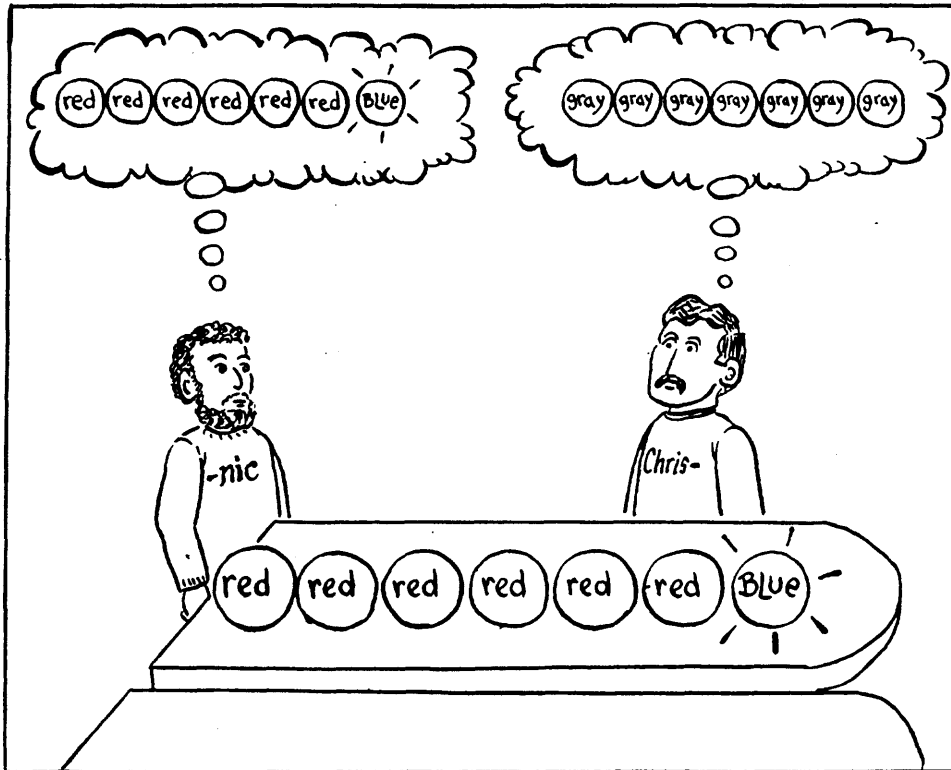


# A TALE OF TWO BROTHERS

Daniel Botkin



Nic and Chris are two brothers who were both born blind. However, they both miraculously received the gift of sight, and now they can see. Nic's sight is normal, but Chris is color-blind. Chris truly has received the gift of sight, but he can see the world only in shades of gray. The world is like a black and white movie to him. For Chris, "color" simply does not exist.

Having both received the gift of sight, these two brothers have a lot in common. They have wonderful fellowship together, rejoicing in the miracle that has given them the ability to see. The only time their fellowship with one another is not so sweet is when the subject of color comes up. Chris sometimes grows frustrated and angry with Nic when he tries to explain the concept of colors, and Nic grows frustrated and angry with Chris because Chris refuses to believe that colors exist.

Chris expresses his frustration this way: "My brother Nic does have the gift of sight, but his vision is really flawed. Take these seven balls on the

table, for instance. You and I can see that they're all exactly alike. Yet Nic insists that one of them is different and clearly distinct from the other six. Ask him to explain what the difference is, and he just says 'color.' Whatever *that* means. Personally, I think it's just a word he made up to describe the delusion he experiences as a result of his bad vision. Hopefully he'll come around someday and see things the way I do, and realize that all seven balls are alike and that 'color' is just a figment of his imagination."

Of course Chris will never persuade Nic to see things his way, because Nic truly does see things in color. And until Chris experiences a second miracle and receives the ability to see colors, Nic will have a very hard time persuading Chris that the seventh ball is truly different from the other six. It's a pity Chris doesn't believe the testimony of his brother. If he did, maybe he would experience that miracle, and then see the difference for himself. □

# DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

## A REVIEW OF TWO BOOKS & TWO OPPOSING VIEWS

Dr. Daniel Botkin

The divorce and remarriage question is a very touchy and explosive topic among Bible-believers, and with good reason. There are multitudes of believers who are currently married to someone other than their first spouse. Are all these divorced and remarried Christians presently living in a continual state of adultery? The answer to that question hinges on which theological position the Bible supports.

Two authors, Joseph Webb and Guy Duty, argue for two opposing views. Joseph Webb, in *Till Death Do Us Part?*, dogmatically asserts that divorced and remarried Christians are, indeed, living in adultery. Webb does not even consider such people to be real Christians. They cannot receive eternal life unless they end their "adulterous marriages," he says. Regardless of the circumstances of the divorce and remarriage and regardless of when it took place, "we should call them adulterers and adulteresses," Webb writes. The Church "should declare to them their lost condition, and **remove them from leadership and membership** until they repent." (Emphasis Webb's)

Guy Duty held the same "no divorce and remarriage" position for over 20 years. "I was so saturated with this belief," he writes, "that I looked upon those who disagreed with me as being some sort of heretics." However, after 14 years of in-depth research on the subject, Duty came to the conclusion that the Bible does allow for remarriage in certain cases.

Webb and Duty both profess a very high regard for the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Webb emphasizes the importance of believing and obeying the Bible regardless of the cost. One reason he wrote his book was "to cause men and women to go back to the Scriptures," and he seems to have a sincere desire to proclaim only what the Scriptures teach.

### ***Till Death DO US PART?***

JOSEPH A. WEBB

WHAT THE BIBLE **REALLY** SAYS  
ABOUT MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Published by Webb Ministries, Inc.  
First Printing, 1983. 263 pages.  
ISBN 0-9632226-2-7

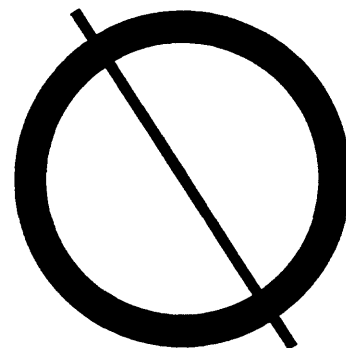
Duty professes an equally high regard for the Scriptures. Before writing his book, he wrote a paper putting forth his arguments for remarriage and sent copies to ministers, church officials, Bible teachers, and born-again lawyers who knew the Bible, asking them to show him if he was in error. "It was my prayer that if I was in error that God would have it exposed," Duty writes, "because my soul recoiled in horror at the thought of leading anyone into sin." In his book Duty writes: "If anyone can refute what I have written, I will bless the hand that corrects me and gladly write a retraction."

How is it that two God-fearing men with an equally high regard for the Scriptures come to two opposing views on the divorce and remarriage question? From a close study of these two books, it seems that each writer's respective conclusion is determined by the answer to one single question in the divorce and remarriage controversy, viz., Can the marriage bond be broken by anything other than death?

The first chapter in Webb's book is about the concept of the husband and

### DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

A  
CHRISTIAN  
VIEW



Guy Duty

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wife becoming "one flesh." Based on this, Webb says that marriage is "a relationship of permanency" and "a permanent gluing" which is absolutely indissoluble until death. According to Webb, even adultery cannot dissolve the marriage bond.

Duty also makes it clear that the question of "*dissolution versus non-dissolution*" is the determining question. "Does divorce for proven and unreconciled adultery dissolve marriage?" Duty asks. "This is the main question."

This is, indeed, the main question in the controversy, because if a Biblically-sanctioned divorce dissolves the marriage as completely as death would dissolve the marriage, then the innocent partner is free to remarry, but if a Biblically-sanctioned divorce means only separation without dissolution of the marriage, then the innocent partner is not free to marry another spouse until the first spouse dies. Both men know that this is the determining question, and each man sets out to prove his case by examining the Scripture passages that address the topics of marriage,

divorce, and remarriage.

*"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." (Romans 7:1-3)*

Webb relies very heavily on this particular passage and refers to it several times throughout his book. According to Webb, this passage conclusively proves that only death can end the one-flesh relationship of a husband and wife, even if a divorce takes place for adultery. Webb also uses this passage to support the idea that all divorced and remarried couples are living in a state of continual adultery. Because Paul said "she shall be called an adulteress," we should call all women who have been divorced and remarried adulteresses, Webb says, regardless of the reasons for the divorce and regardless of when the divorce took place. Webb's belief about the indissolubility of marriage would make this passage mean that a woman is bound to her ex-husband as long as he lives, because in Webb's mind the only "ex-husband" is a dead husband.

"I have read this portion [Rom. 7] to grade school children and said, 'Please tell me what this is saying.'" Webb writes. "Their response has always been clear, 'The Bible says **married people are married for life.**' Now I wonder," Webb continues, "if **children** can see that, **why can't adults?** Perhaps its [sic] because the children do not look at this portion of Scripture with preconceived ideas."

Perhaps. Or perhaps it's because children are not familiar with all the other passages that discuss divorce and remarriage. If this passage in

Romans 7 were the only thing the Bible said about the subject, then Webb would be correct. Webb's zeal for the purity of marriage is commendable, but Duty's book shows that Webb has overlooked some very important things about this passage.

Duty correctly points out that Paul's purpose in writing this passage was not to give "The Christian Position on Divorce and Remarriage." The context (chapters 6 & 8) makes it clear that Paul was simply using a normal marriage relationship (one that ends by death) as an illustration to teach the Roman believers that they were freed from their bondage to sin in the same way that a widow is freed from bondage to her husband. Paul's reference to the marriage relationship was "incidental to Paul's main purpose." Paul is not stating that death is the *only* thing that can loose a woman from her husband; he is stating that death is the *normal* thing. He is stating "the general law of marriage," Duty says, which is "modified by Matthew's exception for adultery."

Duty is right. It is only for the sake of illustrating a point that Paul refers to a marriage relationship which has been dissolved by death (which is how marriage relationships are normally dissolved; dissolution by divorce was the exception). Paul is teaching us that just as a widow is loosed from her husband by death, so we are loosed from "the old man," "the body of sin," "the law of sin and death," etc. by the crucifixion of our old nature.

I wonder what Paul would say if we could talk to him and ask him, "Paul, are you writing this to teach us that marriage can be dissolved only by death, that there are no exceptions?" If I may take the liberty to answer for Paul, I believe this is how he would reply to our question: "Of course there are exceptions. 'I speak to them that know the law,' I said. Don't you know that the Torah binds the woman to her husband for life only if a divorce does not take place? 'The woman that hath a husband,' I said. A divorced woman does not have a husband. She has a 'former husband' according to the Torah. And don't you remember the

words of the Messiah? 'Except it be for fornication,' He said. And I told the Corinthians that if an unbelieving spouse departs, a brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases. But the question of what dissolves a marriage is not the point I'm making. I'm trying to teach you something about your freedom from the dominion of your old nature; I'm not instructing you about the Christian doctrine of divorce and remarriage."

It is very important to note that Paul was addressing this passage in Romans "to them that know the law." A knowledge of the Torah is necessary to correctly understand this passage. This passage is apt to be misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied by people who are ignorant of what the Torah says about divorce and remarriage in Deuteronomy 24, or by people who think that they can disregard Deuteronomy 24 because it is part of the Old Testament law.

Paul said that "a woman that *hath* a husband is bound by the law to her husband." Those who know the law know that a divorced woman does not have a "husband." She has a "former husband" (or "ex-husband" as we say in contemporary English). Paul said that it is the *law* that binds a woman to her husband as long as he lives. But where does the Torah bind a woman to her ex-husband as long as he lives? It does not. Those who know the law know that the law does *not* bind a woman to her *former* husband. On the contrary, the law *frees* the woman from her ex-husband; it does not bind her to him.

*"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to*

*be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Yahweh: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.” (Deut. 24:1-4)*

According to Webb, the above instructions in Deuteronomy simply do not apply to anyone and should be ignored. Webb believes the following: 1) God did not initiate Moses to write these verses; 2) God refuted these instructions; 3) the old covenant “ended with the new one”; 4) “the old Mosaic way [is] gone”; 5) **“the Old Testament is disposed of.”** (Emphasis Webb’s) According to Webb, these instructions are contrary to the will of God, even though they are written in the Torah. In effect, Webb ends up pitting Moses against God.

Carrying out Webb’s beliefs would result in the following: If Jack divorces Jill, and Jill marries a man who later dies or divorces her, then Jack and Jill should be re-united. Indeed, Jill should not even wait for the second husband to die or divorce her; she should leave her “adulterous marriage” and return to her original husband, Jack -- even though the Torah calls this “abomination before Yahweh.”

Duty’s study of Deuteronomy 24 led him to conclusions different from those of Webb. For the meanings of Hebrew words, Duty consulted Jewish scholars, including one who was a member of the official Jewish translation committee in America and another who was an expert in rabbinic law. The significant thing to Duty is the fact that Biblical divorce actually dissolved the marriage, freeing the woman to remarry.

To those who would argue that divorce does not mean dissolution, Duty cites twelve Hebrew and Greek lexicons to show that when the Bible speaks of divorce, it means dissolution, and not mere separation.

“Read any books by those with the opposite view on divorce,” Duty says, “and you will see that not one of them has quoted a Hebrew or Greek

authority on the teaching that divorce means ‘separation from bed and board.’ There is none. Every lexicon I have searched has the same meaning of dissolution ... Twelve leading Hebrew and Greek lexicons define ‘put away’ as dissolution. Not a single authority can be named for separation.”

Why is the question of dissolution versus separation so important? Duty writes, “If dissolution can be proved, then there is no question about the right to remarriage, because our opponents deny remarriage on the grounds of non-dissolution.”

*“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” (Matt. 5:31, 32)*

*“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” (Matt. 19:9)*

“EXCEPT”

Even though Jesus used the word “except,” Webb insists that there are no exceptions to allow divorce. **“No**

**exceptions!”** he writes. (Emphasis Webb’s) Webb tells us that one rule of hermeneutics (the science of interpreting Scripture) is that obscure and unclear passages of Scripture must be interpreted in the light of passages that are clear. Then Webb informs us that Matthew 5:32 & 19:9 are “obscure” and “unclear.” However, he does not explain why these passages should be considered obscure and unclear. These statements of Jesus were certainly not spoken in obscurity. Matthew 5 was spoken in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 19 was spoken in public to a group of Pharisees. As for clarity, both passages make it clear that the introduction of “fornication” into a marriage results in an exception to the general rule of marriage for life. These statements seem to be every bit as clear as the passages of Scripture that Webb quotes to support his “no exceptions” position. Nonetheless, Webb insists that his proof-texts are the “clear” passages, and Matthew 5:32 & 19:9 are “obscure and unclear.” In Webb’s mind, passages that do *not* mention the exceptions to the general rule are the “clear” passages, and the passages that *do* clarify the subject by mentioning the exceptions are the “unclear.”

Duty, on the other hand, points out that the mentioning of an exception to the general rule clarifies, rather than obscures. He devotes an entire chapter in his book to the meaning and significance of the word “except.” He cites five Greek lexicons to prove that the Greek word has the same meaning as our English word “except.” He then cites three English dictionaries and three legal authorities to demonstrate that the use of the word “except” means that there are exceptions. He quotes leading Greek scholars to prove that the exception applies not only to the divorce, but also to the remarriage mentioned in these passages.

“FORNICATION”

The Greek word translated “fornication” is *porneia*. Webb admits that

*porneia* can have a broad meaning that includes any form of sexual immorality, including adultery. However, Webb says that adultery is not grounds for divorce. He says that in Matthew 5:32 & 19:9, the word *porneia* absolutely *must* be assigned the narrow meaning of sex between two unmarried people only. To think that *porneia* includes adultery, Webb says, “violates the obvious truth of our **clear premise verses.**” (Emphasis Webb’s) (Webb’s “clear premise verses” are the ones that do not clarify the subject by mentioning the exceptions.)

Webb discusses the custom of Jewish betrothal, which required a divorce if the engagement was to be broken, and mentions Joseph’s decision to quietly divorce Mary when he assumed she had committed fornication. Webb says that when Jesus said “except it be for fornication,” He was referring *only* to premarital sex during the betrothal period. Webb offers no proof to substantiate this claim.

According to Webb’s theology, if my bride-to-be cheats on me before we’re married, I can break off the engagement, but if she cheats on me after the wedding, I’m stuck with her. So if she wants to play the harlot, all she has to do is wait until after the wedding, because I can’t divorce her then. If *porneia* is Biblical grounds for divorce *before* the wedding, how much more should it be grounds for divorce *after* the wedding? Which is the more grievous sin, unfaithfulness before taking the wedding vows, or unfaithfulness after the wedding vows?

What is Webb’s advice to those who have a spouse who is committing adultery? “Just completely forgive him or her in Jesus’ name,” he says, “and let God do as He sees fit.” Webb asks this question to those with adulterous spouses: “Are you loving them, and showing affection to them, as you did before the offense? If not, you’re only agreeing to detente.”

Duty devotes an entire chapter to the word *porneia*, and quotes dozens of sources to prove that the word means any sexual sin, both before and after marriage. Of those who, like

Webb, claim that it means only premarital sex in Matthew 5:32 & 19:9, Duty writes: “As usual, they give no proof for their dogmatic statements. When a man has proof, he doesn’t have to be dogmatic, all he has to do is submit his evidence.”

Duty also discusses *zanah*, the Hebrew equivalent of *porneia*, to show that Jesus’ Jewish audience would have understood “fornication” to mean any sexual immorality, not just premarital sex: “As Jesus did not give the least indication that He changed the Old Testament meaning of the word, this was the only sense in which they could possibly understand it. The meaning of premarital-sin-only was never attached to the word.”

Duty carries the “no exceptions/no divorce” position to its logical conclusion by applying it to real-life situations. He points out that sometimes married men commit horrible sex crimes. “Does God now require His innocent saints to be one flesh with them?” Duty asks. “Can these offenders, after serving a prison term for their sex crimes, return and renew their one-flesh relation with their innocent mates who - on the premarital view - were forbidden to divorce them?” Duty says that one no-divorce teacher he debated said yes, Christ requires the innocent to be one flesh with convicted sex criminals. “To be consistent, he had to admit it,” Duty writes. Duty also reminds us that in 1 Corinthians 5, God banished fornicators from fellowship with His Church. “Would He require His saints to be ‘one flesh’ with them?” he asks.

Duty also refers to “the law of jealousies” in Numbers chapter 5, which tells of God’s curse on an adulterous wife. “God did not require a Jew to ‘cleave to’ and be ‘one flesh’ with an adulterous wife whose body swelled and rotted under His curse. He could divorce her and remarry and be guiltless while she still lived in her God-cursed body ... Moses punished the guilty and set the innocent free to remarry. He did not bind virtue with the chains of debauchery.” The Mosaic covenant “set the guiltless mates free to remarry,” Duty points

out. The new covenant is called a “better covenant” (Heb. 7:22 & 8:6). “So,” Duty writes, “if the better covenant requires the guiltless to be one flesh with sex offenders, then it seems that Moses gave the guiltless a better deal.”

## HILLEL AND SHAMMAI

Jesus’ statement in Matthew 19:9 was His response to the Pharisees’ question, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause [NASB, ‘any cause at all’]?” In the days of Jesus there were two prevailing views on the divorce question, the view of Rabbi Hillel and the view of Rabbi Shammai. Hillel taught that a man could divorce his wife for any trivial reason, even for burning his dinner. Shammai, on the other hand, taught that the phrase “some uncleanness” in Deuteronomy 24 applied only to sexual immorality, and therefore the only grounds for divorce in Israel was adultery.

Webb claims that Jesus “**ignored Hillel and Shammai** as though they didn’t exist.” (Emphasis Webb’s) Because Jesus did not answer the Pharisees’ question with the words “I agree with Rabbi Shammai,” Webb says that Jesus was not endorsing Shammai’s view -- even though Jesus was stating the very thing Shammai taught.

Duty disagrees with Webb, and quotes several sources (Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic) to show that Jesus was, indeed, endorsing the position of Shammai. “It was not Christ’s purpose to take sides in these disputes,” Duty writes. In answering the Pharisees’ question about divorce, it was “an incidental result” that Jesus’ answer did uphold one side, namely that of Shammai.

Duty also points out that the debate between the *every-cause* of Hillel and the *one-cause* of Shammai was *not* a dispute about a divorced person’s right to remarry. All agreed that a divorced person had the right to remarry. The dispute was only about the lawful grounds for divorce. “Would Jesus make it *right* for a man to divorce an

adulterous wife and then make it *wrong* for him to remarry?" Duty asks. "What kind of law would that be which establishes a right but places a no-marriage penalty upon anyone who uses the right?"

Duty quotes several sources to show that for 14 centuries before Christ, divorce "had the one and only meaning of dissolution with the right to remarriage." We must understand the word "divorce" the same way as it was understood by Jesus' Jewish audience, Duty says. Because of Christ's words "except for fornication," Duty says that after hearing Jesus' sermon that day, "any Jew in that crowd was free to go to a Jewish court and divorce an adulterous and unrepentant spouse with the writing of divorce-ment." And this divorce would have allowed the innocent party to remarry, because "denial of remarriage after divorce was unknown to Jews."

"Jesus approved the Jewish divorce that allowed remarriage, but He restricted this Jewish divorce law to the cause of fornication," Duty concludes. "He corrected the abuse of the divorce privilege, but approved the right use of it."

*"...Yahweh hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For Yahweh, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away [divorce]: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith Yahweh of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." (Malachi 2:14-16)*

Webb quotes from this passage at least five or six times in his book, and each time he quotes it, it is for the purpose of confirming his premise that God makes a husband and wife one flesh for life, without exception. Webb ignores the context, though, which

makes it clear that the divorce which God hates is a divorce that involves treachery against an innocent spouse. (The word "treacherously" appears three times in the passage.) To divorce an adulterous wife is not treachery -- *she* is the treacherous one! "For centuries in Israel, 'just' men had divorced harlot wives and remarried, and God never called that treachery," Duty writes. "God did not hate divorce for adultery and sex perversion."

*"10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband. 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And that woman that hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him ... 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace ... 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. 28a But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; 28b and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." (1 Cor. 7)*

Webb says that Paul was not addressing this statement in verse 28a ("But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned") to the "loosed from a wife" people in the previous verse. To support his argument, Webb again appeals to the hermeneutic principle of letting the clear verses explain the

unclear. And of course for Webb, this verse must be labeled "unclear," since it would otherwise contradict his no-remarriage position. "If it **did** refer to divorcees," Webb writes, "then this one **obscure verse**, would **make void** all the **clear verses**, and **contradict** all the **clear teaching** in God's Word." (Emphasis Webb's)

To whom, then, was Paul addressing these words in verse 28a? According to Webb, Paul was not speaking to the "loosed from a wife" people that he had just spoken to in the previous verse. Rather, he was addressing the "virgins" whom he had mentioned three verses earlier. Webb points out that similar instructions are given to virgins eight verses later, in verse 36 ("he sinneth not: let them marry"). Webb does not explain how the existence of similar instructions to the virgins in verse 36 proves that verse 28a was also addressed only to virgins. Nor does he explain how the two separate statements in verse 28, separated by the word "and," can both be addressing virgins. He will not admit that the "thou" of 28a and "a virgin" of 28b are two different people. Webb's understanding would make verse 28 read this way: "But if thou (a virgin) marry, thou (virgin) hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned."

Duty believes that Paul's instructions to "the married" in verses 10 & 11 were addressed to couples in a normal Christian marriage, where both spouses are believers. Unless one partner commits adultery, a Christian couple should not divorce. If verses 10 & 11 are not addressed to a marriage in which both spouses are Christians, then Paul's instructions would require a Christian woman to be reconciled to her unbelieving husband even if he were a convicted sex-perversed criminal.

Paul does not address those Christians married to unbelievers until verse 12. When Paul introduces verse 12 with the phrase "But to the rest," he is now addressing married couples in a different category, viz., a believer married to an unbeliever. The Greek word translated "the rest" means "the

other ones" or "the remaining ones," which would be different from the ones to whom he had just spoken in the previous two verses.

Duty reminds us that many of the Corinthians were Gentiles who had converted from their pagan faith to the Messianic faith. Sometimes one spouse converted and the other did not. A situation like this had not been addressed in Jesus' teachings, because Jesus taught Jewish, not pagan, audiences. When Paul said, "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord," he was not telling us that he was just giving his own personal opinion, mere advice that we can ignore if we want to. What Paul meant was this: "The Lord Jesus, in His earthly ministry, did not address this particular situation that many of you ('the rest of you') are in. Because He is not here in the flesh to speak to you about it, I am going to declare to you His will."

Paul's Spirit-inspired instructions to a believer married to an unbeliever are short and simple: 1) If the unbeliever wants to remain with the believing spouse, then let the unbeliever stay. 2) If the unbeliever wants to depart, let him/her depart. 3) If the unbeliever chooses to leave, a brother or sister is no longer in bondage in such cases. This seems clear enough, despite Webb's claim that this passage is "unclear" and "obscure."

Does this mean that a believer who has been deserted by an unbelieving spouse is free to remarry? "The whole question turns on the meaning of the words 'not under bondage,'" Duty writes. If the abandoned believer is not freed from bondage to the unbelieving ex-spouse, then what is it that the believer is freed from? If it is not the failed marriage to which the believer is no longer bound, then what is Paul talking about?

Webb gives no answer whatsoever. All he does is insist that it cannot mean that the abandoned believer is freed from the marriage, because this contradicts his no-dissolution/no-remarriage view. Webb says that the believer's only option is to wait for the unbelieving spouse to die or return. Webb does not recognize the distinc-

tion between the two types of married couples Paul was addressing, the Christian couples and "the rest," i.e., the mixed marriages. Therefore he believes that the instructions to "remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband" refer to all situations.

Duty asks: "Must the believer 'keep the door open' for the unbeliever to return at any time from the sex orgies of vice-ridden Corinth, to resume the 'one flesh' relationship with the believer? Paul answered with an emphatic NO. The marriage was dissolved ... What was it the divorced Christians were not in bondage to? By all the rules, there can be only one answer: they were no longer in bondage to the marriage."

It is significant that the Greek word used to describe a wife as "bound" to her husband for life (in Rom. 7:2 & 1 Cor. 7:39) is the very same Greek word used in 1 Corinthians 7:27: "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed." The same Greek word that in Romans 7:2 & 1 Corinthians 7:39 proclaims a wife "bound" to her husband for life, here is used to describe a married man who has the possibility of being "loosed" from his wife *while his wife is still living*. Why would Paul tell a married man to "seek not to be loosed" from his wife if the only possible way to be loosed is by death? Are we to suppose that Paul was telling Christian men to not murder their wives? This is the only way to understand the verse if nothing but death can loose a man from his wife.

Duty discusses the Greek terms *bound* and *loosed*, and concludes that Paul used "a decisive legal term that signified the complete liberation of a slave from his master, and the total and final release from the bondage of matrimony."

Duty writes: "If this evidence is not sufficient to convince a reasonable mind, then there is an end to all meaning in language and we must despair of ever proving anything."

It should be very obvious to readers by now that I find Duty's arguments far more convincing than

Webb's. Webb asks that the reader "not judge this book by its literary excellence or scholastic profundity," and I am not doing that. However, when I see a book filled with an excessive amount of **bold print**, *italics*, underlined words, and exclamation marks (!), it makes me wonder why the writer feels that he must use so many means of emphasis so frequently. This style of writing reminds me of a person who continually shouts to make his point because he has no real evidence, a person who has no proof but a lot of passion. If a person has sound evidence, he only needs to use bold print, italics, exclamation marks, etc. for occasional clarification, or occasional emphasis, or for setting apart long quotations and foreign words. As the Queen of Denmark said in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "The lady [or in this case, the gentleman] doth protest too much, methinks."

In the forward, Webb writes: "This book will be appreciated by those whose first loyalty is to the Word of God, rather than traditions and doctrines of men." This statement reeks of a subtle attempt to manipulate and establish the reader's opinion even before any evidence is presented, because the implication of the statement is this: "If you disagree with this book that you are about to read, your first loyalty is to the traditions and doctrines of men, and not to the Word of God." This is an insult to thinking people.

The book has other problems. Webb continually quotes from the *Living Bible*, an unscholarly paraphrase based not on the Hebrew and Greek texts but on an English translation. Webb's lack of scholarship is evident in other ways. In his effort to prove that the marriages of unbelievers are valid (a fact that no one, to my knowledge, disputes), he wastes eight pages telling about unbelievers in the Bible who had "wives" and not just mere "women." "If God doesn't recognize unbelievers' marriages," he writes, "why didn't it say '**their women**,' instead of '**their wives**?' " (Emphasis Webb's) Although the



legitimacy of unbelievers' marriages is not in dispute, what Webb does not know is that the Hebrew word for "wife" is the same as the word for "woman." Every single Old Testament example Webb gives uses the Hebrew word *ishah*, which can mean either "wife" or "woman."

Webb makes several statements which are inaccurate. He says that in Matthew 1 Joseph and Mary "were already **'one flesh'**" before they had sexual relations, even though the phrase "one flesh" does not appear anywhere in Matthew chapter 1. He continually adds the phrases "**for life,**" "**till death,**" etc. when paraphrasing passages of Scripture, even though these phrases are neither stated nor implied in the texts that he paraphrases. He even adds to the words of Scripture when putting the words of Jesus in quotation marks. When talking about Deuteronomy 24, he writes: "It was cancelled when he said, *'they are no more twain but one flesh for life.'*" (Emphasis Webb's) These words are presented in quotation marks as the words of Jesus, but Jesus did not say "for life." Webb added these words to the quote.

There are some statements in the book that are vague and do not make a lot of sense. When writing about Bible teachers who want to be sympathetic to new believers who experienced a divorce in their pre-Christian past, Webb says this: "These teachers should understand, that **one cannot sympathize and minister at the same time, for sympathy is self-elevating, and therefore it is sin.**" (Emphasis Webb's)

Webb also makes sloppy, careless errors. He says that Samson (which he misspells as "Sampson") had sex with Delilah in Judges 16:1, although Delilah is not mentioned for the first time until later. (The "harlot" of 16:1 is not named in the Bible.) When discussing 2 Corinthians 5:17, he writes: "The word '*things*' in the Greek, is in the perfect tense." I'm no Greek scholar, but I know that it is verbs, not nouns, that have tense. According to two Greek primers I have, nouns can have number, case,

and gender, but there is nothing about tense. Verb tense is for verbs, not nouns.

I can overlook Webb's careless errors and his overuse of bold print and italics, but I cannot accept his doctrine as he presents it. Webb arrives at erroneous conclusions because he uses circular reasoning. He starts from the premise that all marriages are for life, and that there are absolutely no exceptions whatsoever that would allow a divorced person to remarry while the first spouse is living. Webb calls this belief his "**clear, consistent premise** from which to operate." (Emphasis Webb's) Any passages that mention exceptions to the general rule of marriage for life must therefore be interpreted in a way that will agree with Webb's premature conclusion that there are no exceptions.

We might illustrate this type of reasoning like this: Let us say we are searching for the truth about a particular doctrine, which we shall call doctrine x. We study a few passages of Scripture and we think we have learned the truth about doctrine x. Using an algebraic equation as an illustration, let us say that we have come to the conclusion that  $x = 4$ . This, then, becomes our premise, and colors any other Scriptures we might read in the future about doctrine x. If we happen to come across a Bible verse that clearly shows that  $x = 5$ , we say, "Wait a minute! We've already established the premise that  $x = 4$ , so this verse *can't* really mean that  $x = 5$ !" And so we look for a way to interpret it so that it doesn't contradict our premature assumption that  $x = 4$ .

This is exactly the way that Webb operates. When he comes to the exception clause in Matthew 5:32 ("except it be for fornication"), he says that fornication here cannot possibly mean adultery, because that idea "violates the obvious truth of our **clear premise verses.**" (Emphasis Webb's)

If I seem to be too harsh on Webb's book, it is because of the seriousness of his error. As stated earlier, Webb's zeal for the purity of marriage is commendable. He does not want to

"justify the wicked" who are truly living in adultery, and neither do I. However, we need to remember what Proverbs 17:15 says: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to Yahweh." Condemning the just by calling them "adulterers and adulteresses" is abomination to Yahweh. Webb also encourages abomination by teaching that Christians can be reconciled to their original mate even if that original mate remarried after the divorce. This is called "abomination before Yahweh" in Deuteronomy 24.

Guy Duty does his duty and presents the facts. Joseph Webb spins a web of error that would cause believers to commit abomination in the eyes of Yahweh by being reconciled to an ex-spouse who had remarried after the divorce.

Duty's book is far more convincing. Duty concludes that the "no remarriage/no exceptions" doctrine is "loaded with presumption" and "violates all sound rules of interpretation" and is "a doctrine of inconsistency." Duty writes, "The non-dissolution teaching must be rejected, not only for insufficient evidence, but for a total lack of it."

I agree whole-heartedly with Duty's statement. Does this mean that I am endorsing divorce and remarriage for believers? No. I am saying that marriage for life is the ideal and should be the expected norm, but if adultery occurs or if an unbelieving spouse departs, these are exceptions to the general rule, and the marriage can be dissolved, leaving the innocent spouse free to remarry. That is all.

Guy Duty was born in 1907 and died in 1977. The current publishers of his book ask that the information in the book be applied only within the narrow confines discussed in the book, and not be interpreted more broadly than Guy Duty would have intended. I would make the same request to readers of this book review/article I have written. □

*In case readers are wondering: No, neither my wife nor I have ever been through a divorce.*



# EYEGLASSES

Daniel Botkin



When my sister was in first grade, she had her eyes examined. The eye test revealed that she was extremely near-sighted. The first night she wore her new glasses, she looked up at the sky and exclaimed, "I can see the stars!"

Eyeglasses can make a difference in how accurately and clearly we see reality. For someone with defective vision, the right eyeglasses help the person see things as they truly are. However, the same eyeglasses will distort reality if worn by someone with good eyes.

There are literal eyeglasses for physical eyes, and there are figurative eyeglasses that people wear on their minds. For example, we sometimes hear an optimist described as a person who "views the world through rose-colored glasses." There are many kinds of mental eyeglasses through which we can view things. These eyeglasses will have an effect on how and what we think about God, about Yeshua, about the Scriptures, and about life in general. How we think about these things will determine how we live out our faith in our daily life.

Our understanding of the Scriptures is often shaped by one very powerful pair of eyeglasses: the times and culture in which we happen to live. This has been true even of great Christian leaders in Church history, often with disastrous results. A few examples: Luther was extremely anti-Semitic. John Calvin allowed Michael Servetus to be burned at the stake for not believing in the Trinity. Ulrich Zwingli approved of the imprisonment and execution of Anabaptists for their beliefs.

The appalling thing about the Reformers' blunders is that these deeds were done by men who knew and loved the Scriptures. Zwingli, for example, had such a desire to understand the Bible that he taught himself Hebrew and Greek, then hand-copied and memorized all of Paul's epistles in Greek. A writer in



*Christian History* magazine (Vol.III, No. 1) notes that Zwingli "was transfigured and shaped by his own peculiar time and place." The powerful eyeglasses of the times and culture in which a believer lives affects the believer's understanding of the Scriptures.

It is easy for us to criticize men of former generations. But we should be more concerned about our own generation, and ask this question: How do the eyeglasses of our current American culture affect our understanding of the Scriptures?

Most American Christians wear these eyeglasses of contemporary American culture when they read the Bible. As a result, they think of Jesus as a White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Republican. Of course they know He was actually a dark-skinned Galilean Jew with no political interests except His Father's Kingdom. Christians intellectually know this, yet they still think about Him and talk about Him as if He were a WASP Republican like themselves. They also know that Yeshua did not go to church on Sundays, celebrate Christmas and Easter, or shave. "But," they think, "if He had been born in America, He surely would have wanted to do all those things!" Sometimes I think there are some Christians who secretly wish that He had been born someplace in the Bible Belt, like Dallas or Tulsa.

The only way to be delivered from distorted thinking about God, Yeshua, and the Scriptures is to remove the

eyeglasses of contemporary American culture, and use the eyes God gives us when we are born from above. The spiritual eyes we receive from God through the new birth are perfect; therefore, any cultural eyeglasses we wear will distort rather than clarify our vision. We do not need eyeglasses for our spiritual eyes; we need to *remove* our cultural eyeglasses, layer by layer.

Psalms 45 portrays the Messiah as a warring King who takes a captive Bride in battle. This is in accordance with Deuteronomy 21:10-14, where a captive bride is instructed to shave her head, pare her nails, and put off the garments of her captivity. This teaches us that if we wish to be a part of King Messiah's Bride, there must be a stripping away of our old identity and nature. This includes the removal of any cultural eyeglasses that distort our vision.

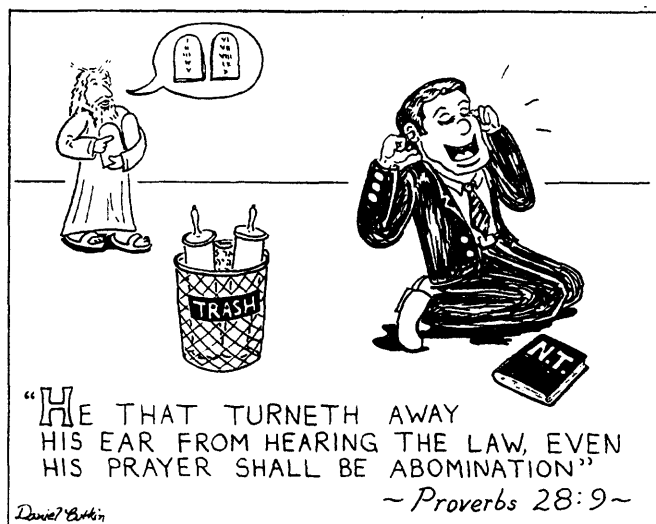
In Psalm 45 the Bride is instructed and encouraged with these words: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

We would do well to heed this word, and forget the excess baggage of contemporary American culture when we read the Bible. When we come under the authority of King Messiah, we must adapt to the culture of His Kingdom. So shall the King greatly desire our beauty.



# TORAH: mishpatim, edot, chukim

Dr. Daniel Botkin



Reprinted from *Gates of Eden* 1-1

**TORAH**, usually translated into English as “Law,” is a subject of vital importance for those who would worship the God of the Bible, as the above-quoted verse from Proverbs so strongly points out. Unfortunately, most Christians have only a superficial understanding of what Torah is, and a lack of appreciation for this God-given gift.

David Stern, in his book *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*, refers to the study and understanding of Torah as “Christian theology’s greatest deficiency.” To demonstrate his point, Stern compares the amount of pages that various Jewish and Christian writers give to the subject of God’s Law in their books of systematic theology. The three Jewish commentators Stern checked devoted 15%, 20%, and 22% of their pages to explaining the meaning of Torah, while the Christian commentators devoted only 3%, one-half of 1%, and one-fourth of 1 % of their space to the subject.

Stern admits that these figures provide only “a rough measure,” but my own 20-plus years of study and experience tells me that Stern is quite accurate in his conclusion when he writes, “One is forced to the conclusion that the topic interests Jews and not Christians.”<sup>1</sup>

I happen to be a Christian who does have an interest in the topic. I do not consider myself an expert on the Torah, but I have given the subject a considerable amount of study, prayer, and thought over the years. The purpose of this article is to give readers a general understanding of the basic elements of the Torah, and thereby help in a small way to remedy “Christian theology’s greatest deficiency.”

When trying to understand a broad subject like Torah, it often helps to first break the subject down into its major components. Fortunately, the Bible does this for us very clearly in Deuteronomy 4:44f: “And this is the Law (*torah*) which Moses set before the children of Israel. These are the testimonies (*edot*) and the statutes (*chukim*) and the judg-

ments (*mishpatim*) which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt.”

From this we can see that the commandments of the Torah fall into three major categories: *edot* (עדות), *chukim* (חוקים), and *mishpatim* (משפטים).

The commandments referred to as *mishpatim* are the moral, ethical commandments called “judgments.” These laws require no explanation or justification -- the need for laws against murder, rape, robbery, etc. is self-evident to anyone with good “judgment.” The Septuagint uses the Greek word *krimata* (κρίματα) in Deuteronomy 4:45, a word which carries with it the idea of condemnation and punishment. Disobeying the *mishpatim* usually results in some form of condemnation and punishment, either by a human court or by Divine retribution.

The *edot* are feast days and other rituals that testify to some important spiritual truth or historical event. The word *edot* can be translated “testimonies” or “witnesses,” as the Septuagint demonstrates by using the Greek word *marturia* (μαρτυρία). Readers of the KJV can see the word used in its singular form in Joshua 22:34: “And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it shall be a witness between us that the LORD is God.” The *edot* are important because they remind us of God’s presence, God’s faithfulness, God’s holiness, and the privileges and duties we have as His children. Obeying the *edot* reinforces the spiritual realities which they represent.

The reasons for the *edot* are always stated; the reasons for the *mishpatim* are always obvious. The reasons for the commandments known as *chukim*, however, are neither stated nor obvious. The *chukim* are commandments such as “Thou shalt not plow with an ox and a donkey together” or “Thou shalt not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together” (Deut. 22:10f).

Why these acts are forbidden is not stated; the commandments are simply given with no explanation. God, for reasons known only to Himself, decided to require His people to follow certain regulations. This is evident in the Septuagint’s translation of *chukim* as *dikaionomata* (δικαιώματα, “decision, requirement, regulation”). The *chukim* are commandments that are “prescribed” or “appointed” for reasons known only to the Lord.

Some people speculate about why the Lord gave certain *chukim*. For example, many believe that the dietary laws were given for reasons of health, and this may very well be true. However, when the Bible does not state the reason for a commandment (as it does for the *edot*) and the reason is not obvious (as it is for the *mishpatim*), we must accept such laws as *chukim*.

Most decent people accept the *mishpatim* as good laws that ought to be obeyed by everyone. Most religious Jews and Christians see the importance of the *edot* for believers (although the only *edot* practiced by most Christians are baptism and the Lord’s Supper). But both Jews and Chris-

tians stumble over the *chukim*. Aryeh Kaplan, a Jewish writer, admits that even for Jews, the *chukim* are "the most difficult to keep." Kaplan gives a good explanation of why this is so:

"If we do not understand the reason for something, it is tempting to find excuses not to do it. When we try to explain our religion to non-Jews, the laws that do not have an obvious reason are the most difficult to justify. If a person is unsure of himself or is wavering in his Judaism, these laws will be the first to be abandoned."<sup>2</sup>

The terms "non-Christian/Christianity" can be substituted for "non-Jews/Judaism" to make the above paragraph relevant to Christians.

How often have we heard people respond to the *chukim*, or even to the *edot*, with remarks like "Why would God care about this?" or "Why doesn't He want us to do that?" or "This doesn't seem important to me. Surely the Lord doesn't care about it!"

Christians often dismiss the *chukim* by saying, "Only the moral laws are important now. Now that we have the Holy Spirit, we don't need to do those other things anymore." Ironically, the Bible says that one reason for the giving of the Holy Spirit is to enable God's people to keep the *chukim* as well as the *mishpatim*: "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes (*chukim*), and you shall keep My judgments (*mishpatim*), and do them" (Ezk.36:27). And again it is written: "And I will put a new spirit within them...that they may walk in My statutes (*chukim*) and keep My ordinances (*mishpatim*), and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God" (Ezk. 11:19f).

Pentecostals often speak about having the Holy Spirit "with evidence of speaking in other tongues." Maybe it's time to start talking about having the Holy Spirit "with evidence of walking in the *chukim*."

For centuries Christian theologians have used Christianity's rejection of the *chukim* and *edot* to justify the Church's changing of the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday observance. The need for a regular day for rest and worship was viewed by Christians as a *mishpat*. The part of the commandment that specifies the seventh day as the Sabbath, however, was viewed as a "ceremonial law" which could be abandoned or altered.

Chrysostom, from whose pen flowed both sweet praises to God and bitter curses against the Jews, said that the Sabbath commandment teaches that "among the days of the week one must be singled out and wholly devoted to the service of spiritual things."<sup>3</sup> It is no longer "the seventh day," but any day of the week. According to Chrysostom, then, man can single out a day for rest and worship other than the day written on the tablets with the finger of God.

In the 13th Century, Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Theologica*, wrote that "the precept of the Sabbath observance is moral ... in so far as it commands man to give some time to the things of God ... but it is a ceremonial precept ... as to the fixing of the time."<sup>4</sup>

For Aquinas, the laws of God that he believed could be discovered by human reason are moral and binding; the laws that require Divine revelation are not. Hebraically speaking, we could say that Aquinas accepted the *mishpatim*

but rejected the *edot* and *chukim*. The moral laws, Aquinas said, are grounded on "natural law," i.e., they can be discovered by natural human reason without any Divine revelation. The flaw in Aquinas' theology lies in the fact that human nature is fallen and sinful, and "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). The Torah does not have its origin in natural human reason; it comes by Divine revelation.

The influence of Aquinas' unscriptural elevation of natural law above the *chukim* and *edot* can be seen in the theology of later Christians. Luther rejected the seventh-day Sabbath because "it is not supported by the natural law."<sup>5</sup> Melancthon insisted on a day to replace the seventh-day Sabbath because it is "moral and natural" to have a fixed day for worship.<sup>6</sup> The Catechism of the Council of Trent (1566) dismisses the seventh-day Sabbath because it is not "a principle of the natural law," but accepts the other nine of the Ten Commandments because the Nine Commandments "belong to the natural law, and are perpetual and unalterable ... because they agree with the law of nature."<sup>7</sup>

By whose authority do we use "natural law" to determine whether or not a command in the Bible should be obeyed? Do we obey the commandments because they "make sense" to the natural man without the aid of Divine revelation? Or do we obey them because they were commanded by our Heavenly Father, who happens to be the Supreme Ruler of the universe? Both Christians and Jews should hearken to Kaplan's comments about the *chukim*:

"The fact that a commandment does not have an obvious reason makes its observance all the more an act of faith. It indicates that we are ready and willing to obey God's commandments, even when we cannot justify them with logic. It shows that we are placing God above our own intellect ... We do not observe the commandments because logic demands it, but simply because they were given by God. The required basis is the relationship between the commandments and their Giver. This is higher than any human wisdom."<sup>8</sup>

Yes, some of God's commandments seem foolish, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1:25). Let us manifest the wisdom of God to the world by our obedience to the *mishpatim*, the *edot*, and the *chukim*, and show the world that we believe our Heavenly Father knew what He was doing when He gave the Torah. □

#### NOTES

- 1 David H. Stern, *Messianic Jewish Manifesto* (Jerusalem: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1988), 125f.
- 2 Aryeh Kaplan, *Waters of Eden* (New York: National Conference of Synagogue Youth/Orthodox Union, 1982), 8.
- 3 Chrysostom, *Homily 10, 7 In Genesim*, PG 53, 89.
- 4 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I-II, Q.122, 4.
- 5 Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets, Luther's Works*, 1958, 40:93.
- 6 Melancthon, *On Christian Doctrine, Loci Communes 1555*, Clyde L. Manschreck, ed. and trans., 1965, 96f.
- 7 *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, J. Donovan, trans., 1908, 342.
- 8 Kaplan, 8f.

# THE DANGER OF INDEPENDENCE

Dr. Daniel Botkin

I became a born-again Christian in 1972 and a 7th-day Sabbath-keeper in 1989. I had a joyous and exciting walk with the Lord even before seeing the truth about the Sabbath. When I began keeping the Sabbath and other Torah instructions, it revolutionized and energized my walk with the Lord as never before. These past eleven years of living a Torah lifestyle in the Messiah have been wonderful, and I would not trade them for the world.

During my eleven years as a Sabbath-keeper, I have learned quite a bit about the Sabbath-keeping community throughout America and the world. I have learned that Sabbath-keepers who believe in Yeshua/Jesus may be 7th Day Adventists, 7th Day Baptists, 7th Day Pentecostals, Messianic Jews, Messianic Israelites, Sacred Name believers, or members of the World Wide Church of God or Church of God, 7th Day. I have even heard of Sabbath-keeping Menno-nites, Methodists, and Mormons.

I have seen some positive things in the Sabbath-keeping community -- zeal for truth, a desire for holiness and purity, a willingness to bear the reproach of being considered weird by other Christians, etc. I have also seen some negative things in the Sabbath-keeping community. One major problem I wish to address is a spirit of pride that manifests itself in the form of independence. By independence I mean a believer's lack of accountability to other believers and his refusal to submit to the authority of any man as an elder or pastor.

This problem exists for a number of reasons. One reason is something called "the pendulum principle." A pendulum swings as far as it can go in one direction, then swings as far as it can go in the opposite direction. Some believers let themselves be pulled like a pendulum from one extreme to the other. When they see one extreme doctrinal error, they swing like a pendulum to the opposite

extreme, and often end up in an equally dangerous error. Most of us have seen the error of religious leaders who have abused their authority and lording it over the flock and led God's people into error. Some believers, in their eagerness to avoid being victims of this kind of abuse, go to the opposite extreme and refuse to be accountable to anyone at all. People who feel betrayed or deeply disappointed by religious bodies to which they once belonged often react this way. This reaction is understandable but it is not right.

A second reason the problem of independence exists among Sabbath-keepers is because the typical Sabbath-keeper is, by nature, something of a non-conformist and a maverick. Many Christians who become Sabbath-keepers do so because they are the type of individuals who are inclined to question authority and to study and think for themselves. This character trait can lead to the discovery of truth, but if the old nature is not dealt with by the Cross, this trait can also lead to a spirit of pride and stubbornness.

Satan tempts us on three levels by appealing to three areas of human desire, described by John as "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16).

If the enemy of our soul cannot get us to yield to the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eyes, he will tempt us with the pride of life. He will make us think more highly of ourselves than we should. He will make us think that we do not need to be accountable to other brothers in a local body of believers. Even though the Messianic assemblies in the New Testament had elders and a system of authority and accountability, the devil will make us think that we do not need that, because we are a special case. After all, we see some truths that so many others do not see! The devil will make us think that the truths which we see are more important than they really

are -- more important, even, than obeying the commandment to "forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." He will make us think that our refusal to join a local congregation is something noble and something we are doing "for the sake of truth," when in fact our refusal is born out of pride, rebellion, and stubbornness. These are three very dangerous sins. "Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov. 16:18). "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:23).

From time to time I hear about some overly-independent brothers or sisters in the Sabbath-keeping community who are reaping the bitter fruit of their pride, rebellion, and stubbornness. The bitter fruit is the loss of their faith in Yeshua as the Messiah. This loss of faith is not sudden, but subtle and gradual like leaven. It usually begins by questioning the inspiration of the Apostle Paul's writings. Paul's letters are certainly "hard to understand." Even Peter said so. (2 Pet. 3:16) On the surface, some of Paul's writings give the impression that the Torah is no longer valid, and Sabbath-keeping brethren know that this is not so. Sabbath-keepers are familiar with Matthew 5:17ff, where Yeshua clearly upholds the Torah "til heaven and earth pass away." Because they cannot reconcile some of Paul's statements with the Torah, they feel that they must choose between Paul and Yeshua. One or the other must be rejected, they think, so they reject Paul as a false apostle.

After rejecting Paul's writings, the next step is to question the truth of the letters written by the other Apostles. Finally, the reliability of the Four Gospels is questioned. These doubting brethren, if they continue on their downward spiral, are finally left with no New Testament writings and no Messiah. They are left with nothing but the Old Testament Scriptures and the gravely mistaken notion that

## In Defense of Paul

Those who have read my booklet *The Ghost of Marcion* know that my view of Paul's writings is somewhat different from the view of Mainstream Christianity, at least when dealing with the subject of Paul and the Law. The validity of the Torah is upheld throughout the Scriptures -- by Moses, by the Prophets, by the Messiah, and by the Apostles. Therefore anything that Paul says about the Law must be understood in a way that harmonizes with what the rest of the Bible says about the Law. Paul must not be interpreted in a way that contradicts or invalidates the Torah.

Much of Mainstream Christianity mistakenly believes that Paul taught against Torah observance. This is extreme error. The opposite extreme is to label Paul as a false apostle and reject his writings. The Ebionites, a heretical Messianic Jewish sect in the First Century, did this, and some Torah-observant Messianic believers are doing it in our generation. This, too, is extreme error.

We should not make Paul's writings the foundation of our faith, but neither should we reject his writings. Granted, some of Paul's statements are hard to understand. Even Peter said so. (2 Pet. 3:15f) Peter was a First Century Jew like Paul. Peter lived in the same time and same culture, spoke the same language, and knew the same people as Paul. Peter even knew Paul personally. If Peter thought that Paul's writings were "hard to understand," then we can be sure that Paul's writings will be even more difficult for us to understand, with our limited knowledge of the situations and people Paul was addressing in his letters.

The difficulty of understanding Paul's writings does not mean that we should reject them. Peter referred to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul," and even implied that Paul's writings were "scriptures." (See 2 Pet. 3:15f.) Paul was recognized as a legitimate Apostle by Peter, James, John, and the other Apostles of the Lord Yeshua. About 350 years later, the Torah-observant Nazarene Jews, who were the direct descendants of the original Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem, still accepted Paul's writings. [For proof of this, see Ray Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), p. 44.]

The earliest Messianic Apostles and the later Nazarene Jews did not see a contradiction between living a Torah-observant life in the Messiah and accepting Paul's writings, so why should we? We must learn to do two things: 1) Respect the First Century Apostolic authority of the original Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem; and 2) Learn to live with unanswered questions about Paul's writings. Virtually all of Paul's statements that seem to express a hostile attitude toward the Law can, in fact, be correctly interpreted to harmonize with the Torah. The existence of a few difficulties that we might not yet be able to reconcile is not a reason to reject Paul's writings. If we have a difficulty, we may be able to reconcile it later with further study. Or maybe someone else has already reconciled the difficulty, and we don't know it yet.

We must recognize that the flaw lies not in Paul's writings but in our lack of knowledge, and we must accept and respect the Apostolic authority of the First Century Messianic Assembly in Jerusalem.

-Daniel Botkin

Yeshua of Nazareth was not the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures. Some of these deluded disciples convert to Orthodox Judaism, but most of them attempt to independently practice their own home-spun version of Israelite faith, based solely on their personal interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Why does God allow this deception to take place? He allows people to believe a lie because they do not love the knowledge of the truth. God Himself is the One who sends the strong delusion, as a judgment for their refusal to love the truth. (See 2 Thes. 2:10-12 & Ezk. 14:9.) These people love their independence and lack of accountability more than they love the truth. If they loved the truth, they would not forsake the assembling of themselves with other brethren. They would not consider abandoning things which they once held to be important truths, without first sharing

their ideas and new discoveries with other, stable brethren. They would be humble enough to admit that they might not be able to find all the answers by themselves. Before making major theological changes, they would run their ideas by the brethren and ask for input and wisdom. Unfortunately, they have no brethren, because their pride, rebellion, and stubbornness prevents them from being committed to a local congregation to whom they can be accountable.

Peter warns us of the dangers of pride. In 1 Peter 5, he instructs elders. Then he writes, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time ... Be sober, be vigilant;

because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, seeketh whom he may devour."

When a lion stalks prey, he looks for those animals that have strayed away from the flock, because the lion knows that they make the easiest targets. There is protection in being part of a flock. Even a small, imperfect congregation is better than no congregation at all.

If you are not committed to a local congregation with brethren to whom you can be accountable, you need to do something about it, even if it means pulling up stakes and relocating. Being a disciple of the Messiah is more important than any job, real estate, or even family ties. It's time for Sabbath-keepers to take their proud, stubborn, rebellious independence to the Cross, die to self, and become useful, functioning members of local bodies. □

# KEEPING THE SABBATH: FAITH OR SUPERSTITION?

Dr. Daniel Botkin

One definition of superstition is “a belief or practice resulting from a false concept of causation” (Webster’s). Superstitious people believe that practicing certain habits or possessing certain objects can cause good luck or bad luck.

The superstitious pagans of Bible times believed that certain days of the week were lucky or unlucky for certain activities. The Hebrews also had some beliefs about the days of the week. They believed that Sunday through Friday were good days to work, and Saturday, the 7th day of the week, was a day to cease working and assemble for worship. This belief, unlike the pagan beliefs, was not a superstition, though. Keeping the Sabbath was and is an act of faith, because it was and is based on a trust in the one true God who gave the Sabbath to be a sign between Himself and His people throughout their generations forever. (Ex. 31:12ff)

Keeping the Sabbath can cause good things to happen and prevent bad things from happening. Breaking the Sabbath can cause bad things to happen and prevent good things from happening. This is not superstition. This is what the Bible teaches when it promises good things (“blessings”) for keeping the Sabbath and bad things (“curses”) for breaking it.

We may not always see how the blessings or curses are the result of our having kept or broken the Sabbath, but that does not matter to the spiritual man. The spiritual man knows that there is an unseen spiritual dimension to life. Unlike the natural man, who believes only what his five senses tell him, the spiritual man knows that his actions in the physical realm affect the unseen angelic and demonic powers that are at work in the spiritual realm. Keeping or not keeping the Sabbath will cause things to happen, and it is not necessary to understand how or why. If the Bible teaches it, then the spiritual man

accepts it as truth, because he trusts the Word of his Heavenly Father.

The rabbis teach that everything in the visible, physical world has a spiritual counterpart in the invisible, spiritual realm. In other words, things that we see in the earthly creation are reflections or shadows of heavenly realities which we cannot see with our physical eyes. (I have been told that Christian writer C.S. Lewis also believed this, and that is why the story of his earthly life is called “Shadowlands.”) Some Christians may think this idea is a bit far-fetched, but the New Testament teaches in Hebrews 8-10 that the earthly Tabernacle with its priesthood and worship was a “shadow,” patterned after a Tabernacle that exists in the heavenly realm, with its priesthood and worship. God gave Moses this warning when he was about to make the Tabernacle: “See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount” (Heb. 8:5).

God has a pattern for worship, and since the first week of Creation, that pattern has included the 7th day of the week as the Sabbath. Some Christians argue that the Sabbath is only a “shadow,” an outward symbol of the inward rest unto the soul that Jesus promised. The fact that the Sabbath is, indeed, a shadow of the Messiah should not motivate us to throw away the Sabbath. On the contrary, it should motivate us to step into that shadow by keeping the Sabbath. The shadow has a solid reality behind it in the spiritual realm. When we step into that shadow, our soul steps into the spiritual reality which is casting the shadow. As the Bride says of the Bridegroom in the Song of Solomon, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste” (2:3).

When it comes to keeping the Sabbath, God’s people just don’t get it. In Deuteronomy 29 Moses warned God’s people that if they disobeyed

the commandments, they would go into exile. The people disobeyed and went into exile in the Babylonian Captivity. The Sabbath was not the only command they had disobeyed, but the Sabbath was specifically mentioned by the Prophets as one of the major reasons for the Babylonian Captivity. Isaiah had pleaded with them to keep the Sabbath. (See chapters 56 & 58.) Jeremiah told them Jerusalem would be spared if they would quit breaking the Sabbath, but fall if they continued breaking it. (Jer. 17:19ff) After they went into exile, Ezekiel was told to “cause them to know the abominations of their fathers” (Ezk. 20:3; 22:2; 23:36). One of the abominations that Ezekiel discussed at length was their refusal to keep the Sabbath, which, he reminded them, had been given to be a sign between God and His people.

“Her priests have violated My law, and have profaned My holy things,” God said through His prophet. “They have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.” (Ezk. 22:26. See also Ezk. 20:10-22; 22:8; 23:38.)

After the seventy years in Babylon ended and the people returned to the Promised Land, they still did not grasp the importance of the Sabbath. Nehemiah had to take strong measures to make the people in Jerusalem stop breaking the Sabbath. (See Neh. 13:15-22.)

Satan works hard to convince God’s people that the Sabbath is not important, and he is quite successful. Why does Satan want God’s people to think the Sabbath is not important? Because he knows how important it really is. Satan knows that keeping or breaking the Sabbath affects what takes place in the spiritual realm.

Art Cox, an elder in our congregation, has an interesting idea about how



our observing Torah affects the spiritual realm: In whatever particular way the Torah blesses us, in that exact way it curses the powers of darkness. In other words, it does the exact opposite to the demons of what it does for us. When we enjoy rest on the Sabbath, it deprives the demonic powers of rest and causes them to have to work harder. When we start each lunar month out with a New Moon celebration and look forward with eagerness to the blessings we will enjoy in the coming month, it causes them to look forward with dread to the misery they will experience in the coming month. When we joyfully celebrate the annual Feasts that remind us of God's great redemptive acts in the past and the future, it causes them to fearfully remember these acts of God and thus robs them of courage. When we strengthen our physical health with a kosher diet, it robs them of their spiritual food and weakens them. It's an interesting theory. I think it's more than a theory, though. I think it's a Divine revelation.

Satan knows that keeping the Sabbath is not a mere superstition that makes no difference in the lives of God's people. Satan knows that keeping the Sabbath will bring curses to the powers of darkness and blessings to the people of God.

Of course God can and does bless His people every day. However, there are some specific blessings which can be received only by stepping into the shadow of God's specifically appointed times. This truth is hinted at in Ezekiel's vision: "Thus saith the Lord God: The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened" (Ezk. 46:1).

In the spiritual realm there is a gate that we can enter only on Sabbath or New Moon. Are you trying to keep the Sabbath by going to church on Sundays? Sorry, but it won't work. In the spiritual realm the Sabbath gate is closed that day. The church doors may be opened for Sabbath services on Sunday, but the shadow into which

you are stepping is not the shadow of the Messiah. The Sunday Sabbath is a counterfeit, substitute sabbath, and it is therefore a shadow being cast by a different entity, an entity that is determined to prevent God's people from stepping into the 7th-day Sabbath, the true shadow of the true Messiah.

Why is it that Sunday-keeping Christians cannot see the truth about the Sabbath? It is partly due to the fact that when they step into the shadow of the counterfeit sabbath, they absorb something of the entity that casts the shadow. Am I saying these people are lost? No, I am only saying that they have absorbed some deception by stepping into the shadow of the false sabbath, just as 7th-day Sabbath-keepers can absorb some truth by stepping into the true shadow.

Is the observance of the 7th day as the Sabbath really that important? The natural man would say no, because he cannot discern with his five senses why it would make any difference. The spiritual man cannot discern why with his five senses either, but unlike the natural man, he does not demand that God explain why it is important. The spiritual man knows that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). The spiritual man knows that the Sabbath is most assuredly one of "the things of the Spirit of God" because God instituted it; therefore the spiritual man does not expect to discern the Sabbath with his natural senses. He discerns its importance by his spirit.

The story of Naaman illustrates the thinking of the natural man. Naaman, a Syrian, came to Elisha to be healed of his leprosy. Elisha sent a message to Naaman: Dip seven times in the Jordan River and the leprosy will depart. Naaman was angry.

"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" he fumed. "May I not wash in them and be clean?"

Elisha's instructions did not make sense to Naaman, so he went away in a rage. However, his friends con-

vinced him to follow the prophet's instructions. Naaman dipped seven times in the Jordan and received the blessing: his leprosy departed.

If Naaman had dipped in some river other than the one specified by God's prophet, he would not have received the blessing. Christians who try to keep the Sabbath on some day other than the one day specified by the Word of God will not receive the blessings that result from keeping the Sabbath. Furthermore, it was the *seventh* dip, not the *first* dip, that brought the blessing and healing that Naaman needed. In like manner, it is keeping the Sabbath on the *seventh* day, not on the *first* day of the week, that will bring the blessing and healing that the Church needs.

Naaman and his friends had no idea how or why the seventh dip in one particular river would make a difference. But they had faith in the word of God's prophet -- a lot more faith than many Christians who refuse to step into the Sabbath have.

"But Daniel," some might object, "for most of its history the Christian Church has *not* kept the 7th-day Sabbath, and look at all the good it has done! Hasn't God blessed and used the Church, even though it hasn't kept the Sabbath?"

Of course. God blesses and uses people in spite of their flaws, especially when their flaws are due to a lack of knowledge and not a result of willful rebellion. God has definitely blessed and used the Church. However, let me close with this thought:

If God has given all this glory to a Church that has *not* kept the Sabbath, *how much more glory* will He give to the Church when she *does* start keeping the Sabbath? The answer to this question can be found in Isaiah chapters 56 & 58:

"Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer."

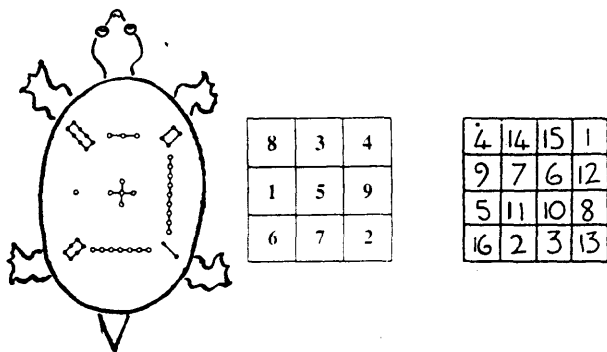
"Then shalt thou delight thyself in Yahweh; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken it." □

# MAGIC SQUARES, 666, & THE MARK OF THE BEAST

## Dr. Daniel Botkin

### A TALE OF A TATTOOED TURTLE

In approximately 2200 BC -- around the time of Abraham -- the Chinese Emperor Yu found a tortoise on the banks of the Yellow River. The shell of the tortoise was marked with the peculiar diagram shown below. Emperor Yu discovered that if the numbers of dots are counted and arranged on a square grid (as shown below), the markings reveal a mathematical oddity: the numbers 1 through 9 appear only one time each, and the sum along each row, column, or diagonal is the same, namely 15. Numbers can be arranged in this fashion on larger square grids. For example, the numbers 1 through 16, when placed on a 4 by 4 grid as shown below, result in the sum of 34 along each row, column, or diagonal. The Chinese call these oddities *lo-shu*. In English they are called magic squares.



This story of Emperor Yu's tattooed tortoise is a story about a mark on a beast, but what do magic squares and this mark on a beast have to do with The Mark of The Beast? We will get to that eventually, but first let's consider some things about The Beast and The Mark.

### THE BEAST

People disagree about who or what The Beast in Revelation is (or was), but no serious Bible student can escape the fact that whoever or whatever The Beast is (or was), it has some kind of connection to the Roman Empire. This fact is apparent when John's vision of The Beast is compared to the dreams and visions described in the Book of Daniel.

The first dream recorded in the Book of Daniel is Nebuchadnezzar's dream of a great image with a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs of iron. It was revealed to Daniel that these four metals represented four great empires that would arise.

"Thou art this head of gold," Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron."

We know from history that the three empires that came after Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon were Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream is in chapter two of Daniel. In chapter three Nebuchadnezzar commanded all his subjects to bow down to a great image he had made of gold. "No silver, brass, or iron in *my* image!" Nebuchadnezzar probably thought. "My golden kingdom will *never* be replaced!" Then in chapter four Nebuchadnezzar was warned in a dream (and by Daniel's interpretation of the dream) to humble himself and repent of his sins. Nebuchadnezzar ignored this warning, and a year later he suffered a temporary madness which caused him to behave like a wild beast. He dwelt with the beasts of the field, ate grass like an ox, and his hair grew like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

"Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him" was the decree of the watcher.

When people exhibit animal-like behavior, psychiatrists call this condition lycanthropy. If it happens in church at a revival meeting, some Christians call it a blessing from the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible makes it clear that in Nebuchadnezzar's case it was a delusion sent by God as a judgment for Nebuchadnezzar's sin and pride.

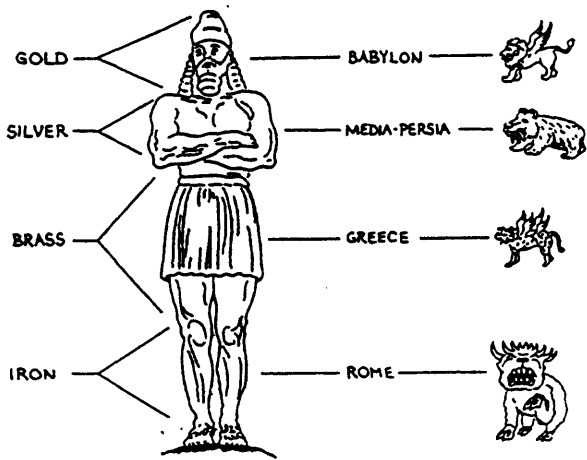
The story of Nebuchadnezzar shows us that without God, man is no better than a beast. If God does not put restraints on sinful men, they will behave "naturally, as brute beasts" (Jude 10; 2 Pet. 2:12). This fact is further demonstrated in the Book of Revelation, when the animal instinct in sinful man is fully unleashed on the earth in connection with The Beast.

Daniel had a vision of The Beast in Daniel chapter seven. Daniel saw four beasts emerge from the sea: a lion with eagles' wings, a bear with three ribs in its mouth, a four-headed leopard with four wings, and a fourth beast that was unlike any earthly animal. It was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth."

It was explained to Daniel that these four beasts represented the same four kingdoms that were foretold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Nebuchadnezzar saw the outward glitter and glamour of the world's great empires, in the form of a shining metallic man. Daniel saw the true inward nature of these worldly empires. They have the war-like nature of wild beasts of prey. And true to their nature, most great Gentile world powers use birds or beasts of prey for their national insignia: the American eagle, the Chinese dragon, the British lion, the Russian bear, the Korean tiger, etc.

It was made very clear to Daniel that the fourth "dreadful and terrible" beast was the fourth kingdom, Rome: "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth"

(Dan.7:23), and John saw this very same beast in his vision. (Compare Rev. 13:1f with Da. 7:1-7.) Therefore we must conclude that The Beast in Revelation has some connection with the Roman Empire, because Daniel was told that this beast was the fourth kingdom, which all knowledgeable Bible students and teachers agree was the Roman Empire.



### THE MARK:

#### LITERAL & PHYSICAL OR FIGURATIVE & SYMBOLIC?

People receive The Mark of The Beast in their hand or in their forehead. (Rev. 13:6) There are a number of theories about exactly what The Mark is. The various opinions about The Mark fall into one of two categories: the belief that The Mark will be a physical, visible mark such as a tattoo or microchip implant, and the belief that The Mark is *not* a physical, visible mark but something spiritual and not visible to the human eye.

Those who argue for a physical mark point out that in Revelation 13 the Greek word for "mark" is *charagma* (χαράγμα), which means a scratch, an etching, a stamp or a badge.<sup>1</sup> I do not pretend to know with 100% certainty exactly what The Mark of The Beast is, but I am more inclined to believe that it is *not* meant to be understood in a literal-physical sense. Some things in Revelation can and should be understood in a literal-physical sense, but some things in Revelation can and should be understood in a figurative, symbolic sense. I will change my mind if our government ever orders citizens to get microchips implanted in their foreheads. Unless that happens, I believe The Mark of The Beast can and should be understood in a figurative, symbolic sense for a number of reasons.

One reason that I have a hard time believing that The Mark is a physical mark is because something physical and visible would be far too obvious. Satan is a master deceiver, and we are warned of his false prophets, that "if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Mt. 24:24). The fact that even the elect of God are in danger of being deceived suggests that the deception is far more subtle than something as obvious as a tattoo or microchip implant.

Another reason to believe that The Mark is probably something other than a physical tattoo or microchip is because of the style in which Revelation is written. Revelation is an esoteric, cryptic, apocalyptic book, filled with symbolic imagery. It is true that *charagma*, the Greek word for "mark," normally refers to a literal, physical mark. However, the Greek word for "sword" normally refers to a literal, physical sword, yet in Revelation 1:16 John said that a sharp two-edged sword went out of the mouth of Yeshua. Does this mean that Yeshua now has a literal, physical sword in His mouth? The Greek words for *lion*, *lamb*, *star*, and the letters *alpha* and *omega* are normally used in a literal, physical sense, yet when these words are used to refer to Yeshua, they are meant to be taken in a figurative, symbolic sense. Even the Greek word for "beast" normally refers to a literal animal, yet we know that The Beast seen by Daniel and by John is not a literal animal, because Daniel was told that "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom." If The Beast is not a literal, physical animal, why should we assume that his Mark is a literal, physical mark? If "The Beast" is meant to be understood in a figurative, symbolic sense, why should not his "Mark" also be understood in a figurative, symbolic sense?

Another reason The Mark is more likely meant to be understood in a figurative, symbolic sense is because of other references in the Bible that talk about marks on the hand or forehead. In Ezekiel 9:4 a mark was placed on the foreheads of the righteous in Jerusalem before God's judgment fell on the city. In Revelation 7:3 the servants of God are sealed on their foreheads before the seventh seal is broken. No one that I know of supposes that these verses refer to literal, physical marks that are visible to the human eye.<sup>2</sup>

The Bible also mentions the phylacteries functioning as a mark or sign on the hand and forehead. Therefore the phylacteries deserve our close attention.

### THE PHYLACTERIES

Phylacteries are mentioned in Matthew 23:5. Phylacteries (called *tefillin* in Hebrew) are small leather boxes containing certain Bible verses on small rolls of parchment. Orthodox Jews strap phylacteries on the hand and forehead during times of prayer. The source of this custom is first mentioned in Exodus 13:9:

"And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that Yahweh's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath Yahweh brought thee out of Egypt."

What do phylacteries have to do with The Mark of The Beast? Perhaps nothing. However, it should be noted that The Mark of The Beast is a sign on the hand and forehead, and the Bible passages about the phylacteries are *the only other places in Scripture* where anything else is ever spoken of as a sign or mark on both the hand and forehead. The *only* two things in the Bible that are described as a sign or mark on *both* the hand and forehead are the phylacteries and The Mark of The Beast. At the very least,

this should tell us that there is a very strong likelihood of some kind of connection between the phylacteries and The Mark of The Beast. If we can understand the deeper meaning of the phylacteries as the mark of God, then we should be able to understand The Mark of The Beast as Satan's counterfeit of whatever the phylacteries represent.

What do the phylacteries represent? First, it should be pointed out that there is absolutely no mention made of making leather boxes in connection with this commandment. It is not wrong to fulfill this commandment in a literal, physical way by making physical *tefillin* of leather. However, since there are no actual instructions to make leather boxes, it is highly doubtful that this commandment really means "Thou shalt make for thyself little leather boxes to strap upon thy hand and thy head when thou prayest." Both the Karaite Jews and Rashbam (Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir, 12th Century) rejected this literal-physical interpretation, and said that the commandment was meant to be understood in a figurative way, just as Proverbs 1:9 and 3:22 are understood in a figurative way. (In Proverbs 1:9 the instruction of one's father and the law of one's mother are called "an ornament of grace unto thy head, and ornaments about thy neck." In Proverbs 3:22 wisdom's ways are called "adornment to thy neck.")

If we are to understand the "phylacteries" of Exodus 13:9 in a figurative rather than a literal sense, what does the verse mean? If the "sign" or "memorial" of Exodus 13:9 is not a pair of little leather boxes, what is it? "And it shall be for a sign unto thee..." What is "it"? A basic rule of language tells us that a pronoun like "it" must have an antecedent, i.e., a noun that precedes it and identifies it. If we look at the antecedent in the previous verses of Exodus 13, we discover that the pronoun "it" is actually referring to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the holidays that mark the beginning of God's Sacred calendar. Notice how this is the idea expressed in several English translations:

"This observance will be a reminder, like something tied on your hand or on your forehead; it will remind you to continue to recite and study the Law of the LORD, because the LORD brought you out of Egypt by his great power." (TEV)

"This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead that the law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand." (NIV)

"This will serve as a sign on your hand would serve, or a reminder on your forehead, and in that way the law of Yahweh will be ever on your lips: for with a mighty hand Yahweh brought you out of Egypt." (New Jerusalem Bible)

"This annual memorial week will brand you as his own unique people, just as though he had branded his mark of ownership upon your hands or your forehead." (Living Bible)

## GOD'S CALENDAR AND SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT

In Exodus 13:9 the "sign" or "mark" of God's people is clearly related to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which introduce the Sacred Calendar that God ordained for His people to follow. If the figurative "mark" on the hand and forehead of God's people is the observance of God's calendar, then Satan's counterfeit, The Mark of The Beast, would most likely be the observance of a counterfeit calendar, complete with a counterfeit Sabbath and substitute holidays.

In addition to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the weekly 7th-day Sabbath is also called a "sign" between God and His people, in Exodus 31:16f and Ezekiel 20:12. The Hebrew word used in these passages to describe the Sabbath as a "sign" is the very same Hebrew word that is used to describe the "phylacteries" as a "sign" in Exodus 13:9. This is why Jews do not wear *tefillin* on the Sabbath – a person keeping the Sabbath is regarded as already bearing God's "sign"; therefore the wearing of the phylacteries as a "sign" is superfluous on the Sabbath.

But what does the observance of the Sabbath have to do with the hand and forehead? The hand speaks of work. Throughout the Scriptures there are references to "the work of his [or her or their] hands." Keeping the Sabbath means that our hands must cease from their work on the 7th day. The forehead is regarded in Judaism as "the mind, whose seat is in the brain, together with all senses and faculties."<sup>3</sup> Keeping the Sabbath requires that our mind and senses be focused on the Lord of the Sabbath on this day.

It was prophesied that Daniel's fourth beast, Rome, would "think to change times and laws," and the Hebrew word means "appointed times." (The Smith-Goodspeed and Moffatt translations say the fourth beast "would attempt to change sacred seasons and the law"; the Knox translation says "calendar and ordinance.") Whose appointed times/sacred seasons/calendar would the enemy want to change but God's? The Roman Catholic Church boasts of her changing of the Sabbath to Sunday, and even claims this act as the sign (or "mark") of her authority to change times and laws.<sup>4</sup> Many Christians think that Rome's changing of the Sabbath to Sunday does not matter. Does it matter? Let me answer that question with a question: Why would the spirit behind Rome want to change the Sabbath if it does not matter?

### WHAT ABOUT SUNDAY-KEEPING CHRISTIANS?

Does this imply that all Christians who worship on Sunday have taken The Mark of The Beast and are doomed? Not at all. Contrary to what some people think, even SDAs (Seventh Day Adventists) do not teach this idea. Ellen G. White, the prophetess of the SDA Church, did not teach that all Sunday Christians are lost. On the contrary, in *The Great Controversy* she wrote this:

"But Christians of past generations observed the Sunday, supposing that in so doing they were keeping the Bible Sabbath; and there are now true Christians in every

church, not excepting the Roman Catholic communion, who honestly believe that Sunday is the Sabbath of divine appointment. God accepts their sincerity of purpose and their integrity before Him. But when Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, will thereby honor popery above God. He is paying homage to Rome and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. He is worshipping the beast and his image."<sup>5</sup>

I have never been a SDA and I have no intention of ever becoming one, and I do not know how accurate the SDAs' understanding of The Mark of The Beast is. However, I do believe that whatever The Mark of The Beast is (or will be), it has some kind of connection to Rome and the Sabbath versus Sunday controversy.

In addition to all the Scriptural evidence, there is another reason to suspect that there is some kind of connection between Sunday and The Mark of The Beast, and that reason is the use of magic squares in occult magic.

### MAGIC SQUARES

People involved in the occult believe that numbers, letters, and colors all have inherent powers, and that the right combination of these elements can magically produce the desired results. There is no real power or magic in the magic squares mentioned at the beginning of this article, of course -- magic squares of any size can be created by using the formula  $MS = [n(n^2 + 1)] \div 2$ .<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the making of magic charms and talismans employs the use of magic squares.

To the occult magician, the sum of the rows, columns, and diagonals in a magic square is very significant. For example, Jewish practitioners of Kabbalah are especially intrigued by the 3 by 3 magic square because the sum of each row, column, and diagonal is 15, the same as the numerical value of  $\aleph$  [Y-H], the first two letters of God's name YHWH. (Kabbalah is euphemistically described as "Jewish mysticism," but it is tainted with a lot of occultic beliefs and rituals. Just because it's Jewish doesn't mean it's kosher. It's not!)

The sum of the rows, columns, and diagonals is not the only sum that is important to the occult practitioner. The total of *all* the numbers in the square grid is considered very important, and this is where we will see a connection between magic squares, Sunday, and The Mark of The Beast. Makers of magic charms and talismans use a different magic square to represent each heavenly body and each day of the week. Monday's magic square is a 9 by 9 grid which represents the moon; Tuesday's is a 5 by 5 representing Mars; Wednesday's is an 8 by 8 representing Mercury; Thursday's is a 4 by 4 representing Jupiter; Friday's is a 7 by 7 representing Venus; Saturday's is a 3 by 3 representing Saturn. A 6 by 6 magic square is used to represent the sun and Sunday:

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
24	14	16	15	23	19
13	20	22	21	17	18
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

If the numbers 1 through 36 shown in this square are added up, the total is 666, the number of The Beast. In Kabbalah, each magic square and the total of all its numbers represents the spirit and demon of each heavenly body. According to Jewish Kabbalah, this magic square and the total of its numbers, 666, represents Sorath, the demon of the sun.<sup>7</sup>

*The Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown* says this about the 6 by 6 magic square:

"The square of the sun has 6 rows of 6 figures, each row adding to 111, and the total of all the numbers used in the square is 666, the celebrated 'number of the Beast.' The deduction which can be drawn from this is that the Beast of Revelation is an aspect of the sun or life-force, the fierce drive that impels living creatures to survive and procreate."<sup>8</sup>

If occultic superstitions about magic squares were the only thing to suggest that The Mark of The Beast has some connection to Sunday, the idea could be dismissed. However, there is a great deal of Scriptural evidence which points to some kind of connection, and we should heed that evidence and trust God to clarify the details of prophecy as it comes to pass. In the meantime, if we want to be a part of "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over his name," we had better start keeping the Sabbath on the right day. □

### NOTES

- 1 For this view, see a recent article "What is the Mark of the Beast?" on TNN Online, [www.tribnews.net](http://www.tribnews.net)
- 2 Whether or not the mark put upon Cain was literal or figurative is open to debate. Judaism teaches that it was the letter tav (ט) on the forehead. [See Michael L. Munk, *The Wisdom in the Hebrew Alphabet* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publ., 1983), page 219.] However, the Bible does not state what the mark of Cain was, where it was placed, or whether it was visible to human eyes.
- 3 *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2nd edition, ed. J.H. Hertz (London: Soncino Press, 1988), 261.
- 4 See, e.g., quotes in "Roman Catholic and Protestant Confessions About Sunday," a pamphlet available from Gates of Eden.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Cosmic Conflict* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1971), 395f.
- 6 Charles D. Miller et. al., *Mathematical Ideas*, 8th ed. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997), 246.
- 7 The Latin words on the Pope's mitre, VICARIVS FILII DEI, also add up to 666 when the letters with a numerical value are added up. See Ralph Woodrow, *Babylon Mystery Religion*, (Riverside, CA: Woodrow Evangelistic Association, 1966), 95.
- 8 *Man, Myth and Magic: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion, and the Unknown*, ed. Richard Cavendish (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1985), "Magic Squares," 1691ff.

# REV. T W I S T R U T H

Daniel  
Bohlin

REVEREND TWISTRUTH,  
DANIEL 7:25 SAYS THAT THE  
4TH BEAST WOULD "THINK TO  
CHANGE TIMES AND LAWS"! A  
MAN TOLD US THAT SINCE  
THE 4TH BEAST IS ROME, THIS  
IS A PROPHECY OF ROME'S  
CHANGING OF THE SABBATH TO  
SUNDAY! IS THAT TRUE?



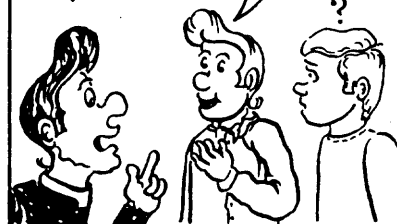
NO, NEWTON!  
NO, NOT AT  
ALL! HE'S ALL  
MIXED UP!



THEN WHAT  
IS THIS  
PROPHECY  
TALKING  
ABOUT?

THAT PROPHECY WAS FULFILLED  
IN 1966 WHEN CONGRESS  
ENACTED THE UNIFORM TIME  
ACT AND PASSED A LAW  
REQUIRING EVERYONE TO SET  
THEIR CLOCKS AHEAD FOR  
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME!

WHEW! THAT'S A  
RELIEF! I WAS SCARED  
WE'D HAVE TO START  
OBEYING THE FOURTH  
COMMANDMENT!



## -Daniel 7:25-

### Does it really speak of Rome's changing of God's appointed times?

Here are several English translations  
of Daniel 7:25 for readers to consider.  
(Underlining of quotes for emphasis is  
by Editor.)

"And he shall speak words against the  
Most High [God], and shall wear out  
the saints of the Most High, and shall  
think to change the times [of sacred  
feasts and holy days] and the law."  
The Amplified Bible (Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1965). All  
brackets belong to the quoted text.

"He shall speak words against the  
Most High; he shall plan to change the  
sacred seasons and the law." Modern  
Language Bible, from the Parallel Bible  
(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Bible  
Publishers, 1977).

"He will defy the Most High and wear  
down the holy people of the Most High.  
He will try to change their sacred  
festivals and laws." New Living  
Translation (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale  
House Publishers, 1996).

"He shall speak words against the  
Most High, shall wear out the holy  
ones of the Most High, and shall  
attempt to change the sacred seasons  
and the law." The New Revised  
Standard Version (Nashville, TN:

Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

"He will speak against the supreme God  
and oppress God's people. He will try to  
change their religious laws and festivals."  
Good News Bible (New York: American  
Bible Society, 1976)

"He shall vaunt himself against the Most  
High, and harass the saints of the Most  
High: he shall plan to alter the sacred  
seasons and the law..." Moffat Bible

"Boastfully he shall challenge the Most  
High, and do His servants despite;  
calendar and ordinance he shall think to  
set aside." Knox Bible

"And he shall speak against the Most  
High, thinking to change the feast days  
and the law." New American Bible

The 1968 Jerusalem Bible (New York:  
Doubleday & Co.) says in its footnote  
that Daniel 7:25 refers to "the obser-  
vance of the Sabbath and the feast  
days."

The above translations make it clear that  
the "times" in Daniel 7:25 are God's  
appointed times, viz., the weekly Sab-  
bath and annual holy days. The Bible  
makes it clear that the 4th beast who  
changes these sacred times and laws is  
Rome. The following statements made  
by Roman Catholic theologians show  
that the Roman Catholic Church regards  
its changing of the Sabbath to Sunday to  
be the proof (or "sign" or "mark," if you

will) of its authority.

"Q: How prove you that the [Roman  
Catholic] Church hath power to  
command feasts and holy days?

A: By the very act of changing the  
Sabbath into Sunday, which Protes-  
tants allow of; and therefore they  
fondly contradict themselves, by  
keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking  
most other feasts commanded by the  
same Church." (Henry Turberville, *An  
Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine*  
(New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1833), 58.

"Q: Have you any other way of proving  
that the [Roman Catholic] Church has  
power to institute festivals of precept?  
A: Had she not such power, she could  
not have done that in which all modern  
religionists agree with her - she could  
not have substituted the observance of  
Sunday, the first day of the week, for  
the observance of Saturday, the  
seventh day, a change for which there  
is no Scriptural authority." Stephen  
Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* (3rd  
Am. ed., rev.; New York: T.W. Strong,  
late Edward Dunigen & Bros., 1876),  
p. 174.

"The Pope has power to change times,  
to abrogate laws, and to dispense with  
all things, even the precepts of Christ."  
[Decretal, *de Tranlantic Episcop.*, cited  
in A. Jan Marcussen, *National Sunday  
Law* (Thompsonville, IL: Amazing Truth  
Publ., 1983), p.32]



# TWO-HOUSE THEOLOGY AND THE MESSIANIC ISRAEL MOVEMENT

Dr. Daniel Botkin

The modern Messianic Jewish movement began to surface around the early 1970s, when Jewish believers in Yeshua/Jesus started forming Messianic congregations. These Messianic Jewish congregations gave Jewish believers a place to worship God in a more Jewish context and provided them with the opportunity to present Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah to their fellow Jews.

As the Messianic Jewish movement grew, more and more Jewish people came to these congregations. At the same time, many Gentile Christians felt themselves being strongly attracted to Messianic Jewish congregations and the Messianic Jewish way of life and worship. By 1990 the membership of the average Messianic Jewish congregation was composed of roughly 50% Jews and 50% non-Jews, according to a survey conducted that year.<sup>1</sup> I am not aware of any more recent surveys, but based on what I know, I suspect that the percentage of non-Jews in the Messianic movement is now probably much higher than 50%.

The ever-growing number of non-Jews identifying with the Messianic movement has caused concern to some Messianic Jewish leaders. On the one hand, Messianic Jewish leaders want to prove to the Gentile Church that Messianic Judaism is not re-erecting the middle wall of partition between Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Messiah, so Messianic Jewish leaders feel obligated to welcome non-Jews who want to join their congregations. On the other hand, Messianic Jewish leaders want to persuade the larger Jewish community that Messianic Judaism is not a foreign religion but a legitimate form of Judaism. When the overwhelming majority of people in the Messianic Jewish movement are not Jewish, this makes it more difficult for Messianic Jewish leaders to gain the recognition that they desire from the larger Jewish

community.

Some Messianic Jewish leaders have suggested that some sort of formal conversion process be set up for Gentile Christians who wish to practice Messianic Judaism, so that these Christians can have the status of a full-fledged Messianic Jew conferred upon them.

Other Messianic Jewish leaders want to place certain restrictions upon non-Jews who wish to join their congregations. These restrictions are couched in noble-sounding terminology, but they result in a kind of ethnic purging of the Messianic Jewish movement. About a year ago one very prominent Messianic Jewish leader wrote that Messianic Jews "must protect themselves from dilution through the incursion of large numbers of Gentile believers."<sup>2</sup> These Messianic Jewish leaders insist that Gentiles are welcome to join their congregations, yet in the same breath they also publicly state that it is important for Messianic congregations to maintain a membership that is predominantly Jewish.

It is one thing for a congregational leader to want a Jewish majority if his congregation is located in Israel, where the majority of the general population is Jewish. But if a congregational leader wants his congregation to have a Jewish majority in America, where Jews comprise only a small percentage of the general population, then he must do one of two things. He must either formally convert the Gentile congregants to Messianic Judaism and confer Jewish status upon them, or he must do something to restrict the large numbers of non-Jews who want to join the congregation. If he opts for converting Gentiles to Messianic Judaism, neither the Church nor the Jewish community is likely to consider the Messianic Jewish convert a true Jew. If the Messianic Jewish leader opts for restricting the number of non-Jews in his congrega-

tion, he will rightly be accused by Christians of bigotry and of re-erecting the middle wall of partition. And he probably still won't gain the recognition that he desires from the larger Jewish community.

Out of this mixture of Messianic Jews and Messianic non-Jews, there is emerging a steadily-growing movement known as the Messianic Israel movement. The Messianic Israel movement embraces and teaches what is known as "Two-House theology" or "the Ephraimite doctrine." This teaching is explained in detail in three books by Batya Wooten (*In Search of Israel, The Olive Tree of Israel*, and, more recently, *Who Is Israel? And Why You Need to Know*) and a book by Eddie Chumney (*Restoring the Two Houses of Israel*). I have read all three of Batya's books; I have not read Eddie Chumney's.

It is not in the scope of this article to explain all the details of this teaching. I refer the interested reader to the above-mentioned books. However, for the sake of readers who may be unfamiliar with this teaching, I will briefly summarize the main points without going into all the details that are offered as proofs for the teaching.

To understand the teaching of the Messianic Israel movement, a person has to be familiar with three significant events in the Old Testament: 1) Israel's division into two kingdoms (or "houses") after the death of King Solomon; 2) the exile of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom and their subsequent scattering and assimilation among the Gentiles; and 3) the Prophets' declaration that these two houses would someday be re-united and restored as one kingdom.

Because the ten northern tribes (known in Scripture collectively as "Ephraim" or "Israel") were scattered and assimilated among the Gentiles through intermarriage, a large percentage of the world's population today has to have some Israelite ancestry.

There is no way to prove or disprove who has an Israelite ancestor and who does not, but that is not the point. The point is that there are, of necessity, a great number of Gentiles who *do* have some Israelite ancestry somewhere in their family tree. Tens of thousands of Israelites intermarrying with Gentiles thousands of years ago would result in millions of offspring over the centuries. Theoretically, all of the world's population could eventually be genealogically linked to the tribes of Israel, and, theoretically, all the world's population could already be so linked, except among ethnic groups that have been geographically isolated and have not intermarried with outsiders.

The Prophets said that the House of Ephraim - the ten tribes who intermarried and lost their tribal identities - would eventually be re-united with the House of Judah. The Jewish people are obviously "the House of Judah," and because the Church (or at least a large percentage of it) is composed of Gentiles who have Israelite ancestry somewhere in their genealogy, the Church is presented as the obvious candidate for "the House of Ephraim" of end-time prophecy. Two-house theology asserts that the Prophets' declaration of the two houses being re-united will come about through Christians and Jews who will join themselves together as "one new man."

At times the terminology gets a bit confusing, even in the pages of the Bible, because all Jews are Israelites but not all Israelites are Jews. Sometimes the term "Israel" includes the House of Judah and sometimes it refers only to the ten northern tribes, the House of Ephraim (also called "the House of Joseph" or "Israel").

This is not, I repeat, *not* replacement theology. This idea is not about the Gentile Church replacing the Jewish people and claiming all the blessings and promises for itself but leaving all the curses and commandments for the Jews. Two-house theology is about Gentile believers, as the House of Ephraim, *joining with* the House of Judah and sharing in the blessings of God as co-equal mem-

bers of the commonwealth of Israel. It is about *sharing* the abundant blessings and promises of God, not about taking them away. It is also about sharing the commandments and obligations. Two-house theology points out that both houses have been in error for centuries: The Jewish people, the House of Judah, have been blind to the identity of the Messiah, and the Christian people, the House of Ephraim, have been blind to the importance of the Sabbath and the Torah. A summary of the beliefs of the Messianic Israel movement are reproduced on page 11.

☆

Several readers have contacted me to ask what my views are on this topic. I have not written on this subject until now, because the question of whether or not Gentile Christians have any Israelite ancestry has been something of a moot point for me. My manner of life and worship is going to be the same whether I have Israelite ancestry or am of pure 100% pagan stock. While I do believe that a large percentage of Gentile Christians undoubtedly have unproveable and untraceable Israelite ancestry somewhere in their family tree, I also believe that even those disciples who may be of 100% pagan ancestry are every bit as obligated to honor the Sabbath and the Torah as are those disciples who happen to have some Israelite ancestry.

Since the question of Israelite ancestry should not affect how a disciple of Yeshua lives and worships, it has been a moot point for me. Furthermore, I have always been secure in my identity as a non-Jewish disciple of Israel's Messiah, and I have never felt a need to demand recognition as an Israelite from anyone. I know that my faith in Israel's Messiah makes me a full-fledged member of the commonwealth of Israel in God's eyes. Christians and Jews can deny it, the modern State of Israel may deny it, but their denial does not change the facts. By my faith in Israel's Messiah, I become a part of the Israel of God.

Perhaps the important question, though, is not "Do (some/many/most/

all) Gentile Christians have Israelite ancestry?" but rather "Will the prophecies about the re-uniting of the two houses be fulfilled by Jews and Christians coming together?" Or, to put it in simpler terms, "Is the Church Ephraim?" I was first made aware of the Messianic Israel movement about five years ago when I read an article that used this question as its title. "Is the Church Ephraim?"<sup>3</sup> The article was written by well-known Messianic Jewish leader Dan Juster, and Dan argued against the idea of the Church fulfilling the end-time role of Ephraim.

I read the article as an interested but unbiased reader. Theologically, the question was irrelevant to me, and the few occasions I had had in the past to spend some time with Dan Juster had always been pleasant, so I certainly had no prejudice against the writer. Dan did a good job of presenting the teaching in the first part of his article - so good, in fact, that the teaching sounded quite plausible to me, in spite of Dan's objections to it. But since it was a moot point to me, I felt no obligation to either accept or reject the teaching.

Some time later a sister in Michigan gave me Batya Wootten's first two books on the subject. Reading these books made the idea seem more than just plausible. Now it sounded like a very likely possibility. If I had had to make a decision back then based on my initial gut reaction and my spiritual intuition, I would have said that the teaching in the books was absolutely true. However, like the Bereans, I wanted to "search the Scriptures to see whether those things were so." As I have continued to search the Scriptures and read the arguments both for and against the teaching, I have found the evidence for the teaching to be more and more convincing all the time.

Am I absolutely convinced that the true Church will fulfill the end-time role of Ephraim? I am very cautious about making dogmatic statements about the fulfillment of end-time prophecies. Too many teachers of Bible prophecy make premature statements about how the details of end-time prophecy

are going to unfold, and then they have to retract their statements when the unfolding of events proves them wrong. As one prophecy teacher said, "After I saw my fourth candidate for the Anti-christ buried, I quit being so dogmatic about end-time prophecy." We are not talking about the identity of the end-time Anti-christ here, but we are talking about the identity of the end-time House of Ephraim. Since we are dealing with end-time prophecy, I want to be cautious.

I am too cautious to say that I am absolutely, 100% convinced that the true Church is Ephraim - that is, I am not so thoroughly convinced that I can in good conscience say it with a "Thus saith the LORD." Yet let me say in the same breath that I have not heard a better explanation of how the prophecies about the re-uniting of the two houses can be fulfilled. I know of no other likely candidate for the House of Ephraim. Therefore I see no reason to reject this teaching and every reason to embrace it, unless someone comes up with a better explanation or unless end-time events unfold differently than expected.

If the unfolding of end-time events shows that the two-house teachers were mistaken about the identity of the House of Ephraim (a possibility that seems less and less likely all the time), no great harm will have been done. Even some opponents of the teaching have admitted this. Daniel Chadwick, in "A Biblical Critique of the Ephraimite Doctrine," describes the teaching as "a doctrine that we do not find particularly heretical but only scholastically disagreeable," and Chadwick admits that "positively some good may come of it," even though he disagrees with the teaching.<sup>4</sup>

Both sides in this debate need to exercise caution and patience - patience to see how events unfold, patience with each other, and a willingness to be corrected. If it later becomes obvious that the two-house teachers were mistaken about the identity of Ephraim, all that needs to be said is "We were mistaken. Sorry." If the leaders of the State of Israel embrace this teaching and invite

Messianic Christians to immigrate to Israel and become Israeli citizens, I will straightaway start packing my bags and get on the first plane heading to Israel. Nothing would please me more.

As stated earlier, the purpose of this article is not to explain all the details of this teaching. That has already been done in the aforementioned books. However, I do want to close by sharing some interesting evidence that gives additional support to the teaching. This piece of evidence is something that I discovered when I was living on a kibbutz in Israel in 1977, long before I knew anything about the teaching that the House of Ephraim would be made up of Christians in the latter days. I discovered that the modern Hebrew word for "Christians," *notzrim*, appears in Jeremiah 31:6 (translated as "watchmen"), and guess where the *notzrim* are in this verse? They are on the hills of *Ephraim* (!), crying out, "Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto Yahweh our God!" And guess when this is happening? It is happening "in the latter days," when the nation of Israel is being restored. (See Jer. 30:24; 31:1ff.)

For more insight on the significance of the word *notzrim* in the Hebrew Bible, see the article "Notzrim and Jews" on page 7. □

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Michael Schiffman, "A Profile of Messianic Congregations," *Messianic Outreach* 9:4 (Summer 1990): 8.

<sup>2</sup>I do not wish to embarrass this leader by revealing the source of this quote. A Messianic Jewish friend of mine (who shall also remain anonymous) showed me a list of qualifications and requirements that one Messianic Jewish congregation had drawn up for Gentiles who wanted to join their congregation. I pointed out to my Messianic Jewish friend that two of the requirements would automatically disqualify even him and his wife, if they were Gentiles and had to meet this criteria.

<sup>3</sup>Dan Juster, "Is the Church Ephraim?" *Messianic Outreach* 14:2 (Winter 1995): 15ff.

<sup>4</sup>Daniel Chadwick, "A Biblical Critique of the Ephraimite Doctrine," *Messianic Outreach* 14:4 (Summer 1995): 19.

# "THE GOOD LORD PARDON EVERY ONE"

Daniel Botkin

*This article first appeared in Petah Tikvah a few years ago and was re-printed in Messianic Home in 1997. I am reprinting it here for readers who may not have read it before.*

Since the beginning of the Reformation, serious believers who recognize the authority of the Scriptures above the authority of man-made traditions have been engaged in two basic activities: 1) casting off man-made traditions that the Church adapted from paganism during her pre-Reformation centuries, and 2) learning to follow the Biblical patterns of worship that Yahweh Himself ordained in Holy Scripture.

Luther, Calvin, and the other early Reformers walked in what spiritual light they had. Since then, each following generation has had a little more light available to them than the generation that preceded them. Consequently, each generation has regained a little more of the blessings that have been lost and buried beneath centuries of erroneous teaching and superstition. This has been a slow, on-going process of recovery, and the Body of Messiah has not yet recovered all.

In these times we are witnessing the recovery of a reverence for the Torah, and, as a result, the recovery of certain elements of the Torah that were abandoned by the Church early in her history. More and more believers are beginning to embrace the seventh-day Sabbath, to celebrate the Feasts of Yahweh, and to see the importance of the dietary laws. These Biblical practices, formerly neglected by nearly all Christians, are being rediscovered by many believers - Messianic Jews, Gentile believers in Messianic congregations, Sacred Name believers, and, to a lesser extent, even Christians in denominational churches.

Rediscovering and recovering these blessings is a glorious and joyful experience. Unfortunately, spiritual victory always carries with it the temptation to become proud and self-righteous, which can cause us to view our less-enlightened brothers with contempt. Yeshua condemned those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,

and viewed others with contempt" (Luke 18:9).

One does not have to search far to find Torah-observant believers who express scorn and contempt toward others. Often the contempt is aimed at other Torah-observant believers who do not happen to agree with them on every little detail of Torah. Writers from different groups blast away at each other, arguing about exactly how the Feasts should be celebrated or how the Sacred Name should be pronounced. Some groups strongly imply (or just state it outright) that their particular organization is the one and only true Body of Messiah on the earth. Obviously, they can't all be right.

Francis Frangipane, a well-known speaker and writer, has some important words to say about this kind of attitude:

*"Anyone can judge, but can you save? Can you lay down your life in love, in intercession, in faith for the one you would judge? Can you see a need or a fault in someone and instead of criticizing them, fast and pray, asking God to give that individual the very opposite of what you saw - and then not stop your intercession until you see that fallen life bloom in fruitfulness? To judge after the flesh requires only two eyes and a carnal mind. On the other hand, it takes the nature and love of Christ to save. One act of His love revealed through us will do more to warm cold hearts than the sum of all our pompous criticisms." [Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God (Marion, IA: Vision Press, 1986), p. 6]*

Of course there is a place for correction of errors, but it must not be done with a bitter, scornful attitude toward the ones we are trying to correct. Aquila and Priscilla did not publicly denounce Apollos for his incomplete understanding of the Messiah. Rather, "they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." (See Acts 18:24.)

We are on a journey with all true believers, seeking to recover "the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Because we are still in the process of recovery, and still learning,

mistakes will be made. Keeping the Sabbath, celebrating the Feasts, and following the dietary laws are new to many believers. Sometimes an uninformed or weaker brother needs some time to learn as he adjusts to these new expressions of his faith. If we are going to teach and correct others, we must do it with patience and love. And we need to pray, as King Hezekiah did, "The good Lord pardon every one."

This prayer of Hezekiah for his peers reveals an important principle that we "Torah-keepers" need to see. Hezekiah lived in a situation similar to ours. His wicked father, King Ahaz, had destroyed the vessels of the Temple, closed the Temple doors, and set up altars to other gods in every corner of Jerusalem.

When Hezekiah became king, he immediately set out to re-establish the old ways of Biblical worship. He opened the Temple doors and instructed the Levites to remove the filth from the holy place. The vessels that were needed to offer the proper sacrifices were prepared. Davidic music was restored to accompany the worship. Finally, plans were made to celebrate the Passover.

At this point in the story, we are told that "a multitude of the people" who came to celebrate the Passover were ceremonially unclean and, according to the Torah, disqualified from eating the Passover. The Torah makes provision for such people to eat the Passover the following month, i.e., the second Biblical month (Num. 9:6-12). However, this was *already* the second month.

Hezekiah and the people had been unable to keep the Passover on its normal date, the 14th day of the first month, because the priests were not yet sanctified, and the Temple was not cleansed until the 16th, two days too late. Consequently, the Passover was being celebrated in the second month, which the Torah allows. Unfortunately, many who wished to eat this Passover were ritually impure, and the Torah makes no provision for a Passover in the third month.

What did they do? The Bible makes it clear that all these people were technically disqualified from eating, "yet

they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For King Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, 'May the good Lord pardon every one who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary' (2 Chron. 30:18).

Celebrating Passover was new to Hezekiah's generation. "They had not done it for a long time in such sort as it was written" (2 Chron. 30:5). Hezekiah's generation, like ours, was in the process of recovering Biblical patterns of worship. Hezekiah understood, as we need to, that getting every little detail of worship exactly right is something that takes time. Hezekiah knew that developing any habit, including being prepared for proper worship, requires a period of adjustment. He also realized that it is better to keep the holy days "otherwise than prescribed" than to not keep them at all.

We are told that the Lord heard Hezekiah's prayer, and great blessings followed: singing and music, good teaching, and confession of sins. Everyone was enjoying the revival so much that they agreed to extend the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread for another seven days. There was "great joy" in Jerusalem, unlike anything "since the days of Solomon." The Scripture tells us that the prayers of the Levites ascended to God's holy dwelling place during that glorious period. The following chapters tell how God continued to bless Hezekiah and the people as they continued to purge the land of idols and re-establish proper worship. The entire story can be read in 2 Chronicles 28-32.

If we desire this kind of revival in our time, we must have the love and humility of Hezekiah, and pray, "May the good Lord pardon every one" whenever we see others sincerely seeking God "otherwise than prescribed." And let us have the faith to believe that the good Lord *will* pardon them and, in His time, show them the details of their worship that need to be corrected. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails" (1 Cor. 13:7). □

## BINDING & LOOSING

Two places in Matthew's gospel (16:19 & 18:18), Yeshua spoke about binding and loosing. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." There are Christians in charismatic circles who believe that this refers to the believer's authority to bind demons and loose angels. Christians in prayer will sometimes utter proclamations that they are hereby binding certain demonic powers over certain cities, and loosing angels to minister to certain people. Among the more excitable groups, the verbal binding of demons is often accompanied by loud, defiant shouting, stomping of feet, and a general militaristic mentality. I have even heard of people dressing in combat fatigues and army boots for these devil-rebuking exercises, to show the enemy that they really mean business.

I am certainly not one to criticize fervent prayer, excitability, or even the wearing of unusual garb, but there is more to binding and loosing than this. To bind and to loose means to forbid and to permit. There are two Hebrew words that a student in Israel learns very quickly: *asur* (אָסוּר, "(it is) forbidden") and *mutar* (מוֹתָר, "(it is) permitted"). These are the words used in Matthew 16:19 & 18:18 in Hebrew translations of the New Testament. Stern's *Jewish New Testament Commentary* also makes it clear that binding and loosing is simply making decisions to forbid or permit believers (not demons and angels) to do or not do certain things. When the Scriptures are not absolutely clear about a certain practice, Messianic leaders have the authority to decide, based on Scriptural principles, whether to forbid or permit that practice. Among Jews this is called establishing *halakhah* ("walking"), and it provides a system by which disciples can "walk out" their faith in accordance with halakhic decisions.

Nonetheless, binding and loosing/forbidding and permitting does influence the demonic and angelic powers, though not in the way that some charismatic Christians think it does. Let me explain.

It appears that certain demonic spirits function in specific ways. The Bible speaks of unclean spirits, deaf and dumb spirits, lying spirits, spirits of

infirmity, spirits of divination, etc. Likewise angelic beings seem to have specific roles. Gabriel delivers messages; Michael is a warrior; cherubim guard the Tree of Life; seraphim proclaim God's holiness; watchers make decrees. All these various roles are somehow related to the general function of angels, stated in Hebrews 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Demonic spirits are likewise sent forth to "minister" affliction to the disobedient. (See, e.g., 1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Ki. 22:22f.)

What is it that forbids or permits (binds or looses) angels and demons to minister to humans? What activates these spirits to move? Is it the loud, aggressive shouting of charismatic Christians barking out orders? If so, why should the spirits obey them? I believe that we can and do bind or loose demons and angels, but the binding and loosing of these spirit beings is simply the result of what we have decided to forbid or permit in our life. Let me elaborate.

Different demons have specific ways of afflicting people, and it is therefore quite certain that different angels have specific ways of ministering to people. It is not far-fetched to believe that there are specific angels that bless people in specific ways for specific acts of obedience. It would also follow that there are specific demons that afflict people in specific ways for specific acts of disobedience. This is where the binding and loosing in a halakhic sense relates to the binding and loosing of demons and angels.

For example: If we who are heirs of salvation *forbid* working on the Sabbath, then those demons who afflict Sabbath-breakers are *forbidden* from afflicting us, and those angels who minister to Sabbath-keepers are loosed to bless us (provided we abide by our *halakhah*). If the heirs of salvation *permit* the eating of unclean meats, then those demons who afflict people for eating unclean meats are *permitted* (loosed) to afflict these people, and those angels who minister to people for eating kosher are forbidden from ministering to them.

So the primary meaning of binding and loosing is establishing *halakhah*. The binding and loosing of demons and angels is simply the result of our walking in good or bad *halakhah*. So let's be sure our *halakah* is based on Scriptural principles.

-Daniel Botkin

# WASHING ONE ANOTHER'S FEET

**Daniel Botkin**

*This year at Passover some of us washed one another's feet, and I was reminded of this incident that took place 25 years ago. -DB*

It has been said that we should be careful how we word our prayers, because God might give us exactly what we ask for. The truth of this statement was demonstrated to me in a humorous way one hot summer day.

I had read a devotional teaching about what it means for Christians to "wash one another's feet" as Jesus taught in John 13:14. To wash your brother's feet, the devotional explained, means to give words of encouragement and strength and hope to your brother when he feels "dirtied" from being exposed to the evil and corruption that surrounds the Christian as he walks through this sinful world.

I liked this idea of taking the concept beyond the literal washing of feet as a ritual, and thinking of it as serving one's brother in any way that might bless him.

I asked the Lord to give me opportunities to wash my brothers' feet. "Let me realize it when a brother needs his feet washed," I prayed. "Please make it obvious enough so that I won't miss the opportunities when You give them to me."

Just a day or two later, I was working outside in my yard when I saw my younger brother, Tim, walking toward my house. He lived with a few other young bachelors about a quarter

mile away from me. He had decided to pay me a visit, and since it was a hot day, he decided to walk barefoot. Tim did not know that my street had recently had a fresh coat of asphalt applied to it. By the time he discovered this, he had already taken a few steps and had gotten a coat of tar on his bare feet. There was no reason for him to turn around and go back home at this point, so he continued to walk through the soft, sticky mess.

By the time Tim arrived at my house, the bottoms and sides of his feet were covered with a thick layer of tar, gravel, and dust. He walked into my yard, adding grass clippings, bits of dried leaves, and dead bugs to the mixture that oozed between his toes.

Tim looked down at his feet, gave me a big grin, and greeted me with the words "How would ya like to wash my feet?"

I immediately recalled the prayer I had uttered only a day or two before, and went into the house to get some rags and kerosene so I could "wash my brother's feet" in the most literal way possible. □



# SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Daniel Botkin

*"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." ~John 4:23f*

It is of the utmost importance that we maintain a balance of spirit and truth in our worship. Those who worship the Father *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth, Yeshua said. Pentecostal and charismatic Christians emphasize the Spirit in their worship, but they are often deficient when it comes to Biblical truth. Fundamentalists and Sabbath-keepers emphasize the importance of Biblical truth, but they are often deficient when it comes to the moving of the Holy Spirit in their worship. True worshippers must worship in spirit *and* in truth. For the true worshipper, neither the Holy Spirit nor Torah truth can be optional. Both are necessary for a balanced walk.

A true worshipper wears upon his shoulders the yoke of Yeshua. On one shoulder the worshipper bears the Holy Spirit; on the other shoulder he bears Torah truth. If both shoulders are bearing equal weight, the worshipper will have a balanced walk. Let me give a real-life illustration: I have six-year-old identical twin daughters who are of equal weight. Every night at bedtime, I throw one twin over each shoulder and carry them both up the stairs to their bedroom. I am able to maintain my balance because I am bearing equal weight on each shoulder. If one twin weighed a great deal more than the other, it would be far more difficult for me to walk. I might be able to reach my destination, but I would have an imbalanced, lopsided walk. And I might fall. In the same manner, if a disciple gives a great deal of attention to the Holy Spirit but very little attention to Torah truth (or vice versa), he will have an imbalanced,

lopsided walk.

This is the reason we see some imbalanced Pentecostal and charismatic Christians. "The Holy Spirit told me to do such-and-such a thing," they say.

"But brother," we reply, "the Bible clearly says not to do that."

"It does? Hmm... Well, praise God, I'm a Spirit-led man; I gotta follow the leading of the Holy Spirit!"

On the other hand, we also see some imbalanced Sabbath-keepers and Fundamentalists. If the Holy Spirit moves and something supernatural takes place -- a healing, a miracle, someone speaking in tongues -- these imbalanced brethren refuse to give God the glory. "We *know* God doesn't do *that* sort of thing anymore," they say. "Therefore it must be of the flesh or of the devil."

Readers of this publication know that I put a great deal of emphasis on Torah truth. I do this because the rediscovery of Torah by Christians is a present-day move of God that is revolutionizing the lives of those who see this truth and walk in it. I want to help others see this truth because I know what a blessing it is. To some people in this Torah movement, though, the moving of the Holy Spirit is a foreign concept. When people see the importance of Torah truth but do not experience the moving of the Holy

Spirit, the result is imbalance. And a person does not have to look far to find imbalanced people in the Sabbath-keeping community.

A few months ago a brother phoned me and expressed his concern about so many imbalanced Sabbath-keepers. "I know the Bible teaches we should keep the seventh-day Sabbath," he said, "but I can't believe how many kooks there are among Sabbath-keepers. The more Sabbath-keepers I meet, the more kooks I find. If I wasn't sure that the Bible teaches Sabbath-keeping, I wouldn't want to be a part of this."

"If it's any comfort to you," I replied, "please remember that there are a lot of religious kooks out there who *don't* keep the seventh-day Sabbath. The Sabbath-keeping community does not have a monopoly on kookiness."

(As I heard someone else recently express it, "When you've got light, you're gonna draw some bugs.")

Torah truth is important and necessary, but the Torah without the life-giving power of the Spirit is nothing more than a dead letter, mere ink on paper. The commandments of the Torah must be obeyed, but the Apostle Paul tells us that "the end [Gk. *telos* = goal] of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned..." (1 Tim. 1:5). Obedience to the Torah is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, the end being love out of a pure heart, having a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. All three of these traits are matters of the heart.

These three traits are the end to which the Torah is supposed to lead us. Let me ask some important questions about these three traits. Question #1: Is your Torah-observance resulting in love out of a pure heart? Or has your love for God and man grown cold since you rediscovered the Torah? Question #2: Do you have a good conscience since you started keeping the commandments?

Or do you have a guilty conscience? Question #3: Has your faith grown, and is it unfeigned? Or has your faith decreased to the point where you have to just pretend that you believe and do certain things?

Mechanical obedience to rules of outward conduct will not by itself produce these internal qualities that Paul describes. Obedience to the commandments must be accompanied by the moving of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Otherwise, the results will be those described by Paul as he continues his statement in the very next verse: "...from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (v. 6f).

This is a perfect description of some believers today. They have taken their eyes off the end (the goal) of the Torah, and have swerved aside onto unimportant tangents. They produce little more than vain jangling in their attempts to be Torah teachers. I know. I get their newsletters and magazines and I hear about them from readers on my mailing list. Some of these brethren need to experience the moving of the Holy Spirit to humble them and to restore some balance to their walk.

Most Messianic believers know that the Hebrew word for Spirit is *ruach*. Not all believers know what the word *ruach* really means, though. In its basic generic sense, *ruach* simply means "wind" or "breath." Why is this so important? It is important for this reason: Wind is the movement of air. If there is no movement of air within a given space, then there is no wind, no *ruach*, in that location. The same holds true for the *ruach* of God: If there is no movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, then the Holy Spirit is not there, because the Holy Spirit is no more static than the wind is.

It is imperative that the Holy Spirit be more to us than a mere theological concept or a creed or a "third Person of the Trinity." The Holy Spirit is the wind of God, the breath of God; it is God on the move. The very first thing

the Bible says about the Spirit is "the Spirit moved" (Gen. 1:2). In Genesis the Spirit of God moved in darkness upon the face of the waters and brought light and order out of chaos and darkness. First the Spirit moved, then God spoke. This is how God wants to re-create our lives, by the moving of His Spirit and by His spoken Word. If we resist or quench or grieve the moving of the Spirit, we will end up with dead orthodoxy and an imbalanced walk. We will remain in our darkness and our lives will remain undisciplined and in disarray, "without form, and void."

I want to worship in spirit and in truth. I love Biblical truth. I read, study, and meditate on the Scriptures day and night. The Word of God is my delight. But I also love the moving of the Spirit. Without the moving of the Holy Spirit, my prayer time would be cold and lifeless. The Holy Spirit makes my prayer life a delight, because the Holy Spirit moves upon me and within me when I pray.

When I pray in public in the presence of others, I am usually somewhat reserved. When I pray alone late at night with the lights out and my office door closed, it is a different story. God moves upon me when I pray alone. The Holy Spirit moves me to tears nearly every night. Sometimes my shoulders heave with sobbing, but usually the tears flow in silence and stillness. Sometimes they are tears of sadness, either for specific people I love or for all the lost souls of my generation. More often they are tears of joy and gratitude for the blessings God has given. A few weeks ago I was moved to tears during a rainstorm, because I realized that our nation deserves drought, not the blessing of rain. This undeserved blessing of God being poured out on a sinful nation moved me to tears. Many times the tears come because I am simply overwhelmed and overcome by a wonderful awareness of the Presence of God.

This moving of the Spirit can happen even outside my prayer closet. A couple weeks ago I was walking across a bridge that spans the Illinois

River. A red-winged blackbird landed on the bridge railing, and I quietly thanked God for putting the red and yellow patch of feathers on this bird. (God didn't *have* to create colors, you know. He could have created the world in black and white and shades of grey.) As the bird flew away, I was moved to tears by its beauty. "The whole earth is full of His glory." This verse is not just a Bible verse to me; it is something that I know by experience because the Holy Spirit moves in me and causes me to see God's glory.

The Spirit moves upon me in other ways when I pray. Every night my praying alternates between praying in tongues and praying in English. ("What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also...") I also sing both in tongues and in English. ("...I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also," 1 Cor. 14:15). An involuntary trembling and shaking comes upon my hands and arms every night as I pray, and sometimes the trembling extends to my upper torso. It is not uncontrollable, because I can stop it at will. It is involuntary, though, because I do not consciously initiate it.

"My goodness, Daniel! It sounds to me like you're possessed by a spirit!" Let me tell you something: I *am* possessed by a spirit. I am possessed by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, the Living God, because I give myself to Him unreservedly when I pray. I let him take possession of me.

I am not describing the moving of the Spirit in my life to boast of myself. I just want readers to know that they do not have to continue in the bland, boring, cold, unemotional walk that they presently experience. I have been to some Sabbath-keeping churches that were so cold and dead and dry that they made Baptists seem like wild Pentecostals by comparison.

In John 7:38, Yeshua described the experience of the Holy Spirit as rivers of living water flowing from our innermost being. Does this describe your experience with the Holy Spirit? You may not experience the moving of the Spirit in the same exact way that I do,

but there should be some kind of definite movement. Just as there is no *ruach* or wind without movement, neither is there a flowing river of living water without movement. If you experience no such movement of the Spirit, I suggest you start getting alone with God in your prayer closet, shut the door, and cry out to your Heavenly Father to deliver you from the stagnant waters from which you have been drinking, and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

A lot of people in the Sabbath-keeping community are wary of anything that smacks of Pentecostalism. I will be the first to admit that a lot of nonsense has gone on (and still goes on) among Pentecostal Christians. (Of course the same can be said of Sabbath-keeping Christians; it's just a different form of nonsense.) A recent issue of *Christian History* magazine (Issue 58) focused on the history of the Pentecostal movement in America in the past century. I like the positive attitude that the editor, Mark Galli, expresses toward Pentecostals. I close this article with Mark Galli's words. They are worth considering:

*"As a liturgically minded, theologically educated, decidedly non-charismatic Episcopalian (I used to lift my hands in prayer, but then only waist high), I'm impressed with Pentecostals. Mainline Christians like myself have managed to so tame the Holy Spirit, one can hardly tell the difference between "the divine presence" and a well-oiled liturgical service.*

*When Pentecostals are accused of acting foolish, I reply: So? If God were really to descend in power, wouldn't some recipients of that power go crazy? ... What do we expect when the Spirit of the Living God enters people: that they'll form a committee to write a new set of church by-laws?*

*A number of Pentecostals have suggested that being filled with the Spirit is like touching a live electrical wire: it's dangerous. Pentecostalism is dangerous, indeed, and as such produces some excesses. Then again, God is reported to be dangerous."* □

making much of human abilities and character, then you are seeing the mark of Satan's kingdom. This is the mark, in fulness, that the Adepts will have.

Armies of demons do the work of Satan, and will stand ready to obey the Adepts when they come to power. The armies of angels will work hand in hand with the Sons, watching over them "lest they dash their foot against a stone." No accident, no sickness, no injury or harm can come to them. Death will have no power over them. God will manifest His power on this earth realm to vindicate His name. Praise God! This has only been an introduction to this study, but I trust that it will help you to see where you are dwelling in the Kingdom, and help you to see that there is a higher place in God for you. God bless you, and give you an honest heart to seek for His highest and best. "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14). □

## **A LIVING SACRIFICE**

### **-Daniel Botkin-**



*"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." -Romans 12:1*

Some folks see the word "sacrifice" in this verse and think that Paul was urging Christians to become martyrs and die for the faith. However, this is not the case, for we are told to present our bodies as a *living* sacrifice. Martyrs for the faith are certainly to be very highly esteemed, but God usually has more use for a living, surrendered body than for a dead martyr.

What does it mean to present our body as a living sacrifice? It simply means that we recognize our Creator as the rightful owner of our body, and view ourselves as mere stewards who will give an account for what we have done with our body.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19f).

If I have transferred ownership of my body to God and have become a steward instead of the owner, then I will be careful what I do with this body, for it is no longer my body in the sense of ownership. I am just a guest in Someone Else's house, and I will not want to do anything that would offend or anger the Owner.

If I realize that my physical body truly belongs to the Lord, then my habits will begin to change, and my body will be used in a manner which is pleasing to the Lord. For example, if my eyes really belong to God, then I will not want to use them to look upon pornography or other questionable materials. Instead, I will look at the beauty of God's creation and read good books and view things that are wholesome and worthwhile. King David declared, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Ps. 101:3). I knew someone who taped this Bible verse to their TV set as a reminder to be careful what they watched.

As a steward of my body, I will also be careful with my ears. I must not use them for listening to gossip, slander, or filthy language. The same goes for my mouth. I must speak wholesome words and pray as David did, "Set a watch, O Yahweh, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3).

My hands are also part of my body, and should be used to do good works, not evil works. God is also the rightful Owner of my feet, so I must not let my feet take me to places where God does not want me to go. "I thought on my ways," the psalmist wrote, "and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies" (Ps. 119:59). The same psalm also says, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy word" (Ps. 119:101).

If I wish to be a good and faithful steward, I must acknowledge that my entire physical body really belongs to my Creator, and is available for whatever He wants. This is actually good news, for if God is the Owner of my body, then He is going to see to it that I have a way to obtain the resources I need to feed, clothe, care for, and house my body.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God," Yeshua said, "and all these things [food, clothing, physical needs] will be added unto you." This relieves me of a great deal of unnecessary worry about the care of my body. Of course this does not mean that I can be lazy or irresponsible or careless about caring for my body. It is my duty as a steward to feed and clothe and care for my body in a responsible manner, so that it will be presentable and strong enough and healthy enough to do the things the Lord has planned for me to do.

Knowing that God wants my body as a living sacrifice tells me that He has a plan and a purpose for my life. If I turn over the ownership of my body to Him, I can rest assured that He will keep me alive and provide whatever is needed to take care of my needs until His plan and purpose for my life has been accomplished. The world cannot give me such peace and assurance and freedom from worry. Such a blessing comes only from above. □

# "HONEY, I SHRUNK THE SCRIPTURES"

Daniel Botkin

Reprinted from *Gates of Eden* 1-2

In 1990 a Christian friend, knowing that my view of Paul's writings was different from that of most other Bible believers, referred me to an article in *Christianity Today*. The title of the article was "The Misunderstood Apostle," and the subheading declared that "A revolution in New Testament studies has challenged traditional understandings of Paul's critique of Judaism."

According to the writer of the article, this "revolution" began with the publication of E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, a work that the scholarly world now considers "a landmark in Pauline studies."<sup>1</sup> This lengthy volume was followed by a shorter book by the same author, entitled *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* in 1983.

Two other theologians' works were mentioned in the *Christianity Today* article, but neither received as much space or praise as Sanders' did. Since E.P. Sanders seemed to be Christianity's top expert on Paul, I decided I should read what he had to say. I thought perhaps he would have a more correct way than I did to explain Paul's seemingly contradictory statements about the Law (viz., "The Law is good" versus "The Law is bad").

I obtained *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* and waded through hundreds of pages, taking notes along the way. I gleaned some knowledge from this book, but the real eye-opener for me was Sanders' shorter book, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*. I totally disagree with the author's solution for reconciling Paul's positive and negative statements about the Law, but the book opened my eyes to some things.

First, I learned from Sanders' introduction that theologians have long struggled with Paul's theology of the Law. According to Sanders, the subject "has been discussed by numerous scholars in great detail" and "all the scholarly labor that has been spent on it has resulted in no consen-

sus."<sup>2</sup> Sanders writes that "one should be able, by using the normal tools of exegesis, to determine precisely what he [Paul] thought ... Yet the search for what he 'really meant' goes on."<sup>3</sup> It was refreshing for me to discover that theologians have long realized that what Paul taught about the Law is not as clear-cut or simplistic as most Christians think it is.

Another significant fact that I learned from Sanders' book was that many Christian theologians, far more educated and experienced than I, have come to the same basic conclusion about Paul's theology of the Law that I have. I have explained the seeming contradiction between Paul's praising and practicing of the Law on the one hand, and his apparent condemning of it on the other hand, by saying that he condemned only man's misuse and perverting of the Law. Obeying the Law for the purpose of establishing one's own righteousness is to be condemned; obeying the Law as a result of having been made righteous by faith in the Messiah is to be expected and praised.

Sanders quotes various scholars whose explanations show that they have arrived at the same basic conclusion:

Hans Hubner explains Romans 10:4 ("Christ is the end of the Law") by saying that "Christ is the end of the *fleshly misuse* of the law."<sup>4</sup> (Italics mine.)

Rudolf Bultmann writes, "Christ is the end of the Law so far as it claimed to be the way of salvation or was understood by man as the means to establishing 'his own righteousness,' for so far as it contains God's demand, it retains its validity."<sup>5</sup> (Italics Bultmann's.)

Ernst Kasemann states it this way: "The obedience of faith abrogates the law as a mediator of salvation, sees through the perversion of understanding it as a principle of achievement, and in eschatological retrospect restores to the divine gift [i.e., the Law]

the character of the original will of God."<sup>6</sup>

Herman Ridderbos says that the works of the Law are good "where meritoriousness is not in question."<sup>7</sup>

In J.A.T. Robinson's view, "the law is constantly regarded from two viewpoints, as the will of God and as a way to salvation."<sup>8</sup>

Heikki Raisanen tells us that "the common explanation [is] that Paul rejects the law as a way of salvation but retains it as an expression of God's will."<sup>9</sup>

Sanders says that "this general view [the view of the above-quoted theologians] is very common."<sup>10</sup> He further states, "Many have seen the 'end of the law' ... as meaning that one dies to the law as a *system of salvation*. It is only *that* aspect of the law which has come to an end since Christ."<sup>11</sup> (Italics mine.)

I find it both comforting and disturbing that "many" theologians have seen that Paul taught that it is only man's perverted misuse of the Law which the Christian is to shun, and not the Law itself. It is reassuring to know that my theological conclusion is the same as that arrived at by theologians with far more knowledge of the Scriptures, their historical background, and the Greek language than I possess.

What disturbs me, however, is the practical implication of this theological conclusion. If, indeed, the Law is good "where meritoriousness is not in question" (Ridderbos) and if it "contains God's demand" (Bultmann) and tells us "the will of God" (Robinson), and if faith in the Messiah restores to the Law "the character of the original will of God" (Kasemann) so that the Law is now "an expression of God's will" (Raisanen), then it is important to carry all this to its logical conclusion, namely, that believers in the Messiah should still be following the commandments of the Law, including the Sabbath, holy days, dietary laws, and other miscellaneous commandments that are ignored by the vast majority of Christians. If the commandments of the Law still retain

validity as an expression of God's will for those who are justified by faith, then the only option for a New Covenant believer is to begin putting these neglected commandments into practice.

When I hear the vast majority of Christendom conveniently label the neglected commandments "Jewish," "obsolete," or "nullified," I cannot help but wonder how many of the "many" theologians who have seen that the Law is still a valid expression of God's will have acted upon it. If the theologians would teach their seminary students that even the neglected commandments are important, and if the seminary graduates taught it from the pulpit, Christian worship would certainly undergo some radical changes.

The only alternative to the above scenario is to come up with some other explanation of Paul's theology of the Law. This is exactly what E.P. Sanders does in *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People*. Although I totally disagree with Sanders' alternative explanation, I must say to his credit that he, at least, appears to have thought through to the aforementioned practical implications of the other theological position, unlike the theologians themselves.

Sanders agrees that Paul expected Christians to keep the Law. But Sanders qualifies this statement by saying that Paul imposed a "reduced law" for New Covenant believers (103). The law Paul prescribed for Christian behavior, Sanders says, is the written Torah, but a Torah from which Paul deleted circumcision, Sabbath, holy days, and food laws (101f). Sanders admits that "Paul offered no theoretical basis for this de facto reduction of the law," (101), and he "offered no rationale for his de facto limitations" (103). "We can say that he meant a *reduced* law," Sanders writes, "...only because we can observe the ways in which he reduced it" (103).

Sanders is very aware of the fact (and even points it out) that the elements of the Torah which he believes Paul "deleted" were the very elements of Judaism "which drew criticism and ridicule from pagan authors" (102).

Sanders writes, "I do not wish to propose that Paul consciously deleted from the law which Christians are to keep the elements which were most offensive to pagan society on purely practical grounds, so that pagans would find it relatively easy to convert" (102).

According to Sanders, Paul's reduction of the Torah was the natural and necessary outcome of Paul's putting into practice his two convictions: 1) Jew and Gentile are to be saved on the same basis; 2) Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles (102). I personally do not see why holding these two convictions would require the deletion of commandments which draw ridicule and scorn from pagans.

On the last page of his concluding chapter about Paul and the Law, Sanders asks a question that all thinking Christians should ask themselves: "How could a Jew of Paul's antecedents, while still viewing Scripture as Scripture, and quoting it to show God's plan and intention, say that some of its commands are optional?" (162)

Here is Sanders' answer to this question:

"Though I wince at the possible anachronism of the phrase, I think that Paul had found a canon within the canon. He did not formulate it, and I doubt that he consciously reflected on it. We perceive it in operation. It is this: those parts of the Scripture which mention faith, righteousness, Gentiles, and love are in, as are those which accuse Israel of disobedience; parts which disagree with this interior canon, particularly the point about the Gentiles, whether explicitly or by implication, do not count" (162).

In effect, this is saying that Paul did not really believe in the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, except for those parts which served his purpose. Sanders is telling us that Paul actually shrunk the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures by deleting commandments that drew scorn and ridicule from pagans. The commandments that are distasteful "do not count" because they are not "in" Paul's "interior canon."

This is the explanation offered by

E.P. Sanders, the man portrayed in *Christianity Today* as Christendom's top expert on Paul's theology of the Law. I am sure that Mr. Sanders is one thousand times the scholar that I am, and I mean no disrespect to the man, but I must flatly reject his theory. A Scripture-shrinker could never write, as Paul did, that "All Scripture is inspired and profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16), unless he were the worst kind of hypocrite. If I were to accept Sanders' theory, I would have to totally reject Paul as a hypocrite who took it upon himself to abolish God-given commandments (even the Sabbath) with a stroke of his pen, an action which even Jesus did not have the authority to do. (See Matt. 5:17-19, "Think not that I have come to destroy the law," etc.)

I see no reason for Christians to reject the "general view" that "many have seen" (i.e., it is only misusing the Law as a means to establish one's own righteousness that should be rejected, and not the Law itself). Furthermore, I see no reason for Christians to not act upon the practical implications of this theological position (i.e., keep Sabbath, holy days, dietary laws, etc.). Such a decision means undergoing some radical changes, but seeking to live and worship more like the Master often results in such painful but beneficial adjustments for the disciple. □

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Daniel G. Reid, "The Misunderstood Apostle," *Christianity Today* (July 16, 1990), 25.

<sup>2</sup>E.P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Hans Hubner, *Das Gesetz bei Paulus*, 2d.ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), 129.

<sup>5</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol.1 (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1951-55), 341.

<sup>6</sup>Ernst Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1980), 94.

<sup>7</sup>Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975), 179.

<sup>8</sup>Sanders, 91, fn. 54.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., fn. 58

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., fn. 54

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 83.



# THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR

## Discerning the Sound of the Trumpet for Our Generation

### Dr. Daniel Botkin

*"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.'"*

*-Leviticus 23:23f*

Rosh HaShanah, the first of the Fall Feasts, is marked by the blowing of the shofar, the ram's horn. In Biblical times the blowing of trumpets was used to call God's people to assemble together for various reasons. The blowing of trumpets served as a kind of "public address system" for the entire congregation of the Lord. There were different trumpets which were sounded in different ways at different times to tell God's people what they were supposed to be doing.

We need to discern "the sound of the trumpet" for our generation. "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8) God's trumpet does not give "an uncertain sound," but if we do not have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Body of the Messiah in these days, we will not know what God's people are supposed to be doing in this generation at this point in history.

The Church's history, like Israel's history, has been a journey. Throughout Church history there have been different movements of the Spirit, led by different men who had an ear to hear what the Spirit was saying to the Church in their generation. It is an understatement to say that many of these men were imperfect. Nonetheless, they did discern the sound of the trumpet that was blowing in their day. In the 1500s the Reformers heard God's shofar telling them that it was time to come out of Babylon, and they broke away from much of the darkness and superstition of medieval Roman Catholicism. During the Reformation, God's trumpet was saying, "The just shall live by faith"

and "*Sola scriptura*" and "Come out of her, My people."

Some of today's Protestants believe that the Reformation was a great success, and that the Protestant Church was re-formed by the Reformation into what God wants. However, the Reformation was only the *beginning* of the re-forming of the Church. Each succeeding generation of believers must listen for the sound of the trumpet for their own generation, and discern what re-formations the Lord wants to make in the Church in their generation. This idea is neither new nor novel. John Robinson (c.1576-1625), the leader of the Pilgrim Fathers, wrote these words:

*"We have come to a period in religion when the Lutherans cannot be drawn beyond what Luther saw. And the Calvinists stick where Calvin left them. Luther and Calvin were precious shining lights in their times, yet God did not reveal His whole will to them. I am very confident that the*

*Lord hath yet more truth and light to break forth out of His Holy Word."* (*Reclaiming Reformation Day*, page 36). [The fact that someone like Luther could be viewed as a "shining light" should tell us how spiritually dark those times were! -DB]

Yeshua wept over Jerusalem because His generation "knew not the time of their visitation" (Lk. 19:44). They should have known the time of their visitation; they should have known from the Scriptures that their generation would see the Messiah, and they should have known from the Scriptures that Yeshua was the Messiah. It is easy for us to criticize the Jewish religious leaders of Yeshua's generation, but what about our own generation? Do we know what to expect from the Lord during the time of *our* visitation? In what way does the Lord want to visit our generation, and what will be the intended purpose of this visitation?

I do not claim to have all the answers, but I do know one thing. I know that in the Lord's present visitation, He is visiting His people as a Jew. He is no longer walking among us wearing a Gentile disguise and bearing a Gentilized name. He is not a White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Republican named Reverend Jesus Christ. He is Rabbi Yeshua of Nazareth, a Galilean Jew with no political interests except His Father's Kingdom.

This present visitation which many of us are experiencing is commonly referred to as the Messianic Movement. And what is the purpose of this visitation? To conform us more into His image and likeness by teaching us to live and worship as He did. He did not go to church on Sundays, celebrate Christmas, and attend church-sponsored hog roasts. He honored the Sabbath and holy days and ate clean meats. These neglected elements of Torah are by no means the sum total of what it means to be

His disciple. However, these things are an important and necessary *part* of being His disciple, because being His disciple means following His example and following His teachings. He certainly did these things, and He taught His disciples to do them as well. (See Matt. 5:17-19 & 23:1-3, e.g.)

The signs of this visitation are obvious for all to see. Our generation, and our generation alone, has witnessed some amazing historical events which are tied to this visitation: the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948; the re-taking of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967; the re-emergence and growth of the Messianic Jewish movement in the past three decades. No other generation of believers since the First Century has been privileged to witness these things.

As these important historical events continue to develop and unfold, a remnant of the Church is awakening to the significance of the Jewishness of Yeshua. Those who have ears to hear know that the sound of God's shofar is calling His people to abandon pagan-inspired religious traditions and to return to a Torah-honoring lifestyle in the Messiah. This is why so many non-Jewish disciples are beginning to keep the 7th-day Sabbath and celebrate the annual Feasts of Yahweh.

The Sabbath and Feasts are called God's *mo'adim* (מוֹעֲדִים), "appointed times." The *mo'adim* are first mentioned in Genesis 1:14, where we are told that the lights in the heavens are to serve as indicators of God's *mo'adim* (translated "seasons" in KJV). This shows us that God had His appointed times, His *mo'adim*, in mind from the very beginning of Creation, even before He created man.

The Sabbath and the Feasts are the times which God has appointed for His people to assemble together for "holy convocations." (See Lev. 23:2.) The Hebrew word translated "convocation," *mikra* (מִקְרָא), means a calling together or a rehearsal. Rehearsal means practicing for the real thing. When we hear the call and assemble together in holy convocation at God's appointed times, our assem-

bling together is a rehearsal for the real thing.

"But isn't Jesus 'the real thing'?" some Christians say. "And didn't He render sabbaths and holy days obsolete? Doesn't Colossians 2:17 say that these things were mere shadows?"

The NASB does say "*mere shadows*"; however, the belittling word *mere* is not in the Greek text. That is why it appears in italics in the NASB, to indicate that it was added by the translators. Colossians 2:17 does not say that the sabbaths and holy days "*were*" a shadow. It says they "*are*" a shadow, present tense. Why is this important? It is important because it shows us that Paul still regarded the Sabbath and Feasts as a *presently-existing* shadow of the Messiah, and not as a bygone shadow of the past which had been made obsolete by the New Covenant.\* The shadow of the Messiah is still with New Covenant believers. When we step into the Sabbath and Feasts, we are stepping into the shadow of the Messiah.

"But what good does it do to step into a shadow?" some ask. Ask the people who brought the sick out into the streets in an effort to get them into the shadow of Peter as he passed by. (See Acts 5:15.) Let me ask you a question. Suppose Yeshua was in the next room over from you, standing in such a way that you could not see Him, but you could see His shadow being cast into the room where you are. Would you not want to step into His shadow? If people were blessed by the shadow of Peter passing over them as he walked by, do you not think that we can receive even greater blessings by stepping into the shadow of the Messiah?

Yeshua is, indeed, "in the next room." He is in the heavenly realm. Even though we cannot see Him, His shadow is still being cast into "this room," the earthly realm where we presently dwell. When we honor God's appointed times, we are stepping into the shadow of the Messiah.

Many disciples who have been stepping into this shadow from Sabbath to Sabbath and from Feast to

Feast can testify that it has brought them great blessings. If you doubt the testimony of present-day disciples, then hear the testimony of the Bride in the Song of Solomon when she says this of her Bridegroom: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song 2:3).

As we celebrate the Fall Feasts this year, may the blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShanah remind us that we are stepping into the shadow of our Bridegroom Yeshua. As we observe Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, may we be thankful for the atonement that we have in Him. As we sit in the shade of our *sukkot* during the Feast of Tabernacles, may we sit down under His shadow with great delight, and may His fruit be sweet to our taste. *Happy Holidays!* ☐

\*Paul's criticism in Colossians was not directed toward the observance of God's appointed times. Paul was criticizing those who insisted that these appointed times be observed in strict accordance with *man-made* traditions. The appearance of the words *man/men* six times in Colossians chapter 2 should make it obvious that Paul was criticizing only *man-made* doctrines and commandments. The commandment to observe the *mo'adim* is not a man-made commandment.

# CALVINISM & ARMINIANISM

Dr. Daniel Botkin

One night when I was a young disciple, I was listening to the preacher preach at the fellowship where I attended. "We're not Calvinists," the preacher declared. "We're Arminians!"

Okay, I thought to myself. So we're Arminians. Whatever that means.

At that time I was just a newborn babe in the faith, enjoying the milk of the Word. I couldn't care less if the milk came out of a bottle labeled "Calvinist" or out of a bottle labeled "Arminian."

I still don't care much about Calvinism and Arminianism as labels. However, it is beneficial to study these two opposing theological viewpoints, because both views have some important things to teach us.

The Calvinist viewpoint is named after the Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564). The Arminian viewpoint is named after the Dutchman Jacob Arminius (1560-1609). The Calvinist viewpoint emphasizes the role that God plays in salvation, while the Arminian viewpoint emphasizes the role that man plays in salvation.

Calvinism stresses things such as the Sovereignty of God, election (meaning God's choice of whom to save), predestination, and grace. According to the Calvinist, it is God who does all the work to save man; man does nothing to bring himself to salvation. Arminianism stresses things such as man's free will and man's ability to choose whether to receive or reject God's free gift of salvation. According to the Arminian, God freely provides the means for man to be saved, but man must exercise his free will to repent and believe unto salvation.

The disciples of Jacob Arminius summarized Arminius' teachings in 1610, a year after their teacher's death. They affirmed the following:

**1. Election to salvation rests on faith foreseen.** In other words, God chooses - or "predestines" - certain



individuals for salvation because He knows beforehand that these individuals will choose to repent and believe the gospel.

**2. Christ died for all, though only believers benefit.** Some Reformers believed that Christ died only for the elect.

**3. Grace is not irresistible.** That is, man can resist the drawing power of God's grace and refuse God's offer of pardon.

**4. Perseverance depends on one's own action over and above God's help.** In other words, a believer must choose to continue in the faith if he wants God to keep him in the faith.

In 1618, eight years after the formulation of Arminius' teachings, Calvinist theologians formulated the so-called "five points of Calvinism" in response to the position taken by the disciples of Arminius. The five points of Calvinism (easily memorized by the acronym T-U-L-I-P) are:

**1. Total depravity of man.** Sinful man is unable to repent and believe



ABOVE: John Calvin

LEFT: Jacob Arminius

the gospel on his own power. It is a supernatural, sovereign act of God, and not man's free will, that produces repentance and faith in a person.

**2. Unconditional election.** God's decision to choose ("elect") certain individuals for salvation is not due to anything the individuals have done in the past or will do in the future. The choice of who is and who is not predestined and elected is based entirely on the Sovereignty of God.

**3. Limited atonement.** The death of Christ is efficacious only for the elect.

**4. Irresistible grace.** The elect cannot resist the grace of God that draws them to repentance and faith. Therefore it is guaranteed that the elect will eventually come to faith.

**5. Preservation (or perseverance) of the saints.** It is guaranteed that the elect will remain in the faith. In modern Christian circles, this idea is sometimes called "the eternal security of the believer" or "once saved, always saved."

While some Christians in Europe

were debating these issues, other Christians emphasized regeneration, sanctification, and the inner life, claiming that these were the weightier matters most needed for the times. These Christians were probably right, because too much focus on Calvinism or Arminianism can lead to hyper-Calvinism or hyper-Arminianism.

Hyper-Calvinism can create a fatalistic outlook: "Whatever happens was ordained to happen exactly as it happened, so why bother to do anything? Why bother to pray, evangelize, or pursue holiness? Our salvation or our doom is predestined and there is nothing we can do to change God's pre-determined will. Therefore let us sin that grace may abound, and we can blame God for everything that happens."

Hyper-Arminianism can attribute more power to man's free will than to God. It can cause us to congratulate ourselves for choosing to repent and believe the gospel. We can give ourselves some of the credit for our salvation. Hyper-Arminianism can also discourage us from praying for the lost or trying to convince them to repent and believe the gospel. If it ultimately depends on man's free will, we can't expect the power of God to interfere, lest He violate their free will. And if there is no security for the believer, then we don't know if we will still be saved from one day to the next.

The above examples are extreme, of course, but these are the kinds of things to which extremism can lead. This is why balance is important. I heard of one old preacher who said, "I preach like an Arminian and I pray like a Calvinist." In other words, he preached in such a way that his listeners understood that man was without excuse, and he prayed believing that God would do the saving because God's power is stronger than the power of man's free will.

Charles Spurgeon was a strong Calvinist. Years ago I heard a story about Spurgeon. One time Spurgeon was praying for the lost to come to salvation. "Oh, God, save the elect, save the elect!" he cried. Then he got so carried away that he added, "And

while You're at it, elect some more!"

I do not know if the story is true or not, but such a prayer request is not far-fetched when we consider the fact that God is "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15). God dwells in the past as much as He dwells in the present, so why could He not predestine someone from before the foundation of the world as the result of our prayer?

The extremes of hyper-Calvinism and hyper-Arminianism can be harmful. However, a balanced look at both of these views can be helpful. A good dose of Calvinism will make sure that man gets no glory for repenting and believing the gospel; a good dose of Arminianism will make sure that man cannot blame God for his refusal to repent and believe the gospel.

Calvinists and Arminians both use Scriptures to prove their respective positions, and both make some very valid points. A person can be very easily persuaded to whole-heartedly embrace one view or the other if he looks at only one side of the argument. Rather than looking at it as an "either-or" issue which requires the choosing of one side and the rejecting of the other side, I prefer to look at it in the following way:

Think of salvation as a house. The place of salvation is inside the house, and we are outside. In order to be "saved," we must enter the house. In the front yard there are signs telling us what we must do to get inside the house. These signs have Bible verses that state what man must do to be saved, Scriptures that we could call "Arminian verses":

- "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life" (Deut. 30:19)
- "Choose this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15)
- "Repent ... unless you repent you shall perish" (Mt. 4:17; Lk. 13:3)
- "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31)
- "Repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38)
- "With the heart man believeth unto

righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10)

- "Come unto Me" (Mt. 11:28)

- "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Rev. 22:17)

We follow the instructions on these signs and we enter the house. Inside, we find ourselves confronted with signs on the walls. Written on these signs are verses which emphasize the role that God played in our salvation, the "Calvinist verses."

If we say to ourselves, "I came to Christ," then we are confronted with a sign that says "No man can come to Me, unless the Father draws him" (Jn. 6:44). If we say, "I entered into Christ," we see a sign with 1 Corinthians 1:30: "But of Him [God] are ye in Christ" ("By His doing you are in Christ," NASB.)

"But didn't God put me in Christ because I believed?"

"As many as were ordained [appointed] to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

"But wasn't I ordained to eternal life because I had faith?"

"By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

"But wasn't the gift of faith given to me because I repented?"

"The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

"Okay, but I chose to respond to that goodness; I chose You, Lord!"

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (Jn. 15:16).

"But I exercised my free will. Didn't my entry into this place of salvation ultimately depend on my own free will?"

"It does not depend on man's will or effort, but on God ... But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Rom. 9:16, TEV; Jn. 1:12f).

People who are outside the house of salvation need to be pointed to the

signs outside the house. People who are inside the house need to look at the signs on the inside. These inside signs tell us saved folks how little we had to do with our salvation. We were "quickened" - which means made alive - when we were "dead in trespasses and sins," the Bible says (Eph. 2:1). A physically dead man cannot make himself physically alive, and a spiritually dead man cannot make himself spiritually alive. Our salvation and regeneration by the Holy Spirit is every bit as miraculous as the resurrections which took place in the Bible. Furthermore, we can give ourselves no more credit for our salvation than Lazarus could give himself for his resurrection.

"But didn't Christ make me spiritually alive because I came to Him?"

With all due respect, you did not exactly *come* to Christ. You were *carried* to Christ by others and/or by Divinely-ordained circumstances, just like the dead man who was carried to the tomb of Elisha, where the touch of Elisha's bones brought the dead to life.

A friend of mine put it this way: "I know that I made a choice to repent and give my life to the Lord. I know that I made that decision. And yet, looking back at the circumstances that brought me to that point of surrender, I now realize what really happened: I was set up."

Does this mean that God forces man to do His will, and violates the nature of man's free will? "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water," Proverbs 21:1 says, "He turneth it whithersoever He will." God changes the inclination of a man's heart in the same way that He changes the course of a river. God changes the course of a river by things such as earthquakes, landslides, floods, erosion, etc. On a smaller scale, a gardener can direct the flow of water in his garden by making ditches, canals, and barriers of earth. This action does not violate the nature of the water or force it to flow contrary to its nature. The circumstances are simply altered to cause the water to flow naturally in the desired direction. This is how God re-directs the will of

man, by altering the circumstances around the man. An anonymous poet explained it this way:

*If a nest of wild hornets  
Were left in this room,  
And the creatures allowed to go free;  
They wouldn't compel you  
To go 'gainst your will,  
They'd just make you willing to flee!*

Baptists have traditionally leaned toward Calvinism, and Methodists have traditionally leaned toward Arminianism. A friend of mine once had two co-workers, one a Baptist and the other a Methodist. These two men argued every day, especially over the question of eternal security. Each morning the Baptist greeted the Methodist by saying, "Good morning! Are you still saved today?"

While it is worthwhile to look at both sides of the Calvinism versus Arminianism dispute, it is not fruitful to get too preoccupied with the subject. We need to humbly recognize that God has not revealed all the details about predestination, election, free will, etc. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29). Trying to fully comprehend things which God has not chosen to reveal can be quite frustrating. To illustrate, let me close with this amusing true story from the autobiography of Peter Cartwright, an American backwoods preacher of the 1800s:

*On Monday morning I went over to see him. He was a high-strung Predestinarian in his views; believed, or professed to believe, that God had decreed everything that comes to pass. After introducing myself to him, he presently bristled up for an argument. I told him I had not come to debate, but to invite him to the Saviour. He said he could not receive anything from me, for he cordially despised the Methodists. I told him if God had decreed all things, He had decreed that there should be Methodists, and that they should believe precisely as they did, and that they were raised up by the decree of God to torment him before his time, and that he must be a great simpleton to*

*suppose that the Methodists could do or believe anything but what they did; and now, my dear sir, you must be a vile wretch to want to break the decrees of God, and wish to exterminate the Methodists; that if his doctrine was true, the Methodists were as certainly fulfilling the glorious decrees of God, which were founded in truth and righteousness, as the angels around the burning throne; and several admonitions I gave him, and, by the by, he had some feeling on the subject. I talked kindly and prayed with him, and left.*

*After I left, he began to think on the topics of conversation, and the more he thought the more his mind became perplexed about these eternal decrees. When he would sit down to eat, or ride, or walk the road, he would soliloquize on the subject. After cutting off a piece of meat and holding it on his fork, ready to receive it into his mouth, he would say: "God decreed from all eternity that I should eat this meat, but I will break that decree," and down he would dash it to the dogs. As he walked the paths in the settlement and came to a fork, he would say, "God from all eternity decreed that I should take the right-hand path, but I'll break that decree," and he would rush to the left. As he rode through the settlement, in coming to a stump or tree, he would reign up his horse and say, "God has from all eternity decreed that I should go to the right of that stump, but I will break that decree," and would turn his horse to the left.*

*Thus he went on until his family became alarmed, thinking he was deranged. The little settlement, also, was fearful that he had lost his balance of mind. At length, deep conviction took hold of him; he saw that he was a lost and ruined sinner, without an interest in Jesus Christ. He called the neighbors to come and pray for him, and, after a long and sore conflict with the devil and his decrees, it pleased God to give him religion, and almost all his family were converted and joined the Methodist Church, and walked worthy of their high and holy calling. □*

# TOWARDS DEEPER PRAYER

**Daniel Botkin**



How does a disciple learn to develop a deep, meaningful life of prayer? The answer to that question is simple: Pray!

Teaching someone else to pray is similar to teaching someone to swim. There are a few basic mechanics about swimming that can be verbally and visually communicated to the non-swimmer: the position of the body, the movements of the arms and legs, the coordination of breathing with each stroke, etc. But unless the non-swimmer actually enters the water and begins to kick and paddle, he will never really know how to swim, regardless of how well he can recite the mechanics he has learned.

So it is with prayer. Yeshua taught what could be called the "mechanics" of prayer in the Sermon on the Mount - entering your closet, closing the door, praying in secret, avoiding vain repetitions, etc. But unless the non-praying person puts the instructions into practice, he will never learn to pray, regardless of how well he can recite the Sermon on the Mount.

Except for the mechanics, I question whether prayer can be taught in a "how to" fashion. "It's better caught than taught," as the maxim goes. My goal is not so much to instruct people how to pray, but to *inspire* them to pray.

A passage of Scripture that has inspired me to continually deepen my prayer life is found in the Book of Ezekiel. The Prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of a life-giving, healing river. As the prophet was escorted into this ever-deepening river, the waters rose with each step, from the ankle, to the knee, to the loins, and finally to "waters to swim in" (Ezk. 47:5). If I can inspire others, by my words and by my example, to enter into the ever-deepening waters of prayer, I

will feel that my efforts will not have been in vain.

One way that I try to stimulate people to develop a deeper prayer life is by pointing out the emphasis Yeshua put on prayer. When He entered the Temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, He declared that God's house was to be a "house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13). Of all the activities that took place in the Temple -- and there were many -- Yeshua pointed to prayer as the one activity that best describes what ought to be done in God's house. God's house today is not a temple of dead stones, but a temple of living stones, His people (1 Pet. 2:5). If God's house is meant to be a house of prayer, then we, as members of that house, must learn to pray.

We could even go so far as to say

that prayer may be the most important spiritual activity that we can do. There are many other worthwhile activities: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and poor, studying and teaching spiritual truths, fasting, and so on. None of these activities should be minimized, but if these activities are to be of any eternal value, they must be undergirded and saturated with prayer. The most powerful and effective endeavors are those that are conceived through prayer and then, through spiritual travail, birthed into existence by prayer.

This truth explains Yeshua's gentle rebuke of Martha, who became upset because her sister, Mary, sat at the feet of Yeshua while she busily labored in the kitchen (Lk. 10:38ff). Serving as Martha did is a necessary part of life; however, we are told that



Martha was distracted, worried, and bothered by the service she was attempting to perform for her Lord.

Martha was like many people today, people who are so wrapped up in "the work of the Lord" that they forget the Lord Himself. Such eager workers have good intentions, but all their activities for the Lord allow them no time to sit quietly at His feet like Mary, who had "chosen the good part," something that could "not be taken from her."

Richard Wurmbbrand, a Hebrew Christian pastor, was imprisoned and tortured for his faith in Communist Romania. After his release he wrote a book, *Sermons in Solitary Confinement*. In one of his prison-cell sermons addressed to God, he said this:

"I was always so active. Finding no other means of achieving Your aim, You arranged for me to have fifty-pound chains on my legs so that I am obliged to sit quietly at Your feet, like Mary of Bethany."

Yeshua placed such a strong emphasis on prayer because He knew that praying people will be the best-equipped people to go out and serve their generation. God wants us to serve others, but if our service to people allows us no time for prayer and meditation, we will be ineffective servants. I cannot help a weaker brother or sister through life's struggles if I myself am spiritually weakened due to my insufficient devotional life. A life of consistent, contemplative prayer is the exercise that enables me to give spiritual help to others. In order for me to impart spiritual help to others, I must have a prayer life that serves as a channel for the wisdom and counsel that comes from heaven. Without this channel, the best I can offer people is mere human advice.

Some people do not see the value and importance of spending time sitting in the Presence of God. They think that a strong emphasis on the devotional life will lead people to idle mysticism and insensitivity to the needs of the world around them. "Too heavenly-minded to be of any earthly good" is an oft-repeated phrase one

hears from the lips of such people. I respond to this statement by asking two simple questions: 1) Who was the most heavenly-minded person who ever lived? 2) Of all the people who ever lived, who did the most earthly good? The answer to both questions is the same, and the answer should be obvious, at least to people who follow Yeshua.

If we are truly heavenly-minded, the time we spend in prayer and contemplation will not lead to inactivity and insensitivity. On the contrary, it will lead to heightened sensitivity and to activity that will produce the best possible results. A deep prayer life puts us in a better position to catch a clear vision of our destiny, and to sense exactly what practical steps we need to take to fulfill our destiny. And any vision of destiny which has its origin in heaven will ultimately lead to action that helps meet the needs of our fellow humans.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccl. 3:1). There are seasons to move forward and serve people; there are seasons to hide ourselves away in the prayer closet. This truth is demonstrated in the life of the Prophet Elijah, a great man of both prayer and action. There were times when the Lord said to Elijah, "Go hide thyself" (1 Kings 17:3). There were other times when the Lord said, "Go show thyself" (1 Kings 18:1). Elijah's life was one of going into seclusion to be alone with God, and then going out to meet the needs of his generation. Yeshua said that His sheep, like Elijah, "shall go in and out" (John 10:9). Let us hear the voice of our Shepherd, and spend our lives going into His Presence, where He can anoint us, empower us, and equip us, and then let us go out and meet the needs of our generation. □

## "DEEP CALLETH UNTO DEEP"

(Psalm 42:7)

### An Invitation to Prayer

The sea invites you to step in,  
And leave the land.

The waters whisper,  
"Put your heart into our hand."

The blue waves beckon  
As they roll back from the shore;

They roar with laughter  
As on angels' wings you soar.  
The tide throws open wide the door.

The land-locked, shore-bound souls  
Build castles in the sand.

They say, "I'll never go,  
That's not how my life's planned!"  
And so they never know  
The freedom of the sea,  
The thrill of life lived out  
In reckless harmony.  
Though bound to earth,  
They think they're free.

Some wade in shallow waters,  
Thinking they've left land.

With trembling hearts,  
They keep one foot upon the sand.

You must let go,  
And let the current sweep you out,

To depths undreamed of,  
Where you hear the silence shout,

"Come, let the deep  
drown every doubt!"

Some swim out to the deep,  
Yet keep the shore in sight.

With longing gazes  
They behold the earthly light.

You must swim out  
Until you see the shore no more.

Remember, out of Sodom

There went only four;

The one who looked back

Turned to salt forevermore.

Swim til you see the shore no more!

-Daniel Botkin

# GENEROSITY

Daniel Botkin

Years ago I knew a sister who had worked as a waitress at a few different restaurants. She said that most waitresses did not like to work the Sunday afternoon shift because most of the customers were Christians coming after church, and Christians usually did not leave very generous tips.

I do not know if Bible believers have a reputation for stinginess in tipping waitresses in other places. I hope that this bad reputation was restricted only to the restaurant where this sister worked. If we do have a bad reputation for stingy tipping, we need to look for opportunities to improve it. Giving generous tips to waitresses (and to others who serve us) is one simple and very effective way to improve our reputation as a generous people who show love to strangers.

When my budget allows it, I try to take my wife out to eat once in a while. A couple months ago, I decided to start giving bigger tips to waitresses. It started when I was at a restaurant with a friend who wanted to buy me lunch. I told my friend that I would take care of the tip since he was paying for our meal. I opened my wallet to look for the customary \$1 bill and saw that the smallest I had was a \$5 bill.

"Now what do I do?" I asked myself. "I don't want to stand in line to ask the cashier for change for a \$5 bill."

"Why don't you just give the waitress the \$5 bill?" a still, small voice suggested.

"Five dollars?! But that's as much as my entire meal cost!" I argued.

"It didn't cost *you* anything. Your friend paid for your meal."

So I gave the waitress the \$5 bill.

The past few times I have taken my wife out since then, I have given our waitress a \$10 tip, even though our total bill is usually only around \$10. I have decided that \$10 will now be the standard tip I will give, provided the waitress does a good job, and provided our budget allows this practice to continue.

"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," our Master said. Money has power to corrupt, but it also has power to bless.

It's amazing how a rectangular piece of green paper with "\$10" printed on it can brighten someone's day.

Be generous to waiters and waitresses and others who serve you, especially those who serve you well. A word of advice, though: I suggest giving the tip directly to the waitress, rather than leaving it on the table. Someone in the restaurant business once said that tips left for waitresses are sometimes stolen by other restaurant workers (or by customers). So it's best to put the money into the hand of the waitress. That way you'll be sure she gets it.



## THE WOES OF A WAITRESS A True Story

A large group of 20-25 people were traveling in a caravan on vacation and stopped to eat at a restaurant. The restaurant was somewhat understaffed to handle such a large, unexpected group, so one waitress had to wait on the entire group. It was a big job, but she handled it quite well.

After the group left, the waitress noticed that one of the diners had forgotten a camera. The waitress also noticed that no one in the group had left her a tip. She told the cashier that someone had forgotten their camera.

"They're already all gone," the cashier said, "but they paid with a credit card, so we have a name and address. We'll mail the camera to them."

The waitress noticed that the camera still had some pictures left on the roll of film. "Do me a favor before we mail the camera," she said to her co-worker. "Use it to take a picture of me."

She got a piece of cardboard and a marker and made a sign. The photo that the cashier snapped showed the waitress standing in front of the messy tables, holding a sign that said:

"WHERE'S MY TIP?"

# **THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK**

## **A Prophetic Foreshadow of the 7 Annual Festivals**

### **Dr. Daniel Botkin**

Both Jewish and Christian sources have suggested that the account of the first six days of creation in Genesis, followed by the seventh-day Sabbath, is a prophetic picture of 6,000 years of human history which will be followed by the Messianic Kingdom, an era which will be "all sabbath."

In addition to providing a pattern for seven millennia of human history, Genesis 1 also provides a pattern for the seven annual Feasts of Yahweh. These Feasts are listed in Leviticus 23. When we look at what God did on each of the seven days of the week in Genesis, we can see each day of the week as a prophetic foreshadow of its corresponding Festival in Leviticus 23. God's work of creation on the first day of the week is a prophetic picture of the first annual Feast; God's work of creation on the second day of the week is a prophetic picture of the second annual Feast, and so on to the end of the week and the end of the Festivals.

I do not know if other Jewish or Christian Bible teachers have noticed this parallel or not. I suspect that there have been others before me who have noticed this. However, I have not seen or heard it presented by anyone else, so I am presenting it here. Let's look at the seven days of the week and their corresponding seven annual Festivals.

#### **DAY #1: SEPARATION OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS** **FESTIVAL #1: PASSOVER**

In the beginning we see the earth in darkness, without form, and void. These phrases describe in a nutshell the condition of God's people when they were slaves in Egypt. It was a time of darkness for the Hebrews, and as a nation they were "without form, and void." They had no freedom, no national constitution, no homeland, no future as slaves. All of that was about to change, though, because God began to move on their behalf. We see this moving of God prefigured in Genesis when "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." God moved upon the face of the waters and separated light from darkness. In Egypt, God moved in great signs and wonders and separated His people, the children of Light, from the Egyptians, the children of Darkness. This is especially evident in the ninth plague, when "all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" while the Egyptians were suffering three days of "darkness which may be felt" (Ex. 10:21-23).

The first day of the week marked the separating of light from darkness; the first annual Festival, Passover, marked the separating of the redeemed from the unredeemed, the children of the Day from the children of the Night. This is a picture of Redemption through the blood of the Passover Lamb, and this is where our spiritual journey must begin. It is the first step. The Bible says, "And the evening and the morning were the first day." At Passover God said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be

the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12:2).

#### **DAY #2: SEPARATION OF WATERS BELOW AND WATERS ABOVE** **FESTIVAL #2: UNLEAVENED BREAD**

On the second day of creation, God made a firmament to divide earth's one single body of water into two separate bodies of water: "the waters under the firmament" and "the waters above the firmament." In the second Festival, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we see a similar separation take place. All the bread of God's people is separated into two categories: bread that is leavened and bread that is unleavened. The relationship between water and leaven can be seen in the Hebrew word for leaven, CHaMeTZ (ץמח). Leaven (CHaMeTZ, מץח) results from a combination of heat (CHaM, מח) and moisture (MiTZ, מץ).

The Messianic significance of Unleavened Bread is the breaking and the burial of Yeshua's body, which took place at the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Burial also speaks of separation, because burial separates the one body of humanity into two separate groups, the dead and the living -- the spirits "above the firmament" and the spirits "under the firmament"; the bodies "under the ground" and the bodies "above the ground."

#### **DAY #3: PLANT LIFE EMERGES FROM THE GROUND** **FESTIVAL #3: FIRSTFRUITS**

On the third day, God rolled back the waters under the heavens and revealed the soil. The earth then brought forth "grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself." The correlation between plant life on the third day and Firstfruits, the third Festival, is very obvious. Even the name, Firstfruits, points us back to the first appearance of fruit on the third day of creation.

The Messianic significance of the Feast of Firstfruits can

also be seen in Day #3. Firstfruits is the day when Yeshua rose from the dead ("Christ the firstfruits," who "rose again the third day," 1 Cor. 15:48, 23). Just as God rolled back the waters to enable plant life to emerge from the ground on the third day of creation, so He rolled back the powers of death to enable the Messiah to emerge alive from the ground on the third day. This is also hinted at in Yeshua's words at His final Passover when He said, "Take, eat: this is My body" after saying the traditional Hebrew blessing over the bread: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, *who brings forth bread from the earth.*"

Plant life came forth from the ground on the third day because of the life-giving power of the seed within it; the Messiah came forth alive from the ground on the third day because of the life-giving power of the seed within Him. He was the promised Seed of the woman, who was destined to crush the Serpent's head. (Gen. 3:15)

#### DAY #4: SUN, MOON, AND STARS

##### FESTIVAL #4: SHAVUOT ("WEEKS") OR PENTECOST

On the fourth day, God caused the sun, moon, and stars to shine in the firmament. There were a number of purposes for these luminaries. They were to give light; they were to rule over the day and the night; they were to divide light from darkness; they were to be for signs and for seasons. The fourth annual Festival, the Feast of Weeks, is called Pentecost in the New Testament. Christians know this Feast as the day when the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples to empower them. Jews know this Feast as the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

These two major historical events, both of which took place on Shavuot, the fourth Feast, are prefigured in the fourth day of creation. What the sun, moon, and stars do in the physical realm, the Torah and the Holy Spirit do in the spiritual realm. The Torah and the Holy Spirit give us spiritual light; they rule over our lives day and night; they divide spiritual light from spiritual darkness; they provide signs for all seasons as we travel the straight and narrow path that leads to life. "For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light" (Prov. 6:23). "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).

#### DAY #5: ANIMAL LIFE EMERGES FROM WATER

##### FESTIVAL #5: TRUMPETS (ROSH HASHANAH)

On the fifth day of creation, God caused the water-dwelling animals and the birds to come forth from the waters. Here is a picture of new life awakening and emerging from the waters, waters where no life existed. These events of the fifth day give us a beautiful picture of repentance and baptism, when new life emerges from the baptismal waters.

Anyone familiar with the fifth Feast, Rosh HaShanah, knows that the blowing of the trumpet on this day is meant to be a wake-up call to repentance. The shofar is blown to awaken God's people from their spiritual slumber so they will repent and have their names written in the Book of Life. By giving us a picture of new life emerging from the waters

on the fifth day, God points us to the fifth Feast, Trumpets.

#### DAY #6: LAND ANIMALS, DOMESTIC ANIMALS; MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, GIVEN DOMINION

##### FESTIVAL #6: THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

On the sixth day, God created land animals and domestic animals. On this same day, He created man in His own image and likeness, and gave him dominion over the earth.

It seems that a creature as special as man should have had a day devoted solely to his creation. It seems like man should not have had to share his "birth day" with animals. Why didn't God create the land animals and domestic animals on the fifth day, when He created all the other animals? Why did He wait til the sixth day, when man was created? Perhaps He did it because in His foreknowledge He knew that man would sin and mar the image of God, and that the sacrifice of a kosher domestic land animal would be required to atone for man's sin. Perhaps God created the sacrificial animals on the same day as He created man, on the sixth day, to point us to the sixth Festival, the Day of Atonement, the day when a kosher domestic land animal was sacrificed to atone for man's sin.

Although man forfeited his dominion over the earth and marred the image of God that he bore, both the dominion and the image of God are restored through atonement -- first by the sacrifice of a kosher domestic land animal, and ultimately by the sacrifice of God's Son as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

#### DAY#7: SABBATH

##### FESTIVAL #7: FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Sabbath is the seventh and final day of the week; Tabernacles is the seventh and final Festival of Yahweh. On the seventh day God rested. He quit working and enjoyed His finished creation. He blessed and sanctified this day, and later gave strong warnings to those who refused to observe it. Tabernacles is much like Sabbath. Arriving at the end of the fall harvest, it is a season when God's people take some time off work and enjoy the creation by spending time outside in booths covered with leafy branches. And just as God gave warnings about what would happen to those who refuse to keep Sabbath, so He gives warnings about what will happen to those who refuse to keep the Feast of Tabernacles: no rain. See Zechariah 14, where Tabernacles becomes especially prominent in the Messianic age, the age that will be "all sabbath."

☆

A Bible commentator once wrote that "the roots of all subsequent revelation are planted deep in Genesis." Over the years I have found this statement to be true. In Genesis the thoughtful reader can see skeleton outlines for future Biblical revelations and future Biblical events. God sets forth patterns by which He works, and later we see Him follow those same patterns. The parallels between the seven days of the week and the seven annual Feasts is just one example of this. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18). □

# LOVING ONE ANOTHER

Daniel Botkin

*Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Torah?" Yeshua answered him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Mt. 22:35-40)*

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (1 Jn. 4:7f)*

During the past decade or so, we have been witnessing a move of the Spirit among Bible-believing Christians who are re-examining the Torah. People are looking into things such as the Sabbath, the Feast Days, and the dietary laws. These inquisitive seekers are dissatisfied with the inadequate answers that church leaders have given them when they have asked about these subjects. As this Messianic movement continues to grow, a great number of disciples are discovering the joy of following Yeshua in a way that honors the Torah.

Those of us who are a part of this movement want to honor the Torah by worshipping on the days set aside by our Heavenly Father. We want to eat foods that are Biblically kosher. We want to dress modestly. We like to see women wearing dresses and head coverings, and men wearing beards and *tzitzit*. We want to live moral, upright lives of integrity that are not corrupted by the world. We want to be honest in our business dealings and pay our bills on time. We want to live and worship in a way that honors all the commandments of the Torah, because all the commandments come from our Heavenly Father.

While all the commandments are

important, we must remember that they are not all of equal importance. Some of the commandments are far more important than others. Yeshua spoke about "the weightier matters of the law" and He spoke about "the least of the commandments" (Mt. 23:23 & 5:19). In our relationships with one another, we must remember that the commandment to love one another outweighs all other commandments. Loving God is the greatest of those commandments that deal with our vertical man-to-God relationship; loving one another is the greatest of those commandments that deal with our horizontal man-to-man relationships.

Those of us in the Messianic movement may worship on the right days, eat kosher, dress modestly, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world, but if we fail to love one another, all of our Torah-keeping is meaningless. In fact, it is worse than meaningless. It is a clanging noise, an annoyance to the ears of God: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1). If the Apostle Paul were alive today, he might rewrite 1 Corinthians 13 this way for Messianic believers:

"Though I speak all the Hebrew blessings and prayers fluently, and understand all the words and phrases perfectly, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I can teach end-time prophecy, and understand all the mysteries of the Torah, and have perfect knowledge of precisely how and when and where the sabbaths and new moons and holy days should be celebrated, and how every little commandment should be observed, and though I have enough faith to afford to buy the best glatt kosher food for every meal, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I give *tsedakah* generously and though I would give my body to be burned rather than disobey the Torah, and have not love, it profiteth me

nothing."

Why is the commandment to love one another so important? "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn. 13:35). If we love one another, the world will know we are His disciples; if we don't love one another, it is proof that we are not truly His disciples. He did not say, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye keep the Sabbath and Feasts and eat kosher." As important as these things are, they are not the proof of our status as His disciples. The Sabbath, the Feasts, and the dietary laws must not be minimized, but the proof of discipleship is not found in these things. The proof of discipleship is found in our love for one another.

Years ago the pastor of a church in South America said, "Our church grew from 200 people who didn't love one another to 600 people who didn't love one another." This pastor was honest and humble enough to admit this. I want to see the Messianic movement grow and I want to see the size of my own congregation increase, but not without brotherly love.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:29ff).

Paul's instructions to the Ephesians implies that there will be times when believers in a congregation will have to forbear one another and forgive one another. It's easy to love people who agree with all of our theology and doctrines. Yet even in a small congregation of people who agree on something like keeping the 7th-day Sabbath

and the dietary laws, there are bound to be disagreements about exactly how the Sabbath and dietary laws should be kept. What activities are appropriate or inappropriate on the Sabbath? What constitutes excessive over-scrupulousness in keeping the dietary laws, and what constitutes carelessness? We can expect differences of opinion even among godly men, and that is why we are told to forbear one another and forgive one another.

"Judge not according to the appearance," Yeshua said, "but judge righteous judgment" (Jn. 7:24). In other words, do not judge things by the way they appear, because the way things appear is not always the way things are.

"He said \_\_\_\_ to me!" someone complains. "He said that because \_\_\_\_." Fill in the blanks with whatever you will. You have made an assumption about a brother's motive. You presume to know the reason that he said or did something. Instead of going to him to be reconciled, you listen to the voice of the accuser of the brethren. Instead of following Paul's instructions to put away all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, etc., you nurture these poisonous seeds that the Enemy has sown in your mind. The Holy Spirit is grieved and you end up spiritually and emotionally crippled when those seeds bear their fruit.

Don't make assumptions about why someone said or did something. Don't even make assumptions about why a person sins. I am not saying to condone the sin; I am saying to take into consideration the fact that there are reasons that a brother or sister is weak. Here are two facts of life:

1. In general, with some exceptions, children who are raised in good, stable homes with godly, moral parents usually become good, stable, moral, godly adults.

2. In general, with some exceptions, children who are raised in bad, unstable homes with ungodly, immoral parents usually become bad, unstable, immoral, ungodly adults.

These two facts do not excuse sinful behavior, but they do explain much of it. Therefore when you see a brother

who is weak, remember that there are reasons for his weakness. If he is making a sincere effort to walk with the Lord and to overcome his weakness, encourage him and pray for him instead of criticizing him.

If it's a sin that is overtaking him, remember Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Go to the weaker brother because you care about him, not just because you are annoyed. And remember Yeshua's instruction about the mote and the beam in the eye. Helping a brother to overcome a fault is like helping someone to get a foreign object out of the eye. The eye is very sensitive. You must not use a wire brush on a power drill to remove a speck of dirt from someone's eye, and you must not use harsh criticisms and accusations to help someone overcome a weakness. Above all, do not slander, backbite, and gossip about a weaker brother. In Romans 1, backbiting is listed as one of the marks of a reprobate mind. It brought the wrath and judgment of God upon Miriam and Aaron. (Num. 12)

Francis Frangipane, in his book *The Three Battlegrounds*, has a chapter called "Beware of the Stronghold of Cold Love." As a springboard for this chapter, he uses Matthew 24:12 ("Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold"). Frangipane writes about the dangers of letting our love for the brethren grow cold:

*Every time you refuse to forgive or to overlook a weakness in another, your heart not only hardens toward them, it hardens toward God. You cannot form a negative opinion of someone (even though they may deserve it!) and allow that opinion to crystalize into an attitude. For every time you do, an aspect of your heart will cool toward God. You may still think you are open to God, but the Scriptures are clear: "...the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 Jn. 4:20). You may not like what someone has done, but you*

*do not have an option to stop loving them. Love is your only option.*

*What do I mean by love? First, I do not merely mean "tough love." I mean gentle, affectionate, sensitive, open, persistent love. God will be tough when He needs to be, and we will be firm when He tells us to be, but beneath our firmness must be an underground river of love waiting to spring into action. By "love" I mean a compassion that is empowered by faith and prayer to see God's best come forth in the one I love. When I have love for someone, I have predetermined that I am going to stand with them, regardless of what they are going through...*

*Many people will stumble over little faults and human weaknesses. These minor things are quickly pumped up by the enemy into great big problems. Oh, how frail are the excuses people use to justify withdrawing from others! In reality, these problems, often with a church or pastor, are a smoke-screen which mask the person's lack of love.*

*We need to overcome our hang-ups about commitment, for no one will attain the fullness of God's purposes on earth without being committed to imperfect people along the way.*

*"Well, as soon as I find a church that believes as I do, I will be committed." This is a dangerous excuse, because as soon as you decide you do not want to forgive, or God begins to deal with the quality of your love, you will blame your withdrawing on some minor doctrinal difference. The Kingdom of God is not based on mere doctrines, it is founded upon relationships -- relationships with God and, because of God, with one another.*



The Apostle John wrote: "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 Jn. 3:14). If we cannot keep the Torah's great commandment to love one another, all of our other scrupulous, letter-perfect Torah keeping will not give us spiritual life. It will only sink our roots deeper into death and serve as a witness against us on the Day of Judgment when our lack of love is exposed for all the world to see. □



# Daniel Botkin

*facedness* was misspelled as "shamedfacedness." The singular *husbandman* in 2 Timothy 2:6 was incorrectly printed in the plural form, "husbandmen." In another verse *thereof* was incorrectly printed as "whereof," making the sentence meaningless in English.

I took about nine months to read through this Bible. Even though I had not written in it and still had the receipt and the original box in which it came, the bookstore refused to refund my money. "We can't give you a refund after nine months," the woman who ran the store told me. "You'll have to contact the publisher."

So this past June I wrote a letter to the publisher and listed all the errors I had seen. In July they sent me a large-print KJV to replace it. This one did not have any of the errors I had spotted, they said, except for one -- *adulteress* was misspelled as "adultress." I wasn't pleased with this Bible, though, because it was very thick and heavy. I sent both Bibles back to the publisher and asked if I could just get a refund. They graciously agreed, and sent me a check.

Now I had to start my search over for a new Bible. I did not want to be disappointed again, so this time I shopped more carefully. I went to a large Christian bookstore and asked questions and looked at their catalogs and the samples they had in stock. I got the phone numbers of Bible publishers and made a lot of phone calls and asked lots of questions.

"What's the difference between a morocco leather cover and a Berkshire leather cover?" I asked.

"Morocco leather covers are made of goatskin. Berkshire covers are made of pigskin." (Really!)

By late summer, I finally found a Bible I liked. It's a KJV with India paper and all-black text. It's a Cambridge Cameo Reference Bible, printed in England, so it retains the British spelling that I'm used to. It's also the exact same size as my old Bible, which is nice. And oh, yes, it has a calfskin leather cover. No Berkshire cover for me! Hopefully it will last me a long time. □

## Why the KJV?

No, I'm not one of those people who believe that all other translations are evil and inferior and should be shunned. My main Bible has always been a KJV, but I do use other translations for comparison when doing in-depth study. I have studied linguistics and foreign languages and the history of the English language enough to know that one single translation will never be sufficient to bring out all the nuances and shades of meaning that a foreign word or phrase can communicate. That's why it's good to compare translations.

I do dislike the way some modern versions translate certain verses, but I also dislike the way some verses are translated in the KJV. Acts 12:4, for example: "Easter." "Easter?!" The Greek word, *pascha*, is an obvious derivation of the Hebrew word for Passover, *pesach*. This Greek word *pascha* appears 29 times in the New Testament, and in every single place it is correctly translated as "Passover" -- except here in Acts 12:4 where it is rendered "Easter." It is also the Greek word used to translate *pesach*/passover in the Septuagint. How this obvious blunder escaped the notice of the KJV translators is a mystery to me. There are other verses besides this one in the KJV that are poorly translated, but Acts 12:4 is probably the most obvious one.

So why do I prefer the KJV? A personal reason, of course, is because it's what I'm familiar with. I have more serious reasons, though, for recommending the use of the KJV as a disciple's main Bible. Until recent years, the KJV was the one translation with which nearly all believers were familiar. Even if they had other translations, it was the KJV that was normally quoted in sermons and in conversations and in songs. Because the KJV was familiar to virtually all believers, it provided a common ground that helped unite believers. The use of alternative versions as *replacements* for the KJV (rather than as supplements) destroys this common ground and weakens the unity of believers. Unless we have pew Bibles, we can no longer all read a passage aloud together, because we all have different translations. We no longer speak the same language when discussing Scripture. Sometimes people ask me, "Where is the verse that says...?" If they quote from the KJV, I normally know what they are talking about. When they quote from a modern version, I have to guess. Sometimes I can figure it out, but sometimes I have absolutely no idea what verse they are referring to.

What about the errors in the KJV, the verses that are translated poorly? No translation is 100% perfect. Simply inform people and make them aware of the poorly translated verses. When I teach from the KJV, I often say, "A more accurate translation would be..." or "Some translations say..."

But what about the old-fashioned Elizabethan English with its "thee," "thou," "thy," and all those other archaic words that have either changed meaning or gone out of use? Actually, the use of the KJV dialect has its advantages. It sets the Biblical language apart from common speech, giving it a sense of respect, dignity, majesty, reverence, and authority. A.W. Tozer wrote: "Communion with God is one thing; familiarity with God is quite another thing. I don't even like (and this may hurt some of your feelings -- but they'll heal) to hear God called 'You.' 'You' is a colloquial expression. I can call a man 'you,' but I ought to call God 'Thou' and 'Thee.' Now I know these are old Elizabethan words, but I also know that there are some things too precious to cast lightly away, and I think that when we talk to God we ought to use the pure, respectful pronouns."

As for the archaic words that are unfamiliar to modern readers, this has become a problem only because the KJV has been discarded by so many in favor of modern versions. If a disciple reads the KJV on a regular basis, the unfamiliar words will soon become familiar. If enough disciples return to the KJV, these archaic words will soon be restored to the vocabulary of believers. If you are intimidated by the unfamiliarity of archaic words, see the ad on page 17 for a helpful booklet, available from Giving & Sharing.

# EFFECTS OF HISTORIC, RELIGIOUS, & LINGUISTIC CHANGES ON ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION

Dr. Daniel Botkin

The story of the relationship between the English-speaking Anglo-Saxons and the Bible started a long time ago. According to Aelfric's "Homily on St. Gregory the Great," Pope Gregory, upon seeing some Anglo-Saxon boys for sale in the slave market, inquired about the name of the people from whom they came. After being told they were called "Angles," Gregory replied, "Rightly are they called Angles because they have the beauty of angels, and it is fitting that such as they should be the angels' companions in heaven."<sup>1</sup> As a result of this encounter, the pope sent missionaries to convert the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity.

The first missionaries arrived in England in 597 and rapidly converted much of the populace. The arrival of Christianity was accompanied by the arrival of the Scriptures upon which the new faith was based. Noted English linguistic historian Barbara Strang writes that "linguistically the effects of this can hardly be overestimated."<sup>2</sup> The churches "laid the foundation of book-based education" and were responsible for seeing to it that English was "committed to writing after the Roman fashion."<sup>3</sup> Prior to this, the only writing known to speakers of English was the runic alphabet. (See top of page.)

Originally written in Hebrew and Greek, the Scriptures had been translated into Latin by Jerome near the end of the 4th Century. It was this version, the Latin Vulgate, which first arrived in England and became the basis for all English translations and paraphrases until Tyndale's 1525 translation.

Although John Wycliffe is recognized as the first to complete a translation of the whole of the Scriptures into English, there were several precursors who prepared the way for Wycliffe's work. One of the earliest known attempts to put the Scriptures into the Anglo-Saxon tongue can be seen in



*Hymn to the Creator*, a poem which Bede ascribes to Caedmon, a 7th Century monk.<sup>4</sup> This work and another work ascribed to Caedmon are certainly not direct translations, or even paraphrases, of any particular portion of Scripture -- they are little more than poetic narrations of Biblical themes and subjects. Nonetheless, they do mark a beginning for the expression of the Scriptures in the English language.

The following centuries saw several paraphrases and translations of Scripture portions into the vernacular: Bede's *Gospel of John* and Aldhelm and Guthlac's *Psalms* (8th Century); Aldred's *Four Gospels* and King Alfred's *Ten Commandments* (9th Century); Aelfric's *Genesis* through *Judges* (10th Century); and several other works, including later ones by Orm, Hampole, and others. The extent of the circulation of these works is uncertain, but their very existence indicates a desire to have the Bible in the English language.

Of course, the earliest works differ markedly from those of the late Old English/early Middle English period, as illustrated by some lines from Caedmon's *Hymn to the Creator*.

Nu scýlon herzan  
metudaes maecti  
uerc uulder-fader  
ēci dryctin

[Now (we) must praise  
(the) Maker's powers  
(the) works of glory-father  
eternal Lord]

To a speaker of contemporary English, the above lines appear to be written in a foreign language. Even with the accompanying gloss, it is sometimes difficult to tell which Old English word goes with which modern English gloss. That's how much English has changed since the 7th Century. A reader should have far less difficulty making sense of this metrical paraphrase of Psalm 100:1f ("Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing"), made around 1200:

Mirthes to god al erthe that es  
Serves to loud in faines.  
In go yhe ai in his siht  
In gladness that is so briht.

Contemporary readers should be able to understand most of the above, in spite of some differences in orthography and syntax. Likewise, an early 14th Century gloss of John the Baptist's response to the Pharisees' question should give little difficulty to the reader: "And hii said to him, what ertow, that we may zif answer to hem that sent us, what sais tow of the seluen? I am a uoice of the criand in desert that dresceth our lordes wai as Isaie saith."

John Wycliffe, like John the Baptist, was "a uoice of the criand in desert." Disturbed by the evil he saw in the Church, he boldly spoke out against it, citing Scriptures to expose hypocrisy and corruption. By 1380 Wycliffe had translated the New Testament into English; two years later he finished translating the Old Testament. Copies of Wycliffe's Bibles were rare and costly in a day when books had to be produced one at a time by copyists. Yet there was a great demand for them. Wycliffe's disciples, known as Lollards, distributed the Bibles throughout the land.

The Bible in the vernacular of the people became a greater threat to

corrupt church leaders than Wycliffe's preaching had ever been. The Bible now functioned as "the testimony of God Himself against all and every form of false doctrine, or of corrupt practice."<sup>5</sup> As a result, Wycliffe's translation was banned by the ecclesiastical authorities in 1408, twenty-four years after Wycliffe's death. But by this time "Lollardie" had found its way into every class of people in England. In 1428, in a final attempt to defy Wycliffe's work, church leaders dug up his bones, burned them, and threw the ashes into a stream. One writer has added an ironic footnote to this scene: "Just as his ashes were carried downstream and into the sea to disperse at last to all the world, so his great work of translating the Bible into English, though beginning small, has spread into all the world like a mighty tide."<sup>6</sup> The fact that the largest organization of Bible translators today is known as *Wycliffe Associates* makes this observation even more striking.

Here is a sample of Wycliffe's 1380 translation, which can be compared with the slightly older gloss of the same text given earlier: "therefore thei seiden to hym, who art thou; that we zeue an answeze to these that senten us, what seist thou of thi self: he seide, I am a vois of a crier in desert: dress ze the weie of the lord, as Isaie the profete seide."

Perhaps the difference most immediately noticeable is in the pronouns. The older forms *hii*, *what*, *tow*, *hem*, and *the* are replaced with the somewhat later *thei*, *who*, *thou*, *these*, and *thi*. It is interesting that Wycliffe uses the *-en* verb suffix in *seiden* and *senten*, while the older sample uses our contemporary forms, *said* and *sent*. This may be explained by the fact that the older gloss is in the Northern dialect.

The next major translation after Wycliffe came about in 1525 as a result of William Tyndale's desire to translate the Bible directly from the Hebrew and Greek rather than from the Latin Vulgate, which Wycliffe and others had used. Like Wycliffe, Tyndale had disputes with the clergy

of his day. While arguing with one theologian, he uttered his famous remark, "If God spare my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do."<sup>7</sup> It was soon thereafter that Tyndale set out to execute his task. This was a time of fierce persecution for those caught possessing or translating the Scriptures into English. In 1519, seven persons, one of them a widow, were burned at the stake by church authorities for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English.<sup>8</sup>

Tyndale's work was greatly aided by the invention of the printing press. A total of twelve editions of his Bible were printed, indicating an increasing demand, in spite of the severe penalties for possessing this "pestiferous and most pernicious poison," as one church leader called it. Many copies were confiscated and burned, and the masses were instructed to "detest them, abhorre them, kepe them not in yowr handys, delyuer them to the superyours suche as call for them." King Henry VIII said that an English translation of the Bible would be provided for the people "when they should deserve it." Tyndale was finally caught and executed by strangling and his body was burned. His dying prayer was "Lord, ope the King of England's eyes!"

Tyndale's style has been described as sometimes robust and homely. He has the serpent telling Eve, "Tush, ye shall not die." We are told that "the Lorde was with Ioseph, and he was a luckie felowe." Much of Tyndale's Bible is nearly identical to the later 1611 KJV (King James Version): "Then sayd they vnto him: what arte thou that we maye geve an answer to them that sent vs: what sayest thou of thy selfe? he sayde: I am the voyce of a cryar in the wylderness, make strayght the waye of the Lorde, as sayde the Prophete Esaias."

Aside from spelling differences and the use of *what* instead of *who* and a *cryar* instead of *one crying*, the passage is identical to the KJV. When compared to the earlier Wycliffe

rendering, several differences are evident in orthography, morphology, and syntax.

After Tyndale's death in 1536, several other translations and revisions appeared before the arrival of the 1611 KJV. A year before Tyndale's death, Miles Coverdale had printed a version based on English, German, and Latin translations. This was followed two years later by the Matthew Bible, based on Tyndale's version. In 1539 the Matthew Bible was revised with the backing of Thomas Cranmer to become The Great Bible. In 1553 "bloody Mary" Tudor came to the throne. A storm of fierce persecution broke out under the reign of this Jezebel. A total of 277 men and women were burned at the stake in a four-year period; however, there was no effort made on her part to destroy the Scriptures. Many fled to Geneva, where scholars among the exiles produced the Geneva Bible in 1557. The desire to produce this version was based on an increased knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and the resultant opportunity for greater accuracy. The Geneva Bible was unique in two ways. It was the first to divide the text into numbered verses and it was the first to be translated by a group of scholars rather than by an individual. This version was the most popular of all translations until the appearance of the KJV in 1611. Even then, the KJV surpassed it in popularity only gradually, as evidenced by six additional editions of the Geneva Bible after 1611. The Geneva Bible was also known as the "Breeches Bible," for its rendering of Genesis 3:7: "They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves breeches."

Two other translations were made between the Geneva Bible and the KJV. One, the Bishop's Bible, never became popular, despite its position as the version authorized for use in the church. The Rheims-Douai Bible (New Testament, 1582; Old Testament, 1609-10) was a Roman Catholic translation based on the Latin Vulgate. Published in an attempt to re-convert England to Catholicism, the translation is "stilted and wooden" and suffers

from "a slavish dependence on the Latin text."<sup>9</sup> For example, the daily bread requested in the Lord's Prayer is rendered "supersubstantial bread."

A year after King James came to the throne in 1603, John Reynolds, a Puritan representative at the Hampton Court Conference, "moved his Majestie, that there might bee a newe translation of the Bible." Fifty-four scholars were appointed for the task. The work was accomplished by first forming six groups of seven to ten individuals. Each group worked together on a particular passage. First, every individual in the group translated the passage, then the group came together to compare and revise. The results were then passed on to the other five groups to be examined. Finally, those results went to another committee for final approval. Thus every portion was examined several times. The translators sought to retain the true meaning of the original as accurately and objectively as possible, avoiding the extremes of "Popery and Puritanism." The work was published in 1611 and was known as the King James Version or the Authorized Version.

The KJV is almost identical to Tyndale's version; likewise, all the translations between Tyndale and the KJV differ very little. Some scholars estimate that at least 90% of Tyndale's work has been incorporated in other versions. The passage about John the Baptist (used to compare earlier versions) can be used as an example for other translations. The Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Rheims all render this passage as does the KJV, with a few minor spelling differences. The period between Tyndale and King James was less than 100 years, and the many translations and revisions of that era seem to be the result of theological concerns more than of linguistic changes. According to Barbara Strang, by 1611 Tyndale's style was "not archaic, but decidedly old-fashioned in flavor."<sup>10</sup> The fact that the translators of the KJV (and other versions prior to that) chose to retain a style which was steadily becoming old-

fashioned is further evidence that the concerns of the revisors and translators were more theological than linguistic.

The reader will notice the use of "our Lord" in the Rheims where "the Lord" appears in other versions. This difference, though minor, is a result of theological differences: in the preface of the Rheims, the Roman Catholic translators' preference for "our Lord" is explained to be the result of the use of "the Lord" by "heretics" (meaning the Protestant Reformers).

Once the KJV was firmly established as *the* Bible for the English-speaking world, the work of translation slowed down. A few new translations and revisions appeared from time to time in the following two centuries, but none of them threatened the popularity or acceptance of the KJV. When some of these versions are investigated, it is easy to see why they did not replace the KJV. In a 1768 translation by Edward Harwood, we hear Peter, on the Mount of Transfiguration, saying, "Why Sir, what a delectable residence we might establish here!" (KJV, "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles.") A later translation by Rudolphus Dickinson (1833) changes the KJV's "the babe leaped in her womb" to "the embryo was joyfully agitated."

The first post-KJV translation to attract considerable attention was the English Revised Version (RV), published 1881-1885. The revisors seem to have had scholarly concerns rather than stylistic concerns. The goal was to produce a word-for-word translation, while retaining the word order of the original as much as possible, and using the same English word for the same Hebrew or Greek word in every place. Although many scholars appreciated the RV, it failed to replace the KJV among the common people. The RV acted as a stimulus for the production of a similar but stylistically superior revision in 1901, the American Standard Version (ASV), which was revised in 1946-1952 to become the Revised Standard Version (RSV). Since the publication of the ASV in

1901, there have been scores of new translations and revisions, some of them obscure, sectarian versions limited to the followers of the particular religious organization responsible for their publication.

The many modern translations vary in purpose. A few follow in the tradition of the RV and take a literal, word-for-word approach to retain the literal accuracy of the text. At the opposite extreme are versions which are paraphrases rather than translations (the Living Bible, e.g.). Writer Stuart Babbage, citing another source (Ronald Knox, *On Englishing the Bible*), makes a distinction between what is called a *literal* method and a *literary* method of translation: "the one [the literal] seeks a mere photographic reproduction of the original; the other [the literary], modernity of diction."<sup>11</sup> Most modern versions fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Modern translations are not without controversy. No one to my knowledge has yet been martyred in modern times for translating the Scriptures into English, but harsh words have been spoken. A well-known controversy was the RSV's use of "young woman" instead of "virgin" in Isaiah's prophecy of Christ's conception. Such renderings have led KJV purists to alter the titles of some translations. I remember seeing one writer years ago refer to the Revised Standard Version as "the Revised Standard Perversion." I once heard a Baptist preacher call the Good News For Modern Man a "good noose" for modern man. Modern translations have steadily gained acceptance. The one single version that seems to be a threat to the KJV's position as the most preferred is the NIV (New International Version). My daughter Betsy has been reading a Christian novel about a girl who lived before the time of the American Civil War. The novelist has the girl quoting Scriptures from the NIV (a century before the NIV existed -- maybe the little girl was a prophetess).

There are many people who prefer the KJV because of its familiarity and its unmatched excellence as a literary masterpiece. These people (and I am

one of them) are not KJV purists in the sense of regarding all other versions as evil. People who refuse to believe that there are some errors in the KJV are in a state of denial. If life-changing decisions are going to be based on Scripture, a reader should be cautious of possible errors in any translation, whether linguistic errors of translation or misunderstandings that arise from changes in lexical meaning since the time the translation was made.

Lexical change is perhaps the greatest reason for modern translations. Nearly all modern translations dispense with the archaic pronouns *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, and *thine*, as well as the *-(e)th* verb suffix. Many words used in the KJV, though understandable, are out of date: *asunder*, *beget*, *countenance*, *dropsy*, *emerods*, etc. Other KJV words are not only archaic; they are meaningless to people unacquainted with the Bible or other ancient literature: *anon*, *fain*, *traw*, *wot*, etc. Paul's statement in Romans 7:15 is hardly intelligible to a modern reader: "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." There are also several words used in the KJV which have changed meaning: *let* no longer means "hinder"; *prevent* no longer means "precede"; *communicate* no longer means "share"; *charity* no longer means "love." Several others could be added to the list.

Semantic changes in the lexicon have resulted in some departure from the KJV. There were a few words used in 1611 which seem crude or obscene to many people today: *bastard*, *damned*, *dung*, *hell*, *piss*, and *whore*. If the appearance of these words in this publication offends readers, I apologize. Please keep in mind, though, that these words appear in the Bible. My discussion of the use of these words is not for the purpose of "coarse jesting." It is to show that linguistic changes can either cause an appropriate word to become inappropriate (*bastard*, e.g.) or an inappropriate word to become appropriate (as later examples will show).

Of six modern versions consulted, all use "illegitimate son" (or some

similar expression) where the KJV uses "bastard."<sup>12</sup> "Damned" changes to "condemned" in all six versions. "Whore" becomes "harlot" or "prostitute."

Perhaps the coarsest statement in the KJV is the record of Rab-Shakeh's threats to the Jews, when he says, "that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss" (2 Ki. 18:27). As the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* points out, the word *piss* is "not now in polite form." Apparently *piss* (which is "probably onomatopoeic," according to the *OED*) has not always been as offensive as it is now. Wycliffe used "vryne" in his 1382 translation, but his 1388 edition reads "ete her toordis, and drynke her pisse." Coverdale's 1535 version renders it "eate their owne donge and drynke their own stale." Closely related to this is a Hebrew idiom that is used to refer to all the males of a particular group or location. The KJV renders it quite literally as "every one that pisseth against the wall." The meaning is obvious. It is still common in the Middle East to see men using certain parts of a city wall for a public urinal. This phrase appears five times in the KJV, and three of those five times it is God Himself who uses this idiom as He speaks through His prophets. Even though God has used this idiom to communicate His message, the idiom has never caught on among Bible-lovers.

*Hell* is of special interest. Strang points out that the English word derives from a pre-Christian root which was "used for the world of the departed" and "did not imply a place of punishment for the departed."<sup>13</sup> Many modern translations of the Bible retain *hell*, but some substitute *Sheol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna*. These are transliterations of the Hebrew and Greek terms, which may or may not imply a place of punishment, depending on the context in which they appear.

Most modern translations render potentially crude passages into language that is less offensive to today's readers. Sometimes, though, a more explicit and accurate rendering

results in a translation that can be more offensive to some readers than the KJV. This is especially true in the Living Bible. Instead of the euphemistic "Adam knew Eve" (a literal translation from the Hebrew), the Living Bible quite frankly states that "Adam had sexual intercourse with Eve." Passages such as "he lay with her, and defiled her" (KJV) become "he took her and raped her" (Gen. 34:2). The KJV's "cut off the foreskin of her son" becomes a more explicit rendering, "cut off the foreskin of her young son's penis" (Ex. 4:25). The KJV's euphemism "sick of her flowers" is abandoned in favor of "a woman's menstrual period" (Lev. 15:33). The Living Bible's margin tells us that Isaiah's statement "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" literally means "filthy as a menstruating woman's rags." King Saul, instead of calling Jonathan "thou son of the perverse, rebellious woman" calls him in the Living Bible "you son of a bitch!" (1 Sam. 20:30).

The differences mentioned above may be good or bad, depending on the reader's outlook. Another weakness in translations such as the Living Bible is the loss of majesty and grandeur which is found in the KJV. The Living Bible's rendering of Isaiah 55 sounds like a TV commercial: "Say there! Is anyone thirsty? ... Why pay for groceries that don't do you any good?" This pales beside the KJV's "Ho, every one that thirsteth ... Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"

In the controversy over which is "the best" translation, it is wise to remember that the translation of the Word of God goes beyond its rendering on the printed page. The incarnation is described by John as an event in which "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." A true disciple who allows the Word to "become flesh" in his life by cultivating a Christ-like character is also a translation of the Word of God. Surely this is what Paul had in mind when he wrote, "Ye are our epistle ... known and read of all men ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." □

(Notes on back page)



# CHISLEV, CHANUKKAH, & CHRISTMAS

Daniel Botkin

*The purpose of this article is not to condemn people who celebrate Christmas. The article is written to encourage those disciples who have already made the decision to abandon Christmas. -DB*

Chislev, which the Bible calls "the ninth month," corresponds to December. Chanukkah and Christmas, two contrasting holidays, both occur at this season. On the Jewish/Biblical calendar, Chanukkah begins on the 25th of Chislev; Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December on the Roman/pagan calendar.

The Bible records seven different events which occurred during the ninth month, Chislev. Five of these events are recorded in the Tenach (Old Testament), one in the apocryphal Book of Maccabees, and one in the New Testament. As we look at these seven events that occurred during Chislev, we can see a common thread running through them all. This common thread relates to the struggle that many of God's people go through during this season of the year. The struggle to which I refer is not the stress of celebrating Christmas. Rather, I am referring to the stress brought about by well-meaning friends and family members who criticize those disciples who do not want to celebrate the pagan-rooted Christmas holiday. This study of Biblical events that occurred during Chislev will show us that even before the existence of the modern Christmas holiday, this has always been the season of the year when the Enemy puts a great deal of pressure on God's faithful remnant to compromise their faith and conform to the world. Let us look at these seven events in chronological order.

## I. THE BURNING OF JEREMIAH'S SCROLL (Jer. 36; c. 606 BC)

During the reign of King Jehoiakim, God told Jeremiah to write words of

warning on a scroll. "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin," God said.

Jeremiah was imprisoned at the time, and sent his scribe, Baruch, to publicly read the scroll. After Baruch read the scroll in the Temple, the king was told about it. The king asked Jehudi to fetch the scroll and read it to him. "Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month [Chislev], and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him," the Bible says. "And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth."

Anyone familiar with the writings of Jeremiah knows that the heart of Jeremiah's warnings dealt with the upcoming Babylonian Captivity of God's people. Furthermore, anyone familiar with what Babylon represents knows that the modern Christmas celebration is the epitome of Babylonian celebrations. Those of us who express disapproval of the Christmas celebration -- merely by our non-involvement, if not verbally -- will probably not see people literally burn the Scriptures in defiance of God's warnings to His people. Nonetheless, the reaction of some people to the truth about Christmas amounts to the same thing. Every December the Enemy tries to make those who shun Christmas feel like they are being foolish fuddy-duddies for not joining in the Babylonian celebration. Jeremiah's warnings against the dangers of Babylon fell on deaf ears that Chislev long ago, and the warnings against the dangers of Babylon still usually fall on deaf ears during the Christmas season, the time when the warnings are most needed.

## II. HAGGAI'S MESSAGE TO THE REMNANT (Hag. 2:10ff; c. 520 BC)

After the Jews went into Babylonian Captivity for seventy years, a remnant returned to rebuild the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. This work of restoration was opposed by the enemies of the Jews. As the enemies' opposition intensified, God's people were intimidated and backed off and compromised by neglecting the work of restoration. Yahweh raised up prophets like Haggai to encourage the remnant to get back to work and complete the unfinished job.

One of Haggai's messages came on the 24th day of Chislev. This message concerned the importance of holiness and the promise that God will prevail over the kingdoms of the heathen. Apparently God's intimidated remnant needed this kind of encouragement at this season of the year. God's remnant today also needs to be reminded of the importance of holiness and the certainty of God's victory over the heathen -- especially during this season when the mingling of the heathen with the holy reaches its climax in the Christmas holiday, a holiday that can be celebrated by drunkenness and lewd behavior at Christmas parties, and later by reverent adoration of the Madonna and Child at Mass.

## III. ZECHARIAH'S MESSAGE TO THE REMNANT (ZECH. 7; c. 518 BC)

Zechariah, a contemporary of Haggai, was another prophet who spoke to the remnant in Jerusalem. Like Haggai, Zechariah received a word for God's people during the month of Chislev. This message was in response to a question that some of the people had asked Zechariah. These people wanted to know whether or not they should continue to observe certain man-made, extra-Biblical religious traditions.

This is a good question for God's people to ask themselves today at this

season of the year. In Zechariah's time, the question was about certain man-made *fast* days. In our case, the question should be about a certain man-made *feast* day that falls in Chislev/December. Zechariah replied by pointing the people to the former prophets and to the Torah. That is where we, too, can find the answers to our questions about the December holiday. Unfortunately, most Christians do not look in the Torah and Prophets to find the answers.

#### IV. THE DECISION TO SEPARATE FROM PAGAN WIVES (Ezra 9 & 10; c. 457 BC)

During the time of Ezra, many of the Jews who had left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem began to intermarry with pagans. Ezra and everyone else, who trembled at the words of God assembled together and did some serious prayer and repentance. Everyone was called to come together so the leaders could address this serious problem. On the 20th of Chislev the people assembled in Jerusalem, and they agreed that all those who had intermarried would separate themselves from their pagan wives.

It was Chislev when God's people became aware of the seriousness of the error they had made by joining themselves to pagan wives. It is at this same time of the year when many of God's people today become aware of the error of the Christmas celebration. As they begin to see the holiday from God's perspective, they realize that they must separate themselves from pagan ways, just as the Jews had to separate themselves from their pagan wives. For some Christians, it is not an easy thing to separate themselves from the pagan-rooted Christmas holiday. It was not an easy thing for the Jews to separate themselves from their pagan wives, either, but it had to be done if they wanted God's blessing.

#### V. THE AFFLICTION AND REPROACH OF THE REMNANT (Neh. 1; c. 446 BC) Nehemiah worked in the king's

palace in Persia. One day during the month of Chislev, some Jews came there from the land of Judah, and Nehemiah asked about the welfare of the Jews who were working to rebuild and restore Jerusalem.

"The remnant that are left of the captivity there are in great affliction and reproach," they answered. "The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire."

Chislev is still a time of the year when God's remnant -- those who have left Babylon -- often suffer "great affliction and reproach." Because of their refusal to participate in the Christmas festivities, God's remnant people are viewed by friends and family members with reproach. They are viewed as anything from an Ebenezer Scrooge to a legalistic, self-righteous spoil-sport. No one wants to be viewed this way, so the temptation to compromise our convictions is especially strong during Chislev/December.

In Nehemiah's time, the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and the gates were consumed with fire, making it easier for the enemies to get into Jerusalem. During Chislev/December, we must be careful to not let the Enemy break down the walls of our convictions and destroy the gates that are there to shut him out of our lives. We must not let the affliction and reproach we bear for shunning Christmas weaken us and cause us to cave in.

#### VI. THE DEFILEMENT AND PURIFICATION OF THE TEMPLE (1 & 2 Macc.; c. 164-167 BC)

The apocryphal books of 1 & 2 Maccabees tell the Chanukkah story. Antiochus Epiphanes had invaded the land of Judah and tried to force the Jews to compromise and assimilate. Sabbath observance and circumcision were outlawed; Torah scrolls were burned; idol worship and the eating of swine's flesh were commanded. Jews who refused to cooperate were cruelly tortured and killed.

Antiochus erected "the appalling abomination [an idol of Zeus] on top of

the altar of burnt offering." This was done on the 15th of Chislev, and then on the 25th of Chislev a sacrifice was offered to officially inaugurate the altar. (1 Macc. 1:54-59) The 25th of Chislev was the birthday of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is a prefigure of the anti-Christ. Perhaps here more than anywhere else we see the Enemy's determination to force God's people to participate in pagan celebrations -- once again, during Chislev/December on the 25th day of the month.

The Maccabees succeeded in defeating the enemy, then cleansed and re-dedicated the Temple on the 25th of Chislev: "This day of the purification of the Temple fell on the very day on which the Temple had been profaned by the foreigners, the 25th of the same month, Chislev" (2 Macc. 10:5).

Chanukkah is all about God's people getting the victory over the pagans' pressure to conform to the world. It is ironic that most Christians celebrate Christmas, a holiday saturated with paganism, during the very season that commemorates the victory of God's people over the paganism that had saturated Jerusalem.

#### VII. YESHUA'S CELEBRATION OF CHANUKKAH (John 10:22; c. AD 32)

"And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication [Chanukkah], and it was winter. And Yeshua walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch."

Yeshua was at the Temple during the Chanukkah celebration. In the verses just prior to this, He had presented Himself as the Good Shepherd who was going to lay down His life for the sheep. Yeshua's words caused a division among the people: "There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, 'He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?' Others said, 'These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?'" (v. 19-21)

During the month of Chislev/December, God's people were divided over the question of Yeshua's identity and the source of His authority and power. Today God's people are

divided during this season over the question of whether or not to celebrate Jesus' birth on December 25th. They are also divided over the source of the Christmas holiday — not over the question of whether or not it was adopted from paganism (all informed people will admit this) — but over the question of whether or not the pagan origins of Christmas matter.

Just as the Jews had to face the question of Yeshua's authority and power, so we have to face the question of the authority and power of church leaders: Did church leaders have the authority and power to Christianize an idolatrous pagan holiday, and to modify and adapt religious rituals which were used to worship idols? On the basis of Deuteronomy 12:30-32 (and other passages), some of us say no, and we refuse to celebrate Christmas.

During Yeshua's encounter with the Jews that Chanukkah, He was accused of blasphemy, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (v. 33). In an ironic reversal of this scene, some Christians consider us irreverent if we refuse to acknowledge that God became a man on December 25th. It is not enough for these modern-day Pharisees that we acknowledge the incarnation and deity of Yeshua throughout the year. If we do not acknowledge it in a special way (i.e., a pagan way) on December 25th, we are regarded by some as one that "hath a devil, and is mad," or as one who is guilty of "blasphemy."

The seven events above show us that Chislev/December is a time to expect the Enemy to use peer pressure to get us to compromise. It is a time to expect people to be divided over issues of faith. If we want to maintain our faith and integrity, we must follow the example of those who took a stand against the mixture of the heathen with the holy. □

# Have you ever noticed how Santa Claus is a mockery of Messiah?

TEXT WRITTEN BY JOHN SHIRN \* ARTWORK BY DANIEL BOTKIN

