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A View From Beit Shalom

Go up in peace to your house.
I Sam. 25:35

Shalom **A**leichem,

(Peace be unto you)

May the peace that passes all understanding be with you and all of your *Messianic Brethren* during this most stressful year:

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*]." (Phil. 4:6-7)

~ Check Your Seed Type ~

This is a good time to do a self-evaluation to determine what kind of seed you might be. Not everyone who hears the Word of Truth is able to hang on to it, due to the various trials and tribulations that come upon each one of us to test our souls.

Many Believers depend to strongly upon the support they receive from the members of their local fellowship. However, circumstances today do not always allow *Believers* to gather together for Sabbath worship, prayer, and study. The Covid-19 lock downs, that are being cranked up again in many states, preclude the gathering together of even small groups, for fear of contracting and spreading the virus.

Let's take a close look at *Y'shua's Parable of the Sower and the Seed* to see if we can determine what type of seed we might be, and how that

information might help us take the necessary steps toward a stronger stand for righteousness:

"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundred-fold."

"When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'" (Luke 8:5-8)

The Disciples were puzzled by this parable, not discerning what its full meaning might be, so they asked Him to explain in more detail:

"And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that

"Seeing they may not see,
And hearing they may not understand."

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

"Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

"But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

"Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

"But 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 8:10-15)

Those who consider themselves *Messianic Believers* fall outside of the first category -- those who hear the word but ignore it.

However, the other three categories can all pertain

to *Believers* in *Y'shua* today.

Those who are like rocky soil hear and understand (at least to a degree) the *Gospel of the Coming Kingdom of Heaven*. However, these would be *Believers* do not have the where with all to cling to the truth when trouble and temptation come along.

If you are a person who has had the seed fall among thorns this message is especially for you. While the Scripture speaks specifically about riches and pleasures it also speaks about how "cares" of the world can choke the life out of the seed so that it cannot mature properly. That is what the current world troubles are doing to many people, especially those who depended so strongly on their fellowship providing them with the necessary strength to keep the Faith.

~ The Good Ground ~

That leaves us with those who have "good ground" in which the Seed can take firm root and grow into a tree of

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life that gives good fruit -- the Fruit of the Spirit:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who are Christ's [Messiah's] have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Gal. 5:22-24)

Examine yourself and make sure that you are providing "good ground" for the Spirit of God to grow within you into "good fruit." Yes, you may be all alone at the moment, with no fellowship support. If that is the case, turn to God throughout the day in direct prayer, asking Him to provide you the "good ground" that you need to **"bear fruit with patience:"**

"See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. ¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua] for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit."

(I Thess. 5:15-19)

Above all, keep in contact with God's Holy Spirit for guidance:

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"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25)

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63)

Pray without ceasing to the Father as you go through your daily routine.

~ Sukkot 2020 ~

An example of what is happening in the *Messianic Movement* was borne home in many *Sukkot* celebrations this year. The site we attended (Warrens, Wisconsin) had only 30-35 people in attendance. Many sites around the country had small attendance because of the virus. Many Believers stayed home alone this year as well. Hopefully, next year we can all celebrate in open fellowship once again.

~ Attention Prisoners! ~

We want to thank those of you who take the time to fill out your mail restrictions each time you send in an order. This helps us to reduce our postage expense for undeliverable mail. In addition, we can get orders out to you without unnecessary delays.

~ Current Issue ~

The first two articles in this issue are both part of the *Preparing the Bride Series*. The first is called *A Standard for Behavior* and goes into detail on what is proper behavior for a member of the *Bride of Messiah*.

The second article gives some examples as to how that *Standard* can be applied in today's world.

Tim Kelley has contributed an excellent article entitled: *Yom Kippur Gathering: The Message of Jubilee*. It gives a prophetic timeline which the *Fall Festivals* picture -- the coming of *Messiah* for His Bride, and their ultimate return to rule the earth with a rod of iron.

~ Current Offers ~

Two previously recorded CDs are in the process of being re-recorded into DVD format. Both are from the *Origins Series*. The first is *Origins of Mary Apparitions* (OR9). The second is *Origins of Scared Symbols* (OR10). Orders will be mailed as soon as these new recordings are ready.

Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread are coming soon. Please send in your order early, so that it arrives in plenty of time for the celebration. Items you might want to consider are: *A Believer's Passover Haggadah* (SPBPH), *Instructions for a Successful Seder* (SPIFSS), and the booklet *Passover in Egypt and Jerusalem* (SPPEJ).

The *Wedding of the Messiah* teaching is always timely, no matter what the season. If you have not yet studied our three booklets on that most important subject, now is a good time to do so. *Wedding of the Messiah I, II, and III* are all available for your enjoyment and edification, as are eight recorded teachings (W1 through W8).

If you would like to have any of the current offers, you may place your order by completing the enclosed *Offer Form* or the *Materials Order Form*. (Be sure to include your name and address with all correspondence.) If you would like extra copies of materials, to pass on to friends and/or relatives, please indicate the quantity desired and consider including a donation to help cover printing and mailing costs. All contributions are greatly appreciated.

May the peace of God
be with you always,

Dean & Susan Wheelock

Dean & Susan Wheelock

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# Preparing the Bride: A Standard for Behavior

Blessed are the undefiled in the way,  
Who walk in the law of the LORD!  
Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,  
Who seek Him with the whole heart!  
They also do no iniquity;  
They walk in His ways.  
*Psalm 119:1-3*



It is evident from Scripture that Believers in *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah) are in a marriage relationship with Him; a state of *Betrothal* -- as the Apostle Paul tells us:

**"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ [Messiah]."** (II Cor. 11:2)

Like a young betrothed Bride in ancient Israel, members of the *Bride of Messiah* are expected to be chaste virgins. Therefore, the question needs to be asked: "What does it mean to be a spiritually "Chaste Virgin?"

## ~ Called to Righteousness ~

That question is answered, at least in part, in the Book of Revelation:

**"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."**

**"<sup>18</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."** (Rev. 19:7-8)

Thus, the *Betrothed Bride* is to prepare for the great wedding to come. There are various tasks a *Betrothed Bride* needs to accomplish in order to be ready when her Husband comes to take her to the *Chuppah* (the Wedding Chamber).

First of all, she needs to prepare proper clothing for the impending wedding. In the above passage this clothing (i.e. the Wedding Dress) is said to be constructed of the finest

material available -- which is the spiritual equivalent to "**fine linen**." Spiritually, that material is made from "**... the righteous acts of the saints**." The *Complete Jewish Bible* makes clear what constitutes "**righteous acts**:"

**"Fine linen" means the righteous deeds of God's people."**

(Rev. 19:8 CJB)

## ~ Called to Be Saints ~

An important fact to learn from this passage in *Revelation*, is that the Bride is composed entirely of 'saints.' So, the next question to arise is: "Who are the saints?" In Roman Catholicism, the Church hierarchy determines who can be designated a 'saint.' However, in Scripture, it is a much different matter:

**"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,**

**"<sup>2</sup> To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified [set apart] in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua], called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] our Lord, both theirs and ours: . . ."** (I Cor. 1:1-2 NKJ)

This passage clearly states that the *Saints* are those who continually "call upon the name of *Y'shua HaMashiach*." In other words, all true Believers are considered to be saints (made holy and set apart) -- not just those declared to be such by a church organization.

Therefore, the *Wedding Dress*, which the Bride will wear at the final *Wedding Ceremony*, is nothing less than the righteous behavior of all the individuals who constitute the *Bride of Messiah*.

Our purpose in this article is to explore what the *Bride of Messiah* needs to be doing in order to be properly clothed for the wedding that is to take place when *Y'shua* returns.

It is evident, from the above Scriptures, that the *Bride* needs to be doing something that has to do with righteousness and/or righteous behavior. Therefore, we must come to a correct (Biblical) understanding of righteousness so that we can begin the task of preparing our *Wedding Dress*; in anticipation of that great day ahead.

## ~ Righteousness ~

What is it that makes a person righteous as opposed to unrighteous? Is there a standard which can be used to measure one's 'acts' as to whether they are righteous or not? It is very important that we understand completely what constitutes *Righteousness*, because we live in a world that simply cannot agree upon a standard for moral behavior. In addition, many today call good evil and evil good:

**"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;  
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"**

**<sup>21</sup> Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,  
And prudent in their own sight!"** (Isa. 5:20-21)

Many would say that moral behavior should be regulated by the teachings of their religion. The problem is that the various religions simply cannot agree either. While most religions hold certain basic moral precepts in common, it seems as though their disagreements often outweigh their areas of agreement. Thus we find, throughout history, a record of so-called "Holy Wars" -- of people killing one another in the name of their particular god, or gods.

Even if the major religions were able to come to agreement on a standard for moral behavior, there would still be a vast number of people (especially in the nations of the west) who hold to no unified religious belief. As a result, many people have been

attracted to secular philosophy, in order to determine a personal code of moral behavior.

We also find people whose only moral code seems to be: "I'll get mine and I don't care about anybody else." These are the morally bankrupt of the world and, sadly, their numbers are growing. However, as Believers in *Messiah Y'shua*, we have an instruction book which teaches a superior code of moral behavior. If all people of the world lived by this book there would be peace, love, and prosperity throughout the entire world.

Unfortunately, even those who profess to believe in the Bible cannot seem to come to agreement about what it actually teaches -- or how much of it needs to be followed; as opposed to what, if any, can be discarded:

**"There is a way that seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death."**  
(Prov. 14:12)

However, for those who are members of the *Betrothed Bride of Y'shua*, there must be some basic agreement concerning a *Standard of Behavior* which must prevail in order for harmony to exist.

Let us turn to the pages of the Bible and find the Biblical definition for *Righteousness*; then we will begin to know how to behave in order to assist in the preparation of the *Bride of Messiah's* Wedding Dress.

#### ~ Righteousness Defined ~

Before using religious words, such as 'righteous' and 'righteousness,' it is important to obtain correct Biblical definitions. Sometimes this can be done through a direct statement in Scripture. For example, sin is clearly defined in the New Testament in four different places:

**"... for whatever is not from faith is sin."**  
(Rom. 14:23)

**"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin,"**  
(James 4:17)

**"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is**

**the transgression of the law."**

(I John 3:4 KJV)

**"All unrighteousness is sin, ...**

(I John 5:17 NKJV)

All of these definitions of sin are important to this discussion because one major inherent attribute of righteousness is the absence of sin. When combined together, these four Biblical definitions of sin give a picture of what actually constitutes sin. *Righteousness* is to not transgress the rules (commandments) found in the *Torah*. *Righteousness* is being confident that what we are doing is not wrong, and *Righteousness* is doing good when good needs to be done, and not just sitting back and letting someone else do it.

The most direct definition of *Righteousness* is found in *Psalms* 119:

**"My tongue shall speak of Your word,  
For all Your commandments are righteousness."**

(Psalm 119:172)

Not just some of God's commandments are Righteousness -- ALL of them are completely righteous.

#### ~ Commandments ~

In Hebrew, there are very specific instructions which are referred to as *mitzvah* מצוה (#4687 - meets-vah' or *mitzvot* = plural form). There are a total of 613 of them to be found in the *Written Torah*. Of these 613, there are said to be 365 prohibitive (negative) commandments which correspond to the number of days in a solar year. These constitute the commands such as those which clearly state -- "Thou shall not." In addition there are 248 performative (positive) commandments which are said to correspond to the number of organs and limbs of the human body. These are the ones which urge men to perform good deeds.

Like the New Testament definitions of sin, the Old Testament definition of righteousness includes observing the 613 *Written Torah* commands, including those which demand doing good deeds -- for another definition of *mitzvah* is "doing good."

**"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? <sup>8</sup> 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?**

**"Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life."**

(Deut. 4:5-9)

#### ~ A Just Man ~

A *Righteous* commandment keeper will automatically be a *Just* man. For he will always try and do the right thing in any given situation:

**"But if a man is just  
And does what is lawful and  
right;**

**<sup>6</sup> If he has not eaten on the mountains [pagan sites],  
Nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,  
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife,  
Nor approached a woman during her impurity;**

**<sup>7</sup> If he has not oppressed anyone,  
But has restored to the debtor his pledge;**

**Has robbed no one by violence,  
But has given his bread to the hungry**

**And covered the naked with clothing;**

**<sup>8</sup> If he has not exacted usury  
Nor taken any increase,  
But has withdrawn his hand from iniquity**

**And executed true judgment  
between man and man;**

**<sup>9</sup> If he has walked in My statutes**

And kept My judgments  
faithfully --

**He is just;  
He shall surely live!"  
Says the Lord GOD."**

(Ezek. 18:5-9)

The *Righteous* or *Just* man will be  
protected by God:

**"Righteousness guards him  
whose way is blameless,  
But wickedness overthrows  
the sinner."** (Prov. 13:6)

#### ~ New Testament Confirmation ~

The New Testament confirms that  
the commandments of the *Torah* consti-  
tute righteousness:

**"And they were both [Zacharias  
and Elizabeth] righteous before God,  
walking in all the commandments  
and ordinances of the Lord  
blameless."** (Luke 1:6)

**"... (for not the hearers of the  
law are just in the sight of God, but  
the doers of the law will be justified;  
..."** (Rom. 2:13)

**"... concerning the righteousness  
which is in the law, blameless."**  
(Phil. 3:6)

Even the most often quoted  
passage of *Scripture* which deals with  
being saved by grace, ends with a state-  
ment that those so saved should  
perform good works or *Mitzvot*  
(commandments):

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

After examining all of the above  
*Scriptures* one can only come to the  
same conclusion as did Paul:

**"Therefore the law is holy, and  
the commandment holy and just and  
good."** (Rom. 7:12)

#### ~ The Bride of Righteousness ~

According to the passage we  
looked at earlier (Rev. 19:7-8), the  
*Bride of Messiah* is to wear a spiritual  
gown of 'Righteous Acts' as her  
wedding dress. These 'Righteous Acts'  
are defined in *Scripture* as the 613  
commandments or *mitzvot*. Thus, in  
can be seen, that at the end time, the  
*Bride* (or Church of called out ones)  
that flees into the wilderness to escape  
the clutches of the Dragon has three key  
attributes.

The first two are:

**"And the dragon was enraged  
with the woman, and he went to  
make war with the rest of her  
offspring, [those] who keep the  
commandments of God and have the  
testimony of Jesus Christ [Y'shua  
HaMashiach]." (Rev. 12:17)**

Keeping the commandments is so  
important for a Believer, it is expressed  
again two chapters later:

**"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)**

This passage also includes a third  
attribute -- having total faith or trust in  
Y'shua.

So the Bride has three very impor-  
tant attributes by which she can be  
identified:

- ♦ She has the testimony that  
Y'shua is her husband and  
Savior, and that He is coming  
for her; to bring her into the  
full marriage relationship.
- ♦ Because of that testimony, the  
*Bride* has complete confidence  
(or faith) in Him that He will  
fulfill His promises to her.
- ♦ In addition, the *Bride* is doing  
her utmost to observe, keep,  
do, and perform, the 613  
commandments; in order to be  
pleasing to her Husband.

#### ~ The Righteousness of God ~

Now some may say, at this point,  
"YES BUT! We receive our righteous-  
ness from Y'shua -- therefore we cannot

earn our salvation by keeping (or trying  
to keep) the 613 commandments."

That is absolutely, without a doubt,  
CORRECT. It is solely by Faith that  
we are saved:

**"But that no one is justi-  
fied [rendered righteous] by the law in  
the sight of God is evident, for 'the  
just shall live by faith.'" (Gal. 3:11)**

That we are not made righteous by  
the *Torah* is evident. The English word  
for 'justified' is translated from one of  
the Greek words (all of which are  
related) which means "made righteous!"  
That is what 'justified' means -- "Made  
Righteous."

It means to take someone who is  
not righteous and make that person  
righteous by some means other than the  
Law or *Torah* Commandments. The  
*Written Torah* defines righteousness --  
it cannot make us righteous. In other  
words, God takes us, who are by nature  
sinners, and He straightens us out. He  
justifies us -- making us righteous.

How is this accomplished?  
Through the shed blood of Y'shua, who  
made full *Atonement* for our sins:

**"Therefore by the deeds of the  
law no flesh will be justified in His  
sight, for by the law is the knowledge  
of sin."**

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of  
God apart from the law is revealed,  
being witnessed by the Law and the  
Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of  
God, through faith in Jesus Christ  
[Y'shua HaMashiach], to all and on all  
who believe. For there is no differ-  
ence; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall  
short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being  
justified freely by His grace through  
the redemption that is in Christ Jesus  
[Messiah Y'shua], <sup>25</sup> whom God set  
forth as a propitiation by His blood,  
through faith, to demonstrate His  
righteousness, because in His  
forbearance God had passed over the  
sins that were previously committed,  
<sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time  
His righteousness, that He might be  
just and the justifier of the one who  
has faith in Jesus [Y'shua].

<sup>27</sup> Where is boasting then? It is  
excluded. By what law? Of works?  
No, but by the law of faith.

**<sup>128</sup> Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.**" (Rom. 3:20-28)

~ An Example ~

Let us make a hypothetical example of what Paul is teaching us here. Suppose there was a man who had murdered someone. Suppose that he deeply regretted what he had done. Is he guilty of murder? Absolutely! Has he broken the commandments of the *Torah*? Absolutely!

Now suppose the same man wants to pay the penalty for his crime (sin) by perfectly keeping all the laws from that day forth (i.e. by legalistic observance of the law). Will his observance from that time forth ever pay the penalty for the murder he committed? No -- Never! He will always be guilty of murder -- no matter what he does. By keeping the law perfectly from that day on -- he is only doing what he should have been doing all along.

Now, what is the Biblical penalty for murder? Execution!

**"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death."** (Ex. 21:12)

So the man is now subject to the death penalty, despite all of his other wonderful works. Suppose another individual comes along and agrees to stand in for him when he is scheduled to die in the electric chair. And this individual actually does that. The penalty has now been paid and the murderer goes free. The death penalty price for murder has been paid for by someone else.

Now -- suppose the freed man goes out and commits a second murder. Because he received the Grace (favor) of having someone else stand in for him at the first execution, do you think he will find another person willing to be a stand-in the second time around? Whether he does or not is a moot point. The fact is that once the man has been forgiven of his past crimes, he should do what *Y'shua* told the woman who was caught in the act of adultery:

**"When Jesus [*Y'shua*] had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, 'Woman,**

**where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?'**

**<sup>131</sup> She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus [*Y'shua*] said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.'**" (John 8:10-11)

~ Sin Defined ~

As previously mentioned, the clearest definition of sin in Scripture is:

**"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."**

(I John 3:4 KJV)

Intentional sin is knowing that something is wrong but going ahead and doing it anyway. Not doing good to someone when you know you should is also a sin. As Believers, we find ourselves in exactly the same situation as the example of the murderer. Our past sins have been forgiven -- wiped clean -- obliterated as though they never existed:

**"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"** (Rom. 6:1-2 NKJ)

**"Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."** (I Cor. 15:34)

Once we have been forgiven, we are commanded to begin living lives of righteousness, no longer committing sin. Once we are justified we are commanded to follow the straight path.

~ Another Example ~

Some years ago we were building a storage shed. It came time to put some trim boards on the corners. One of the boards was quite bowed. (One could say it was not a righteous board.) However, after much effort, we managed to straighten it as we nailed it to the corner of the building. As a result of our efforts, that board had been made straight. It had been justified and now, one could say, it was a righteous board.

However, it had not been made straight (or righteous) by it's observance

of all the other laws of a board. The fact that it was 3/4 inch thick, 3 1/2 inches wide, and 80 inches long had no bearing on the fact that it was a crooked board to start with.

The next day we went out and noticed that this recently justified (made righteous) board was desperately trying to go back to its old crooked ways. It had developed a crack in its character as a result of its refusal to remain straight (righteous). Needless to say, we removed the board and replaced it with another that was willing to remain 'righteous' or straight. Consider the following *Scripture* which concerns the human terms of not being fully committed to walking the straight path once one's sins have been forgiven:

**"Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.**

**<sup>148</sup> 'But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,'"** (Matt. 24:46-51)

~ The Throne of Grace ~

Like the bowed board, we too are made straight by an external force. That force is the Living God [*YHVH*] who is willing to justify us through the sacrifice of His Son, *Y'shua*. All we can say is "*Baruch HaShem* -- Blessed be the Name of the LORD."

Once we are straightened out, it behooves us to remain straight and not go back to our old crooked ways! This does not mean that if we stumble and commit sin after having received forgiveness for those very sins through *Y'shua's* blood -- that we have committed the "unpardonable sin." God knows that we are still flesh and no matter how hard we try, there will come times when we will fail to live up to the standard established in the *Torah* (law aka Instruction Book). Therefore, God has

made a way for us to receive forgiveness and be reconciled to Him:

"For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must* give account.

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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. 4:12-16)

The Apostle John confirmed this great Favor which God has extended to His children -- the members of the *Bride of Messiah*:

"But 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.

<sup>18</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

(I John 1:7-10)

Praise Abba for His great mercy!

~ The Bride's Standard for Behavior ~

The Bride's *Standard for Behavior* consists of holding to the testimony of Y'shua and keeping the commandments of God:

"... who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]."

(Rev. 12:17)

This has always been the standard which God has set for His people. For example, *Avraham* looked forward to the time of the Messiah:

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

<sup>9</sup> By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:8-10)

*Avraham* had the Faith of Y'shua as he looked forward:

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (John 8:56)

But *Avraham* also remained straight by keeping the commandments of God. All of God's people (past, present, and future) were expected to keep the *mitzvot* (aka the commandments), and to perform good deeds.

Let us carefully examine this statement to see if it holds true. We will begin with *Adam* and *Chava* (Eve) who failed to keep God's direct commandment and thereby lost the blessing of *Paradise* because they did not obey:

"And the LORD [YHVH] God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

(Gen. 2:16-17)

However, *Noach* (Noah) was a *Tzadik* -- a righteous or just man in the sight of God:

"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD [YHVH]. <sup>9</sup> This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just [tzadik] man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

(Gen. 6:8-9)

*Avraham* also kept the commandments of God:

"And I will make your [Isaac's] descendants multiply as the stars of

heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

(Gen. 26:4-5)

Joseph refused to submit to adultery and was thrown into prison as a result of his righteous act:

"But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, <sup>12</sup> that she caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me.' But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside." (Gen. 39:11-12)

The children of Israel were expected to keep all of the commandments as communicated through *Moshe*:

"Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, 'Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the LORD [YHVH] your God. <sup>10</sup> Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD [YHVH] your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today." (Deut. 27:9-10)

The children of Israel were to continue to keep the *Torah* after *Moshe* had died:

"After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD [YHVH], it came to pass that the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying:

<sup>12</sup> 'Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them -- the children of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. <sup>4</sup> From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory.'

<sup>15</sup> 'No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as

I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.

"<sup>6</sup> 'Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.

"<sup>8</sup> 'This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success." (Josh. 1:1-8)

Commandment keeping was to be the norm under the system of *Judges*:

"And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD [YHVH], which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses." (Judg. 3:4)

Next came the era of the kings of Israel and Judah. They too were expected to lead the nation of Israel in the observance of God's commandments -- but King Saul failed in that respect (as did most of the others):

"Now the word of the LORD [YHVH] came to Samuel, saying,

"<sup>11</sup> 'I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.'

"And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD [YHVH] all night." (I Sam. 15:10-11)

King David, however, was dedicated to following all of the *Torah* -- although sometimes he too had lapses:

"With my whole heart I have sought You;

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"

(Psalm 119:10)

The *Prophets* stated over and over the punishments that were to come if the people and their leaders would not repent of breaking God's commandments, and the peace and joy that would be theirs if they were to obey:

"Thus says the LORD [YHVH], your Redeemer,

The Holy One of Israel:

'I am the LORD [YHVH] your God,

Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

<sup>18</sup> Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!

Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

(Isa. 48:17-18)

When the House of Judah returned from Babylonian captivity, they also returned to the observance of the *Torah* (at least for a time):

"Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD [YHVH] had commanded Israel.

"<sup>2</sup> So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month [*Yom Teruah aka Feast of Trumpets*]. <sup>3</sup> Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law." (Neh. 8:1-3)

~ Law Keeping in the NT ~

But what about Believers in *Y'shua* (whether Jew or Grafted-in Gentile)? Were only the Jews required to obey the *Torah*? Or were the Gentiles also subject to that requirement?

First of all, let us establish that the law was not "done away" as many have proclaimed:

"Do not think that I [*Y'shua*] came to destroy the Law or the

*Prophets*. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo = complete*]. <sup>18</sup>For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

(Matt. 5:17-18)

As Believers we are to both do and teach even the least of the commandments. In addition, our own righteous acts (our observance of the commandments) are to EXCEED that of the *Pharisees*. The Apostle Paul agreed on this point:

"Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters." (I Cor. 7:19)

Not only Jews, but also Gentiles were to learn the commandments of God and perform them to the very best of their ability. While the Gentiles were not expected to be perfect in their commandment keeping, before being allowed into fellowship -- they were expected to learn and improve as they studied and were taught:

"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, <sup>20</sup> but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

"<sup>21</sup> 'For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.'" (Acts 15:19-21)

The Gentiles were to learn 'Moses' (that means they were to learn *Torah* by attending synagogue every *Shabbat*). This was the means by which the Gentiles were delivered into the status of being *Grafted-In* to the *Olive Tree of Israel*:

"And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you [*Gentiles*] do not

support the root, but the root [*Israel*]  
supports you." (Rom. 11:17-18)

~ Summary ~

There is a *Standard* by which members of the *Betrothed Bride of Messiah* can check their behavior. It is called the *Written Torah* and consists of 613 commandments.

No single individual (with the exception of *Y'shua*) will ever be able to perfectly keep all of those commandments, which apply to them, while still in the flesh. Also most, if not all, Believers will have seriously broken some of those commandments prior to conversion. Nevertheless, the simple fact remains that every member of the *Bride of Messiah* must strive to "go on to perfection" (Heb. 6:1) by learning and following all of God's commands -- not just the ones they want to follow.

It will only be through the *Standard of Torah Observant Behavior* that the *Bride* will ever be able to finish her Wedding dress of fine linen as described:

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

<sup>18</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." (Rev. 19:7-8)

That dress is none other than the Righteous (commandment keeping) Acts of the Saints. When all members of the *Bride* come into relative compliance with the *Standards* set forth in the *Torah*, then the *Body* will be fitly framed together as it should be:

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ [*Messiah*].<sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.<sup>14</sup> For in fact the body is not one member but many. . . .<sup>26</sup> And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.<sup>27</sup> Now

you are the body of Christ [*Messiah*], and members individually."  
(I Cor. 12:12-14, 26-27)

Once the *Bride* has become fully married to *Messiah Y'shua* and has become fully *Torah Observant* -- then she will be able (like a mother teaching her young children) to teach the nations of the world how to behave properly -- how to have love, joy peace, and prosperity for 1000 years:

"In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city;

God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks.

<sup>2</sup> Open the gates,

That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

<sup>3</sup> You will keep him in perfect peace,

Whose mind is stayed on You,

Because he trusts in You.

<sup>4</sup> Trust in the LORD [*YHVH*]

forever,

For in YAH, the LORD [*YHVH*], is everlasting strength.

<sup>5</sup> For He brings down those who dwell on high,

The lofty city;

He lays it low,

He lays it low to the ground,

He brings it down to the dust.

<sup>6</sup> The foot shall tread it down --

The feet of the poor

And the steps of the needy."

<sup>7</sup> The way of the just is

uprightness;

O Most Upright,

You weigh the path of the just.

<sup>8</sup> Yes, in the way of Your judgments,

O LORD [*YHVH*], we have waited for You;  
The desire of our soul is for Your name  
And for the remembrance of You.  
<sup>9</sup> With my soul I have desired You in the night,  
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;  
For when Your judgments are in the earth,  
The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.'" (Isa. 26:1-9)

Meanwhile, our *Wedding Dress* is under construction!

Shalom,

DEW & SAW

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Let there be no thought that I have come  
To put an end to the law or the prophets.  
I have not come for destruction, but to make complete.  
Truly I say to you,  
Till heaven and earth come to an end,  
Not the smallest letter or part of a letter  
Will in any way be taken from the law, till all things are done.  
Matt. 5:17-18 BBE

# Preparing the Bride: Applying the Standard

You are the light of the world.  
A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.  
Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket,  
But on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house.  
Let your light so shine before men,  
That they may see your good works  
And glorify your Father in heaven.  
*Matthew 5:14-16*



In the previous article we established two major precepts:

- ◆ First of all, *Believers* in *Messiah Y'shua* are currently *Betrothed* to Him and are now awaiting His return to bring us into the state of full marriage.

Because we are in the *Betrothal* state we are to conduct ourselves as "chaste virgins:"

**"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ [*Messiah*]."** (II Cor. 11:2)

Not only are we to be chaste, we are also expected to be performing righteous acts in preparation for the wedding:

**"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."**

**"<sup>18</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."** (Rev. 19:7-8)

- ◆ The second major precept (covered in the previous article) is that the *Righteous Acts*, which the *Bride* performs during her *Betrothal* period, are defined in Scripture as the commandments of God:

**My tongue shall speak of  
Your word,**

**For all Your commandments are  
righteousness."**

(Psalm 119:172)

## ~ Completing the Law ~

The commandments found in the *Written Torah* (the first five books of the Bible) were not "done away" by *Y'shua*, as so many teach. Rather, *Y'shua* showed us how to properly observe them -- thereby rendering the Law "complete" through proper observance:

**"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill [*pleroo* = complete]. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.**

**"<sup>19</sup> 'Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.'"** (Matt. 5:17-20)

Many *Believers* do accept the fact that the members of the *Bride of Messiah* would do well to observe the commandments of God. The problem, they feel, is that many cannot be properly kept today. This fact sometimes confuses people. For example: none of the commandments related to the actual *Temple Service* and *Sacrifices* can be observed properly

today because there is no legitimate Temple.

However, even if there was a legitimate *Temple*, the question remains whether or not *Believers* (especially *Gentile Believers*) would even be allowed to bring a sacrifice to the *Temple*.

## ~ Building a Framework ~

The purpose of this article is not to try and answer all of the many questions concerning the observance of God's commandments (although a few of them will be addressed) -- but rather to build a framework which each one of us can use to understand how to properly obey the law of God at this present time. The easiest thing for a person to do is to sit back and have someone tell them, in minute detail, exactly how each commandment should be observed. In fact, that is exactly what *Rabbinic Judaism* does (along with many Christian sects).

However, what God really wants are not ten thousand human yellow pencils, all lined up and looking exactly the same, because they have been molded and shaped by the same human leaders. Rather, God desires individual men and women who have studied the Scriptures for themselves -- struggling with God's *Instruction Book* (the *Torah*) and have become convicted about how they can best follow His precepts. Because all of us are struggling to understand correctly, we still have a lot of unanswered questions -- some of which may never be adequately answered in this life, but will have to wait for clarification from the *Messiah* when He comes:

**"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."** (Phil. 2:12-13)

As we delve into this study, let us never forget what King David wrote in the depths of despair over his sinful condition:

**"Deliver me from the guilt of  
bloodshed, O God,**

The God of my salvation,  
And my tongue shall sing aloud  
of Your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips,  
And my mouth shall show forth  
Your praise.

<sup>16</sup> For You do not desire sacrifice,  
or else I would give it;  
You do not delight in burnt  
offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a  
broken spirit,  
A broken and a contrite heart --  
These, O God, You will not  
despise." (Psalm 51:14-17)

### ~ The Commandments of God ~

According to the *Rabbis*, the *Torah* contains a total of 613 commandments (called *mitzvah* or *mitzvot* (plural) in Hebrew). However, there is not complete agreement, even among the *Rabbis*, on which ones actually constitute the 613. *Rabbinic Judaism* takes their version of the 613 *mitzvot* and divides them into two major groups.

- ◆ 365 *Prohibitive Commandments* (negative commands) which correspond to the 365 days in a solar year. And --
- ◆ 248 *Performative Commandments* (positive commands) which are said to correspond to the number of organs and limbs in the human body (all of which are urging a person to perform good deeds).

An example of both types of commandments can be found in the following single *Scripture* passage:

**"You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume.**

<sup>136</sup> **'You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD [YHVH] your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.'**

(Lev. 19:35-36)

The same principle is found in each of these two verses -- in both a negative and a positive manner. Verse 35 is the *Prohibitive Commandment* and it tells what is expressly forbidden. Verse 36 is a *Performative Commandment*. It tells what the proper practice is.

Obedying a *Performative* injunction is considered to be a *mitzvah* (good deed). It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for commandments in general (*mitzvot* (pl. form)) is also used as the word for a good deed. Thus, if you avoid doing the *mitzvot* (the deeds) which are forbidden, that is a good deed. Likewise, if you perform the positive *mitzvot* (commandments), that is an even better deed.

### ~ A Popular Misconception ~

One of the comments often heard concerning the 613 *mitzvot* of God goes something like this: "You mean that in order to be saved I have to keep all 613 commandments all the time?"

The answer is NO on two counts.

First: we are not awarded salvation for keeping the commandments. Rather, we are given blessings for doing so -- for we are saved by God's grace through our Faith:

**"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."**

(Eph. 2:8-9)

We will be rewarded according to our works:

**"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."**

(Matt. 16:27)

Nevertheless, we express our Faith through the performance of *Good Works*:

**"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?"**

<sup>115</sup> **If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 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? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**

<sup>118</sup> **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.**

<sup>119</sup> **You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe -- and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"**

(James 2:14-20)

The second answer to the question "Do I have to keep all 613 commandments?" is different. It is not possible for one person to keep them all.

Some *Mitzvot* apply only to the Priests, some only to the High Priest. Some commandments apply only to the Levites. Some apply only to men, while others only to women. Some apply only to men who live in the land which was given by God to the children of Israel (*The Promised Land*). Let's look at some examples:

**"Now the LORD [YHVH] spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the LORD [YHVH], and died; <sup>2</sup> and the LORD [YHVH] said to Moses:**

**"Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.'" (Lev. 16:1-2)**

This is a *Prohibitive Commandment* which applies only to the *Tabernacle* or *Temple* and only to the *Priesthood*. Even though only Aaron is specifically mentioned, the fact that the deaths of Aaron's two sons are also referred to, in verse one, signifies that no Priest can enter the *Holy Place* at just any old time, but only when performing a commanded service and in a state of ritual purity.

Verse 3 is more specific -- only the *High Priest* can enter the *Holy of Holies* (where the *Ark of the Covenant* was kept); and his entrance can only occur on *Yom Kippur*:

**"The LORD [YHVH] said to Moses:**

**"Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.**

**"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering."** (Lev. 16:3)

If anyone else were to try and perform this commandment it would NOT BE A GOOD DEED! and would be punishable by death.

Now for a *Performative Commandment*:

**"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."** (Ex. 25:8)

This commandment applied to all of the children of Israel, for they all had a part to play in its construction (in many cases it was the donation of building materials and precious metals).

Later on it was commanded that the *Sanctuary* was to stand only where God specifically placed His Name. That location is recognized as being the *Temple Mount* in Jerusalem.

While all the children of Israel were to have a part in the building of the *Tabernacle* and, later on, the *Temple* -- they each had their own role to play.

#### ~ Other Commandments ~

Here is a *Performative Commandment* that applies to everyone -- everywhere:

**"Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed."** (Ex. 23:12)

Here is another:

[A.] **"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD [YHVH] your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and [B.] they shall not appear before the LORD [YHVH] empty-handed."** (Deut. 16:16)

Verse 16a is a *Performative Commandment* that applies only to men and requires the Temple to be functioning. Verse 16b is a *Prohibitive*

*Commandment* that also applies only to men and the Temple.

This is not to say that men, women, and children cannot celebrate the *Festivals* apart from a sanctified Temple -- for they should:

**"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest. <sup>22</sup> And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end."** (Ex. 34:21-22)

Deut. 16:16 is merely saying that, when a *Temple* is properly functioning in Jerusalem, the men are required to attend there.

Moving on to a different subject:

**"If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening."** (Lev. 15:19)

This is said to be a *Performative Commandment* which applies only to women -- since if she touches someone else she makes them unclean. Therefore, it is a *mitzvah* (good deed) if she refrains from touching another person, during her period, since only she knows for sure if she is ritually clean or unclean. Being "unclean" is not a sin in itself. In fact, everyone has times of uncleanness. However, to intentionally make someone else unclean is a sin:

**"Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD [YHVH]. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard."** (Lev. 25:3-4)

Here we have a mixture of positive and negative commands. Verse 3 is a *Positive Commandment* to raise crops, prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit during a six year period. Verse 4 has two negative commands -- not to sow or prune during the seventh year. Obviously, these commands apply only to those who grow crops. According to Jewish tradition, they apply only to

those who grow crops in the *Promised Land*. However, many people in the *Diaspora* have performed this practice and say they have been blessed by doing so.

#### ~ The Need to Study ~

As can be seen, to fully understand the commandments (*mitzvot*) of God requires a lifetime of study. Many people have made the mistake of reading a commandment -- not understanding to whom it was intended to be applied -- and then run with it. (Often they condemn others who do not follow what may be a misguided lead.) One of the areas of abuse has been in teaching about tithing.

#### ~ The Tithing Dilemma ~

Tithing, as taught in the *Torah*, only applies to agriculture products and specifically only to agriculture products that are grown in the land of Israel. They are given only to the *Levitical Priesthood* who perform service in the *Tabernacle* or *Temple*. For a ministry to insist that its members pay tithes on earned income is not in accordance with tithing as taught in the *Torah*. If they want to base tithing upon some other aspects of *Scripture*, that is up to them and to the people they shepherd. But tithing to a church organization is nowhere commanded in the *Torah* or in the New Testament.

Now, of course, every ministry depends upon the support of the ones they serve in order to exist. *Hebrew Roots* could not even begin to exist if it were not for the freewill offerings of its subscribers -- but we do not teach that anyone must tithe to us.

One last note on this subject. While wage earners were not required to tithe on their earnings (according to *Torah*) they were required, by custom, to give generously to help support the widows and the orphans and for the upkeep of their local synagogue. The phrase "good eye" (as used in *Scripture*) describes one who was generous in his giving -- while an "evil eye" describes someone who was stingy:

**"But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no**

wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? <sup>14</sup> Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. <sup>15</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?"

(Matt. 20:13-15)

### ~ The Oral Torah ~

According to the *Pharisees* and Rabbinic Judaism (which claims to descend from the *Pharisees*), the *Torah* (God's *Instruction Book*) includes not only the *Written Torah* (the first five books of the Bible) but a whole body of *Oral* instructions as well. These verbal instructions are called the *Oral Torah*. The original *Oral Torah* is said to have been given to *Moses* when he was with God on Mt. Sinai, and then was handed down orally through the Priesthood, the Judges, and the Sages.

About 200 CE, a famous Rabbi called *Judah the Prince* decreed that the *Oral Torah* had to be written down, lest it be lost due to the dispersion of the Jewish people. Thus today, we have the *Oral Torah* in written form. It is called the *Mishneh*.

However, what was written down is more than what was said to have been given orally to *Moses*, because it also includes a large amount of "case law" as well. These were decisions that were made by Rabbinic Courts when cases were brought to them. Therefore, the *Oral Torah* (*Mishneh*) contains various opinions of the Rabbis on various subjects.

Then, around 400 CE the Rabbis began adding a large amount of commentary to the *Mishneh*. This commentary is called the *Gemara*. The *Mishneh* together with the *Gemara* is called the *Talmud*. To complicate things even further, there are two different *Talmuds* -- one developed in Babylon (the *Babylonian Talmud*) and the other in the Holy Land (the *Jerusalem Talmud*).

Out of all these various writings Rabbinic Judaism has developed an intricate set of laws on how a pious Jew should conduct his life. This complete set of laws is called *Halacha* (literally -- the way one walks out their life).

### ~ NT Commandments ~

It is our belief that Believers in *Y'shua* have their own *Halacha* based upon the *Written Torah*, the instructions found in the *Prophets* and the *Writings*. These are expounded upon by *Y'shua HaMashiach*, and taught by His Disciples.

Finis Dake, a Christian scholar, has actually codified all of the commandments he claims to have found in the New Testament. He says they total 1050, in addition to the 613 *Torah* commandments of the Old Testament (although many, no doubt, overlap). That list can be found in *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*, (KJV) beginning on page 313 of the New Testament section.

### ~ A Further Breakdown ~

One of the confusing things about Old Testament Law is the way the English translators have rendered certain single Hebrew words into a variety of English words, thus confusing their meanings:

**"And I will make your [Isaac's] descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."**

**"So Isaac dwelt in Gerar."**

(Gen. 26:4-6)

Let us take a closer look at the Hebrew words behind some of these English renderings:

1.) *Charge* -- from *mishmeret* (#4931) -- often translated as "ordinance."

2.) *Commandments* -- from *mitzvah* (#4687) translated as "law or precept."

3.) *Statutes* -- from *chok* (#2706) translated as "law, ordinance, custom, decree, commandments." Another related word: *Chokah* (#2708) is translated as: "ordinance, customs."

4.) *Laws* -- from *Torah* (#8451) always translated as "Law," but could better be rendered "Instruction."

In addition, there are two words which are also sometimes used interchangeably in English:

*Judgments* -- from *mishpet* (#4941) translated as: "right, ordinance, manner, according, or lawful." And --

*Testimony* -- (#5715) translated as: "witness."

A thorough understanding of the law requires an in-depth study of these various terms and what they really mean in the context in which they are used. This type of comprehensive study is beyond the scope of this article. However, for today, it is important to note that there is more than one accepted interpretation about how to divide up the *mitzvot* (commandments) into these various categories.

Here is one way to break some of them down.

- ♦ *Mishpatim* or *Judgments* -- are the moral and ethical laws. These are primarily focused on the last five of the Ten Commandments.
- ♦ *Edot* (testimonies or witnesses). These refer to the *Festivals* (including *Shabbat*). Also to various aspects of prayer.
- ♦ *Chokim* (statutes or decrees). These are the commandments that have no apparent explanation in the physical realm. For example, the Rabbis teach that the food laws of *Lev. 11* (reiterated in *Deut. 14*), fall into this category. Even though we may not understand why God gave these laws, it is considered to be a great *mitzvah* (good deed) to observe them because He said to do so -- even though we do not understand why at this time. The Rabbis also teach that we will come to fully understand them when *Messiah* returns.

### ~ Fences ~

Another aspect about Biblical Law is the issue of the establishment of *Fences* around the Law. *Fences* are extra, man-made rules which have been added to prevent one from even getting

close to breaking the Written Law itself. The first recorded fence is found in the very beginning of the book of *Genesis*:

**"And the LORD [YHVH] God commanded the man, saying,**

**'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'**"

(Gen. 2:16-17)

This passage clearly states that *Adam* and *Eve* were not to eat of the fruit of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. However, very soon a "fence" was added:

**"And the woman said to the serpent,**

**'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"** (Gen. 3:2-3)

Who added the fence? It was either *Adam* or *Eve* -- we are not told which. The problem is that "fences" sometimes become more important, in people's eyes, than keeping the commandments the way in which they were intended to be kept when they were given by God.

Nevertheless, *Y'shua* Himself did establish some fences. Here are two examples:

**"You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment."**

**"<sup>22</sup> 'But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, "Raca!" shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, "You fool!" shall be in danger of hell fire.'**" (Matt. 5:21-22)

**"You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery."**

**"<sup>28</sup> 'But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.'**"

(Matt. 5:27-28)

Both of these examples constitute "fences" -- additions to the original commands. Both are very typical of the Jewish teaching of *Y'shua's* day. However, one fence that *Y'shua* established, which was not typical of the teaching of His day, is found in:

**"You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."**

**"<sup>44</sup> 'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**"<sup>46</sup> 'For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?**

**"<sup>48</sup> 'Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.'"** (Matt. 5:43-48)

All of these examples are classic cases of putting fences around the law. *Fences* are good if they are used lawfully -- but they can be bad if used to prohibit that which is good.

### ~ Personal Responsibility ~

It is of the utmost importance to remember that, as we learn about the law of God and begin to practice more of the *Mitzvot* (Commandments) that apply to us -- that we be careful not to become self-righteous about our actions and begin judging others because they are not doing the things we are doing in the manner in which we are doing them.

*Y'shua* was emphatic about us not judging each other without first getting our own house in order:

**"Judge not, that you be not judged. <sup>2</sup> For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. <sup>3</sup> And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me**

**remove the speck from your eye;" and look, a plank is in your own eye?**

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

(Matt. 7:1-5)

We need to work out our own problems first -- not the problems of our brother and sister. The Apostle Paul also addressed this question in regard to eating clean meat purchased from the open market, not knowing whether it had been offered to an idol:

**"Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; <sup>26</sup> for 'the earth is the LORD'S [YHVH's], and all its fullness.' (Psalm 24:1)**

**"<sup>27</sup> If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. <sup>28</sup> But if anyone says to you, 'This was offered to idols,' do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for 'the earth is the LORD'S [YHVH's], and all its fullness.'**

**"<sup>29</sup> 'Conscience,' I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? <sup>30</sup> But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?**

**"<sup>31</sup> Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, <sup>33</sup> just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."**

(I Cor. 10:25-33)

Although Paul states there is nothing wrong with eating meat from the open market (as long as it is Biblically clean meat) -- if a brother is bothered by this act, then it would be an act of love toward that person to not eat of it in his presence. That way, he will not be tempted to eat something that he believes (down deep in his heart) is a sin to eat. Therefore, Paul issued this definition of sin:

**"But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."** (Rom. 14:23)

Paul also taught that we do not have to come under rigid man made rules (in addition to what is found in the *Written Torah*) concerning how we celebrate the *Sabbath* or the *Festivals*:

**"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, <sup>17</sup> which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ [*Messiah*],"**  
(Col. 2:16-17)

In this case the Colossians were being judged concerning how they celebrated these special days. It was not a question of observing them or not -- for they were all observing these days. The question was the manner in which they were performing their celebration.

Finally, let us read what *Ya'acov* (James) had to say:

**"Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. <sup>12</sup> There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?"**  
(James 4:11-12)

#### ~ Summary ~

To sum up the matter -- we find that there are said to be 613 *Mitzvot* (Commandments) of God found in the *Written Torah*. They are divided into 365 *Prohibitive Commandments* and 248 *Performative Commandments*.

No single individual is obligated to keep all 613 commandments -- for some apply only to men, others only to women, some only to the High Priest, some only to farmers, some are valid only if you live in the land of Israel, while others only if the *Temple* is functioning.

Also it must be remembered that even if a person does faithfully observe all of the commandments that apply to him as an individual -- that observance will not grant him salvation unto eternal

life. That is a free gift from God and is a result of one's *Faith* in the supreme sacrifice of *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah).

In addition to the *Written Torah* Judaism also follows the dictates of the *Oral Torah*. Much of the *Oral Torah* has to do with the interpretation of the *Written Torah* and the establishment of fences around the law.

However, we as *Believers* have our own Rabbi -- His name is *Y'shua*. He taught us how to properly follow the *Written Torah* by setting an example for us. He was called, by His disciples, the *Living Torah* (the Word made flesh -- John 1:14). Our *Halacha* (the way we walk out our faith) is based upon the *Written Torah*, as defined by *Y'shua's* example and amplified by the teachings of the Apostles.

Lastly we must remember the need to truly understand a commandment before we can observe it properly. Otherwise, we might find ourselves doing something that is actually contrary to *Torah*.

Also, we must never judge ourselves as better than someone else because we are doing something they are not yet doing. God is working with each one of us as individuals -- and we can all be thankful for that.

In closing let us meditate on a portion of *Psalm 119* which extols the virtues of God's Commandments:

**"Oh, how I love Your law!  
It is my meditation all the day.**

**<sup>98</sup> You, through Your  
commandments, make me  
wiser than my enemies;  
For they are ever with me.**

**<sup>99</sup> I have more understanding  
than all my teachers,  
For Your testimonies are my  
meditation.**

**<sup>100</sup> I understand more than  
the ancients,**

**Because I keep Your precepts.**

**<sup>101</sup> I have restrained my feet from  
every evil way,**

**That I may keep Your word.**

**<sup>102</sup> I have not departed from  
Your judgments,**

**For You Yourself have  
taught me.**

**<sup>103</sup> How sweet are Your words to  
my taste,**

**Sweeter than honey to my mouth!**

**<sup>104</sup> Through Your precepts I get  
understanding;**

**Therefore I hate every  
false way."**

(Psalm 119:97-104)

Shalom,

DEW & SAW

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*For not the bearers of the law are just  
In the sight of God,  
But the doers of the law  
Will be justified.  
Romans 2:13*

# Yom Kippur Gathering

## The Message of Jubilee

And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year,  
And proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants.  
It shall be a Jubilee for you;  
And each of you shall return to his possession,  
And each of you shall return to his family.  
That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you.  
*Leviticus 25:10-11*

by Tim Kelley



Yom Kippur is a very special day, and in Judaism, it is considered to be the most sacred day of the year. It is listed in Leviticus 23, along with most of the other appointed times of God. It is a day of fasting and of sacrifices for the cleansing of God's people, starting with Aaron and his house, and then for the people of Israel themselves. It concludes with the sins of Israel being put on the head of a goat called the 'Azazel' -- the goat of departure -- which was led away to the wilderness. It pictures *Messiah Yeshua* taking our sins away to a place where even God himself can no longer remember them.

### ~ Other Aspects ~

But there are other aspects of this day that are not often discussed, one of which is the role Yom Kippur plays in the Return of the Captives -- the Exiles of Israel.

Just days before crossing the Jordan to enter the promised land, Moses warned Israel that they would eventually turn from God and be scattered throughout the nations; but in a day of calamity, they would return to Him.

**""And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse,**

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Visit their Website:  
[www.amiyisrael.org](http://www.amiyisrael.org)*

**which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD [YHVH] your God has driven you, <sup>2</sup> and return to the LORD [YHVH] your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, <sup>3</sup> then the LORD [YHVH] your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD [YHVH] your God has scattered you.**

**""<sup>4</sup> 'If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD [YHVH] your God will gather you, and from there he will take you. <sup>5</sup> And the LORD [YHVH] your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.'"** (Deut. 30:1-5 ESV)

Other than those Scriptures pertaining to the Messiah -- the return of the captives -- the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel, is probably the most mentioned prophetic theme in the Bible. It could be said that these prophecies begin as far back as Genesis 12 with the promise made to Abraham, and they continue through the book of Revelation.

Though Jeremiah prophesied of it being an event that far exceeds the greatness of Israel being delivered from Egypt,\* there is no Festival dedicated to the gathering of the exiles. But God has not left us clueless. He has alluded to this 'second Exodus' as part of an event that happens every fifty years -- an event that takes place on Yom Kippur:

**""And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.""**

(Lev. 25:8-9 NKJ)

After seven cycles of seven years, on Yom Kippur of the first year of the next (eighth) cycle, God said that a shofar shall be blown throughout the land of Israel. That shofar would be heard everywhere in the land and that the people would shout for joy, just as the Hebrews shouted when the walls of Jericho began to fall, and as the Jewish people shouted in the days of Ezra when they saw the rebuilt Temple.\*\*

### ~ What is the Shouting About? ~

Why would the people shout? Let us continue:

**""And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.'"**

(Lev. 25:10 NKJ)

The people shout because they will be liberated from slavery. They will have liberty -- liberty to return to their homes and to live on their own land. Families will come back together as they return to the inheritances granted by God himself.

In this passage, the Hebrew word translated 'liberty' is *derowr* דִּרְוֹר (#1865 de-ror). It means "a flowing, free run -- the unrestricted flow of sap from a maple tree." Unlike the "freedom from law" that is espoused by many churches; as well as liberal organizations, the freedom provided by the Jubilee is a freedom in law -- a freedom that guarantees everyone's ability to flow about, to run free. That freedom will be announced by the blast

\*Jer. 16:14-16, 23; 23:7-8

\*\*Ezra 3:12

of a shofar, which in many cases is a ram's horn. In fact, the word *Jubilee* is translated from the Hebrew word *yovel* יוֹבֵל (#3104 yoh-vahl) which does mean ram's horn; the root of which is *yabal* יָבַל (#2986) which means "to bring, lead, carry." So not only does this day picture liberty, it carries with it the idea that God's people will be 'led' or 'carried' to liberty.

When you consider that the Jubilee only takes place every 50 years, and that it always begins on Yom Kippur, is it possible that there is a message in the Jubilee that we may have missed? I believe there is. Though there is no single passage in scripture that ties the Jubilee year to a specific event in Biblical eschatology, I believe we can tie a number of prophecies together and build a picture of the end time "greater Exodus" and tie it to the Jubilee. To do so, we will need to bring in a little understanding of the *Hebrew Wedding*, tie that to the Biblical Festivals of Leviticus 23, and also introduce the Jewish understanding of some oftentimes misapplied biblical terms.

So in this article, we're going to briefly discuss the *Hebrew Wedding*, introduce Jewish tradition to some biblical terms, see what the fall Festivals reveal about the end times, and discuss one of *Yeshua's* roles -- especially the role He plays at the end of days. With that, we'll see how all this ties in with the Jubilee and hopefully gain a better understanding of end-time prophecy.

### ~ The Hebrew Wedding ~

The ancient Hebrew courtship/marriage process is somewhat like the traditional Christian process of years past (before it became acceptable to live together before getting married) with the major difference being that a person was legally married at betrothal. The process is loosely linked to the Biblical Festivals in regards to them. It goes like this:

- ◆ Covenant between Fathers (Passover)
- ◆ Courtship (DULB = Days of Unleavened Bread -- until reaching Mt. Sinai)

- ◆ Betrothal (Shavuot = Pentecost)
- ◆ Snatching the Bride (Yom Teruah = Feast of Trumpets)
- ◆ Leaving the *Chuppah* (Yom Kippur = Day of Atonement)
- ◆ Wedding Feast (Sukkot = Feast of Tabernacles)
- ◆ New Life Together (Shemini Atzoreth = The Eighth Day)

To illustrate these relationships, it is understood that God made the covenant with Abraham\* on Passover, then confirmed it 400 or so years later when He delivered Israel from Pharaoh at Passover. It is also clear that God took Israel as His Betrothed Bride at Shavuot some 50 days later. As we move to the fall Festivals, it is widely believed that God will 'take' His bride on Yom Teruah (the Feast of Trumpets), then after the pattern set by Jacob in Leah,\*\* God will stay with the bride in the *Chuppah* for seven years, then return for the Wedding Supper which takes place on Sukkot. After the wedding supper, they, like it is with the typical Christian wedding, will begin to build a new family and live their lives together.

Now that we have a general overview of the Hebrew wedding, let us take a look at a few terms that are defined by Jewish tradition. They, along with their 'traditional' meaning are:

- ◆ First Trump (betrothal of Israel at Mount Sinai)
- ◆ Last Trump (fetching away of the Bride; announces the arrival of the Bridegroom -- Yom Teruah)
- ◆ Great Trumpet (the trumpet that is blown at the end of Yom Kippur); see Isaiah 27:13
- ◆ "At that day" or "in that day" (the end times, specifically the beginning of the birth pains)

\*Genesis 12

\*\*Genesis 29:27 to "fulfill her week" means to stay with her in the *Chuppah* -- the Wedding Chamber -- for seven days.

\*\*\* Colossians 2:15-17.

- ◆ Day of the Lord (the "tribulation Birthpains." (See Joel 2:1,11; Is. 2:12, 13:6; Jer 46:10; Ezek 30:3; 2 Peter 3:10).

Armed with the above information and beginning with Yom Teruah, let us now take a deeper look at the sequence of the fall Festivals which are a 'shadow'\*\*\* of what is going to happen at the end of days.

### ~ Yom Teruah ~

The fall Festivals begin with Yom Teruah. In 1st century Israel this day pictured the day that, with repentance, a person might be considered worthy to avoid the *Birthpains* (which we will get to later). An example of such is when the Pharisees came to John's baptism.

**"Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him <sup>6</sup> and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'"**  
(Matt. 3:5-7 NKJ)

It is clear that these people, which includes "all Judea," came to John's baptism at the Jordan River to repent, hoping they would be spared from the "wrath to come" -- the *Birthpains* of the Messiah.

Paul, a man who considered himself to be a Jew, even though he was actually from the tribe of Benjamin, also understood the Jewish traditions surrounding the fall Festivals, and thus provides further insight into the meaning of this day:

**"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus [*Y'shua*] died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus [*Y'shua*]. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from**

heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ [Messiah] will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:13-17 NKJ)

Paul made a similar statement in his first letter to the Corinthians:

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (I Cor. 15:51-52 NKJ)

With these three passages, we see that on Yom Teruah there will be a "catching away" followed by the 'birthpains' or 'tribulation.' Note that it begins when Yeshua descends with a 'shout' which is further defined as the "trumpet of God" and at the "last trumpet." It is at this time that the righteous believers and the "dead in Christ" will be resurrected to eternal life. Many believe this is the "resurrection of the Just."\* Note that the text does not indicate that Yeshua will actually set His feet on earth that day, but instead, the believers will rise up to meet Him in the air.

#### ~ Birthpains of the Messiah ~

The Birthpains are referenced throughout both the Old and New Testament. One of the most referenced scriptures is found in Jeremiah's prophecy:

"Ask now, and see, can a man bear a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Why has every face turned pale? <sup>7</sup>Alas! That day is so great there is none like it; it is a time of distress for

Jacob; yet he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. 30:6-7 ESV)

This scripture points to a time when God will bring his wrath on the Hebrew people, both Israel and Judah, for their sins and blasphemy against God. When asked about this time, Yeshua said:

"For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ [Messiah],' and they will lead many astray. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

"<sup>9</sup> Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.'" (Matt. 24:5-12 ESV)

This will be an unprecedented time of war, famine, and lawlessness; a time when many will look to a human 'king' to save them, but will be greatly deceived. On the other hand, those who proclaim these times as God's indignation against a disobedient people will

be hated, just as happened to the prophets of old.

The Birthpains are generally believed to last seven years, with the final three and a half years being the "great tribulation" (see vs. 9 above). This is not a good time! But neither is it a time when God simply forsakes His people. Rather, it is a time when God brings correction on a disobedient child for the purpose of helping him to see where he has gone wrong. The purpose of the birthpains is to cause Israel and Judah to repent and turn back to God:

"There is hope for your future, declares the LORD [YHVH], and your children shall come back to their own country. <sup>18</sup> I have heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the LORD [YHVH] my God. <sup>19</sup> For after I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I slapped my thigh; I was ashamed, and I was confounded, because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'" (Jer. 31:17-19 ESV)

#### ~ A Shelter From the Storm ~

What about those who have been walking in God's way -- those who have been diligently serving Him? Will they have to endure the Birthpains as well? Scripture seems to indicate that they may be "hidden away" during this time. David speaks of a "time of trouble" when the righteous might be hidden:

*And let this fiftieth year be kept holy,  
And say publicly that everyone in the land is free from debt:  
It is the Jubilee, and every man may go back  
To his heritage and to his family.  
Let this fiftieth year be the Jubilee:  
A seed may be planted,  
And that which comes to growth of itself may not be cut,  
And the grapes may not be taken from the uncared-for vines.*

*Leviticus 25:10-11 BBE*

\* Luke 14:14; Acts 14:15 -- the unjust could simply be those who do not observe the law -- not that they are necessarily against the law, but are not aware of it, or may have been blinded to it.

**"For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock." (Psalm 27:5 NKJ)**

Isaiah also speaks of a time when God's people will be sheltered from His indignation:

**"Come, my people, enter your chambers,  
And shut your doors behind you;  
Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment,  
Until the indignation is past.  
21 For behold, the LORD [YHVH] comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
The earth will also disclose her blood,  
And will no more cover her slain." (Isaiah 26:20-21 NKJ)**

In this passage, the word 'chambers' is translated from the Hebrew word *chedar* חֶדֶר (#2315 kheh'-der) which means 'bedchamber.' This indicates that during the birthpains, many of the righteous will be in the *Chedar* while the rest of mankind endures the birthpains. This would include many "fence sitters" -- those who believe in God, but are unwilling to walk in His ways because they have let the cares of the world overtake them. These people will likely repent sometime during this period of tribulation and God may spare them from the balance of this terrible time. *Yeshua* alludes to this possibility when He said:

**"Therefore when you see the "abomination of desolation," spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes ... 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.'" (Matt. 24:15-18, 21 NKJ)**

"Fleeing to the mountains" is a reference to the story of *Hanukkah* where the priest *Mattathias* told those who followed God to flee to avoid the carnage that was about to come on Jerusalem:

**"And Mattathias cried throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, 'Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me.'**

**"28 So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city."**

(I Maccabees 2:27-28)

~ Yom Kippur ~

The festival that follows the Birthpains is Yom Kippur. It is a day of "afflicting our soul" as well as a time of forgiveness; and according to *Yeshua*, this day marks the time of His return to the earth:

**"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:29-30 NKJ)**

Since we will be discussing this day for the remainder of this study, I will skip the details here except to note that it is the day that follows on the heels of the Birthpains and that *Yeshua* clearly stated that He would return on this day.

~ Sukkot ~

The festival of Sukkot pictures the Messianic Kingdom, in which we have the *Wedding Supper* of the Lamb. It is a time of restoration. For 1000 years the Messiah will go about his father's business restoring the Kingdom of Israel as it was intended to be. Sukkot begins five days after Yom Kippur, which indicates there is a break between the return of the Messiah on Yom Kippur and the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom.

~ Shemini Atzoret ~

Literally "the Eighth Day Assembly," Shemini Atzoret begins immediately after Sukkot and is chronologically a New Beginning. The seven "1000 year" cycle will have been completed at the end of Sukkot, and a new 'cycle' begins, though this cycle is outside of time since there is no sun or moon by which we can determine time. The Messiah and His Bride start a new life together back where it all began -- the Garden of Eden. It is a life that will last forever.

To summarize what we have seen so far, the Biblical Festivals are related to the Hebrew Wedding and the events of the Wedding help us to understand the Festivals. We have also seen that the fall Festivals, beginning with Yom Teruah, picture the catching away of the Believers and the beginning of the Birthpains that precede the coming of the Messiah. With that, we will briefly discuss one of the main roles of the Messiah.

~ *Yeshua's Purpose* ~

Just after *Yeshua* returned from being tested by HaSatan, and before He had called His disciples, He went into the synagogue in Nazareth. As part of the study He was asked to stand up and read the portion for that day which included Isaiah 42:7, 49:8, and 61:1-2. He said:

**"The Spirit of the LORD [YHVH] is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind.  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD [YHVH]."**  
(Luke 4:18-19 NKJ)

After reading to that point, He abruptly stopped in the middle of a thought and sat down. Because He did not finish the prescribed reading, everyone looked at Him with a quizzical

look. He then gave a short and concise commentary on what He had just read. He said:

**"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21 NKJ)**

This event more than likely took place on Yom Kippur as evidenced by the context of the passages and by the fact that the people's outrage prompted them to attempt to throw Him over a cliff (vs. 29), something they traditionally\* did to the Azazel goat of Yom Kippur.

The context of the passages He quoted speaks of the return of the exiles using terms such as "my people," 'prisoners' and 'captives.' It was common knowledge in Yeshua's day that the 'kingdom' could not be restored until the Captives -- the Exiles -- were free to return to the land. The disciples knew that as well, after all Yeshua had Himself said:

**"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."\*\*\***  
(Matt. 15:24 NKJ)

So the Disciples -- on the day the resurrected Messiah was taken up to the Father, asked Him:

**"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"**  
(Acts 1:6 NKJ)

The gathering of the exiles and the restoration of the Kingdom of God was the main reason Yeshua was sent. It is through that Kingdom that ultimately all mankind will have the opportunity to know and follow God as is indicated by the prophet Isaiah:

**"And he said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' 4 But I said, 'I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD [YHVH], and my recompense with my God.' 5 And now the LORD [YHVH] says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him;**

**and that Israel might be gathered to him -- for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD [YHVH], and my God has become my strength -- 6 He says: 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'"** (Isaiah 49:3-6 ESV)

Yeshua's purpose is to gather Israel back to God, but God knows the heart of man and that it oftentimes takes a crisis to make him stop and think about what he is doing and what has caused him to get into such a mess. Though many people will take notice when they see calamity around them -- for instance, the events of September 11, 2001 -- God knows it will take a cataclysmic event that shakes the entire world to get His scattered people to take notice. That is the purpose for the 'Birthpains,' which according to the Festival cycle, end at Yom Kippur.

### ~ The Gathering Begins ~

Though the above passage shows that it is the role of the Messiah to gather the preserved of Israel, Isaiah provides us with a time frame in which that will happen:

**"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse,  
Who shall stand as a banner to the people;  
For the Gentiles shall seek Him,**

**And His resting place shall be glorious.**

**11 It shall come to pass in that day**

**That the LORD [YHVH] shall set His hand again the second time**

**To recover the remnant of His people who are left,  
From Assyria and Egypt,  
From Pathros and Cush,  
From Elam and Shinar,  
From Hamath and the islands of the sea.**

**12 He will set up a banner for the nations,  
And will assemble the outcasts of Israel,  
And gather together the dispersed of Judah  
From the four corners of the earth." (Isa. 11:10-12 NKJ)**

According to the prophet, it will begin "in that day" which, as mentioned earlier, is a Hebrew idiom that means "at the end time" and more specifically, sometime around the times of the Birthpains. When combined with Matthew 24:29-30 mentioned above, it is clear that Yeshua will begin the gathering of the exiles on Yom Kippur.

Many believe that when He comes, He will come by Himself, go directly to the Mount of Olives, and set His feet on it. This belief comes from the prophet Zechariah where it says:

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

*For it is the Jubilee, and it is holy to you  
Your food will be the natural increase of the field.*

*In this year of Jubilee*

*Let every man go back to his heritage.*

*And in the business of trading goods for money,*

*Do no wrong to one another.*

*Leviticus 25:12-14 BBE*

\* The Jews incorrectly associated the Azazel with haSatan See <https://www.amiyisrael.org/articles.phpff/YomKippurSinsBlottedOut-tittle>

\*\* See also John 11:50; John 7:35.

Though it is true that He will eventually stand on the Mount of Olives, to do that immediately on His return would void much of the prophecy about the return of the exiles, and would invalidate the purpose of the Festivals, which according to Paul are "a shadow of things to come."\* If indeed the Festivals provide an image of things that will happen to the followers of the Messiah, then we must take all the Festivals as specific events and look at them in the context of the Wedding of the Messiah. In addition, we should also take into account a truth that should guide all prophetic understanding, and that is the words of King Solomon who said:

**"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun."** (Eccl. 1:9 ESV)

So when we search to find what will happen, we should look for similar events that have already happened ... not that future events will perfectly match former events, but there would be clear similarities.

Jeremiah 16:14-16 and 23:7-8 show us that the return of the exiles in the latter days will be likened to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. That then is a pattern that will help us understand what is going to happen. Another example is that *Yeshua* is going to be like His father -- King David, who after uniting the Kingdom of Israel subdued the nations that surrounded her.

\* Colossians 2:16-17 -- a literal shadow is an image of something that is real. In the passage, the word 'but' in verse 17 (KJV) is 'de' (Strong's 1161) and can be translated a number of ways including 'and' 'moreover,' 'also,' etc. Translated correctly, verse 17 would read "... which are a shadow of the coming things and the body of the anointed one." The body of the anointed one is of course, the people who follow the Messiah.

\*\* We know that Moses headed south after the Israelites were cast out of Goshen. Besides securing the bones of Joseph he likely gathered Israelites that were scattered throughout Egypt.

### ~ Messiah Returns! ~

When we take into account the 'shadow' provided by the Festivals, the events of the Hebrew Wedding, and the fact that there is nothing new, we see that when the Messiah returns, He -- like Moses, will begin to gather Israel from the four corners of the earth\*\* and bring them to His holy mountain, Mount Sinai.

Going back to the Olivet prophecy, *Yeshua*, while seated on the Mount of Olives and likely looking down over the city of Jerusalem, told His disciples:

**"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be ... 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."**

(Matt. 24:27, 29-31 NKJ)

There are a number of details provided in this passage that we should consider. The first detail is that the events will happen at the "great sound of the trumpet" which coincides with "immediately after the tribulation." Like we learned earlier, the "Great Trumpet" -- the "Shofar haGadol" in Jewish understanding is the one blown at the close of Yom Kippur. It is the shofar that announces the beginning of the gathering of the exiles. The prophet Isaiah confirms:

**"And it shall come to pass in that day  
That the LORD [YHVH] will thresh,  
From the channel of the River to the Brook of Egypt;  
And you will be gathered one by one,  
O you children of Israel."**

**13 So it shall be in that day:  
The great trumpet will be blown;  
They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria,  
And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt,  
And shall worship the LORD  
[YHVH] in the holy mount at Jerusalem."**

(Isaiah 27:12-13 NKJ)

The next detail is that the events He is describing are going to take place within a short period of time. Lightning is something that happens quickly, suddenly, and it always appears to come out of the sky. Such will be the return of the Messiah. He will come out of the sky and will quickly gather His people who, like in the Exodus, will probably be thrust out of the lands where they are living.\*\*\* He then has to take them to Mount Sinai, organize them into an army, rid Jerusalem of occupying armies, bind the adversary, and prepare for the Wedding Supper. All this takes place between Yom Kippur and Sukkot.

### ~ The Clouds of Heaven ~

A final detail on this passage is that *Yeshua* is coming "on the clouds of Heaven." There is a very popular song that was written by a Northern Irish singer/songwriter named Robin Mark. In the chorus it says:

**"Behold He comes, riding on the clouds,  
Shining like the sun, at the trumpet call,  
Lift your voice, it's the year of jubilee,  
And out of Zion's hill salvation comes."**

Though the writer has much of the facts correct, *Yeshua's* Olivet Prophecy statement does not say that He will be 'riding' on the clouds, instead the Greek text infers that He is coming 'with,' or "before the clouds." The Greek word 'epi' (Strong's 1909) which is translated 'in' or 'on' in this verse can also be translated 'by' or 'before,' and in fact was translated 'before' 42 times in the New Testament.

\*\*\*Exodus 6:1; 12:31-33, 39

Like *Yeshua*, the prophet Daniel spoke of the Messiah coming 'with' the clouds:

**"I was watching in the night visions,  
And behold, One like the  
Son of Man,  
Coming with the clouds  
of heaven!  
He came to the Ancient of Days,  
and they brought Him near  
before Him.  
14 Then to Him was given  
dominion and glory and  
a kingdom,  
That all peoples, nations, and  
languages should serve Him."**  
(Daniel 7:13-14 NKJ)

The book of Daniel was written in Aramaic -- a close relative to Hebrew, and in this passage the word 'with' is from the word *im* ׀ (Strong's #5974 and pronounced *eem*). *Eem* is used 21 times in the Tanakh, and two-thirds of the time it is translated 'with.' In this same passage, the LXX (Septuagint Version) also translates the word as 'with.'

So who are the 'clouds' and how did they get to Heaven?

On the evening before *Yeshua* was crucified, He said to His disciples:

**"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."**  
(John 14:2 NKJ)

According to Jewish tradition, this is a statement that is typically made when a young Jewish man, immediately after betrothal, prepares to depart to build the *Chuppah* חופה (#2646 = wedding chamber) in his father's house. The *Chuppah* could be a separate room of the house or an addition made to the house, but in either case it is a specially prepared place to be used for one week as the new Husband and Bride consummate their marriage. For the Bride, when the Bridegroom said this on departure, it was understood to mean that he would certainly return for her.

So if *Yeshua* went to His Father's house and built a *Chuppah*, that pretty much indicates that his Bride will eventually go there as well. But keep in mind -- this is only temporary, in fact,

the Greek word *moneh* (Strong's #3438) -- translated 'mansions,' actually implies a temporary residence. In other words, you are going to eventually move on.

If Jewish tradition is correct, *Yeshua* will come back to fetch His Bride on Yom Teruah. He will take her to His Father's house in Heaven and she will stay with Him in the *Chuppah* for seven days (or years). Thus the *Chuppah* is the "shelter from the storm" -- the place of refuge during the Birthpains. At the end of the seven days, they come out of the *Chuppah* and prepare for the wedding supper.

This scenario is supported by the prophet Joel. Joel chapter 2 is about end-time events. It starts with Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets) and continues through Sukkot. In regards to Yom Kippur it says:

**"Blow the trumpet in Zion,  
Consecrate a fast,  
Call a sacred assembly;  
16 Gather the people,  
Sanctify the congregation,  
Assemble the elders,  
Gather the children and nursing  
babes;  
Let the bridegroom go out from  
his chamber,  
And the bride from her  
dressing room."**  
(Joel 2:15-16 NKJ)

The passage mentions blowing the shofar -- most likely the Great Shofar that is blown at the close of Yom Kippur -- and notes the Bridegroom and the Bride coming out of their rooms. The Bridegroom comes out of his bedchamber,\* and the Bride comes out of her *Chuppah*, the room where the bride and groom had been staying for seven days.

This indicates that the Bride will indeed be with the Bridegroom for the seven days/years of the Birthpains and will then leave the *Chuppah* to accompany Him to the wedding supper which takes place at Sukkot. So what would they do for seven years? I believe they will become an army of leaders who can lead the people back to Mount

\*Translated "bedchamber" in these passages: Ex. 8:3; 2 Sam. 4:7; 2 Kings 6:12, 11:2; 2 Chron. 22:11; Eccl. 10:20.

Sinai, and Messiah *Yeshua* will go before them as their 'general.'

In the scriptures, clouds are sometimes personified as armies. For instance, Jeremiah refers to the armies of King Nebuchadnezzar as clouds:

**"Behold, he shall come up like  
clouds, and his chariots like a  
whirlwind.  
His horses are swifter than  
eagles.  
Woe to us, for we are  
plundered!"** (Jer. 4:13 NKJ)

Ezekiel also speaks of end-time wars where the soldiers are likened to clouds:

**The word of the LORD [YHVH]  
came to me again, saying,  
"2 'Son of man, prophesy and  
say, "Thus says the Lord GOD:  
"Wail, Woe to the day!"  
3 'For the day is near,  
Even the day of the LORD  
[YHVH] is near;  
It will be a day of clouds, the  
time of the Gentiles.  
4 The sword shall come upon  
Egypt,  
And great anguish shall be in  
Ethiopia,  
When the slain fall in Egypt,  
And they take away her wealth,  
And her foundations are broken  
down."'** (Ezek. 30:1-4 NKJ)

"Day of Clouds" would refer to armies of soldiers that bring the sword. Another example is that of *Yeshua* who while on trial before the High Priest, is specifically asked if He is the anointed king -- the 'Christ,' and *Yeshua* answers stating:

**"... 'It is as you said. Neverthe-  
less, (moreover) I say to you, hereaf-  
ter you will see the Son of Man  
sitting at the right hand of the Power,  
and coming on (before) the clouds of  
heaven.'"** (Matt. 26:64 NKJ)

At that moment, the High Priest tore his clothes because he understood *Yeshua* claiming to be the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy -- that He was the King of Israel, which implies that He will have an army, just like His father David.

The book of Revelation clearly shows that armies will follow *Yeshua* when He returns:

"And from the throne came a voice saying, 'Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.'

"<sup>6</sup> Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure," for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, 'Write this: "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

"... <sup>11</sup> 'Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a *white horse*! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. <sup>13</sup> He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."' (Rev. 19:5-9, 11-16 ESV)

If the clothing of the Bride is fine linen, and the armies in Heaven are arrayed in fine linen, and the armies that follow Him ride on white horses, and He is the King of Kings, then the armies come from Heaven with Him. It is just as it says in Revelation chapter 1:

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all

tribes of the earth will wail on account of him." (Rev. 1:7 ESV)

It is interesting to note the Israelites, when they came out of Egypt, came out as an army as well:

"But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle." (Ex. 13:18 ESV)

So the 'clouds' are the army of Holy Beings. They come from Heaven where they had been in training for seven years. They are dressed in fine linen, and they ride on white horses following their King -- Messiah *Yeshua* -- who is Himself riding on a white horse.

#### ~ Gathering the Remnant ~

With what we have learned about the "clouds of heaven," let us now return to the Olivet Prophecy where *Yeshua* said:

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

(Matt. 24:31 NKJ)

Without understanding who the 'clouds' are, one might think that it is the angels that gather the elect.\* Now we can see that it is the angels that blow the great shofar, but it is the 'clouds,' the army that follows *Yeshua*, that gathers the elect -- and they do it on His behalf. Thousands, maybe even millions of Holy Beings will scatter out to the four corners of the earth and begin locating and leading God's flock -- the remnant of Israel that repented and turned to God during the Birthpains -- back toward the land. They will sing for joy and shout for gladness as they go:

"For thus says the

LORD [YHVH]:

'Sing with gladness for Jacob,

And shout among the chief of the nations;

\* 'elect' = 'eklektos' (1588) which simply means 'chosen.' God makes it very clear that Israel is His chosen -- Isaiah 41:8-9; 44:1-2; Jer. 33:24-26.

Proclaim, give praise, and say, "O LORD [YHVH], save Your people,

The remnant of Israel!"

"<sup>8</sup> Behold, I will bring them from the north country,

And gather them from the ends of the earth,

Among them the blind and the lame,

The woman with child

And the one who labors with child, together;

A great throng shall return there.

<sup>9</sup> They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them.

I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters,

In a straight way in which they shall not stumble;

For I am a Father to Israel, Ephraim is My firstborn.

<sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD [YHVH], O nations,

And declare it in the isles afar off, and say,

"He who scattered Israel will gather him,

And keep him as a shepherd does his flock."'''

(Jer. 31:7-10 NKJ)

God will 'lead' them -- *yabel* them\*\* -- along rivers of water and in a strait -- a righteous\*\*\* path. It will be something to see, something that will make the Exodus from Egypt pale in comparison:

"Therefore, behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD [YHVH], when it shall no longer be said,

'As the LORD [YHVH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' <sup>15</sup> but 'As the LORD [YHVH] lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.'

"For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their fathers." (Jer. 16:14-15 ESV)

\*\*as the word 'jubilee' implies.

\*\*\* in the Tanakh, the word 'strait' is often likened to 'righteousness.' This picture is similar to Psalm 23.

Like at the Exodus, God will provide food and water along the way -- maybe a moving bolder with water gushing out of it. And if the technology remains, every news organization will be covering it. There will be drones buzzing all over the place and it will all be on TV! The nations will see it all, but the media will likely pass it off as a cult gathering. But it's not over yet!

**"Thus says the LORD [YHVH]: 'In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, <sup>9</sup> saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Appear." They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture; <sup>10</sup> they shall not hunger or thirst, neither, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them. <sup>11</sup> And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up. <sup>12</sup> Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.'"**

**"<sup>13</sup> Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! for the LORD [YHVH] has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted."** (Isa. 49:8-13 ESV)

This is the "acceptable\* year of the Lord," the event spoken of by the prophets and by *Yeshua* in Luke 4:18-19. God will lead them to the wilderness just as He did in the Exodus, and will once again bring them to Mount Sinai -- the Mountain of God:

**"I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. <sup>35</sup> And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. <sup>36</sup> Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the**

**wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,' says the Lord GOD."** (Ezek. 20:34-36 NKJ)

He will speak softly to them and show them where they went wrong. This time they will respond to Him as a loving wife responds to a loving husband:

**"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. <sup>15</sup> And there I will give her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. And there she shall answer as in the days of her youth, as at the time when she came out of the land of Egypt. <sup>16</sup> And in that day, declares the LORD [YHVH], you will call me "My Husband," and no longer will you call me "My Baal."'"**

(Hos. 2:14-16 ESV)

The significance of verse 16 is tremendous in that it shows Israel's attitude toward God. Instead of thinking of YHVH as her 'master' (baali) with all His silly rules and laws, she will think of Him adoringly as her 'man' (ishi) -- her provider and protector. Therefore she will respond to Him as a wife and not as a slave -- just as Israel did with dancing and tambourines when she crossed the Red Sea 3500 years earlier.

Israel will realize that God has extended undeserved grace to His people as both the northern and southern tribes join back together as one people, and He will again look at them as a virgin:

**"At that time, declares the LORD [YHVH], I will be the God of all the clans of Israel, and they shall be my people."**

**"Thus says the LORD [YHVH]: 'The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, <sup>3</sup> the LORD [YHVH] appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. <sup>4</sup> Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merrymakers.'"**

(Jer. 31:1-2 ESV)

There is indeed -- nothing new under the sun!

Though the wilderness is where God takes His people to speak to them, educate them, and comfort them, the wilderness is not their destination. Their destination is the land of Israel. The Messianic Kingdom will start in Jerusalem, so that is where they ultimately need to be; but the city is occupied by foreign armies that must be driven out.

So after the wilderness, God begins to lead them to Jericho. Because there is "no new thing under the sun," He will probably lead them along the very same path Moses did long before. They will make their way up the King's Highway to the eastern shore of the Jordan River across from Jericho. This is attested to in the Song of Moses -- a "latter day" prophecy for the people of Israel:

**"... The LORD [YHVH] came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints ..." (Deut. 33:2 NKJ)**

Battles will be fought along the way, just as it was before. The fame and the fear of the God of Israel will precede them as they make their way from kingdom to kingdom -- *Yeshua* riding on a white horse, followed by the Holy Beings and the remnant. As they enter the gates of the cities, the kings will surrender to the power of Israel and her King:

**"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. <sup>23</sup> Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD [YHVH]; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.'"**

(Isa. 49:22-23 ESV)

Crossing the Jordan and heading west toward Jerusalem, they will begin

\* 'favor' is translated from *ratsown* (רָצוֹן #7522) which is also translated 'acceptable' in Isaiah 61:2.

the ascent to the Mount of Olives, and as they look over the city of Jerusalem and the carnage below, *Yeshua* will dismount from His horse, setting His feet on the Mount of Olives:

"Behold, a day is coming for the LORD [YHVH], when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. <sup>2</sup> For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD [YHVH] will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. <sup>4</sup> On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. <sup>5</sup> And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD [YHVH] my God will come, and all the holy ones with Him."

(Zech. 14:1-5 ESV)

*Yeshua* and the Holy Beings with Him will cleanse Jerusalem of their foreign occupiers. They will then begin to subdue the nations surrounding her. *Yeshua* will follow the same steps as did His father David as He brings into subjection all the territory promised to Abraham:

"... they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines in the west, and together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites shall obey them. <sup>15</sup> And the LORD [YHVH] will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt, and will waive his hand over the River with his scorching breath, and strike it into seven

channels, and he will lead people across in sandals. <sup>16</sup> And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that remains of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt."

(Isa. 11:14-16 ESV)

*Yeshua* has now established Himself as King of Kings and has chained the adversary so he will not be able to influence the nations. Sukkot and the Messianic Kingdom have now begun. Finally, the Wedding Supper can take place. The Bride will arrive in her fine linen garments, and the guests -- the remnant -- those who were gathered along the way\* and became faithful to Him at Mount Sinai, have their wedding garments on as well.

The Kingdom has finally been restored to Israel, and now all Israel knows that YHVH is God:

"... 'They shall forget their shame and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they dwell securely in their land with none to make them afraid, <sup>27</sup> when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their

enemies' lands, and through them have vindicated my holiness in the sight of many nations. <sup>28</sup> Then they shall know that I am the LORD [YHVH] their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then assembled them into their own land. I will leave none of them remaining among the nations anymore. <sup>29</sup> And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.'"

(Ezek. 39:26-29 ESV)

This is the message of liberty pictured by the Jubilee year that starts on Yom Kippur. It is a new beginning for the people of Israel.

Shalom Aleichem,

Tim Kelley

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*I will bring you out from the peoples
And gather you out of the countries
Where you are scattered,
With a mighty hand,
With an outstretched arm,
And with fury poured out.
And I will bring you
Into the wilderness of the peoples,
And there I will plead
My case with you face to face.
Ezekiel 20:34-35*

* The parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14) indicates that those who attend are those who were traveling on the highways.

Prophetic Perspectives: Front Line News

But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars,
Do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen,
But the end is not yet.

For nation will rise against nation,
And kingdom against kingdom.

Mark 13:7-8

Election 2020 has come and gone and the many dire predictions that were put forth, by a variety of prophetic pundits have, for the most part, not manifested themselves as predicted. That does not mean all is well and there will be a peaceful transfer of power on January 20, 2021. What it does mean is that Believers in *Y'shua HaMashiach* must keep watching world events (and especially developments in Israel) with a mind of discernment:

"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man [in the Wedding Chuppah]." (Luke 21:36)

At the time of this writing, President Trump has not conceded defeat, despite the news media having proclaimed a Biden victory. A few states are still in dispute and recounts are taking place in some of them. There are also a number of developing court cases challenging the results of the election. If this stalemate continues on into January, without resolution, then the decision will go to the House of Representatives. This could lead to much dissension and trouble.

The following brief synopsis, of such an event, comes from G. Edward Griffin in a *Need to Know* email:

This Issue of *Prophetic Perspectives* contains a number of articles from a variety of sources. It is intended to be an overview of what is being taught during these troublesome times.

"Youtube personality and minister Shane Vaughn explains that there is no law that requires a concession speech. It is merely a custom to make the transition smooth, because all claims for the office are terminated once the losing candidate concedes.

"Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Nevada will recount the votes, and Arizona is still counting votes. According to Amendment 12 of the U.S. Constitution, if the election cannot be settled in court, and it cannot be certified with an indisputable majority, the election becomes null and void, and the matter goes to the House of Representatives. At this point, the president will be elected by the House of Representatives. The Constitution stipulates that each state will have only one vote. Despite the House having 475 representatives, only 50 will be voting. 37 out of the 50 states in the House have a Republican majority, so the constitutional solution likely will lead to Trump holding office for a second term." -- GEG

Comment: If the vote goes to the House of Representatives it may cause widespread demonstrations -- which could lead to violence.

~ Guide to Disrupting the Country ~

"A 39 page document, *Stopping the Coup: The Disruption Guide for 2020*, reportedly produced by *DisruptionProject.org* and spread about by *ShutdownDC*, both leftist organizations, was revealed. The document essentially provides instructions for staging a coup rather than trying to stop one, as it claims. The plan is to

paralyze commerce and the government and to seize political power in the event that Democrats lose the election. The goal is to disrupt everyday life as an 'incentive' to change the American system. Tactics include shutting down highways, disrupting commerce, conducting strikes and boycotts. The document states the need to 'force some pillars of power (business, military, media, or other major institutions)' to side with them. As usual, they attempt to claim the moral high ground by claiming the violence they will unleash is necessary to put an end to white supremacy and capitalism." (Brietbart.com)

~ Other News ~ ~ And Views ~

~ Number of Jews in Europe ~

by Assaf Golan,
Israel Hayoom via JNS

"The number of Jews in Europe, including Britain, Turkey and Russia, has fallen to a 1,000 year low, according to a new study conducted by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in London . . .

"According to the study, there are only 1.3 million people currently living in Europe who define themselves as Jews. This is the same number counted by famous Jewish traveler and scholar Benjamin of Tudela in 1170.

"The study shows that since 1970, Europe has lost some 60 percent of its Jewish population. In 1970, there were 3.2 million Jews living in Europe. According to the study, 1.5 million Jews left Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain."

Comment: God has many ways of enticing His people to make *aliyah* (return back to the Promised Land). Look for many more US Jews to join this exodus.

~ Preparing the Priests ~

Prophecy News Watch reports that preparations are being made to have a trained Priesthood, once the next Temple is finished and ready for service:

"Among traditional Jews, the lineage of male descendants of Aaron the High Priest is carefully preserved. Interestingly, over 98% of Jewish men who identify as kohanim [*priests*], and who have had their DNA tested, have a specific genetic marker in common.

"Certain vestigial laws apply to kohanim today, but when Jerusalem will once again have a Temple, their priestly rules will become significantly more influential. . . .

"Together, ... two men are launching *Kehuna Academy*, an online community and school for learning about the service of the Kohanim in preparation for the Third Temple. *Kehuna* is the Hebrew word for priesthood. ...

"Practically speaking, the *Kehuna Academy*, 'aims to be a resource center for groups of kohanim from around the world.'"

"*Kehuna Academy* will begin instruction in English and expects to quickly expand to Hebrew."

~ The Abraham Accords ~

Currently, the biggest news coming out of the Middle East is the signing of the *Abraham Accords* peace treaty. This initial peace treaty was between the Arab countries of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain and the Jewish nation of Israel.

From 1948 (when Israel was declared an independent nation) and 1978, not even one Middle Eastern nation made peace with Israel. Egypt was the first to form a peace treaty, and that was in 1979. It took another 16 years before another Arab nation, this time Jordan, made peace with Israel in 1995.

Now, 25 years later, two Arab nations, UAE and Bahrain, signed a peace treaty with Israel on the same day. Saudi Arabia is also seeking peace with Israel to help counteract their mutual enemy, Iran.

Michael Brown writes:

"Let's not forget that for years we were told that for America to make such moves [as

establishing the US embassy in Jerusalem] would be disastrous, leading to an all-out war with the Muslim world. Instead, the aftermath has been a path of peace."

Meanwhile, the Palestinians are livid, for they see the *Abraham Accords* as a sellout by their Arab neighbors. Michael Brown continues:

"But what cannot be denied is the magnitude of this treaty, which is being hailed as the *Abraham Accords*. As one of the official documents states, 'this development will help lead to a future in which all peoples and faiths can live together in the spirit of cooperation and enjoy peace and prosperity where states focus on shared interests and building a better future.'"

Some, however, are wondering if this is really a path to peace or is it a path to the reign of the Antichrist. Scripture is clear, there will be no truly lasting peace until Messiah *Y'shua* returns to establish the *Kingdom of Heaven* on earth. Some Scriptures that come to mind are:

"For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape." (I Thess. 5:3)

"'You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwallled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates' -- ¹² to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land.'"

(Ezek. 38:11-12)

Again Michael Brown writes:

"Who could imagine the nation of Israel described as 'a peaceful and unsuspecting people -- all of them living without walls and without gates and bars?' Who

could imagine Israel putting its guard down?"

Nevertheless, some prophecy teachers believe this passage will be fulfilled at the end of this age. If that is the case, then it is most probable that these *Accords* may eventually collapse so that the endtime prophecies can be fulfilled.*

~ Saudi Prophecies ~

Prophecy teacher Bill Salus identifies four unfulfilled Biblical prophecies concerning Saudi Arabia which are yet to come to pass:

Saudi Prophecy #1:

"Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths,

O inhabitants of Dedan

For I will bring the calamity of

Esau upon him,

The time that I will punish him."

(Jer. 49:8)

Dedan is located within the borders of Saudi Arabia and identifies that nation prophetically. Salus writes:

"Apparently when this future prediction happens, the Saudis will have joined forces with Esau's descendants, and in so doing, will become positioned in the line of fire. The Lord is going to punish Esau severely, and for Saudi Arabia's own protection, Jeremiah warns them to flee and turn back to the depths of their homeland. This infers that at the time of Esau's calamity, that Saudi armed forces are involved in a military operation that is taking place on foreign soil."

Saudi Prophecy #2:

"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because of what Edom did against

*It is possible that, *Ezekiel 38* depicts a second war of *Gog and Magog* that occurs at the end of the *Millennium* -- during the time when *HaSatan* has been released from imprisonment:

"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea." (Rev. 20:7-8)

the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them,'¹³ therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate from Teman; Dedan shall fall by the sword. ¹⁴ I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance,' says the Lord GOD." (Ezek. 25:12-14)

Again, we know that Saudi Arabia is included in this prophecy because of the reference to *Dedan*. Salus writes:

"This Ezekiel passage explains why Esau's Calamity comes and how this calamitous campaign is carried out. The Edomite descendants of Esau will be guilty of attempting to bring harm against the Jews, and in retaliation, the Lord will empower the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to execute His anger, fury and vengeance."

Saudi Prophecy #3:

"They have said,
'Come, and let us cut them off
from being a nation,
That the name of Israel may be
remembered no more.'
⁵ For they have consulted
together with one consent;
They form a confederacy against
You:
⁶ The tents of Edom and the
Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
⁷ Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants
of Tyre;
⁸ Assyria also has joined with
them;
They have helped the children of
Lot.' Selah." (Psalm 83:4-8)

Apparently, this current peace accord with Saudi Arabia (and the other Arab nations) will collapse prior to the *Psalm 83 War*. The inclusion of the *Ishmaelites* in this prophecy clearly indicates that Saudi Arabia will be arrayed against Israel. However, as recounted in *Prophetic Perspectives* (as

found in Issue 20-1), the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) will prevail and Israel will finally have a period of peace with its conquered neighbors.

Saudi Prophecy #4:

This brings us back to *Ezekiel 38*:

"Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'" (Ezek. 38:13)

Bill Salus writes:

"This fourth Saudi prophecy takes us back to the top of the article and Ezekiel 38:13. If the sequence of prophetic events presented thus far is correct, then by this future time Saudi Arabia has been plundered severely with the Palestinian refugees and their Psalm 83:6-8 confederacy.

"Apparently, after being plundered, the Saudis decide to align themselves with the protectors, rather than the invaders in Ezekiel 38. Perhaps at this future point, when there is no further Palestinian plight to banner, the Saudis will abandon their Arab (Saudi) Peace initiative in favor of normalized relations with Israel."

Missing from this scenario is the nation of Iran, currently enemies of the Arab states as well as Israel. Salus concludes:

"If a war with Iran is forthcoming in the near future, these current peace deals between Israel with the UAE and Bahrain, could make it easier for an American, Israel and GCC Arab coalition to form and fight against Iran in fulfillment of the prophecy."

It is all very complicated to try and predict in advance exactly how everything will come about. However, when we see these events coming to pass, then it will begin to make more sense. In the meantime:

"**Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your**

heads, because your redemption draws near. . . . Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man [in the Marriage Chamber]."

(Luke 21:28, 36)

~ Graham Attacked for Prayer ~

Well known evangelist, Franklin Graham (son of the late Billy Graham) was attacked for praying at the Republican National Convention. Franklin pointed out that he made no mention of a particular political party, and he did not support either President Trump or Joe Biden. He merely "... asked that we pray and ask God's blessing on them and protection for all of our lenders." *Family Research Council* comments:

"What's interesting about this latest salvo from the Left is how it reveals their hypocrisy on religion in the public square. The DNC was happy to feature prayer from clergy who, as Graham noted, are 'very liberal in their theological views. They prayed at the DNC, but activists on the Left did not call for them to step down or resign their positions because they prayed.'"

~ Mass Exodus ~

It is reported that a mass exodus is taking place with people moving out of the major cities because of the Covid-19 health crisis and the political unrest from the election hype.

In the 'good old days' people moving out of Southern California would likely head to Seattle or Portland. Today however, with all of the unrest in those cities, they are looking for more rural areas where they can live (hopefully) in peace.

The East Coast is also experiencing an exodus, especially with many leaving the New York City area. It is estimated that 800,000 New Yorkers have moved out of the city since March 1st.

Many of those leaving the New York area are heading to (of all places) California and Florida which saw 28 percent of the relocation's. Meanwhile,

Texas and North Carolina made up 15 percent of the moves.

As a result of the exodus many businesses in those areas are also closing and/or moving out as well. Homelessness and poverty are increasing, and the crime rates are going sky high.

~ Natural Disasters Rising ~

Prophecy in the News reports that tornados, heat waves, and hurricanes are all on the rise in the US.

Shortly after a very large storm moved across the Midwest, the western half of the nation was hit with an historic heat wave.

"The highest temperature ever captured by modern instruments was recorded in Death Valley, California, many other all-time records were shattered all over the southwest, and the city of Phoenix actually broke their record for most days in a year in which the high temperature reached at least 115 degrees."

The heat waves set the stage for even more wildfires, -- especially in California. Note the following:

- ◆ 12,000 lightning strikes hit California over a one week period.
- ◆ More than a million acres have been destroyed by fire so far.
- ◆ Two of the largest fires in the history of the state were burning at the same time.
- ◆ In addition, dangerous storms also hit the southern US.

In Africa, the plague of locusts continues. Some of the swarms are the size of modern cities, eating everything that grows and leaving nothing for the people who live there. To cap it all off, Covid-19 is still raging and could lead to a major calamity.

"2020 has truly been a year like no other, and it is imperative for everyone to understand that the 'perfect storm' that we are now facing is just getting started. All of a sudden, the U.S. is being hit by one major crisis after another, and to many people it seems quite unlikely that so many nightmarish

events would happen so closely together by random chance."

"And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy."

"²⁶ When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, and you shall eat and not be satisfied." (Lev. 26:25-26)

"Could it be possible that someone is trying to get our attention?"

~ Archeology News ~

Archeologists continue to find artifacts which prove the veracity of Scripture. In a *United With Israel* article, Ezra Stone writes:

"Over 120 seal impressions stamped on jars were recently discovered near the US Embassy in Jerusalem dating back about 2,700 years to the era of the Judean kings.

"According to Jerusalem District Archaeologist of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) Dr. Yuval Baruch, 'The archeological discoveries of Arnona identify the [location] as a key site -- the most important in the history of the final days of the Kingdom of Judah and of the return to Zion decades after the destruction of the Kingdom.'

"Dr. Baruch notes, 'This site joins a number of other key sites uncovered in the area of Jerusalem which were connected to the centralized administrative system of the Kingdom of Judah from its peak until its destruction.'"

Also of importance is a discovery in the north of Israel of a fortress from the time of King David.

"A fortified complex from the time of King David (Iron Age, eleventh to tenth centuries BCE) was exposed for the first time in archaeological excavations carried out by IAA in Hispin in the Golan.

"The archaeologists consider that the fort was built by the kingdom of Geshur, the ally of King David, in order to control the region."

~ Return of Israel and Judah ~

When *Y'shua* returns to gather His Bride to the Wedding Chamber, He will find that many of those marked to be a part of the First Resurrection will be sleeping in their graves:

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

(Rev. 20:6)

This will not prevent those who are alive from also being gathered, and together they will form a great company of souls from both the House of Israel and the House of Judah, as well as those Gentiles who have been Grafted In to one of the two houses:

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

"⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'

"⁵⁵ 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?'

"⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]."

(I Cor. 15:51-57)

May He come quickly and in our time!

Shalom,

DEW

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## Iron Sharpens Iron

Iron sharpeneth iron;  
So shall a man sharpeneth  
The countenance of his friend.  
Proverbs 27:17

**I**t is our policy not to divulge the names of those who write us, unless requested by the writer. *Hebrew Roots* reserves the right to condense letters to save space. Every effort will be made to retain the essence of the communication. Responses to the letters may be for clarification, or for the general edification of our readership and are not necessarily directed toward the person writing the letter.

Although we are unable to answer all of the letters which we receive, we do read them and appreciate your input.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### ~ Chewing the Cud ~

Dean & Susan,

I first of all would like to thank you for your diligence in your ministry. You have been a blessing to me with the material that you provide. I have learned a lot about the Biblical faith and its Jewish roots. Coming from a traditional Christian background this has been a challenge, but I thank you again for being obedient to the Lord.

I know you are not able to respond to every letter that you get, but if you care, I have a question:

Leviticus 11:6 says that the "hare chews the cud," but biology apparently says they do not. Why is that? I believe the same goes for the coney [rock hyrax]. Any help you can give will be much appreciated.

Grace and Peace,

CS

~ ~

Shalom Aleichem CS,

*This is an interesting question. Let's take a look at the actual Scriptures involved:*

"... **the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have**

**cloven hooves, is unclean to you; <sup>6</sup> the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you...**" (Lev. 11:5-6)

*This command is restated:*

**"Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, such as these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they are unclean for you."** (Deut. 14:7)

*In modern terminology, animals that chew the cud are called ruminants. They have four stomach compartments. They swallow their food into one compartment and then regurgitate it back and chew it again before swallowing into a different compartment. This is called ruminating.*

*From an external observational standpoint, the hare appears to chew the cud, however, they do not have multiple stomachs. The average Believer living in Biblical times would not know this without killing and dissecting the animal.*

*According to a book entitled Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions, by Ken Ham, Bodie Hodge, and Tim Chaffey here is what rabbits (hares) actually do. They produce two kinds of feces, the more common hard feces as well as softer fecal pellets. The later are made up of partially digested food that has passed through the body and then is reingested through the mouth. This is not the same as "chewing the cud," since they do not bring the undigested food up internally. Nevertheless, rabbits do re-chew this partially digested food -- so it may appear (from external observation) that they are "chewing the cud."*

*Therefore, the visual key which shows the hare and rock hyrax to be unclean is that they do not have a split hoof, even though it may appear they chew the cud. The Bible is not in error,*

*it is just making it easier for the average person of that day to identify that the hare is unclean even though it appears to be a cud chewer.*

*Hope this helps.*

*May the peace of God  
be with you always,*

DEW & SAW

~ ~ ~

### ~ Relationships ~

Steve Rees,

You nailed it with your article *Back to Relationships*. (HR 20-2)

Our group, here in prison, spends so much time emphasizing eating meats, holydays, new moons, and sabbath days that we have forgotten our "first love."

We are a small group of Christian inmates. We create tracts for offenders who don't go to church and don't read their bible.

Shalom Aleichem,

JP

~ ~

Shalom Aleichem JP,

As Steve Rees pointed out so well in his article, we can be doing all the right things from the aspect of "keeping the law," but if we have not love for one another we are just making noise:

**"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**

<sup>12</sup> **And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**

<sup>13</sup> **And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing."**

(I Cor. 13:1-3)

*This does not mean that it is permissible to break the commandments as long as we just "love one another." We need to both obey as well as love one another. Taken together,*

they make up a powerful witness to the world:

**"But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. <sup>8</sup> And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.'**

**<sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."**

(I Pet. 4:7-10)

*May the peace of God  
be with you always,*

DEW & SAW

~ ~ ~

~ Coping With Prison ~

Dear Friends:

Greetings and Erev Tov to all at Hebrew Roots. I hope that my note finds each of you in YHVH's caring hands and in Y'shua's love during these trying times.

As for myself, I am doing okay. Cannot really complain much as things could definitely be much worse. Our prison is currently on medical lock-down due to our second Covid-19 outbreak. It seems to be a continuing cycle here at the \_\_\_\_\_ Unit. We have even had some staff and inmate deaths some months back. Hopefully this time around it will not be so wide spread. Last time over 80% of the prison population was infected with Covid-19.

Just thought I'd touch base with you all. Keep us in your prayers.

In Y'shua's Name,

CK

~ ~ ~

Shalom Aleichem CK,

*It is difficult for those of us on the outside to fathom what it must be like to be locked up with a virus rampaging throughout the unit. Your letter makes it seem a little more real and should encourage all of us to keep our many*

*prisoners in prayer for protection, not just from each other, but from a disease that is not in any way, under their control.*

*The anger manifested by some of the prisoners must be terrible and a danger to all who reside there. This is when one's love for their neighbor will stand out like a shining star in a dark place:*

**"You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy."**

**<sup>44</sup> 'But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

**<sup>46</sup> 'For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? <sup>47</sup> And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? <sup>48</sup> Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.'"** (Matt. 5:43-48)

*Not only must the prisoners pray for one another, they desperately need our prayers as well. Not just one prayer (as you read this), but prayers that go up to the very Throne of God each and every day.*

*May the peace of God  
be with you always,*

DEW & SAW

~ ~ ~

~ Taking That Big Step ~

Shalom Hebrew Roots,

On June 30 of this year I consciously made the decision to convert to Messianic Judaism, a decision nearly seven years in the making. I wanted to share this with you because your publications played a key role in that decision.

During these years of my incarceration I have been given several of your publications to read. Thank you

for the truths you teach. Admittedly, because I was so steeped in Christian theology, I was not at first capable of accepting many of these teachings. But when people honestly seek the truth, the truth has a way of finding them.

Your articles on the origins of Sunday worship and of the Christian holidays really opened my eyes. I had read some of these things before, but I never go on what someone says without doing research for myself. The amount of detail you went into really helped me in my searching. So thank you, so very much!

There is a book called *The Love Languages* that came out, I guess, about 10 to 15 years ago. It was a Christian marriage counseling book. Well, I recently found a verse of scripture that I believe shows us what Adonai's love language is:

**"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."**

(I John 5:3 KJV)

So now I am a Keeper of the Law (the whole law to my best ability), not only because He expects it of us, but also because I can show Him how much I love Him by making decisions that I believe He would approve of, just like a husband and wife will always try to make decisions that won't negatively effect their spouse (at least, if they truly love them). And Adonai is easier because at least He tells us what He prefers!

Anyway, thanks again. Peace and blessing upon you. And stay healthy during this Covid-19 crisis.

Sincerely,

JS

~ ~ ~

Shalom Aleichem JS,  
Well said.

*May the peace of God  
be with you always,*

DEW & SAW

~ ~ ~

# Endnotes

But the end of all things is at hand;  
Therefore be serious and watchful  
In your prayers.  
1 Peter 4:7

## ~ Calendar ~

**Purim** (14 Adar) February 26, 2021

**Passover\*** (Day of the Sacrifice)  
(14 Aviv) March 27, 2021

**Hag HaMatzot\***  
(Feast of Unleavened Bread)  
(15 -21 Aviv) Mar. 28 - Apr. 3, 2021  
(Note: 15 and 21 Aviv are Holydays)  
(March 28 and April 3)

**Omer Wave Offering\*\***  
(Wave Sheaf Offering)  
(22 Aviv)\*\* April 4, 2021

**Shavu'ot\*** (Pentecost)  
(12 Sivan)\*\*\* May 23, 2021

**Tisha B'Av** (Ninth of Av)  
(9 Av) July 18, 2021

**Yom Teruah\*** (Rosh HaShannah)  
(1 Tishri) September 7, 2021

**Yom Kippur\*** (Day of Atonement)  
(10 Tishri) September 16, 2021

**Sukkot\*** (Feast of Tabernacles)  
(15 -21 Tishri) Sept. 21-27, 2021

**Shemini Atzeret\*** (Eighth Day)  
(22 Tishri) September 28, 2021

**Hanukkah** (Feast of Dedication)  
(25 Kislev - 2 Tevet)  
Nov. 29 - Dec. 6, 2021

All dates are based on the *Traditional Hebrew Calendar*. All festivals begin the prior evening at sundown. The calendar, in its entirety, is printed in our *Weekly Torah Reading Schedule*, which may be obtained by simply requesting a copy.

\* Biblically Commanded Festival. (See Leviticus 23)

\*\* Next year the Pharisaic Omer Wave Offering is celebrated on 16 Aviv -- March 29, 2021.

\*\*\* Next year the Pharisaic Shavu'ot is celebrated on 6 & 7 Sivan, -- May 17 & 18, 2021.

(Note: See Special Publication *Shavu'ot: The Feast of Weeks* (SPSFV) for the Scriptural reasons why we observe a first day of the week Shavu'ot (Pentecost) and why the Omer Wave Offering falls outside the Days of Unleavened Bread in 2021).

## ~ The British Empire ~

"The British Empire once ruled over a quarter of the globe and one-fifth of its population. The British also influenced every other people. ... The British gave rise to the USA and to other nations of importance including Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This all accords with Biblical Prophecy concerning the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel!"

Source: *Brit-Am*

## ~ Ancient Weight ~

"An ancient limestone-made weight, dating to the Iron Age -- the First Temple Period -- was discovered in an archaeological excavation conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in conjunction with the Western Wall Heritage Foundation beneath Wilson's Arch, adjacent to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem."

Source: *CHPP via Isaiah 40*

## ~ Hebrew Basis ~

"English and European words such as alphabet, earth, loco, and habitat could come from Hebrew, according to an independent Israeli linguistics researcher who has written a number of unpublished dictionaries, articles and books.

"Hebrew is a much older language ... so it makes sense the roots of words go back before Latin or Greek."

Source: Ariel Ben Solomon, JNS

## ~ Abortion Declaration ~

The United States and a coalition of 31 other countries have signed onto the Geneva Consensus Declaration that upholds the importance of women's health, and states that there is no global right to abortion.

Source: *Worth Brief*

## ~ Great Barrier Reef Die-Off ~

"Australia's Great Barrier Reef has lost more than half of its coral populations over the past 25 years because of climate change. ... From 1995 to 2017 Australian researchers recorded population drops in all types of coral ... In some areas of the reef, colony abundance declined by up to 98 percent."

Source: *The Week*

## ~ Deep Sea Microplastic ~

"Some 15 million tons of microplastics might be sitting at the bottom of the world's oceans, according to a new report by Australia's national science agency. That's 30 times the amount floating on the surface and is the equivalent of 18 to 24 shopping bags full of plastic for every foot of coastline on every continent except Antarctica."

Source: *The Week*

## ~ Hagia Sofia ~

"Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that the *Hagia Sophia*, one of the architectural wonders of the world, would be reopened for Muslim worship as a mosque, sparking fury in the Christian community and neighboring Greece."

Source: *Midnight Call*

## ~ Passport Ban Lifted ~

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo officially announced (in October) the end to a long-standing policy of not recognizing Jerusalem as part of Israel on US Passports.

Source: *Arutz Seven*

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Pray For the Peace Of Jerusalem

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~ Shalom ~

AN

(Aleph-Tav)

The Beginning and the End

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