of opinion and interpretation on less significant matters.

In this booklet, we continue with four more chapters on this subject -- making a total of eight attributes of the *Faith Once Delivered* which we believe form the foundational pillars of our common Faith.

~ Brief Review ~

Following is a brief review for those of you who have not read the previous four chapters:

- ◆ *Scripture Authority* (Scripture as the final authority for our Faith.)
- ◆ *Y'shua Centered* (There is one Mediator between God and man.)
- ◆ *Torah Focused* (God's Instruction Book.)
- ◆ *Hope Based* (Our hope is in the resurrection.)

It is important to remember that the men who **"crept in unnoticed,"** had their roots in paganism, not in traditional

Judaism, or in the *Tanakh* (Old Testament). Most probably, they were teaching 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."

Some First Century *Hellenistic Jews* (known today as *Gnostics*), had adopted many of the ancient pagan practices of the Greeks. Other *Gnostics* would have come from strictly pagan backgrounds. Y'shua, the Apostles, and the *Pharisees* were adamantly opposed to any and all *Hellenistic* practices which, among certain Jews, had been an ongoing problem since the days of Alexander the Great (c. 330 BCE). Hellenism was what the *Maccabees* had fought against in the 2nd Century BCE.

~ #1 Scriptural Authority ~

The main emphasis of the first chapter of the first booklet was that the final authority for *The Faith Once Delivered* is the Scriptures, most (perhaps all) of which were originally written in Hebrew (even the New Testament). At the time Y'hudah (Jude) wrote his epistle, the only official Scriptures were those found in what we call the *Tanakh* or Old Testament. The *Brit Chadasha* (New Testament) was in the process of being written but would not be canonized until later in the 1st Century.*

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. We also need to understand there are two types of Faith: 1.) An individual life changing Faith in Messiah Y'shua's atoning blood sacrifice, and 2.) The Faith; that body of beliefs (doctrines) and actions by which the Saints are identified.

~ #2 Y'shua Centered ~

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 מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף (*Mashiach* #4899, *Ben* #1121, *Yoh-safe'* #3130 -- as prophesied in Isaiah 53) and He will be the Conquering King Messiah Ben David מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד (*Mashiach* #4899, *Ben* #1121, *Dah-veed'* #1732). He is the Savior, not just for Israel, but for the whole world. He brought the Good News (*gospel*) concerning the Restoration of the Kingdom of God on earth. He is the Son of God who came and lived as the Son of Man and then died for our sins, so that we can be reconciled to the Father and welcomed into the Kingdom of God. Y'shua is the only mediator between God and man.

~ #3 Torah Focused ~

The Faith Once Delivered is *Torah Focused*. It was defined for us when God gave the children of Israel the *Written Torah Mitzvot* מִצְוֹת תּוֹרָה (*Meets'-voht* #4687 (pl. form),

* Peter, Paul, and John were the primary men who set the New Testament cannon; the final canonization was done by John just prior to his death. We hope to cover this topic in detail when expanding on this pillar.

Toh-rah' #8451) 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, because they did not follow the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands).

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 those Gentiles who were willing to accept His atoning sacrifice and be grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel (see Rom. 11), so that we who desire to be reconciled to God can repent of our past sins and achieve 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*, which functions within God's judicial system.

~ #4 Hope Based ~

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* רוח הקדש (Rue-ahkh' #7307, Hah Koh-dehsh' #7307 = The Holy Spirit), our Living Hope is sustained and enhanced.

The Hope of *The Faith Once Delivered* is primarily based on the hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6, 24:15, I Pet. I:3), and the establishment of the *Malchut Shamayim* מְלָכּוּת שָׁמַיִם (Mahl-khoot' #4467, Shah-mah'-eem #8064 = Kingdom of Heaven) on earth (Rev. 20:6).

~ Lost and Found ~

If *The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints* was in danger of being lost during the 1st century, it is certainly in danger of being lost today. Certain aspects of *The Faith* (true doctrines) were lost once the headquarters of the "Church" was removed from Jerusalem and out of the hands of the leaders of the Jewish Messianic Movement.

Once power became vested in the Roman Church, things really began to change. When the Roman Empire began persecuting the Jews (as a result of the various Jewish revolts), the Roman Church began moving away from their Jewish roots so they would not be subject to persecution as Jews. They primarily did this by abandoning the Sabbath and the Festivals. Eventually, the Roman Church established traditions that conflicted with many other aspects of *The Faith Once Delivered*.

While the Protestant Reformation did restore *Scriptural Authority* to its rightful position, the reformers (who had previously been Catholic) still retained some of the major Church traditions (Sunday worship for example). Thus, the Protestants did not fully restore *The Faith Once Delivered*.

For the past two centuries, men and women have been gradually returning to *The Faith Once Delivered*. Various denominations have arisen which have restored some of the original Faith. However, it takes time to work out the details, and today we are still in that process.

With the advent of the Internet, there is a wealth of information for any Messianic Believer who wishes to pursue knowledge. The problem is that much of it is MISINFORMATION and, as a result, some have been led astray by returning to Judaism (thus denying *Y'shua*), while others have taken up with doctrines which are clearly not based on Scripture.

Before we accept any new "doctrine" we must check it against the Bible. If we cannot prove it to ourselves out of the Scriptures, we should not accept it:

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

(I Thess. 5:21)

The following pages contain chapters on four more pillars of *The Faith Once Delivered*:

- ◆ Overcoming Oriented
- ◆ Righteousness Rooted
- ◆ Spirit Led
- ◆ Love Directed

We hope these articles prove to be profitable in your spiritual walk.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Overcoming Oriented ~

He who overcomes shall inherit all things,
And I will be his God and he shall be My son.
Revelation 21:7



The Brit Chadasha (NT) makes it clear that a Believer in Messiah Y'shua will be rewarded if they become an Overcomer. The rewards for overcoming are clearly stated in the book of *Revelation*, where Y'shua instructed John to reveal the prophecies concerning the *Seven Churches*:

"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:19-20)

To each one of the churches, Y'shua spoke of a reward which will be given to those who overcome. For example, to the Church at Ephesus He said:

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

To understand the importance of Overcoming, one needs to recognize that the Tree of Life bears fruit that, when eaten, imparts eternal life:

"Then the LORD [YHVH] God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever' -- ²³ therefore the LORD [YHVH] God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken." (Gen. 3:22-23)

What does it mean to be an Overcomer? *Strong's Dictionary* defines overcoming as:

3528 νικάω nikao {nik-ah'-o}

Meaning: 1) to conquer 1a) to carry off the victory, come off victorious 1a1) of Christ, victorious over all His foes 1a2) of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions 1a3) when one is arraigned or goes to law, to win the case, maintain one's cause

Origin: from 3529;

Usage: AV - overcome 24, conquer 2, prevail 1, get the victory 1; 28.

The first definition is "to conquer." The question is: "Conquer what?" There are a number of things which a *Messianic Believer* needs to conquer in order to be considered an Overcomer.

At the Last Supper, Y'shua stated clearly that He had overcome the world:

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33)

If Y'shua made a point of telling us that He had overcome the world (and we are to walk as He walked), then it holds that we should attempt to do the same. One key in learning how to overcome the world is to bring oneself to the point of not loving the things in the world above the things of God:

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

It is important to understand that John is not saying we should not enjoy God's creation which He has made for man's dwelling place. The earth, in its natural form, is extremely good and was created for our good pleasure, to use and enjoy:

"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Gen. 1:31)

Now, it is true that we no longer live in the Garden of Eden, however, anyone who has seen the beauty of the forests, the ocean, the mountains, the green fields, or a sunset, knows that the earth God has given us to live on is still "very good" and meant to be enjoyed.

When saying "if anyone loves the world" or "the things in the world," John was referring to the evils in the world; those things which entice us to sin and draw us away from a close relationship with God:

"For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:16-17)

It is not the physical world which Believers must overcome, it is our own internal lusts. The "lust of the flesh" includes overwhelming desires for food and/or drink and, of course, for illicit sexual union. The lust of the flesh points right back to one of the Ten Commandments (Do not commit adultery), and the instructions about who, according to the *Torah Mitzvot*, one can and cannot marry. (The illegal sexual unions are listed in Leviticus 18.)

Another lust mentioned by John is the "lust of the eyes." This refers to seeing something in the world and having an inordinate desire to possess it. This is called coveting, and it is written:

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." (Ex. 20:17)

The Apostle Paul said that he would not have known that coveting was wrong if it had not been for the Law of God:

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'" (Rom. 7:7)

The other thing mentioned by John is the "pride of life;" being proud of one's status in life, one's accumulation of wealth, political power, etc. The attitude of pride is in direct opposition to God's way of life:

"Pride goes before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall.

¹⁹ Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly,

Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

²⁰ He who heeds the word wisely will find good,

And whoever trusts in the LORD [YHVH],

happy is he." (Prov. 16:18-20)

John tells us that the victory of Overcoming the pulls of the world is to be found through Faith (confidence/trust) that *Y'shua* is the promised Messiah and the Son of God:

"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, 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." (I John 5:1-4)

Y'shua's words to a sinful woman concerning faith apply to every Believer:

"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

(Luke 7:50)

~ Overcoming the Adversary ~

There is a powerful Adversary wandering around the earth who would like nothing better than to prevent Believers in *Y'shua* from becoming *Overcomers*. This Adversary is *HaSatan* הַשָּׂטָן (Hah Sah-tahn' #7854 = Satan the Devil).

HaSatan is especially focused on those who are just beginning to hear and understand *The Faith Once Delivered*. In the *Parable of the Sower*, *Y'shua* explained how many can be pulled away from the truth through various circumstances in their life or attitudes in their mind:

"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁴ And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it. ⁵ Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. ⁶ But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. ⁷ And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop." (Mark 4:3-7)

Since the *Sower* had sowed the Word of God into the ears of the people, how is it possible that some did not act upon it? *Y'shua* explained the ways by which the seed of the *Word* can be lost:

"The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts." (Mark 4:14-15)

How does the Adversary (*HaSatan*) achieve this feat? It can occur in any number of ways, depending on the inherent weaknesses of the person involved. Perhaps the unifying element in all of those is a tendency to discredit the Bible. Some people have been so hurt by their past religious experiences in "Christian" churches (or even Messianic Fellowships), they are simply unwilling to hear the word. So the adversary **"comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts."**

Others may initially receive the Word of God with joy, but when the Adversary steals their joy by bringing on trials and tribulations, they fall away:

"These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; ¹⁷ and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble." (Mark 4:16-17)

Other people are likened to seed falling among thorns:

"Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹ and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mark 4:18-19)

When the pride of life interferes, people become more concerned about this world (i.e. - making themselves comfortable or powerful in this life) than securing a place in the *Malchut Shamayim* (Mahl-hoot' Shah-mah'-eem = Kingdom of Heaven). The sad part is that these people apparently understand the Word, they just simply do not continue acting upon it throughout their life. It is just as *Y'shua* said:

"Then one said to Him, 'Lord, are there few who are saved?' And He said to them, ²⁴ 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.'" (Luke 13:23-24)

In the *Parable of the Good Shepherd* *Y'shua* said:

"I am the door [narrow gate]. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:9-10)

It is written:

"Choose life -- if you and your offspring would live --" (Deut. 30:19)

However, there is no promise in Scripture that those who follow the pathway of *The Faith Once Delivered* are going to have an easy life. In fact, a strong case can be made that it will be just the opposite. According to Mark, tribulation will arise. Peter says we must be sober and vigilant because we have an Adversary (*HaSatan*) who wants to deprive us of our place in the Kingdom of God:

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (I Pet. 5:8)

~ Good Seed, Good Soil ~

Y'shua concluded the *Parable of the Sower* by pointing out that there would also be good seed that fell onto good soil producing a bumper crop:

"But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (Mark 4:8)

These are the people who hear the word and act positively on it. They actively live what they believe:

"But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred." (Mark 4:20)

The Adversary can be overcome, but it requires a strength that is obtained only when the Word of God abides in us and we have constant contact with the Father through the power of the indwelling *Ruach HaKodesh* (The Holy Spirit). When that relationship is consistently maintained, we can overcome the wicked one:

"I write to you, fathers,

Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

Because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write to you, little children,

Because you have known the Father.

¹⁴ **I have written to you, fathers,**

Because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men,

Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,

And you have overcome the wicked one."

(1 John 2:13-14)

When *Y'shua* was tempted by the Adversary (*HaSatan*) in the wilderness, He answered the temptations of the Devil by telling him:

"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

(Matt. 4:4 cited from Deut. 8:3)

~ The Key to Overcoming ~

The key to overcoming is holding on to *The Faith Once Delivered* and living by its righteous precepts. Note what Paul wrote to the *Messianic Believers* at Rome:

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom. 12:21)

Those who have the ability to overcome the world, the Adversary, and their own human nature, are those who have faith (confidence, trust) in *Y'shua*:

"Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus [*Y'shua*] is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4)

It is the Believer's Shield of Faith which protects them from the Adversary's arsenal of weapons:

"... the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." (Eph. 6:16)

At times our trials will come from other people and our response to them (friends, neighbors, relatives, and even other Believers, those who are supposed to be our Brethren). For this reason, we must learn how to control our tongue. Much of the evil in the world stems from words spoken with the intent to hurt or discredit another person. In Hebrew this type of speech is called *Lashon Hara* לָשׁוֹן הָרָע (Lah-shone' #3956, Hah-rah' #7451 = Tongue Evil). *Y'shua's* brother *Ya'acov* (Jacob or James) spoke of the Evil Tongue:

"If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless." (James 1:26)

The carnal tendency when verbally or physically attacked by others, is to lash out and seek revenge in like manner. However, Paul told the Romans that when such situations arise, a Believer should overcome the evil done to them by giving back good in return. This is in full accord with what *Y'shua* taught:

"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you."

(Luke 6:27-28)

Of course this goes totally against human nature. However, at the time of His trial, *Y'shua* set the example that we should follow:

"Who committed no sin,

Nor was deceit found in His mouth;' [cited from Isa. 53:9]

²³ **who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed."** (1 Pet. 2:22-24)

Our actions attest to our faith. Both *Avraham* אַבְרָהָם (Abraham #85) and *Rachav* רַחַב (Rah-hav' #7343 = Rahab) were deemed righteous because of their actions:

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are

needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. ²⁵ Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?"

(James 2:14-25)

~ The Reward for Overcoming ~

There are definite rewards for *Overcomers* which are clearly delineated in the book of Revelation:

"... he who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

(Rev. 2:7)

"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."

(Rev. 2:11)

"To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it*."

(Rev. 2:17)

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations --

²⁷ **"He shall rule them with a rod of iron;**

They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels" --

as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star."

(Rev. 2:26-28)

"He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."

(Rev. 3:5)

"He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."

(Rev. 3:12)

"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. 3:21)

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

(Rev. 21:7)

~ Summary ~

The *Brit Chadasha* (NT) makes it clear that it is through the observance of the *Torah Mitzvot* (commandments) that life can be experienced in its full measure.

Salvation comes only by God's Grace (favor) through our acceptance of, and Faith in, *Y'shua HaMashiach's* atoning sacrifice. It is our Faith that saves us. However, faith without works is dead. Understanding this truth gives Believers the motivation to "choose life" and become *Overcomers*.

As Believers repay the evil done to them with good deeds toward those who brought the evil, they overcome evil and by doing so give pleasure to our heavenly Father, and ultimately enter into the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven). *Overcomers* will have overcome the world and its pulls, the flesh and its pulls, and the Adversary and his deceptions. If you have accepted *Y'shua* as your own personal Savior and Lord of your life, then:

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

(I John 4:4)

It is our choice. We must "choose life" to inherit eternal life. For those who overcome, the rewards will be beyond anyone's fondest dreams.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Righteousness Rooted ~

Little children, let no one deceive you.
He who practices righteousness is righteous,
Just as He is righteous.
1 John 3:7



The *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) are one of God's gifts to mankind, because through them the *Messianic Believer* receives instruction on how to properly order his life. Anyone who walks according to *Torah Mitzvot* is considered to be a *Tzadik* צַדִּיק (tzah-deek' #6662) or a righteous person. The first man mentioned in Scripture whom God called a *Tzadik* was *Noach* נֹחַ (Noh-ahkh' = Noah #5146):

"Noah was a just man (tzadik or righteous man), perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God." (Gen. 6:9)

Scripture is silent on why *Noach* was considered to be a *Tzadik*, but in the case of *Avraham* it was because he believed God's promise to him:

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

Although Scripture clearly states that *Avraham's* righteousness was accounted to him because of his faith and trust in God's promises, it is also clear that *Avraham* was obedient to God's instructions:

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

Not only were certain individuals called *Tzadik* in the *Tanakh* (OT), there are Scriptural records of righteous people in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) as well. *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, the parents of *Yochanan HaMatzvil* (John the Baptist) were said to be righteous:

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." (Luke 1:5-6)

Here we are told that not only were *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth* righteous, the reason given for their righteousness was because they were **"walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."** In other words, their righteousness stemmed from obedience to the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands).

Y'shua was also called a *Tzadik* (righteous man); in fact He was the most righteous man who ever lived and was referred to by the Apostle John as being The Righteous:

"... we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

And so, Scripture teaches there is a righteousness which comes by Faith (as exemplified by *Avraham*) and there is righteousness which comes from Obedience to the *Torah Mitzvot* (as exemplified by *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*). Choosing whether we should be a *Tzadik* by Faith in *Y'shua's* atoning blood sacrifice, or by Obedience to the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) is the crux of the Grace vs. Law argument. Rather, given the example of "our father *Avraham*" and our Messiah *Y'shua*, we should strive to be a *Tzadik* through both methods, even as *Ya'acov* יַעֲקֹב (Yah ah-cove' #3230 = Jacob or James) said:

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

~ Righteousness Applied ~

According to Scripture:

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

When individuals come to accept this Scripture as being true for themselves, the first question they might ask is: "What must I do to be saved?" We find that answer recorded in the book of *Acts*:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31)

On the day of *Pentecost* (*Shavu'ot*), after the ascension of *Y'shua* to heaven, Peter gave a more complete understanding as to what is needed to take place in an individual's life in order to receive salvation:

"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'"

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 2:37-38)

Not only are Believers in Messiah *Y'shua* to "believe" on Him, they are also to turn their life around and no longer walk according to their previous sinful ways. In Hebrew this is called doing *Teshuvah* (teh-shoe'-vah) and it leads the repentant sinner onto the Path of Righteousness. Thus, true repentance (*Teshuvah*) means not only feeling sorry for having sinned, it means turning one's life around and living righteously according to the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands or instructions) of God.

Although sin had previously reigned in the individual's life (which, if not dealt with properly would eventually have led to the Second Death (Rev. 20:14-15)), now, through the Grace (favor) of God, the New Believer is advised to allow righteousness to reign in his life. When a righteous lifestyle is pursued, the New Believer can look forward to eternal life in the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven (Rev. 22:14)):

"But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, ²¹ so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign

through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ
[Y'shua HaMashiach] our Lord." (Rom. 5:20-21)

So it is that through unwavering belief (faith) in Y'shua's atoning blood sacrifice, the Believer is transferred from an "unsaved condition" into a "saved condition." To repeat, this change in "condition" is not the result of anything the Believer can do in terms of "keeping the law," it comes only through complete Faith that Y'shua's blood is the sufficient atoning sacrifice:

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ..."
(Eph. 1:7)

What we earned from our previous lawlessness was death. What we receive by Faith is eternal life. Once a person has incurred the death penalty, no amount of observance of the law can save them. What is required at that point is a full pardon:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua] our Lord."
(Rom. 6:23)

~ The New Path ~

Having fully repented, the New Believer must depart from the Path of Destruction and enter the Path of Righteousness. The Apostle Peter taught that the Path of Righteousness begins with Faith that our sins have been forgiven through the blood of Y'shua. Once a New Believer has been transferred into a "saved condition," he very well might ask what he should then do to ensure eternal life:

"Now as He [Y'shua] was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?'"
(Mark 10:17)

Y'shua's answer is most instructive to the modern day *Messianic Believer*, as He encouraged the man to live as a *Tzadik* (a righteous man) by keeping the commandments:

"So Jesus [Y'shua] said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. ¹⁹ You know the commandments:

**"Do not commit adultery,
Do not murder,
Do not steal,
Do not bear false witness,
Do not defraud,
Honor your father and your mother.'"**

(Mark 10:18-19)

It is important to understand that Y'shua's commandments and the Father's commandments are one and the same. Y'shua did not come to do away with the Father's laws, nor to establish new laws contrary to His Father, for He clearly said:

"I and My Father are one." (John 10:30)

"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 key to maintaining a right relationship with God, through Y'shua HaMashiach, is to obey His commandments, just as Y'shua obeyed His Father's commandments:

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." (John 15:10)

We proceed down the Path of Righteousness by growing in our knowledge of the Scriptures which, in turn, leads to various traits of righteous living. The Path of Righteousness culminates in the goal of true and perfect love:

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love." (II Peter 1:5-7)

As Believers, we show our love for God by following the commands of the *Torah Mitzvot*. By following the Path of Righteousness, and thereby no longer living a life of sin, we remain in a "saved from sin" state. If we stumble and fall from the Path of Righteous (the observance of the *Torah Mitzvot*) our Father will forgive us and allow us back on the path if we but follow the Apostle John's directions:

"... if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:7-9)

However, if we intentionally leave the Path of Righteousness and willfully transgress the *Torah Mitzvot*, we reenter our old "sinful condition." In this case, the Believer has placed himself back on the Path of Destruction. The Apostle John was very blunt about those who claim to love God but refuse to keep the commandments (*Torah Mitzvot*):

"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked," (I John 2:3-6)

~ Repenting of Intentional Sin ~

Sometimes, Believers walk away from the Path of Righteousness and begin to commit sin intentionally. While some may choose to continue on down this Path of Destruction, others may repent, but then fall into despair when they recognize the enormity of what they have done. Their despair leads some to think they have gone too far and committed the "unpardonable sin:"

"For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:26-29)

While such a state of affairs is indeed very serious, it does not need to be fatal. What is needed is heartfelt repentance and a desire on the part of the sinner to once again turn from their wicked ways and return to God -- in a word, to do *Teshuvah* (repent and return). Our Father in heaven will not turn a deaf ear to those who are truly sorry for leaving the Path of Righteousness and desire a renewed relationship with Him through the atoning blood sacrifice of *Y'shua*:

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (II Pet. 3:9)

It is God's desire that all men everywhere might come to repentance and acceptance of *Y'shua* as their Savior:

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (I Tim. 2:3-4)

**"The LORD [*YHVH*] is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."**

(Psalm 103:8)

"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."

(James 5:19-20)

"Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

(Luke 6:36)

What cleanses us from current sins (whether intentional or unintentional) is the same substance that cleansed us from our past sins. Repentance coupled with our faith filled acceptance of *Y'shua's* atoning blood sacrifice is sufficient payment for those sins:

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus [*Y'shua*] the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin.¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

(Heb. 4:14-16)

~ Harden Not Your Hearts ~

Having been reconciled to God through the forgiveness of our sins, it is important that *Messianic Believers* not enter into a state of rebellion by ceasing to believe in the power of God to deliver them from all affliction. This is what the Israelites did in the wilderness, for which they incurred God's anger:

"... the Holy Spirit says:

'Today, if you will hear His voice,

⁸ Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,

In the day of trial in the wilderness,

⁹ Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,

And saw My works forty years.

¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation,

And said, "They always go astray in *their* heart,

And they have not known My ways."

¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,

"They shall not enter My rest.""

(Heb. 3:7-11 cited from Psalm 95:7-11)

If a person falls into sin and willfully continues in it for a time, they could harden their hearts to the point where they believe that God cannot, or will not, save them. Sin is very deceitful and, if allowed to continue, can cause a Believer to cease believing:

"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

(Heb. 3:12-13)

God allowed the faithful among the children of Israel to enter into the "rest" of the Promised Land. Today, God offers an even better "rest" to those who trust *Y'shua* -- for today's *Messianic Believers* will enter the "Promised Land" of the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven), provided they do not lose faith and once again become trapped in sin:

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

¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? ¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3:17-19)

We need to make sure that none of us fall into that same type of trap:

"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it." (Heb. 4:1)

Only by diligent and daily exercise of our Faith will we be able to overcome temptations to sin:

"Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." (Heb. 4:11)

~ Instruments of Righteousness ~

On the night of His arrest, *Y'shua* said:

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26:41)

That certainly is an apt description of the human condition. This is why, over and over, the writers of the *Brit Chadasha* (NT) warned the *Messianic Believers* to do their utmost to avoid sinning (breaking the *Torah Mitzvot*). One of the chief teachers of holiness was the Apostle Paul:

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace." (Rom. 6:12-14)

For those who might think that by extolling the virtues of Grace (favor through the forgiveness of past sins) Paul is teaching that the Law is "done away," please think again, for Paul indeed taught just the opposite:

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." (Rom. 6:15-18)

Now we are no longer slaves to our sinful lusts. Rather, we are slaves of righteous living, defined and exemplified by the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands). Now we have the opportunity to live the life of a *Tzadik*; a holy life.

~ Good Works ~

A *Tzadik* (a righteous one) will have a life full of Good Works. Good Works come in two major categories; loving God and loving neighbor:

"Then one of the scribes ... asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?'"

"²⁹ Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD [*YHVH*] our God, the LORD [*YHVH*] is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD [*YHVH*] your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'" (Mark 12:28-31)

All of the *Torah Mitzvot* can be placed under one or the other of these two Great Commandments. We fulfill our love for God when we obey those commands in the *Torah* which pertain to the things of God, such as:

**"I am the LORD [*YHVH*] your God, ...
You shall have no other gods before Me. ...
You shall not take the name of the LORD [*YHVH*] your God in vain, ...
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ...
Honor your father and your mother, ..."**
(Ex. 20:2, 3, 7, 8, 12)

We fulfill our love for our neighbors by obeying those commands which pertain to man's relationship to his fellow man:

**"You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
You shall not covet..."** (Ex. 20:13-17)

These are general principles. To understand more fully what it means to obey each one, it is necessary to go to the *Torah* and study the more detailed laws. In addition, there is a wealth of information -- on what it means to keep the commandments -- found in the rest of the Scriptures: the *Prophets*, the *Writings*, (both part of the *Tanakh*), and the *Brit Chadasha* (NT). For example, *Y'shua* had a great deal to say about how to properly apply the Ten Commandments in our lives.

When it comes to the question about whether keeping the Commandments is relevant for today, perhaps the Apostle John stated it best:

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments."
(1 John 5:2)

The *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) were not created to be instruments of war. They are not to be used to beat other people over the head by telling them that, if they do not obey a certain interpretation of the law, they are going to burn in hellfire.

Good Works is not just doing what one "must" do in order to live within the law. That is the attitude of the man who, in the *Parable of the Talents* (Matt. 25:14-30), did not even invest his master's talent so it could earn interest, rather he hid it in the earth so he could give it back when his master returned. While what this man did was honest, for he did return the talent to the owner, he was, nevertheless, an unprofitable servant:

"But his lord answered and said to him, "You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷ So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest."" (Matt. 25:26-27)

What God is looking for are Profitable Servants who will take the Word of God (including the *Torah Mitzvot*) and turn it into an instrument of blessing for all with whom contact is made; to go above and beyond the call of duty. The Prophet Isaiah spoke God's words to the people of Israel. He told them they were to put evil out of their lives and to begin helping the

weak people in their society whom they had previously been oppressing:

"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean;

Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.

Cease to do evil,

¹⁷ Learn to do good;

Seek justice,

Rebuke the oppressor;

Defend the fatherless,

Plead for the widow."

(Isa. 1:16-17)

This same plea should be made today, for we have become a nation of greed, with far too many people looking out only for themselves. Yet, when disaster strikes, many people do search their souls and come forth in great numbers to help. What we need is for that same spirit of loving concern to be expressed in the everyday business world, in our workplaces, and in our communities throughout the nation. In this regard, it is up to God's People to lead the way. We need to be willing to extend a helping hand, to go the extra mile, and to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction.

Ya'acov (Jacob or James) was adamant about obeying the *Torah Mitzvot*. However, he knew that just "keeping" the commandments was not enough if one wished to be called a Profitable Servant. *Ya'acov* taught that the true servant of God would also be a righteous servant within the community. Here is how *Ya'acov* defined "pure religion:"

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."

(James 1:27)

A profitable servant will keep himself "unspotted from the world" by obeying the *Torah Mitzvot* and not partaking of this world's evils. In addition, a Profitable Servant will do good; helping those in need and going above and beyond the call of duty.

Y'shua approached the topic of Good Works from another angle. He said that even if someone compels us to do something (as long as it is not against God's Law), we should not only do what they require, we should perform even greater service to that person, even if they are evil (Matt. 5:38-48). The apostle Paul reiterated this principle and, in addition, pointed out that we are not to take vengeance upon people who have wronged us:

"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹ Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. ²⁰ Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

(Rom. 12:17-21)

In addition to performing good works in our community, we are told to be zealous in doing them:

"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)

~ Good Fruit ~

The legacy of a Profitable Servant will be a life which bears Good Fruit. The *Parable of the Sower* teaches that those who will be welcomed into the Kingdom will be those who bear good fruit, some having left a legacy of an enormous increase of Good Fruit:

"But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold. ... ¹⁵ ... the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

(Luke 8:8-15)

Believers are the good grapes in God's vineyard. Our seeds that bear fruit will bring forth more good grapes. When we bear good fruit, we glorify our Father in heaven, for *Y'shua* said:

"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

(John 15:8)

~ Summary ~

Once an individual has been called by God to be a part of His People, and he has answered that call, it is imperative that he turn from his former wicked ways and begin training to become a *Tzadik* (a righteous person). The *Tzadik's* foundational instruction for righteous living is found in the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) given by God to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. However, much additional instruction concerning the application of these *Torah* principles can be found throughout the Scriptures (both the OT and the NT). Being a *Tzadik* involves not just obedience to the law, but a willingness to do good within one's family, congregation, and community.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Spirit Led ~

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,
These are sons of God.
Romans 8:14

In the beginning, Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden. But they were disobedient and, as a result, direct fellowship with God was broken. Later (as a result of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) God chose the children of Israel to be His very own special people.

When God brought the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt (along with the mixed multitude who joined them -- Ex. 12:37), their first major stop was at Mount Sinai, where they were given the *Written Torah*. They spent nearly a year there while *Moshe* מֹשֶׁה (Mow-shay' = Moses #4872) communed with God at the summit of the mountain and in the Tent of Meeting. It was there where *Moshe* received, on behalf of the children of Israel, the Terms and Conditions of the Sinai Covenant; the covenant in which God dictated the family rules:

"Then he [*Moshe*] took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD [*YHVH*] has said we will do, and be obedient.'"

(Ex. 24:7)

~ A Marriage Made in Heaven ~

All who desired to be reconciled to God participated in this Covenant, which was made between the Creator God (*YHVH*) and the children of Israel. This covenant was a type of marriage covenant that bound them as Husband and wife:

**"For your Maker is your husband,
The LORD [*YHVH*] of hosts is His name;
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth."** (Isa. 54:5)

There is often confusion about who it was that accompanied the children of Israel through the wilderness. The Apostle Paul made it clear:

"Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ [*Messiah*]." (I Cor. 10:1-4)

From what Paul said, it would appear that this first marriage was between the pre-incarnate Messiah and Israel, although it could be argued that the Father merely sent the Messiah as His representative Agent to accompany them and negotiate for Him. If indeed, this original marriage was between the Messiah and the children of Israel, it makes what

happened later more understandable. In all of this it is important to remember what *Y'shua* told His disciples:

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father ..."

(John 14:9)

"I and My Father are one."

(John 10:30)

Paul said:

"He [*Y'shua*] is the visible image of the invisible God. He is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ because in connection with him were created all things -- in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities -- they have all been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He existed before all things, and he holds everything together. ¹⁸ Also he is head of the Body, the Messianic Community -- he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might hold first place in everything. ¹⁹ For it pleased God to have his full being live in his Son ²⁰ and through his Son to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace through him, through having his Son shed his blood by being executed on a stake." (Col. 1:15-20 CJB)

Much of this is really beyond human comprehension, and we will have to wait until our change from flesh to spirit before it all becomes clear:

"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." (1 Cor. 13:12)

~ The First Wedding Covenant ~

The First Wedding Covenant agreement was between God and the children of Israel. It took place at Mount Sinai when God betrothed* the children of Israel and they agreed to enter into a covenant relationship. God promised that He would take Israel to be His very own special people:

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

(Ex. 19:5-6)

The Israelites (and at least some of the mixed multitude) who joined themselves to Israel at the Exodus) promised to obey God and do whatever He asked of them:

"All that the LORD [*YHVH*] has spoken we will do."

(Ex. 19:8)

This was the Covenant agreement which God made with the children of Israel. God then proceeded to unilaterally give them the Terms and Conditions of their Marriage Covenant. This was the *Written Torah* which *Moshe* received for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai. This document (the *Torah*)

* In the ancient Hebrew wedding the Betrothal was the first step in a marriage. This was when the Bridegroom and the Bride legally became Husband and Wife, although they were not yet permitted to live together.

contained the Terms and Conditions of the marriage and set forth the responsibilities of both parties. In Hebrew, this type of document is called a *Ketuvah* (Keh-two'-vah). It was a very valuable document to the Bride (the children of Israel), for it stipulated God's promise to them and their responsibilities to Him:

"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. '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." '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 which I set before you this day?'" (Deut. 4:5-8)

~ The First Wedding Gift ~

Thus, while enroute to their new home (the Promised Land) the very first gift which was given to the Bride (the children of Israel) from her Husband, (the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) was the *Written Torah* proclaimed at Mount Sinai. It contained a promise that even if the Bride were to violate the terms and conditions of the *Ketuvah* to such an extreme that God would banish her from the Promised Land, in the end He would make a way possible for her to return and once again live with Him in a Husband/Wife relationship, for He said:

"I will betroth you to Me forever;

Yes, I will betroth you to Me

In righteousness and justice,

In lovingkindness and mercy;

²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,

And you shall know the LORD [YHVH]."

(Hosea 2:19-20)

The renewal of this marriage relationship was predicated upon one condition, that the children of Israel repent and return to the Terms and Conditions of their Covenant agreement with God:

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD [YHVH] your God drives you, ² and you return to the LORD [YHVH] your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ that the LORD [YHVH] your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD [YHVH] your God has scattered you." (Deut. 30:1-3)

The Wedding Gift of the *Torah* was given to the Bride (the children of Israel) on the day of *Shavu'ot*, one of the annual Festivals of the Lord. Many Christians know that Festival as the *Day of Pentecost*.

~ Marital Problems ~

There were many troubled times which occurred in the marriage between God [YHVH] and the children of Israel, all of them brought about by the disobedience of the Bride. *Moshe* reprimanded them to no avail:

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD [YHVH] your God require of you, but to fear the LORD [YHVH] your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD [YHVH] your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD [YHVH] and His statutes which I command you today for your good? ¹⁴ Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD [YHVH] your God, also the earth with all that is in it. ¹⁵ The LORD [YHVH] delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. ¹⁶ Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." (Deut. 10:12-16)

Nevertheless, the Kingdom became divided and things got so bad in the Northern Kingdom (the House of Israel -- the northern ten tribes), that God eventually saw fit to write that portion of the Bride a Bill of Divorce:

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

However, the House of Judah was not given a divorce because it was through her that Messiah was prophesied to come:

"For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, ..."

(Heb. 7:14)

Even though God divorced the House of Israel, she still has the *Ketuvah* (*Torah*) which promises that one day she will be allowed to return. This fact was confirmed many places in the writings of the *Prophets*. For example:

"Thus says the Lord GOD: "When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob."" (Ezek. 28:25)

The condition for their return is their willingness to once again agree to live by the Terms and Conditions of the *Ketuvah* (the *Written Torah*):

"If you will return, O Israel,' says the LORD [YHVH],

'Return to Me;

And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight,

Then you shall not be moved."

(Jer. 4:1)

Both houses of Israel were doomed under this agreement. It had given grounds for fault finding because neither house of Israel remained faithful. So God made a new agreement; a

New Covenant that provided the means for them to fulfill their part of the agreement:

"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)

~ The Second Wedding ~

Y'shua ben Yosef, the Son of God, was an integral part of the new agreement. The New Marriage Covenant was a brand new Agreement offered by *Y'shua* (as the Father's Agent and Son) to the individual members of both houses of the children of Israel, and all who wish to join themselves to Israel. As far as the Terms and Conditions were concerned, they were the very same as found in the First Marriage Covenant.

At the Last Supper, when *Y'shua* and the Disciples jointly partook of the Cup of the Covenant, the New Betrothal was sealed. As was the case in the ancient wedding procedures, *Y'shua* then made a traditional Betrothal speech to His Bride (the Disciples):

"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)

In this speech, *Y'shua* indicated that He was about to return to His Father's house in heaven where He would prepare a Wedding Chamber or *Chuppah* חופה (Whoop'-pah #6944) for His Bride. It is to this heavenly *Chuppah* where *Y'shua* will take His Bride (the Believers) for the consummation of the marriage, for a period of time prior to their return to earth to set up their new home in the *Malchut Shamayim* (Kingdom of Heaven).

A number of things need to be understood concerning this new marriage arrangement. First of all, the House of Israel had already been released from the first marriage covenant through divorce. With the death and resurrection of *Y'shua* (the Husband), the House of Judah was also released from the first marriage covenant:

"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband."

(Rom. 7:2)

The New Covenant is now offered to all who repent of their sins and accept the betrothal *Y'shua* has offered:

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

~ The Second Wedding Gift ~

As already noted, the First Wedding Gift given to the Bride (the children of Israel) was the *Ketuvah*, the *Written Torah*, which instructed the Bride concerning what was expected of her in terms of behavior. This was a marvelous gift because it spelled out clearly what was acceptable and unacceptable behavior on her part.

Just as a gift was given at the first wedding, so another precious gift was given in honor of the Second Wedding Betrothal. This wedding gift was the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Rue-ahkh' Hah Koh-dehsh' = the Holy Spirit). There is more information about the *Ruach* in the first chapter of the book of Acts:

"Dear Theophilos: In the first book, I wrote about everything Yeshua set out to do and teach, ² until the day when, after giving instructions through the *Ruach HaKodesh* to the emissaries whom he had chosen, he was taken up into heaven. ³ After his death he showed himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. During a period of forty days they saw him, and he spoke with them about the Kingdom of God. ⁴ At one of these gatherings, he instructed them not to leave Yerushalayim but to wait for 'what the Father promised, which you heard about from me. ⁵ For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the *Ruach HaKodesh*!' ⁶ When they were together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?' ⁷ He answered, 'You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the *Ruach HaKodesh* comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!'" (Acts 1:1-8 CJB)

The gift of the *Ruach* did not take away the first gift (the *Written Torah*), rather it made possible for the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) to be properly kept because it was through this gift that the *Torah* was written on the Bride's heart:

"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 in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

(Jer. 31:33)

This prophecy was initially fulfilled on the day of the Festival of *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost):

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

With the advent of the Second Wedding Gift (the *Ruach*) it is now possible for God to truly be our God, and for us to truly be His people -- a Spirit led people. Now we can live in the fullness of *Torah* through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach HaKodesh*). The *Ruach* teaches the New Believer about the things of God, enabling them to properly keep the Terms and Conditions (*Torah Mitzvot*) of the Covenant:

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

(John 14:26)

~ Understanding Covenants ~

The reason the First Covenant failed to achieve its intended result was not because the Terms and Conditions of the *Written Torah* were at fault. A New Covenant (agreement) had to be made because the Bride was at fault, for she was not able to keep the Terms and Conditions of the *Torah Mitzvot* because of her human weaknesses:

"But now He [*Y'shua*] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. ⁷ For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says:

"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 ... [a reiteration of the passage from *Jer. 31*]

¹³ In that He says, 'A new *covenant*,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." (Heb. 8:6-8, 13)

Because people read this passage without a proper understanding of what constitutes a Covenant, they may think that the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant which God made with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai have been abolished. However, a Covenant is not the Terms and Conditions, a Covenant is the Agreement between two or more parties indicating they will form a Covenant relationship. What the Terms and Conditions do is spell out the obligations and rights of each party. While the Terms and Conditions can be altered without destroying the Covenant or Agreement itself, the death of one party ends the covenant relationship. If the Terms and Conditions were made by mutual agreement, then both parties must approve the changes. If the Terms and Conditions were made unilaterally (by only one of the parties), then that party has the right to change the Terms and Conditions as they see fit. This is the case with both of these Covenants, for God dictated the Terms and Conditions unilaterally and the children of Israel agreed to do whatever He said:

"... 'All that the LORD [*YHVH*] has spoken we will do." (Ex. 19:8)

Actually, the Hebrew sense of what the children of Israel said was more like: "We agree to do whatever the Lord says,

even those things which He has not yet told us." In other words, the children of Israel made an open ended commitment to God by agreeing to honor whatever He asked them to do, whenever He requested it, even if it were to be years later and/or something they did not want to do.

As already noted, the children of Israel did not have the spiritual wherewithal to keep all of the Terms and Conditions found in the First Covenant. They could not keep all of the *Torah Mitzvot* (commands) because of the weakness of their flesh. Therefore, the weakness of the First Covenant was not the Terms and Conditions, the weakness was within the people themselves. That is why Hebrews 12:8 states: **"finding fault with them."** This indicates the people were at fault and not the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant.

God did not see fit to change the Terms and Conditions of the First Covenant, so He made a New Covenant (agreement). This New Covenant agreement took into consideration the fleshly weakness of the children of Israel and gave them the ability to keep the Terms and Conditions which had been stipulated by God in the First Covenant.

What is "new" about the New Covenant is that the *Ruach Ha Kodesh* writes the *Torah* on their fleshly hearts and empowers them to walk in His "statutes" and keep His "judgments:"

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them." (Ezek. 36:26-27)

With the advent of the New Covenant agreement, the *Torah* Terms and Conditions become internalized within the hearts and minds of the Believers in *Y'shua*, who came and gave His life as the atoning sacrifice which pays the penalty for the sins committed against the Terms and Conditions of the Covenant.

~ Receiving and Using the Wedding Gifts ~

A Betrothal to *Y'shua* is only possible if the Father calls an individual:

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

(John 6:44)

Having received the Wedding Gifts which were given at the time of our betrothal to *Y'shua*, it is our responsibility to use them properly:

"But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ..."

(I Tim. 1:8)

The proper use of the First Wedding Gift (*Torah Mitzvot*) is to learn how to live by its precepts. One thing for sure, the *Written Torah* must not be used as a weapon to beat up other people:

"Who is the faithful and sensible servant whose master puts him in charge of the household staff, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will go well with that servant if he is found doing his job when his master comes. ⁴⁷ Yes, I

tell you that he will put him in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸ But if that servant is wicked and says to himself, "My master is taking his time;" ⁴⁹ and he starts beating up his fellow servants and spends his time eating and drinking with drunkards; ⁵⁰ then his master will come on a day the servant does not expect, at a time he doesn't know; ⁵¹ and he will cut him in two and put him with the hypocrites, where people will wail and grind their teeth!"

(Matt. 24:45-51)

The *Torah* is to be used as a personal measuring tool, by which we can compare our own everyday actions against what God has declared to be righteous behavior. In this way we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

(Rom. 12:1-2)

The Second Wedding Gift empowers us to live in the fullness of the *Torah*:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me [*Y'shua*] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

(Acts 1:8)

The primary purpose of the gift of the *Ruach* is to lead *Messianic Believers* into all truth, so their righteous manner of living can be a witness to nonbelievers. Because the *Ruach* is the tool by which the Father writes the *Torah* (law) on the Believer's heart, it holds that eventually the Believer does not have to keep looking everything up in Scripture because they now have the concepts of the commandments internalized in their hearts. Thus, a truly Spirit Filled Believer instinctively knows what is right and wrong according to the *Torah*, because the *Ruach* reveals it to them:

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

(John 16:13-14)

~ Testing the Spirits ~

It is important that *Messianic Believers* make sure the direction they are being led is a result of contact with the *Ruach HaKodesh* and not with some other spirit. The *Ruach* will always glorify *Y'shua*:

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] has come in the flesh is of God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] has come in the flesh is not of God.

And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."

(1 John 4:1-3)

This is the first diagnostic a *Messianic Believer* should run when confronted with what seems to be a message from the spirit world. There are many teachers who use the name of Jesus Christ and sound as though they believe in Him. However, if you examine their teachings carefully you will find they are teaching a much different "Christ" than the "Christ" revealed in the Scriptures:

"And Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ [*Messiah*],' and will deceive many.'" (Matt. 24:4-5)

This verse can be read two ways. First of all it can mean that many people will come saying that they themselves are "Christ" (Messiah or Anointed), which is false. However, it can also mean that many will come saying that *Y'shua* is the Messiah, but, if their teachings do not square with Scripture, they too are deceivers.

If a person says "God told me thus and such," we need to test what is being said, for if what God supposedly told them is contrary in any way to the Scriptures, then it did not come from God, it came from a different spirit or from the person's own imagination.

It should not come as a surprise that there are deceiving spirits in the world, for the greatest deceiver of them all, *HaSatan* (Satan the Devil), is still the god of this world and he works against the Good News of Messiah *Y'shua*. His reign over the earth will not end until Messiah *Y'shua* returns to replace him when He brings in the *Malchut Shamayim* (the Kingdom of Heaven):

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴ In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ [*Messiah*], who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (II Cor. 4:3-4)

~ Nurture the Spirit ~

It is necessary for *Messianic Believers* to nurture the gift of the *Ruach HaKodesh* and not do anything which might cause the power of the *Ruach* to be diminished in their lives. Two warnings have been given in this regard. The first:

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30)

How does one grieve the *Ruach*? By looking at this verse in context we can see how this might happen. The list is long (Eph. 4:17-31) and it includes sexual sins, uncleanness, greediness, deceitful lusts, lying, anger, stealing, and corrupt communication, which would include *Lashon Hara* (the evil tongue). The list is summed up in verse 31:

"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice." (Eph. 4:31)

All of these evils, if practiced, will grieve the *Ruach* and bring a sense of loss to our lives. However, by practicing their opposites, we will experience life more abundantly. Therefore:

"... be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ [Messiah] forgave you."
(Eph. 4:32)

The other warning concerning the *Ruach* is:
"Do not quench the Spirit." (I Thess. 5:19)

How does one quench the *Ruach*? By not following or listening to the *Ruach* when you know God is directing you to do something. Another way is by not accepting the fact that one has been given a special spiritual gift and/or refusing to use a gift in the way God intended it to be used.

Whether one grieves or quenches the *Ruach HaKodesh* the outcome is basically the same; it diminishes the closeness one has with the Father.

~ Gifts of the Spirit ~

Along with the *Ruach HaKodesh* come a number of gifts which may be imparted to the *Messianic Believer*. Whatever Spiritual Gift a person might receive, it is important to understand that all Spiritual Gifts stem from the same source:

**"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.
5There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
6And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all."**
(I Cor. 12:4-6)

The purpose of Spiritual Gifts is so that everyone in the Body of Messiah will benefit. Gifts are not to be hid under a bushel:

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:"
(I Cor. 12:7)

Although there are nine gifts listed: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophesy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues; any number of gifts may be imparted. However, just because a person has exhibited a word of wisdom on one occasion, it does not mean that person will always have a word of wisdom. It may be for one time only in order to accomplish a specific outcome at a specific time.

Another passage which takes up this subject is found in Romans, chapter twelve:

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them:"
(Rom. 12:6)

The gifts listed here are similar in some respects. Those mentioned are: prophesy, ministry, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and mercy. The point being made, is that if someone has one or more of the "gifts" (in this case they seem to be more like natural talents) they should be used as a means to edify and encourage the Body of Messiah.

~ Fruit of the Spirit ~

The outcome of having and properly using the gift of the *Ruach HaKodesh*, will be visible good fruit in the life of the *Messianic Believer*:

"... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."
(Gal. 5:22-23)

Y'shua likened a person's life to a tree; it either bears good fruit or it bears bad (depending on the nature of its root system, the quality of the soil, and the stock from which it came):

"You will know them by their fruits. ... 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."
(Matt. 7:16-18)

The Fruit of the Spirit is what is naturally produced by living in the power of the Holy Spirit:

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord."
(Eph. 5:8-10)

When we are being led by the Holy Spirit, we will desire to live in the fullness of *Torah* because we want to please the Father:

"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us."
(I John 3:24)

~ Summary ~

All who desire to be reconciled to God must enter into a Marriage Covenant relationship with Him, and live righteously before Him. In a Spirit led life, the *Torah Mitzvot* and the *Ruach HaKodesh* are interconnected. To understand this interconnection requires an understanding of the Marriage Covenants.

The First Wedding Gift (which came with the First Marriage Covenant) was the *Torah* (and by extension all of the Scriptures as they were revealed). The children of Israel were unable to use this gift properly because of the weakness of their flesh. This resulted in God creating a New Marriage Covenant.

The Second Wedding Gift comes with the New Marriage Covenant and is given only to those who accept betrothal to *Y'shua HaMashiach*. This second gift is the *Ruach HaKodesh*, and it empowers the Bride of Messiah to live in the fullness of the *Torah*.

If we are truly being Spirit Led, we will use both of these gifts properly.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Love Directed ~

By this all will know that you are My disciples,
If you have love for one another.
John 13:35



ast but not least of the attributes of *The Faith Once Delivered* is Love, the primary behavioral characteristic needed by all *Messianic Believers*.

Love means different things to different people. Those differences often reflect the culture in which an individual was raised. However, culture is not the only factor, for within the same culture people can have different understandings of what constitutes Love, depending upon the type of Love (or lack thereof) they experienced in their own life.

This article is not intended to be an exploration of the different ways in which love is expressed within our society. Rather, the goal is to explore the characteristic of Love as taught in the Holy Scriptures.

~ Definitions ~

In the *Tanakh* (OT), the primary word translated into English as *love*, *loving*, *loved*, *lover[s]*, or *loveth*, is *ahav* (ah-hahv'). It has multiple meanings:

0157 אָהַב *ahav*

Meaning: 1) to love 1a) (Qal) 1a1) human love for another, includes family, and sexual 1a2) human appetite for objects such as food, drink, sleep, wisdom 1a3) human love for or to God 1a4) act of being a friend 1a4a) lover (participle) 1a4b) friend (participle) 1a5) God's love toward man 1a5a) to individual men 1a5b) to people Israel 1a5c) to righteousness 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) lovely (participle) 1b2) loveable (participle) 1c) (Piel) 1c1) friends 1c2) lovers (fig. of adulterers) 2) to like

Origin: a primitive root;

Usage: AV - love 169, lover(s) 19, friend(s) 12, beloved 5, liketh 1, lovely 1, loving 1; 208

A companion word to *ahav* is *ahavah* (ah-hah-'vah) :

0160 אָהַבָה *ahavah*

Meaning: 1) love 1a) human love for human object 1a1) of man toward man 1a2) of man toward himself 1a3) between man and woman 1a4) sexual desire 2) God's love to His people

Origin: f of 0158;

Usage: AV - love 40; 40

Of the 261 times one of the forms of the English word *love* is used in the *Tanakh* (OT), the vast majority come from these two words.

In the *Brit Chadasha* (NT), there are again two words used, but they are not related and they have somewhat different

meanings. The most often used word is *agapao* (or its noun form *agape*):

25 ἀγαπάω *agapao* {ag-ap-ah'-o}

Meaning: 1) of persons 1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly 2) of things 2a) to be well pleased, to be contented at or with a thing

Origin: perhaps from *agan* (much) [or cf 5368];

Usage: AV - love 135, beloved 7; 142

26 ἀγάπη *agape* {ag-ah'-pay}

Meaning: 1) brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence 2) love feasts

Origin: from 25;

Usage: AV - love 86, charity 27, dear 1, charitably+2596 1, feast of charity 1; 116

The other word, used far less in the *Brit Chadasha* (NT), is *phileo*:

5368 φιλέω *phileo* {fil-eh'-o}

Meaning: 1) to love 1a) to approve of 1b) to like 1c) sanction 1d) to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome, befriend 2) to show signs of love 2a) to kiss 3) to be fond of doing 3a) be wont, use to do

Origin: from 5384;

Usage: AV - love 22, kiss 3; 25

In almost every instance where the English word *love* is used in connection with God (in the NT), the Greek word is either *agape* or *agapao*. This has led many to interpret those words as being a higher level of love than *phileo*, which is more along the lines of a warm human feeling or fondness.

~ Love Is Not a Feeling ~

Many years ago a Christian singer named Don Francisco recorded a song about love. This was not the "romantic love" type of song that is often a part of popular music. This song had a message that goes directly to the heart of the Biblical concept of *Love*. The key phrase of that song, (and perhaps its title, we are not sure anymore) was: "Love is not a feeling, it's and act of your will."

This may well be the difference between the *agape* love of God for man, and the affectionate type of love (*phileo*) that all of us have for certain other human beings. *Phileo*, or fond affection, is unexplainable. It is that attraction that we sometimes feel for another person. It is not a sexual feeling (that is *eros* in Greek), but a desire to have frequent contact with a particular person because we like them. This type of love does not require an act of one's will -- it comes naturally.

Agape, on the other hand, is a higher level of love that may require effort on the part of the person who is doing the "loving." In other words, it is characterized by those times when we express love or do acts of loving kindness for a person that we might not personally like very well. Let's face it; sometimes it is really difficult to "love" some of the people with whom we come in contact. There are such things as "personality clashes." If our personality "clashes" with that of a brother or sister in the Faith, so that *phileo* love is really not

possible, that is when we must learn to express *agape* love. That is when love becomes "an act of our will."

~ Love Brings Unity ~

With this as background information, let us turn our attention to exploring the Scriptures to see if we can come to a better understanding concerning the "love of God," and how His love for us can help us learn how to love Him in return and, by extension, to love one another.

At the Last Supper, *Y'shua* told His disciples how they could identify other disciples and how the world would know they were His disciples:

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

In all four instances, the English words "love" and "loved" come from the Greek words *agape* or *agapao*. In other words, what *Y'shua* is saying here is that fondness for each other is not necessary (although it certainly is wonderful to be fond of one's brethren); rather, what is needed is a commitment (an act of our will) to show love to all the Brethren, whether we like them or not. A follower of *Y'shua* will truly love their brethren in the Faith, whether they like them or not.

The benefit of learning how to *agape* (love) one another, is that it brings unity to the Body of Messiah. *Y'shua* prayed for this very thing near the end of his Last Supper prayer, which was more than a prayer for the twelve who were with Him at that time. It was a prayer for all those who have believed in Him down through the centuries:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:20-23)

~ God's Love ~

God's love is an *agape* love. It is an act of His will. He loved the children of Israel not because they were the best or the greatest people on earth, but because He had made a promise to the Patriarchs concerning their descendants:

"The LORD [YHVH] did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the LORD [YHVH] loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, ..." (Deut. 7:7-8)

God also loves the world so much that He was willing to allow His Son to give His life so that mankind could be reconciled to Him through His Son, and thereby receive everlasting life:

"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's love was equally as strong, for He willingly gave up His life so that we could be redeemed and live eternally:

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." (John 15:13-14)

~ Love God ~

The key statement of Faith for the Jewish people is the *Shema*. The Hebrew word *Shema* שְׁמָע (shah-mah' #8085) means to "hear, listen, and obey." In other words, to act upon what one is hearing:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD [YHVH] our God, the LORD [YHVH] is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD [YHVH] your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:4-9)

When *Y'shua* was asked what the greatest commandment was, He responded by reciting the *Shema*:

"Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD [YHVH] our God, the LORD [YHVH] is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the LORD [YHVH] your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment." (Mark 12:29-30)

How can a Messianic Believer show love for God? Remember the song: "Love is not a feeling, it's an act of your will." We show our love for God by doing what He wants us to do. Whether we want to do it is not important. What is important is our obedience:

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD [YHVH] your God require of you, but to fear the LORD [YHVH] your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD [YHVH] your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the LORD [YHVH] and His statutes which I command you today for your good?" (Deut. 10:12-13)

The Apostle John made it clear that doing the will of God is binding upon Messianic Believers today:

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." (I John 5:3)

~ Love Brethren ~

Not only does keeping the *Torah Mitzvot* (commandments) serve as a vehicle by which we show our love for God, it is also one of the main ways in which we show our love for our Brethren in the Bride of Messiah:

"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, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." (I John 5:1-3)

Peter added to John's teaching about loving the Brethren by teaching that we are to love one another with a pure heart:

"Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, ..." (I Pet. 1:22)

Learning how to love in both our thoughts and our actions is very important, for:

**"Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins."** (Prov. 10:12)

"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, ²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20)

~ Love Neighbor ~

While loving our Brethren may be difficult at times, it can be even more difficult to love our neighbor, especially when they treat us badly. Yet, we are commanded to love our neighbor even as we love ourselves. This is the second of the Great Commandments:

"And the second, like it, is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."" (Mark 12:31)

One way to love our neighbor is to refrain from thinking evil about them:

"Let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbor; ..." (Zech. 8:17)

Paul said that if we truly love our neighbor we will automatically not do him any harm. That, in itself, is a fulfillment of the *Torah* (law):

"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13:10)

~ Justice ~

This does not mean that one should turn a blind eye when someone is obviously breaking the law. In order to keep society from breaking down it is very important that those who are breaking the law be brought to justice. In those cases, it is

proper to even testify against someone, so that justice is served and others (brethren and neighbors) are protected:

"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. ¹⁶ If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD [*YHVH*], before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. ¹⁸ And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹ then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁰ And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you."

(Deut. 19:15-20)

~ The Love Chapter ~

No discourse on Love would be complete without some reference to what is commonly called the "Love Chapter," I Corinthians 13. Prefacing this subject, Paul taught about the things of the Spirit, exhorting all to seek the better gifts. He then taught how loving one another is more important than some of their other activities, such as: speaking in tongues, prophesying, or the understanding and knowledge of the deep mysteries of life. He said that love was even greater than Faith. Likewise, no matter how much giving one might perform, if it is not done in a spirit of love Paul said:

"... it profits me nothing." (I Cor. 13:3)

How does love behave itself?

"Love suffers long and is kind;

love does not envy;

love does not parade itself,

is not puffed up;

⁵ does not behave rudely,

does not seek its own,

is not provoked,

thinks no evil;

⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity,

but rejoices in the truth;

⁷bears all things,

believes all things,

hopes all things,

endures all things."

(I Cor. 13:4-7)

Paul said that of all the inner attributes of *The Faith Once Delivered*, the most important is Love:

"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (I Cor. 13:13)

When we are truly abiding in the Light of Messiah *Y'shua*, we will have love for one another:

"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." (I John 2:10)

Therefore:

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law." (Rom. 13:8)

~ Summary ~

Scripture says that the single most important trait exhibited by a Messianic Believer is Love. Paul said it is greater than both Faith and Hope. *Agape* Love requires effort (sometimes extreme effort) on the part of the one doing the loving. Scripture is clear that our love for both God and man is expressed by obeying the commandments of God.

Think about it. When everyone on the face of the earth is following the *Torah Mitzvot*, we will be living in a world of peace, prosperity, and joy. For now, we can only claim to be *Torah* pursuant. It is an act of our will. In the end, we will all be *Torah* observant.

Keep the Faith, our Salvation draws nigh:

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus [Y'shua]." (Rev. 14:12)

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The *Torah* is for all ages. It was given directly by God to *Moshe* and formed the initial Constitution for the nation of Israel. It is the standard by which all Messianic Believers should live today, and upon which the government of the Kingdom of Heaven will be established when Messiah *Y'shua* returns.

Which Law?

There were two sets of laws practiced by first century Pharisaic Judaism; the *Written Torah* (instruction/law) and the *Oral Torah* (traditional interpretation). Which law was Paul speaking about when he made some of his "anti-law" comments?

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