

Finding the Truth

The Path to Abundant Life

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Which Bible is Right?

Truth about the Scriptures

Visit any bookstore or search online for a good Bible and your eyes will be flooded with various translations and versions. There's the NIV, the Student Bible, the New Living Translation, the NASB, the Life Application Bible, study Bibles, and of course the King James Version. Each Christian Pastor or denomination seems to have a specific version that is favored above others. Joyce Meyer uses the Amplified Bible and the Southern Baptist Convention has recently printed its own Holman Christian Standard Version. There are even those that proclaim the authority of the 1611 KJV as if God Himself speaks Old English. With so many translations and revisions, it is hard to know for sure, if the Bible you are reading is totally accurate. Do the translations we use give us the best understanding of the holy words found in Genesis to Revelation?

To answer this question, let's first consider the difficulty in communicating with someone who speaks a foreign language. Imagine ordering food at a drive thru window and realizing that the person on the other end of the loud speaker doesn't understand English. You order a hamburger, but you get a fish sandwich. Much is lost in a translation! The same is true for the words of the Bible. To best understand the messages of the Scriptures, one should study and learn the language, customs and culture of which the Bible was written. This, of course, is Hebrew.

The entire Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew tongue. We also know that the Savior Himself spoke Hebrew. In Luke 2, He is found at the Temple, teaching the teachers. There is no doubt that He spoke Hebrew to these people. In Luke 4:16, the Gospel records that He stood and read from the scroll, which is always written in Hebrew. The Savior even spoke Hebrew when He

appeared to the Apostle Paul. "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Acts 26:14.

The disciples and even, the Apostle Paul spoke and wrote their letters in Hebrew, as well. Today, some of the oldest existing copies of New Testament texts are Greek. But, that doesn't mean these were originally written in Greek. Most scholars would agree that each author of New Testament originally wrote their books in Hebrew texts, from a Hebrew mindset. Thus, these documents must be studied that way.

The Bible was written by approximately 40 people over the course of 1500 years. Despite this huge time frame, the Bible does not contradict itself nor does it contain any errors. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that the Bible was "breathed" by the Almighty. Each person used their own writing style, but they recorded exactly what the Creator intended. The Scriptures were copied by hand through an amazing system of scribes who developed an intricate method to ensure that no errors were made.

Most English Bibles are based upon a Greek translation of the Hebrew text. This Greek document is called the Septuagint or LXX. Other English Bibles rely upon the Latin Vulgate which is also a translation from the Hebrew. Error occurs when man translates the Scriptures from one language to another. The Bibles we have today have mostly been translated from Hebrew to Greek and THEN, to English! Consider trying to get driving directions from a person who speaks Hebrew. That Hebrew speaker gives the directions to a person who speaks Greek. You then are literally lost, as you try to figure out what that Hebrew speaker spoke to the Greek!

The translations sold online or at Wal-mart are works of man that each contains errors and problems. The more times a text is simplified for the masses, the more that text loses its original

meaning. Such is the case with numerous new translations or paraphrases that are promoted as “easy to read.” The Bible was never meant to be “easy to read.” Instead, it was meant to be studied, learned, and applied to life.

So, how does a person come to the most accurate understanding of the Bible? The answer to this question is found in 1 Timothy 3:15. This verse says to, “Study to shew thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” This verse is the basis for every true believer who seeks to walk in the truth of the Scriptures. In the next verse, Paul wrote that “All Scripture is inspired and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” Take note that when these verses were originally penned by Paul there was no New Testament. The Apostle was confirming that the Old Testament was to be considered the instruction book for life and faith. Paul was speaking specifically that a person must have a strong foundation in the Old Testament Scriptures. Understandably, this foundation should center on the Hebrew language.

Hebrew is a powerful language that has deep meanings for each and every letter. A good concordance and Hebrew dictionary helps the student discover the original words used in the text, without having to be fluent in Hebrew. Keep in mind that there are certain linguistic nuances that don’t translate well into English. So, don’t depend on the translators for accuracy. The only way to ensure that your Biblical understanding is correct is to go the source of the original document which is in the Hebrew language and culture. For example, consider the Savior’s comments about an evil eye. “The light of the body is the eye; If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness,” Matthew 6:22-23a, KJV.

The people who heard the Messiah speak these very words immediately recognized what He meant when he talked of the evil

eye. This idea was, and is, common in the Hebraic culture. Yet, just pick up any different Bible translation and in it will be a quagmire of different words used to express this hidden Hebrew idiom. Each translation seems to deal with the issue differently. A few examples include, eye be whole, eye be simple, eye be sound, eye be plain, eye be healthy, sincere, clear, honest, or eye be good. This is very confusing! What did the Messiah really mean? Hebraically and Biblically, what is an evil eye?

First, consider the context. The very next verse after the evil eye quotation, explains exactly why the evil eye squints. "But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both god and Money," Matthew 6:23, 24 NIV. When the Messiah spoke of the bad eye, He wasn't talking about bad eyesight or the need for lasik surgery! From the context it is easy to grasp that He was using a Hebrew expression to comment on people's greed. Each time Messiah spoke of the eye being good or evil, or "plucking out the eye," he was speaking of the issue of greed. An evil eye is a greedy eye. A person with an evil eye is controlled by the desire to receive for self.

The Bible explains this issue further. "He that has a good eye shall be blessed; for he gives of his bread to the poor," Proverbs 22:9. Again, if your eye is good, then you are not greedy. The opposite is also true. If your eye is evil then you shall not be blessed because you withhold from the poor. Traditional Judaism agrees with this. "A good eye and a humble spirit and a lowly soul, those who have these are disciples of Abraham our father," Mishnah Aboth 5:19.

From a Hebraic viewpoint it is now easy to grasp the difficult words of the book of Matthew. "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck

it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire," Matthew 18:9. The Savior was not literally suggesting his followers mutilate themselves. Such a literal teaching would be a direct contradiction and violation to the Scriptures. "Do not cut yourselves," says Deuteronomy 14:1. The verse in Matthew was suggesting that we run away from greed and idolatry. We should take precautions to guard and protect ourselves from the evil eye of want, to get rid of the evil eye of desire. Such meaning is only discovered when one looks past the English and into the Hebraic history and culture.

The best way to know your Bible is to know your Bible! The New Testament is explained in the Old Testament. Open the Scriptures; pray for understanding; question traditional teachings; and compare the messages you hear from the pulpit to the whole of Scripture. Begin to look past the English words, to view the Hebrew text. Bible translations are great for casual reading but they are far from perfect. To gain the most from your Bible, simply study to prove all things true. As you consider the context and culture of the Scriptures, you may begin to question some of the traditional teachings of the Church. You might also agree with Martin Luther, who once said, "If I were younger I would want to learn Hebrew, for without it one can never properly understand the Holy Scriptures."

That's NOT in the Bible?

Truth about popular statements

The Bible has affected mankind in countless ways. It is the best selling book of all time. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton once based their curriculum upon the Scriptures. For many years Webster's Dictionary predominately defined words from their usage in the King James Version. The message of the Bible has sparked wars like the Crusades, changed lives of horrible sinners like Jeffrey Dahmer, and become part of everyday speech. Phrases like "cleanliness is next to godliness" are repeated over and over as coming from the good book. But, do many of the popular sayings we attribute to the Bible actually originate from the Scriptures?

"God helps those who help themselves" is just one example of a quote that doesn't have Biblical origin. This statement was actually first made by Ben Franklin in the Poor Richard's Almanac of 1757. This isn't a bad idea, but it isn't Scriptural. How could the man on the cross next to the Savior actually help himself?

When problems plague a person the popular Christian catch phrase "this too shall pass" is often repeated. This statement can't be found in the Bible. Yes, pain is only temporary compared to the eternal glory of Heaven but you won't find this "verse" in your Bible. To read this quote, try opening the Jewish Talmud.

"Once saved, always saved" is a popular Baptist citation that isn't from the Bible either. The theology of eternal security can easily be argued as Revelation 3:5 speaks of blotting someone's name OUT of the book of eternal life. Don't be mistaken about this declaration.

Is money the root of all evil? Not according to the Scriptures. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the “love of money is the root of all evil.” Money is a tool that can be used for good or bad. The love of money is greed. This desire to receive for self alone is indeed the force that drives all wickedness.

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” is a phrase from a newspaper in 1833. And “beggars can't be choosers” was first used in a 1546 book of proverbs.

Perhaps the most used unbiblical phrase derives from a hymn written by William Cowper. He wrote that “God moves in a mysterious ways.” Today, this statement is repeated over and over by believers and unbelievers alike. The truth is that the Almighty is not mysterious whatsoever. The Creator can be known and understood through His word. We are the ones with a problem of understanding the infinite. For a Bible believer, nothing about the Creator should be mysterious as **EVERYTHING** can be for the good. Everything that occurs is not good but can work for our benefit. Romans 8:28, “And we know that all thing work together for the good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.”

Error brings more error. We delude ourselves when we erroneously attribute man's ideas for Biblical wisdom. The only way to know if what we think is in the Scriptures is to study and know the Bible. The truth of the Bible will set us free from error and misunderstandings.

Global Cooling or Global Warming

Truth about iniquity

For over 39 years, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day. This is a worldwide holiday that is recognized to build awareness of environmental and climate change issues.

Former Vice-President Al Gore claims global warming is to blame for the looming climate crisis. Gore has said that the glaciers in Antarctica are melting and that sea levels will rise to cover parts of Florida and New Orleans. "Is it only terrorists that we're worried about? Is that the only threat that is worth our attention? We are witnessing a collision between our civilization and the Earth," Gore has said. Global Warming seems dangerous. Yet, "Global Cooling" is a much larger threat to the world.

Global Warming is predicted by scientists; Global Cooling is prophesied in the Bible. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold," Matthew 24:12. While temperatures are on the rise, the heart of man is beginning to freeze. From road rage to impurity and strife, people are acting on their impulses and placing another layer of ice upon their cold heart. This is Global Cooling and it is triggered by the smog of what the King James Version calls "iniquity." The New King James Version and the New American Standard use the word "lawlessness" to describe the cause of the cooling. The terms are identical as iniquity is law-less-ness.

"And because law-less-ness increases in the world, the love of many will grow cold," Matthew 24:12. The Greek word translated "lawlessness" in this verse is "anomia." This word, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Dictionary*, means "illegality, i.e. violation of law, wickedness, iniquity, unrighteousness." Likewise, *Thayer's Greek*

Lexicon defines anomia as "the condition of one without law - either because ignorant of it, or because violating it, contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness." Anomia is exactly the same Greek term used in Matthew 7:23 where the Savior said, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (anomia)." Ouch!

Iniquity can be understood as law-less-ness or having no regard towards the Law of Moses. Iniquity causes the heart to grow cold to the arena of faith. 1 John 3:4, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." To sin is to violate or break the law of the Almighty, called "torah" in Hebrew. This law is the eternal commandments that were given to Moses and then recorded in the first five books of the Bible. Today, the Torah is the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Torah reveals the expectations for all mankind. A person sins when the law is not kept. Sin is having lawlessness - having less of the law.

Blessings and purpose abound when a person walks in obedience to the whole of Scripture. On the contrary, violating the Torah dulls the heart. Like slow changes in the weather that go unnoticed, iniquity grows slowly in the hearts of many believers. Many act like super-market shoppers, picking and choosing what should be followed in the Bible while casting much of the "Old Testament" aside.

The opposite of law-less-ness is law-plus-ness, or having more of the Torah in life. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart, for out of it flows the issues of life." Though iniquity increases in the world, believers have been called to not be affected by this chill factor. The Torah should clearly be studied, learned and become a part of every day life.

Beware of Spiritual Identity Theft

Truth about the Scriptural lifestyle

The FBI has recognized identity theft is the fastest rising crime in America. Each day the personal information of thousands is compromised and used by thieves. A spiritual identity theft also robs people of blessing and purpose. The criminals of society and religion have stolen the identity of millions.

Life is shaped by past experiences and surrounding culture. The language spoken, the food eaten, and the holidays celebrated are all predetermined by the culture a person lives within. For Bible believers, this is identity theft. People think they are American, Lutheran, or Baptist but they are not. They are more.

A person's true identity is found within the pages of the Bible. The Scriptures state, "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Galatians 3:29. The original word for "seed" in this verse is "sperma," which means a "physical seed or descendant." Christians are not just spiritual heirs of salvation but direct physical descendants of Abraham.

Abraham had a special relationship with the Almighty, which led to him being blessed above all people. He would be given special land in the Middle East and have physical descendants "as numerous as the stars in the heavens." These blessings were passed to Abraham's son, Isaac and then given to Isaac's son, Jacob. "Be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body," Genesis 35:11.

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, fathered twelve sons. These twelve sons and their families became known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel isn't just a small sliver of land in the Middle East. *And Israel isn't just the Jewish people!* Israel is the family of Abraham. This family's bloodline has been scattered all over the world. As Romans 2:29 states, the identity of all disciples is Israel.

History proves that shortly after the rule of King David, the nation of Israel was tragically split in two. In 586BCE the two tribes that made up the Southern Kingdom were taken captive by the Babylonians. 70 years later many of these people returned to the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, and rebuilt the Temple. They kept the Law and sought to worship as prescribed in the Scriptures. Today, the descendants from Judea are known as the "Jews."

In 722BCE the Northern Kingdom, comprised of 10 tribes from Ephraim, were scattered by the Assyrians. These Israelites mixed into the nations. Thus they lost their identity and forgot their Hebrew heritage. They continued to grow and multiply, spreading their bloodline all over the world. A recent NBC News article estimates over a tenth of today's population is directly descended from this group. Today they are known as the "lost 10 tribes of Israel." Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Messiah Y'shua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah."

The Jewish people began their return to the Land in 1948. As fulfillment to Biblical prophecy in Ezekiel 37 and elsewhere, the lost tribes are slowly returning to their identity as people recognize they are Israel. Acts 2:39 and many other verses in the Bible indicates that the scattered tribes are found throughout the world. "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself," Acts 2:39. The brother of Jesus knew that the restoration of Israel was of utmost importance. He wrote his to this group, "James, a bond-servant of

God, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings,”
James 1:1.

One website makes this message easy to understand:

1. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possibly number in the many millions (Genesis 22:17; 35:11; Deuteronomy 1:10-11), and there are many more physical Israelites on Planet Earth than are given credit.
2. Ancient Israel was divided into two separate Kingdoms or Houses: Judah and Israel/Ephraim, the latter’s descendants becoming the fullness of the Gentiles/nations (Genesis 48:19; Romans 11:25).
3. In the end, all who have faith in Messiah are part of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:17; cf. Romans 9:6). God’s plan of regathering Israel is a part of His plan to take the message of salvation to the entire world as His Kingdom is restored (Isaiah 49:6).

The Savior said in John 4:22, “Salvation is of the Jews.” This doesn’t mean that a person must convert to Judaism. This means the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. All of the promises in the Bible made to Israel are for today. All of the commandments in the Bible that were given to Israel are also for today. Being Israel isn’t about being Jewish, but recognizing the identity theft of the world and the Almighty’s true plan for man.

Firm Foundation?

Truth about the Torah

In 1173 construction began on a building that would later receive worldwide attention. A foundation was laid and workers started to labor with the best marble. As the eight-story structure was being completed several architects began to notice a slight problem. Somehow, this beautiful bell tower in Italy seemed to lean just a few inches. Precautions would have to be taken to stop this monument from falling. Today the “Leaning Tower of Pisa” tower stands tall and slanted as a sign to the world about the importance of a well-built and secure foundation.

The Messiah spoke of this concept through a parable about a wise man that built his house upon a rock in Matthew 7:24-27. The rains came down, the floods went up, and only the house on the rock stood firm. If a bad foundation can cause a building of solid stone to crumble, then surely having a bad spiritual foundation can cause a believer to fall.

The scriptures are clear that a person’s spiritual walk should be based upon the first five books of the Bible. These are the teachings of Moses upon which the whole of the Bible is built. They were not replaced with the Gospels and the Messiah did not do away with these teachings. 2 Timothy 2:19a, “A solid foundation stands firm.”

Many Christians start their faith by turning directly to the middle of the Bible for instruction and inspiration. New believers begin reading the Gospels without any prior knowledge of what is required of man or how the Most High relates to humanity. Without Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy it is

impossible to correctly understand the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Suppose a person walks into an Algebra class with no prior knowledge of math. The teacher starts the class by instructing everyone to turn to the middle of the book. The new student would be lost. Well, that is exactly what happens when people lay a foundation of the New Testament without knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament teachings and way of life.

In Hebrew, the first five books of the Bible are called the “Torah.” Torah is often translated as “law” in most English Bibles but the word actually means “teaching and instruction.” Torah is more like an instruction manual than a rulebook. Found within the Torah is a blueprint for living, with information on pretty much every part of life, from what to eat, to how to dress, and when to worship. The Torah is the revelation of the Creator’s eternal will for mankind. It is the Bible the Savior read and used.

The Messiah based His complete life and ministry on the Torah. He did not violate, negate, nor abolish it. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished,” Matthew 5:17 & 18. The issue seems pretty plain doesn’t it? Heaven and earth are still here, so the Law/Torah must be too! What was wrong to do during the times of Moses is still wrong. What was commanded during the time Moses is still commanded today. The Torah is the true foundation for the Biblical faith.

Don't Stumble On Your Journey

The truth about sin

Imagine all the obstacles a person might have to overcome if he were to walk from New York City to San Francisco. One man who accomplished this rare achievement mentioned a surprising difficulty when asked to tell of his biggest hurdle. He said that the toughest part of the trip wasn't the steep slopes of the mountains or barren stretches of desert. Instead, he said, "The thing that came the closest to defeating me was the sand in my shoes." It's not the "big" sins like murder and adultery that cause most people to stumble. Instead, the "little" sins of gossip and "lust" easily entangle. Does the Bible distinguish between levels of sin? The definition and the remedy for sin are both discussed in 1 John 3:4-7, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous."

If a person violates God's laws then a person is sinning. Sin is not obeying the laws or commands of the Bible. To be "sin less" a person must be "law full." Sin is a life without the law. The Law is the Law of Moses as presented in the first five books of the Bible. What was wrong to do during the days of Moses is still wrong today. The word "law" is an ill interpretation of the Hebrew word "Torah." The word "torah" is Hebrew for "teachings." Torah was given for the benefit of mankind as Torah is the loving instructions and guidelines for living as the Almighty's chosen people.

The Torah explains exactly how a believer should eat, live, worship, treat other people, and marry. According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, a Baptist publication, "the Old Testament has a rich

vocabulary for sin. The Hebrew word “chata” means “to miss the mark.” The word could be used to describe a person shooting a bow and arrow and missing the target with the arrow. When it is used to describe sin, it means that the person has missed the mark that God has established for the person’s life.” The Torah is the Almighty’s bull’s eye for obedience. The penalty of committing just one sin is physical and spiritual death says Romans 3:23. Though a person misses the mark and sins, forgiveness is granted if one repents, turns from their ways, and trusts the Savior.

Jesus is the Torah or Law alive. “And the Word was made flesh,” John 1:4. The Savior walked fully in the Torah commands and never broke the law. Jesus kept the Torah in its entirety and therefore was sinless. To follow Jesus, man must follow the Old Testament Law. A life patterned after Jesus will be a life patterned after the Torah! Jesus kept the seventh day Sabbaths, celebrated the feasts, ate kosher, and was circumcised all according to the Creator’s Torah. Jesus did not come to “do away with the Torah” (Matt.5:17-20) but to present to the world an example of a perfect life.

What is sin? Sin is lawlessness. What is the law? It is the loving instructions and guidelines given by the Almighty in the Torah. Deuteronomy 27:26 says, “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this Law by carrying them out.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!” Can you say “Amen” to these ideas?

America: Land of the Law?

Truth about freedom and the law

Patriotic anthems declare America to be the “land of the free and home of the brave.” Indeed, the United States is the sweet land of liberty which guarantees religious and political freedom. These freedoms are protected from abuse through various legislation. Congress passes and revises thousands of laws each year. Each state, county, and city has their own rules which govern everything from taxes to parking. Violation of such laws results in fines, jail time and even capital punishment. Some have speculated that America has more laws in place than any other country in the world. Isn’t it strange that the land of the free is in reality the land of the law?

The law could be viewed as a binding list of do’s and don’ts. The law could also be accepted as a fence that regulates behavior. That same stop light that irritates the morning drive to work actually stops wrecks from occurring throughout the day. Truth be told, the law is not for the criminal but for the free person. The law protects from abuse or anarchy by ensuring an orderly society. In these ways, the laws of the United States are much like the Laws of the Bible. The Mosaic Law teaches the believer how to serve and worship the Creator (Psalm 19:7-9, Acts 13:13-15.) The Law, or “torah” in Hebrew, also gives instructions on how to treat one another (Leviticus 19:18, Galatians 6:2.) The Torah of Moses is a school master that defines sin and leads a person to the Messiah (Romans 7:7, Galatians 3:21-2.) The Law is the viable standard of the Almighty’s will. “So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good,” Romans 7:12.

Consider the Bible to be a type of constitution for the saints. It is a law of liberty that leads to freedom and blessing. The founding

father's Bill of Rights and the Torah are still in affect today. There are over 613 commandments in the first five books of Moses and over 1,100 commands in the four Gospels. Many verses are specifically given to only certain groups of people or individuals for that very moment. For example, Leviticus 15 reads that women are to separate themselves during their menstrual cycle. Some of the controversial commandments, like stoning a person or sacrificing animals, are regulated in the Scripture to only occur "in the Land" of Israel or only when the Temple is functioning. For each command of the Law there are spiritual insights and practical applications.

It isn't legalism when a person obeys the law, its righteousness! The Law should be followed through heart-felt devotion. The Savior said, "If you love me then keep my commandments," John 14:15. Here, the Messiah is referencing the commandments found in the Old Testament. Not a single word in the US Constitution or the Bible has become outdated or unimportant.

"It is sometimes taught that no one can keep the Law of Moses because it is too difficult. The Bible says otherwise (Deuteronomy 30:11–14). To say that we cannot keep Torah diminishes both the truth and the potential of the new life planted within us. Christians have been given a job to do! Christians are to display His majesty, holiness, righteousness, mercy, and goodness. We are commanded to be holy, to be set apart for God. This means being faithful to His instructions on how to be holy. We can do it through faith in His Son, our Savior, and the life that He now lives in us," wrote Bible teacher Boaz Michael.

Church History in a Nutshell

Truth about the faith

A short drive through any small town in the Bible-belt of the United States will reveal an iconic “church on every corner.” Lutheran, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches offer contemporary, traditional or Spanish services. There may be Catholic congregations, charismatic outreach centers, or even Unitarian Universalist churches.

Worldwide, there are over 1,900 different denominations of Christianity. Each differs in their own ways. For example, Lutherans sprinkle, Baptists immerse and the apostolics baptize only “in the name of Jesus.” Is this division really what the Savior envisioned when He prayed in John 17:21, “Father, may they be one?”

History recognizes Christianity as originally a small sect of Judaism. The first followers observed the Law of Moses and didn’t change their behavior when they accepted the Jewish Messiah. As the good news began to spread many believers faced harsh persecution.

Christianity changed in 313AD when the Edict of Milan granted Christians the right to openly practice their religion. Roman Emperor Constantine the Great had supposedly converted and now showed kindness to the church. This affection came with many strings attached. As time went on, many Roman laws were passed to establish the Roman Catholic Church as supreme. Constantine declared himself the “Potinfex Maximus” and set up the hierarchy of archbishops over bishops.

In 321AD the first council of Nicea was held by the emperor to rid the Christian church of “Jewish” identity. Church leaders who failed to attend this meeting faced the death penalty. During the council, the idea of a Trinitarian godhead was mandated and Passover was replaced with the pagan Ishtar/Easter celebration. This was just the start of changes that were made by Constantine.

In 325AD Constantine decreed the first day of the week as “Dies Solis” or “the day of the sun.” It just so happened that Sunday was the official day off for the Roman civil government. Changing the Biblical Sabbath was an easy trade as Sun’sday became the “Lord’s day.”

The acts of Constantine propelled the world into the dark ages when the church had supreme authority over science, learning, and government. For hundreds of years, only the Catholic priests were allowed to read and interpret the Scriptures. In 1517 Martin Luther started the protestant reformation as he led a theological rebellion against the Catholic Church. Various groups later split from Luther as they discovered aspects of the faith that had been forsaken.

The past 2,000 years have seen a great struggle within Christianity. The original faith of a small group of Jewish believers has now become the popular religion of celebrities. To be accepted by the masses, the American church has adopted contemporary music and feel good sermons. Mega-churches throughout the country boast weekly attendance of more than 5,000 while local groups offer everything from gyms to modern-style dance troupes. Is today’s model of church the most accurate as compared to the Scriptures? Should the message and the method of the Bible change with the times? “The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him,” Proverbs 18:17.

There has always been a small group in the church who would fight for the fullness of truth. This remnant continues to escape the

latter day apostasy and experience the restoration of Biblical worship. One can discover the original faith of the apostles by knowing church history and studying the ancient language, culture, and words of the Bible. Jude 1:3 explains that one must “contend for the most holy faith that was delivered to the saints once for all time.”

Religion is Wrong

Truth about the Savior

Is there really a difference between the message of the Bible and the faith of today? Have you ever considered if what is being taught in the local church or on the television is how the faith was meant to be?

Perhaps part of the problem with organized religion is how they view the Savior. Some people see Him standing at the door to the church with free flowing blond hair and baby blue eyes. While others view him with dark hair and black skin wearing an African robe. Millions consider him to be Islamic. For some he is yet to come. Are these pictures realistic of the Savior who walked the face of the earth 2,000 years ago?

This might surprise you, but the Savior of the Bible did not speak English. He did not worship on Sunday. He did not have blond hair or black skin. Neither did He ever ask someone to join His church. And, the virgin born Redeemer was not named Jesus. Sadly, what most people know as the Savior is a fabrication far from the truth.

History and the Bible reveals that the Messiah was born a Jew, spoke Hebrew, ate kosher foods, went to the synagogue, and kept perfectly the Father's will as revealed in the first five books of the Bible. This savior was given the Hebrew name of "Y'shua." Perhaps you have heard this name on Mel Gibson's film, "The Passion of the Christ." Sadly, He Messiah was never called "Jesus" nor did he ever hear this word while he walked the earth. The name "Jesus" is actually a poor English translation that some suggest has pagan roots. A case could be made to indicate that the name of "Jesus" points not to the Biblical Savior but to Zeus and Greek mythology.

All of this is shocking, but can be validated with a little research using encyclopedias, dictionaries, the Internet, and a Bible.

The Savior Himself said that “Salvation is of the Jews,” in John 4:22. This doesn’t mean that you must convert to Judaism to be saved. What Jesus was teaching is that the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. The Jewish people make up just a small portion of the greater Israel family that has been scattered all over the world. This nation of Israel is being regathered as millions of people around the world are recognizing their Hebrew roots. Multitudes are rejecting false worship and returning to the ancient path set by Messiah. Y’shua, the “king of the Jews,” came teaching, healing, and proclaiming a message of repentance. A message that said “the kingdom of heaven is here.” A message that included the words, “think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets,” Mathew 5:16.

The true Savior came as a teacher, a Rabbi. He did not come to start a new religion, but to “seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Matthew 15:24. To truly follow the Messiah is to reject the deception of the religious system and return to the truth of the Bible and the facts of history. When it comes to the savior, you must realize that there is a difference between the Jesus of the world and the Y’shua who died for all mankind. Accept no imitations – Y’shua is Savior.

Church Changes

Truth about the original faith

The first followers of the Savior never “went to church.” The original faith in Messiah was originally just a sect of Judaism. They were called “Nazarenes” or “Followers of the Way.” In the Apostle Paul’s trial before Felix, the lawyer for the prosecution said, “We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ring leader of the Nazarene sect,” Acts 24:5.

The word “church” originally comes from an Old English term “kirke,” which means circle. Long ago, the Anglo-Saxons referred to their pagan places of worship as “kirkes.” When the Anglo-Saxons accepted Christianity, they simply continued to call their worship centers “kirkes,” which eventually evolved into “churches.” The word “kirke” is also the root of the English term “circus.” The “kirke/church” is where the term “three ringed circus” originated.

Catholics proclaim that the church began when the Savior commissioned Peter to become the first Pope. They believe the Apostles were the original Catholics who started the new religion of Christianity. Catholics reason that God turned his attention to the rest of the world since Jesus was killed by the Jews. After the crucifixion, the apostles passed the faith to the Early Church Fathers. Later, the masses followed as emperors and monarchs accepted the creed. It was Roman Emperor Constantine “the Great” who mandated Christianity to be the universal religion. However, before he did this, Constantine made huge changes in the faith. Constantine gave several edicts that would separate the church from Biblical Judaism. These decrees mandated that ancient pagan practices, like Christmas, Easter, and Sun day worship, should be considered as “Christian.”

The original building program was developed by Emperor Constantine as well. The first “church” buildings were placed over the tombs of popular martyrs. The cathedrals were also named after patron saints, much like the pagans who named their temples after various gods. These buildings were patterned after the Roman basilica which served a similar function as college auditoriums do today. Rowed seating was provided for passive crowds to watch a performance. “The professional clergy performed the acts of worship while the laity looked on as spectators,” wrote John White in *Protestant Worship and Architecture*.

Stained glass was first used in the sixth century as an attempt to represent the beauty of heaven. And the “steeple” was born when pagans who “converted” to Christianity insisted a pagan obelisk be used at all church buildings. The Almighty expressed His contempt for such in Leviticus 26:30, “And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.” Additionally, the New Testament never calls a four walled building the “church.”

Before these changes, the first followers of Messiah met at local synagogues (Acts 15:21; 21:26; James 2:2; Luke 4:16) and in their homes for worship (Acts 20:20; Romans 16:3). Their meetings were open, participatory, and included the working of Spiritual gifts. Paid pastors, ministers of music, pulpits, collection plates, communion wafers, and altar calls were not part of the original faith handed down from the Apostles. Such a pure faith *does* exist today in the hearts and homes of those willing to forsake manmade traditions and seek truth. This type of “church” is one that meets spiritual and physical needs through honest practices set forth in the Scriptures. “Let us contend for the most holy faith that was delivered to the saints once for all time,” Jude 1:3.

Who's Your Daddy?

Truth about the father's name

Mark Twain once wrote that “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.” The wisdom of a father is an unmatched wealth of experience and advice. It is interesting that people with devoted dads usually have an easy time relating to God the Father. “Daddy” is a title that lovingly describes relationship. Earthly fathers may be named Jerry or Tom, but does the Heavenly Father have a name? People sing “blessed be the name of the Lord” yet seldom know the identity of this blessed name. The Son’s name is clear and many are familiar with the Holy Spirit. What about the Father?

A careful reading of Exodus 3 reveals more than just the story of a burning bush. Here, one can learn the true name of the Father. At the burning bush, Moses learns that the Almighty wants to use him to deliver the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh. It’s been many years since Moses left Egypt and he’s doubtful the people will even accept him as the legitimate deliverer sent from above. For the people to follow him, Moses needs a miracle. He needs a higher authority to vouch for him.

Here on Mt. Horeb the Almighty passes before Moses and “the LORD said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” Here in Exodus 3:15 the LORD reveals His name as the four Hebrew lettered tetragrammatron yod-hey-vav-hey or “YHWH.” Some pronounce this name as “Yahweh” or “Yahuah.”

Throughout the Bible, YHWH is used over 6,000 times exclusively as the name of the Father. This name is usually explained in the preface or introduction of most Bibles and hidden behind translator's techniques. The King James Version capitalizes the words "LORD" or "GOD" in an effort to alert the reader that "YHWH" is the Hebrew word behind the English. The KJV sometimes uses the poetic form of "Jah" to reference the mighty name of YHWH. This can be seen in Psalm 68:4. YHWH says emphatically in Exodus 3 that "this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." This name was not intended to be hidden by scribes and translators; rather YHWH Himself gave it to man as a sign of His existence and as a means of personal relationship. This is the Father's name. The Bible puts a lot of emphasis on this name, even the Savior said, "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name," Matthew 6:9.

Traditionally, this name is not used by observant Jewish people as many believe the name is too holy to be uttered. Judaism has replaced the sacred name with "Adonai" or "HaShem." Christianity as well has ignored the name of YHWH by substituting generic terms like "God" in English or "Dios" in Spanish. These words are not specific to the deity of the Bible and can easily reference Allah or Buddha. "God" or "Gad" in Hebrew is the false Babylonian deity of good fortune or luck and not of the Bible. This is according to Strong's Concordance #H1407-1411. This can also be referenced to Genesis 30:11. *The Oxford Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* agrees. It teaches that 'god' comes to our English language from the ancient Sanskrit language meaning - to invoke by incantation, sorcery, magic. The Encyclopedia Americana says under this topic that "god is a common Teutonic word for personal object of religious worship, formerly applicable to super-human beings of heathen myth." While further research reveals that the Druids called the sun 'Gud, Gudh, Goth, or Gott' which were later translated into English

as "gawd" or "god." In most English Bibles, the term "god" is a poor translation from the Hebrew term "elohim." The word "elohim" literally means "mighty one, judge, or deity."

Using such replacement terms is in direct opposition to Isaiah 42:8 which states, "'I am YHWH, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another.' One can say the true name of YHWH in prayer, praise, study, and witnessing. By using the Sacred Name a believer can experience the power of spiritual intimacy. The Father's name is not God or Billy Bob, it is "YHWH." YHWH has given us His personal name so we could approach Him with intimacy.

From this point forward in this book, all references to the God of Israel will be made as "YHWH Elohim."

Assorted Bible Verses About the Name of YHWH

Isaiah 12: 2, "Behold, Elohim is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Master YHWH is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."

Isaiah 43: 3, "For I am YHWH your Elohim, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

Isaiah 43:11, "I, even I, am YHWH, and there is no savior besides Me."

Proverbs 18: 10, "The name of YHWH is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe."

Joel 2: 32, Acts 2: 21, and Romans 10: 13, "And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of YHWH will be saved."

Exodus 3: 13-15, "Moses then said to Elohim: "Behold I am going to address the Israelites saying to them: 'The Elohim of your ancestors sent me to you.' When they ask me: "What's His Name!?" then what should I respond to them?" And Elohim said to Moses: "I am that which I am becoming!" And He continued: "Thus shall you say unto the Israelites: "I AM sent me to you." But then Elohim spoke once again unto Moses: "Thus shall you say unto the Israelites "YHWH the Elohim of your ancestors, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob sent me to you. This is my name for eternity and this is My Remembrance from generation to generation."

Psalm 135:13, "YHWH is Your name forever; YHWH is Your Remembrance from generation to generation."

Psalm 116:13, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call out in the Name of YHWH!"

Psalm 122:4, "For there (i.e. in Jerusalem) the tribes ascended, the tribes of Yah, a testimony for Israel, giving thanks to the Name of YHWH."

Psalm 105:1, "Give thanks to YHWH, call out in His name, make known among the peoples His deeds."

Psalm 124:8, "Our help is through the Name of YHWH, Maker of heaven and earth."

Psalm 33:21, "In Him our heart rejoices! In His holy name we trust!"

Jeremiah 3:17, "At that time they will call Jerusalem "The Throne of YHWH" and all the nations will be gathered unto her for the Name of YHWH and for Jerusalem and they will no longer walk in the stubbornness of their evil heart."

Jeremiah 10:25, "Pour Your wrath on the nations who knew You not, and on families who called out not in Your Name -- for they consumed Jacob and ate him up completely and laid waste his habitation."

Deuteronomy 18:5, "For in him (i.e. the Levite) YHWH your Elohim chose from all the tribes to stand and to serve in the Name of YHWH, he and this children for all days."

Deuteronomy 28:10, "Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the 'Name of YHWH' is called upon you, and they will reverence you."

Malachi 1:11, "For from the shining of the sun and its going down, My Name is great among the nations and in every place there is incense and contribution to My Name and pure poor offerings - for My Name is great among the nations has said YHWH Creator of all."

Malachi 2:2, "If you continue to refuse to listen and if you continue to not place it on your heart to give honor to My Name, says YHWH of all Armies, then I will send to you the curse and convert your blessings into the worst curses because you are not paying attention!"

Isaiah 43:7, "All who are referred to by My Name, for My honor I created them, reformed them, also remade them."

Isaiah 42:8, "I am YHWH, that's My Name, and My honor I will not assign to any other, neither transfer My praise over to human inventions."

Isaiah 52:5-7, "'Now what am I doing here?' declares YHWH, 'for My people are dismissed as nothing, their conquerors celebrate obscenely, declares YHWH, and My Name is constantly being despised.'

Zachariah 14:9, "Then YHWH will be Sovereign over all the earth; on that day YHWH will be one and His Name one."

Deuteronomy 8:3, "For not on bread alone can man live but on each utterance of the mouth of YHWH shall man live."

Deuteronomy 6:16, "Don't test YHWH your Elohim."

Deuteronomy 6:13, "Fear only YHWH your Elohim, and serve only Him, and in His Name only shall you swear."

The Ever Changing Name of Jesus

Truth about the Savior's name

When it comes to naming a baby, many parents are very picky. Sometimes a name is chosen in honor or memory of a loved one. Other names are inspired by movies, friends, or just the sound. Recently, the names Ethan, Emma, Noah, and Isabella were recognized as some of the most popular monikers in 2009.

Over two-thousand years ago a little boy was given a special name by direction of heavenly messengers. “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins,” Matthew 1:21. Of course, this verse has been translated into English. Originally, the angels spoke the language of Hebrew to this Jewish couple. The baby was actually given a Hebrew name. (English wasn’t spoken for thousands of years later!) The child was named “Yahoshua” or “Y’shua” for short. The Savior never heard the name “Jesus” while He walked the earth.

The name “Jesus” is a modern invention and has only been used for a few hundred years. History shows that around the third century BC, a group of Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint. In the Septuagint, the name Joshua is rendered in Greek as “Iesous.” The early church was heavily influenced by the Greek culture and depended upon the Septuagint for reading the Old Testament. As the Gospel began to spread throughout the world the Hebrew name of “Yahoshua” was exchanged for a Greek name “Iesous.” Catholicism later implored the use of Latin and “Iesous” became “Iesus.” As English emerged, the “I” sound was changed to the letter “j” and “Iesus” became “Jesus.” (Linguists prove that the letter “J” is the youngest sound in the English language.) Under the subject “J,” the *Encyclopedia Americana* contains the following:

“The form of J was unknown in any alphabet until the 14th century. The symbol was first used generally had the consonantal sound of Y as in year. Gradually, the symbol (J) acquired consonantal force and thus became regarded as a consonant. It was not until 1630 that the differentiation became general in England.”

The original KJV that was printed in 1611 called the Savior by the Latin influenced “Iesus.” Later, as the “j” became a sound, the Messiah’s name was changed to “Jesus.” The modern name “Jesus” is at best a transliteration from the Hebrew to the Greek then to Latin and then English. The changing of the Savior’s name is very troubling as proper names are not translated from one language to another. For example, when George W. Bush would visit Spanish speaking countries his name wasn’t changed to “Jorge.” Regardless of where a person goes or what time in which they lived, it is customary to call someone by their original name. Plato is still Plato and Shakespeare is still Shakespeare. The Savior’s name was never meant to be changed.

“Y’shua” is the exact Hebrew word for “salvation.” Every time someone uses His name, they are actually calling out the word “salvation.” This is easy to miss as most people read English Bibles that have mistranslated and changed the name from Greek and Hebrew texts. Yet, using His true Hebrew name puts Yahoshua back into Hebrew context, which helps a person understand His actions and words better. “Wherefore the Almighty also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Yahoshua every knee should bow... and every tongue should confess that Yahoshua the Messiah is Master, to the glory of the Father,” Philippians 2:9-11. Finally, Acts 4:12 gives a compelling argument to use the true name. The verse reads, “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Obama Inauguration Issues

Truth about the Messiah's name

There has been a lot said and written about the inauguration oath gaff by Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts and President Obama. First, the wording was terribly mixed up. Then President Obama didn't use a Holy Bible when the vows were taken for a second time. Perhaps the greatest problem with the swearing in was not Obama's actions but the prayer spoken by Christian Pastor Rick Warren.

Warren, who is the pastor of a mega-church in California, gave a stirring invocation that quoted the Torah, New Testament, and Quran. He ended the prayer in a very Christian manner. He said, "I humbly ask this in the name of the one who changed my life, Yeshua, Isa, Heysus, Jesus, who taught us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come..."

The plea from the Pastor was dangerously inclusive. He used four different names of the Savior from four different languages - Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, and English. This name calling effectively proclaimed that the one true name of the Messiah doesn't matter. This prayer suggests that the Messiah's name, and therefore his character, changes for each culture. Such an idea couldn't be farther from the truth.

The Islamic Quran uses the phrase "Isa" as a derogatory name for the Messiah. The Isa of Islam and the Savior from the New Testament are very much opposites. The Quran states that "Isa was simply a created human being, and a slave of Allah," An-Nisa' 4:172; Al 'Imran 3:59. The Muslim holy book says that "Isa did not die, but ascended to Allah," An-Nisa' 4:158. On the day of Resurrection, "Isa himself will be a witness against Jews and Christians for believing in

his death,” An-Nisa’ 4:159. Can Isa and the Messiah really be the same person?

Many Catholics view the Spanish Savior Heysus as the son of the sinless Mother Mary. Others picture Jesus with dark skin and dread locks or blue eyes with blond hair. Do these descriptions accurately fit the Biblical Jewish Messiah? The Bible states that the Savior of the New Testament was given a Hebrew name by the direction of angels. “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins,” Matthew 1:21. Of course, this verse has been translated into English. Originally, the angels spoke the language of Hebrew to this Jewish couple. The child was named “Y’shua,” which is the exact Hebrew word for “salvation.” Y’shua is the name that the Savior used, heard, and answered to during His life. He never heard the name “Jesus” or “Heysus” while He walked the earth. The sacred name of Y’shua was never meant to be changed to Isa, Heysus, Bob or Jesus.

A name reflects character and meaning. Therefore, names do not normally change from culture to culture or from language to language. President Obama does not change his name when he visits Islamic or Hispanic countries. So, why would the Savior’s name be different?

Rick Warren used the true name in His prayer BUT he equated this name to other titles. We must be careful not to follow Warren’s sin of creating God in our own image. Names do matter. The Savior’s true name is the Hebrew “Y’shua” and not “Isa” or “Heysus.” Acts 4:12, “There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved.”

The Name Game

The truth about the name of Jesus

A name is powerful. Each name is connected to feelings, memories, and ideas that represent something. The brain is filled with a myriad of thoughts, even as a name is mentioned.

What comes to the screen of your mind when you hear or read this name: "Barack Obama"?

What does your mind highlight, at the mention of "Elvis Presley"?

What image comes to mind with "Tom Cruise"?

Now, consider the name, "Moses". Do you envision a bearded guy, with tablets in his hands?

What about "King David"?

Now, think of "Jesus Christ"?

Surely these last three names bring to mind some of the main elements of the Bible. The problem is that these names are not historically accurate. Nor are they correct, scripturally.

The truth is that Moses was never called "Moses." David wasn't really "David." Jeremiah wasn't "Jeremiah"! Shockingly, Jesus Christ never addressed as, nor referred to as, nor answered to, nor heard the name "Jesus." No. Not ever. Not even once.

How can this be? When scholars penned our English Bibles, they translated words to form complete phrases or thoughts. Names,

however, weren't carried over properly. Rather, they were "transliterated," replacing ideas with English phrases, to convey a similar idea.

The translators totally changed the names of each person to an "acceptable" English equivalent: The Hebrew name "Moshe" became Moses. The prophet Yesha'yahu had his name changed to "Isaiah." Likewise, the Hebrew name given to the Messiah by the angels in Luke 2 was changed from "Y'shua ben Yosef" to "Jesus" in Greek and then, to "Jesus Christ" in English.

With the result, today, our English-language Bibles contain poor substitutes for the true names used in Biblical times. This is frightening due to the result of such error. In Philippians 2:9, the name of the Savior is described as the "name above all names". We are told in the New Testament, that every knee will "bow" and every tongue will "confess" the name of the Messiah. At the end of time, will people bow to the original eternal name of Y'shua or to the modern moniker?

A name has power and meaning. Such meaning is lost when the true name is replaced with a nickname or something totally different. "Yahoshua" or shortened to "Y'shua" is the Hebrew name of the Savior. This is what His mother and called Him. The name "Y'shua" is the Hebrew word for "salvation." The name "Heysus / Jesus" is one of the most popular names in the Latino culture, yet it carries no etymological meaning. History records that the name of "Jesus" has been used for less than 500 years by Christianity.

Does it matter what name a person uses? In today's world, a person's name doesn't change because they travel to another country. Regardless of the language or culture in the world, John McCain is John McCain. John's name isn't changed to "Jorge" because he visits Spain. DaVinci has been dead for hundreds of years but we still honor him by correctly using his real name.

Why should Bible believers willingly accept substitutes for the truth? Some would argue that this issue isn't valid because of grace. We must understand that grace is forgiveness and mercy given by the Almighty because of sin. Therefore, to say that grace is needed to cover the use of a wrong name would admit that error has occurred. If your name is "Lester" or "Joan", why would you answer to "Don" or "Maggie"? The Almighty knows who we are talking about when we refer to His Son as, "Jesus", but it's a lot more honoring to call Him by His given Name.

From this point forward in this book, all references to the Messiah will be made to the Hebrew name "Y'shua."

Sunday Morning Blues

Truth about Sunday worship

During colonial times, several states enacted “blue laws” to enforce the observance of Sunday as a day of worship. Many people were arrested for playing cards or fixing wagon wheels on Sunday. In the Palmetto State of South Carolina, these laws forbid people from shopping on Sunday morning or purchasing alcohol. In Virginia it is still against the law to hunt on Sunday. A person who watches pornography on Sunday can receive a five year jail sentence for violating the “blue laws” of Connecticut. Many of these laws are still binding. Should the state enforce a mandated Sunday Sabbath on all people?

History records the first blue law was passed by Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. In 321AD an edict forbids work on the first day of the week for everyone but farmers. It said, “Let all judges and all city people and all tradesmen rest upon the venerable day of the sun. But let those dwelling in the country freely and with full liberty attend to the culture of their fields; since it frequently happens that no other day is so fit for the sowing of grain, or the planting of vines; hence, the favorable time should not be allowed to pass, lest the provisions of heaven be lost.”

Note that Constantine made this decree in honor of the SUN and not the Biblical Sabbath. Don’t be mistaken! This edict wasn’t given to push people towards true worship. The emperor was an absolute pagan who murdered those who disagreed with him and refused baptism until he took his last breath. Constantine set aside SUNDAY to unify his empire for one common day to worship the sun. In doing so, Constantine passed the very first “blue law.”

Until then, the first church kept the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week as eternally commanded in the book of Genesis. “Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day Elohim had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And Elohim blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done,” Genesis 2:1-2. The importance of a specific day for worship is repeated with the giving of the Ten Commandments as well. The specific day of our worship and rest does indeed matter to the Almighty.

The modern calendar clearly shows what day is what. Plus, in the latest edition of *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary*, the definition for ‘seventh day’ references: “Saturday, the seventh day of the week.”

The Sabbath wasn’t changed in the New Testament. Messiah Himself, kept the true Sabbath, “And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read,” Luke 4:16. Even the Apostle Paul kept Saturday as holy. “And Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks,” Acts 18:4. Notice that Jews and Greeks were worshipping together. Saturday isn’t the “Jewish” Sabbath, but the Biblical one. Seventh day Sabbath observance is intended for all Bible believers.

History shows that the day of worship wasn’t changed by the Creator, but by man. The first “Blue Law” was enacted by a Roman empire. Such laws continue in South Carolina to erroneously promote a false day of worship. Believers must make the choice to keep the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath.

Protestant and Catholic Confessions about the Sabbath

James Cardinal Gibbons, *The Faith of our Fathers*, 88th ed., pp. 89.

"But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify."

Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism* 3rd ed., p. 174.

"Question: Have you any other way of proving that the Church has power to institute festivals of precept?

"Answer: 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."

John Laux, *A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies* (1936), vol. 1, P. 51.

"Some theologians have held that YHWH likewise directly determined the Sunday as the day of worship in the New Law, that He Himself has explicitly substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. But this theory is now entirely abandoned. It is now commonly held that God simply gave His Church the power to set aside whatever day or days she would deem suitable as Holy Days. The Church chose Sunday, the first day of the week, and in the course of time added other days as holy days."

Daniel Ferres, ed., *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (1916), p.67.

"Question: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

"Answer. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of, and therefore they fondly contradict themselves, by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same Church.'

James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore (1877-1921), in a signed letter.

"Is Saturday the seventh day according to the Bible and the Ten Commandments? I answer yes. Is Sunday the first day of the week and did the Church change the seventh day -Saturday - for Sunday, the first day? I answer **yes** . Did Christ change the day'? I answer **no!**

"Faithfully yours, J. Card. Gibbons"

The Catholic Mirror, official publication of James Cardinal Gibbons, Sept. 23, 1893.

"The Catholic Church, . . . by virtue of her divine mission, changed the day from Saturday to Sunday."

Catholic Virginian Oct. 3, 1947, p. 9, art. "To Tell You the Truth."

"For example, nowhere in the Bible do we find that Christ or the Apostles ordered that the Sabbath be changed from Saturday to Sunday. We have the commandment of God given to Moses to keep holy the Sabbath day, that is the 7th day of the week, Saturday. Today most Christians keep Sunday because it has been revealed to us by the [Roman Catholic] church outside the Bible."

Peter Geiermann, C.S.S.R., *The Converts Catechism of Catholic Doctrine (1957)*, p. 50.

"Question: Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer: Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question: Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer. We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday."

Martin J. Scott, *Things Catholics Are Asked About (1927)*,p. 136.

"Nowhere in the Bible is it stated that worship should be changed from Saturday to Sunday Now the Church ... instituted, by God's authority, Sunday as the day of worship. This same Church, by the same divine authority, taught the doctrine of Purgatory long before the Bible was made. We have, therefore, the same authority for Purgatory as we have for Sunday."

Peter R. Kraemer, Catholic Church Extension Society (1975), Chicago, Illinois.

"Regarding the change from the observance of the Jewish Sabbath to the Christian Sunday, I wish to draw your attention to the facts:

"1) That Protestants, who accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and religion, should by all means go back to the observance of the Sabbath. The fact that they do not, but on the contrary observe the Sunday, stultifies them in the eyes of every thinking man.

"2) We Catholics do not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith. Besides the Bible we have the living Church, the authority of the Church, as a rule to guide us. We say, this Church, instituted by Christ to teach and guide man through life, has the right to change the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament and hence, we accept her change of the Sabbath to Sunday. We frankly say, yes, the Church made this change, made this

law, as she made many other laws, for instance, the Friday abstinence, the unmarried priesthood, the laws concerning mixed marriages, the regulation of Catholic marriages and a thousand other laws.

"It is always somewhat laughable; to see the Protestant churches, in pulpit and legislation, demand the observance of Sunday, of which there is nothing in their Bible."

T. Enright, C.S.S.R., in a lecture at Hartford, Kansas, Feb. 18, 1884.

"I have repeatedly offered \$1,000 to anyone who can prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. There is no such law in the Bible. It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone. The Bible says, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.' The Catholic Church says: 'No. By my divine power I abolish the Sabbath day and command you to keep holy the first day of the week.' And lo! The entire civilized world bows down in a reverent obedience to the command of the holy Catholic Church."

Isaac Williams, *Plain Sermons on the Catechism* , vol. 1, pp.334, 336.

"And where are we told in the Scriptures that we are to keep the first day at all? We are commanded to keep the seventh; but we are nowhere commanded to keep the first day The reason why we keep the first day of the week holy instead of the seventh is for the same reason that we observe many other things, not because the Bible, but because the church has enjoined it."

Canon Eyton, *The Ten Commandments* , pp. 52, 63, 65.

"There is no word, no hint, in the New Testament about abstaining from work on Sunday into the rest of Sunday no divine law enters.... The observance of Ash Wednesday or Lent stands exactly on the same footing as the observance of Sunday."

Bishop Seymour, *Why We Keep Sunday* .

We have made the change from the seventh day to the first day, from Saturday to Sunday, on the authority of the one holy Catholic Church."

Dr. Edward T. Hiscox, a paper read before a New York ministers' conference, Nov. 13, 1893, reported in *New York Examiner*, Nov. 16, 1893.

"There was and is a commandment to keep holy the Sabbath day, but that Sabbath day was not Sunday. It will be said, however, and with some show of triumph, that the Sabbath was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week Where can the record of such a transaction be found? Not in the New Testament absolutely not.

"To me it seems unaccountable that Jesus, during three years' intercourse with His disciples, often conversing with them upon the Sabbath question . . . never alluded to any transference of the day; also, that during forty days of His resurrection life, no such thing was intimated.

"Of course, I quite well know that Sunday did come into use in early Christian history . . . But what a pity it comes branded with the mark of paganism, and christened with the name of the sun god, adopted and sanctioned by the papal apostasy, and bequeathed as a sacred legacy to Protestantism!"

William Owen Carver, *The Lord's Day in Our Day*, p. 49.

"There was never any formal or authoritative change from the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath to the Christian first-day observance."

Dr. R. W. Dale, *The Ten Commandments* (New York: Eaton & Mains), p. 127-129.

" . . . it is quite clear that however rigidly or devotedly we may spend Sunday, we are not keeping the Sabbath - . . 'Me Sabbath was founded on a specific Divine command. We can plead no such command for the obligation to observe Sunday There is not a single sentence in the New Testament to suggest that we incur any penalty by violating the supposed sanctity of Sunday."

Timothy Dwight, *Theology: Explained and Defended (1823)*, Ser. 107, vol. 3, p. 258.

" . . . the Christian Sabbath [Sunday] is not in the Scriptures, and was not by the primitive Church called the Sabbath."

Alexander Campbell, *The Christian Baptist*, Feb. 2, 1824, vol. 1. no. 7, p. 164.

"'But,' say some, 'it was changed from the seventh to the first day.' Where? when? and by whom? No man can tell. No; it never was changed, nor could it be, unless creation was to be gone through again: for the reason assigned must be changed before the observance, or respect to the reason, can be changed! It is all old wives' fables to talk of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. If it be changed, it was that august personage changed it who changes times and laws *ex officio* - I think his name is Doctor Antichrist.'

First Day Observance , pp. 17, 19.

"The first day of the week is commonly called the Sabbath. This is a mistake. The Sabbath of the Bible was the day just preceding the first day of the week. The first day of the week is never called the Sabbath anywhere in the entire Scriptures. It is also an error to talk about the change of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. There is not in any place in the Bible any intimation of such a change."

The Sunday Problem , a study book of the United Lutheran Church (1923), p. 36.

"We have seen how gradually the impression of the Jewish Sabbath faded from the mind of the Christian Church, and how completely the newer thought underlying the observance of the first day took possession of the church. We have seen that the Christians of the first three centuries never confused one with the other, but for a time celebrated both."

Augsburg Confession of Faith art. 28; written by Melanchthon, approved by Martin Luther, 1530; as published in The Book of Concord of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Henry Jacobs, ed. (1911), p. 63.

"They [Roman Catholics] refer to the Sabbath Day, a shaving been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath Day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!"

Dr. Augustus Neander, The History of the Christian Religion and Church Henry John Rose, tr. (1843), p. 186.

"The festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a Divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic Church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday."

John Theodore Mueller, Sabbath or Sunday , pp. 15, 16.

"But they err in teaching that Sunday has taken the place of the Old Testament Sabbath and therefore must be kept as the seventh day had to be kept by the children of Israel These churches err in their teaching, for Scripture has in no way ordained the first day of the week

in place of the Sabbath. There is simply no law in the New Testament to that effect."

Harris Franklin Rall, *Christian Advocate*, July 2, 1942, p.26.

"Take the matter of Sunday. There are indications in the New Testament as to how the church came to keep the first day of the week as its day of worship, but there is no passage telling Christians to keep that day, or to transfer the Jewish Sabbath to that day."

John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, John Emory, ed. (New York: Eaton & Mains), Sermon 25, vol. 1, p. 221.

"But, the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, he [Christ] did not take away. It was not the design of his coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other."

D. L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanting* (Fleming H. Revell Co.: New York), pp. 47, 48.

The Sabbath was binding in Eden, and it has been in force ever since. This fourth commandment begins with the word 'remember,' showing that the Sabbath already existed when God wrote the law on the tables of stone at Sinai. How can men claim that this one commandment has been done away with when they will admit that the other nine are still binding?"

T. C. Blake, D.D., *Theology Condensed*, pp.474, 475.

"The Sabbath is a part of the Decalogue - the Ten Commandments. This alone forever settles the question as to the perpetuity of the

institution . . . Until, therefore, it can be shown that the whole moral law has been repealed, the Sabbath will stand . . . The teaching of Christ confirms the perpetuity of the Sabbath."

Various Bible Verses on the Sabbath

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

'Y'shua said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15.

"Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest and the slave born in your household, and the alien as well, may be refreshed," Exodus 23:12.

"Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest," Exodus 34:21.

"There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to YHWH," Leviticus 23:3,

"Fear YHWH, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man," Ecclesiastes 12:13.

"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled," Matthew 5:18.

"Faith by itself, if it does not have works is dead," James 2:17.

"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law," Romans 3:31.

"He that says, 'I know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," 1 John 2:4.

"The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness," Psalms 111:7, 8.

"For whoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all," James 2:10.

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness," 1 John 3:4.

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

"If you will enter into life, keep the commandments," Matthew 19:17.

"My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of my lips," Psalms 89:34.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of YHWH and the faith of Y'shua," Revelation 14:12.

"Speak you also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths you shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am YHWH that does sanctify you. Six days may work be done; but in the Seventh is the Sabbath of rest, Holy to YHWH: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days YHWH

made heaven and earth, and on the Seventh day he rested, and was refreshed," Exodus 31:13-17.

"And hallow my Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am YHWH your Elohim," Ezekiel 20:20.

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read," Luke 4:16

"When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts," Nehemiah 10:31.

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath day?" Nehemiah 13:15-19.

"Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. For this is what YHWH says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant-- to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to YHWH to serve him, to love the name of

YHWH, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant-- these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations," Isaiah 56:2-7.

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of YHWH, honorable; and shall honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shall you delight thyself in YHWH," Isaiah 58:13-14.

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning," John 2:7

"And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins." One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of Elohim, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath," Mark 2:22-28.

God's Bail Out Plan?

Truth about the rapture

The sign outside the church read “God’s Bailout Plan is the Rapture.” This statement is eye catching but is it Biblical?

To find the truth of this subject, simply do a Bible search for the word “rapture.” Flip through the entire Bible and look for that word. No luck? This term just can’t be found in the Scriptures. It isn’t in the Bible. Anywhere. The idea of Christians being suddenly taken to heaven comes from preachers who misinterpret the timing of 1 Thessalonians - “For YHWH himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of YHWH: and the dead in Messiah shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet YHWH in the air: and so shall we ever be with YHWH. Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” 4:16, 17.

Today, this popular doctrine asserts that the saints will suddenly disappear at the beginning of a seven-year period of Tribulation. The time of the anti-Christ will then begin, until the visible Second Coming of the Savior. This theology is fairly new when compared to the major tenets of the Christian faith. The Messiah, the Apostles, and the early church fathers did not teach a pre-tribulation catching away of the saints. Proverbs 10:30. “The righteous shall never be removed: the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.”

Infact, the idea of a bailout before the bad times first surfaced around the 1830’s. It was then that a thirteen-year old Catholic girl had a vision that those baptized in the Spirit would be raptured before the antichrist came to power. She also saw that a second

group of believers would be raptured at the end of the tribulation. About the same time, a book was written by John Darby about the Savior coming first to rapture His church and then, again to defeat the anti-Christ. Bible publisher C.I. Scofield heavily promoted these ideas in his study Bible and the church hasn't looked back since. From movies to TV preachers and church signs, many are convinced of the pre-tribulation rapture. Too bad the Christian Savior didn't teach such an idea.

Matthew 13:49, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." This correlates exactly of how the righteous remained on the earth while the wicked were destroyed by Noah's flood. "People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man returns," Luke 17:27-30.

The Messiah indicates that the second coming occurs after the events of the Great Tribulation as seen in Matthew 24 and elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Bible does not teach a pre-tribulation catching away where unbelievers are "left behind." Man teaches this idea. Don't get caught up in this false hope. Strengthen your faith for whatever the future holds. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world," John 16:33. There is NO verse in the Bible that says, "Verily verily, before the Great Tribulation and the beginning of YHWH's wrath, the end-time Christians will be miraculously air evacuated off of Planet Earth."

Revelation 20 verifies that during tribulation people will make a choice to take the mark of the beast or face persecution. There will be many Saints who refuse the mark and therefore are murdered. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of YHWH, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection,” Revelation 20:4-5. According to this passage, the rapture does not and can not take place before the mark of the beast!

The Savior clearly states when He will return in regards to the rise of the anti-Christ and the time of Jacob’s trouble. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory,” Mathew 24:29-30. It is critical that one understands the timing of the Messiah’s return. Numerous signs have been given to warn believers of when the great tribulation will begin and how to prepare for such trouble. Don’t be misled by a funny church sign and don’t hope for a bail out program. Be ready for the hard times ahead by strengthening your faith for whatever the future holds.

Baptism Basics

Truth about immersion

A drunk staggered upon a baptismal service one Sunday afternoon. He proceeded to walk down into the water and stood next to the Preacher. The minister turned and said to the drunk, "Mister, are you ready to find the Savior?" The drunk looks back and says, "Yes, Preacher. I sure am." The minister then dunked the fellow under the water for at least 30 seconds. The preacher asks, "Have you found the Savior yet?" The old drunk wipes his eyes and replies, "Are you sure this is where he fell in?" It is easy to see that this fellow didn't know what he had gotten himself into. This drunk is not alone. There are many people who don't understand what baptism is all about.

Christian denominations vary from the Bible and from each other with their views of Baptism. Some churches sprinkle infants while others suggest that full body immersion should take place after conversion. For many evangelical churches, a person goes down into the water to recall the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior. "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Romans 6:4.

The word baptism comes to the English language from the Greek word "baptizos," which means to "wash or immerse." This Greek concept is derived from the Hebrew terms "t'vilah" and "mikvah." Before John the Baptist came preaching "repent and be baptized," immersion was already an accepted practice in the life of the Hebrew people. This is verified in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, "Moreover, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact that all our fathers were under the cloud, and that all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"

“T’vilah” is the physical act of immersing into a body of moving water, called a “mikvah” in Hebrew. The “mikvah” is the ritual washing by immersion that was common in Biblical times and still practiced today by religious Jewish people. Biblical mikvah differs from Christian baptism in formula, style, and occasion.

The Encyclopedia Judaica says that a mikvah is a, “a collection of water, a pool or bath of clear water, immersion in which renders ritually clean a person who has become ritually unclean through contact with the dead (Num. 19) or any other defiling object, or through an unclean flux from the body (Lev. 15) and especially a menstruant. It is similarly used for vessels (Num. 31:22–23).” Immersing totally in a “mikvah” before a holy day or after becoming unclean has long been a practice in Judaism. The ritual carried over to the New Testament and Christianity as a means of symbolizing faith in the Messiah.

Every single baptism, from Acts to Revelation, was done “in the name of Y’shua” and never “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Acts 19:5 verifies the proper method, “Upon hearing, they were baptized into the name of the Master Y’shua.” Notice what name the new believers were baptized into. The Trinitarian formula was never used in the Scriptures! There is only one verse in the entire Bible that alludes to a baptism in the trinity. Matthew 28:19: “Go you therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” People misunderstand this verse and therefore misapply the waters of mikvah. “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” aren’t names but titles. Even more, notice that the verse uses the singular “name” and not the plural “names.” Biblically speaking, there is one name that a person should be baptized in. The words spoken at baptism are just as important as the method.

Worship through full body water immersion started in Old Testament times and continues today. Baptism in the one true name of the Savior should be more than just a one time salvation experience. It is a process in which a person can say to the Creator and to the world that one does not want to live under the power of sin. Y'shua said, "Most assuredly I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit, he can't enter into the kingdom of YHWH," John 3:5. The Master Himself was baptized and believers should follow His example.

Additional verses for further study:

Acts 2:41, "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

Acts 8:12, "But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of Elohim and the name of Y'shua Messiah, both men and women were baptized."

Acts 8:36-37, "Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Y'shua Messiah is the Son of Elohim.""

Acts 9:17-18, "And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Master Y'shua, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized."

Acts 10:45-46, "And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify Elohim. Then Peter answered"

Acts 16:14-15, "Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who

worshiped Elohim. YHWH opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Master, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us."

Acts 16:31-33, "So they said, "Believe on the Master Y'shua Messiah, and you will be saved, you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Master to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized."

Acts 18:8, "Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Master with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized."

Acts 19:4-5, "Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Messiah Y'shua." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Master Y'shua."

Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Master."

Galatians 3:27, "For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah."

More proof about the name and baptism:

1. "They acknowledge that the original formula for baptism was in the Name of the Savior, but the Pope changed it." *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1913 edition, volume 2, page 256.

2. "The baptismal formula was changed from the Name of the Savior, to the words Father, Son and Holy Ghost by the Catholic

church in the second century." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, volume 3, pages 365-366.

3. "The early Church always immersed in the Name of the Savior, until the development of the trinity doctrine in the second century." *Canney Encyclopedia of Religion*, page 53.

4. "The Christian baptism was administered using the Name of the Savior. The use of the Trinitarian formula of any sort was not suggested in the early church history. Baptism was always in the Name of the Savior." *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion*, volume 2, pages 377-379.

5. "Moreover, there is no mention in the New Testament of any one being immersed into the name of the trinity." *Dictionary of the Bible*, by Hastings, volume 1, page 242, 1906 edition.

6. "The term 'trinity' was originated by Tertullian, a Roman Catholic church father." *New International Encyclopedia*, volume 22, page 477.

7. "The New Testament knows only one baptism in the Name of the Messiah, which still occurs even in the second and third century." *Schaff Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, volume 1, page 435, 1906 edition.

8. "The formula used was in the Name of the Savior. There is no evidence for the use of the trinity name." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, volume 2, page 384, 1958 edition.

9. "With the early disciples, generally, baptism was in the Name of the Messiah." *A History of the Christian Church* by Williston Walker, page 87, 1959 edition.

10. Under Formula: "In the name of Jesus Christ or of the Lord Jesus. The former expression is used in Acts 2:38 and 10:48. The latter is used in Acts 8:16 and 19:5. See also Acts 22:16... From these passages, and from Paul's words in the 1st Corinthians 1:13

Cupid's Dangerous Darts

Truth about Valentine's Day

According to the National Retail Federation, billions of dollars are spent each Valentine's Day to continue the tradition of spending more to spread love. Popular gifts like candy, flowers, jewelry, and cards cost the average man \$163.37, compared to an average of \$84.72 spent by women. (Doesn't this seem a little ridiculous?) Children of course send Valentine's cards to their classmates. And Americans purchase more than 46 million heart shaped boxes of chocolate in celebration of cupid. Valentines Day is so sweet! Sweet and toxic.

The holiday seems harmless and wonderful but dangers lurk in this pagan love feast. The Encyclopedia Britannica explains, "This holiday has its origin in the Roman festival of Lupercalia, held in mid-February. The festival, which celebrated the coming of spring, included fertility rites and the pairing off of women with men by lottery." Thousands of years ago, On February 15, Romans celebrated Luperacalia, honoring Faunus, god of fertility. Men would go to a grotto dedicated to Lupercal, the wolf god, located at the foot of Palatine Hill. Here, the Romans believed that the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were suckled by a she-wolf. These men would sacrifice a goat, wear its skin, and run around, hitting women with small whips, an act which was supposed to ensure fertility.

The *Encyclopedia Americana* states the custom of exchanging valentines was "handed down from the Roman festival of the Lupercalia, celebrated on the 15th of February, when names of young women were put into a box and drawn out by men as chance directed."

Later, the Catholic Church replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day. History shows that early church policy was to incorporate pagan celebrations. Instead of just banning these ancient satanic religions, the Catholic Church adopted evil practices into the Christian faith. A story was fabricated about a martyred Catholic priest who would sign his letters, "with love from St. Valentine." Today, we have the mixture of a Roman festival, savvy retail marketing, and a false story of a patron saint. Valentines Day is no longer part of the liturgical calendar of any church. This day was dropped from the Catholic calendar in 1969 and not surprisingly has returned to its original pagan roots of unbridled love making. The Bible says to "take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them," Ephesians 5:11.

Mythology teaches that Venus was the mother of Cupid, whose name means "desire." Nimrod's mother, Venus desired / lusted after her own son. That is why she is called the goddess of sexual immorality - she had relations her own son. Their twisted sexuality is the object of Valentine's Day as their relationship was consummated on February 14. Cupid can also be traced back to the evil man Nimrod, who built the tower of Babel in Genesis 10. Nimrod / Cupid was a mighty hunter with bow and arrows. His vicious rebellion against the Almighty continues with Valentine's Day.

The history and origin of modern practices and holidays should be an issue to Bible believers. Pagan holidays, like the love feast Valentine's Day, should be avoided. Zephaniah 1:8 says, "On that day of judgment," says YHWH, "I will punish the leaders... and all those following pagan customs." Love is wonderful but Valentine's Day is like a tainted candy with deadly poison. "Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out," 1 Corinthians 7:3.

Passover Today

Truth about Passover

The holy day of Passover is a Biblical worship experience that celebrates the deliverance of the Hebrew people from the harsh slavery of Pharaoh. Passover recalls how ten horrible plagues pronounced judgment upon Egypt and pagan gods. On the night of the final plague, the Israelites were commanded by the Almighty to take the blood of a lamb and smear it on the doorposts of their home. The death of the firstborn would “pass over” the houses marked with blood. This of course foreshadows the Lamb of YHWH, the Messiah, whose blood would be shed to cover the sins of the world on a future Passover.

Since that dark night in Egypt, the Jewish people have faithfully kept the Passover. John 2:13 shows that from His childhood, the Savior celebrated the festival. Much can be learned as a person follows the Savior’s examples of life and culture. “For here unto were ye called; because Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow ***his steps***, 1 Peter 2:21. In the Gospels, the disciples participate in the iconic “Last Supper,” which was actually a Passover teaching.

Even today, the Passover story is told through an interactive meal called a “seder.” The seder menu includes bitter herbs, unleavened bread called “matzah,” wine, and lamb. These foods have specific meaning to convey the divine message of slavery, liberation, sin, and blood sacrifice. The meal is then followed by a 7 day fast of all food products that contain yeast. “That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast,” Exodus 12:8.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the importance of commemorating Passover when he wrote, “Messiah, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the festival (of Passover),” in 1 Corinthians 5:8. History shows that the commandment to keep Passover was repealed by the Roman Catholic Church in 325AD. The Bible never abolishes this memorial.

Many dismiss Passover as an outdated Jewish festival. Yet to do so is to reject a set apart time of blessing and rich meaning. It was during a special Passover meal the Savior said, “This is my body which is given for you: This do in remembrance of me,” Luke 22:19.

On the night before his death, that the Savior commemorated the Passover with His disciples as seen in Matthew 26:17-24. During this meal the Savior said, “This bread is my body,” and “this cup is the new testament in my blood,” Luke 22:7, 19-20. The Messiah wasn’t instituting the service of “communion” at this point. These words were spoken during *and* about the Passover meal. Bible believers are to keep Passover in remembrance of the Messiah.

The bread and the wine were later removed from the Passover and developed into the weekly Eucharist by the Roman church. The idea of transubstantiation was then adopted into communion to appease the nations that were accustomed to offer goblets of human blood to acquire the virtues of the dead person. Christians everywhere now partake of wafers and wine without truly recognizing the meaning behind the service. Sadly, the message behind the meal is lost as communion is accepted and Passover is ignored. The main point of Passover is for each Bible believer to actively reflect upon their faith and seek true holiness. The communion table is only part of the meal, which is often taken at the wrong time.

Give Up Lent for Lent

The truth about the Lenten season

Many people celebrate the season of Lent by fasting certain foods or other physical pleasures. These people give up specific sins or bad habits to prepare themselves for resurrection Sunday. Such a practice seems noble, yet history reveals the festival of Lent is a Biblical comprise that can actually lead to sin.

Each year the Lenten season starts after the great debauchery of Mardi Gras. The French term “Mardi Gras” literally means “Fat Tuesday,” which commemorates the last day to get “fat” and eat before the lent fast begins. The first day of Lent is called Ash Wednesday, as on this day believers mark their foreheads with ash to symbolize the start of a solemn fast. Many suggest that Lent is kept to remember the Savior’s 40 day fast in the wilderness and to prepare for the celebration of Easter. Historians suggest that Lent is like other pagan practices that are not found in the Scriptures yet were adopted into the Church from the surrounding culture and ancient history. Lent can actually be traced back to the forbidden worship of Tammuz.

"The forty days' abstinence of the Lent was directly borrowed from the worshippers of the Babylonian goddess. Such a Lent of forty days, 'in the spring of the year,' is still observed by the Yezidis or pagan Devil worshippers of Koordistan, who have inherited it from their early masters, the Babylonians. Such a Lent was held by the pagan Mexicans, in honor of the sun and was observed in Egypt as well. This Egyptian Lent of forty days was held expressly in commemoration of Adonis or Osiris, the great mediatorial god. Among the Pagans this Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the

death and resurrection of Tammuz," wrote Alexander Hislop in the Two Babylons, pages 104 and 105.

A pagan connection between Tammuz and Lent is clear. During ancient times the death of the god Tammuz was commemorated through weeping and fasting. The Bible condemns such practices. "And He said to me, 'Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing.' So He brought me to the door of the north gate of YHWH's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz,'" Ezekiel 8:13-14. The Wycliffe Bible Commentary states, "Mourning for the god was followed by a celebration of resurrection."

Popular Bible commentator John MacArthur agrees, "The celebration of Lent has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis's mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezek. 8:14) before his alleged resurrection—another of Satan's mythical counterfeits." (John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary; 1 Corinthians, Chicago: Moody, 1984*).

Neither the Messiah, the Apostles, nor the first church leaders spoke of Lent as an accepted practice. Lent officially became a "Christian" celebration at the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 360. Even the famed Catholic Saint Abbot John Cassian, the monk of Marseilles, admitted in the fifth century, "Howbeit you should know that as long as the primitive church retained its perfection unbroken, this observance of Lent did not exist." Today Lent is celebrated by most Catholics, Episcopals, Lutherans, and some Presbyterians who desire to be closer to the Almighty. Many unknowingly observe Lent without knowing its history or acknowledging its pagan past.

YHWH hates *all* pagan observances. Study these verses to understand the danger of participating in pagan practices: Jeremiah. 10:2-3; Leviticus 18:3, 30; Deuteronomy. 7:1-5, 16.

According to tradition Semeramis, the wife of Nimrod the King of Babylon, claimed she had been supernaturally impregnated by the Sun god and gave birth to Tammuz. One day while hunting, Tamuz was killed by a wild boar. Semeramis mourned for 40 days, at the end of which Tammuz was supposedly brought back from the dead. She proclaimed herself Queen of Heaven, founded a celibate priesthood to worship her son and declared its chief priest infallible, and memorialized her mourning in an annual 40 day period of denial. It was the world's first counterfeit of the Biblical story of the Redeemer and grew into a mother-child cult that was duplicated in almost every pagan mythology.

Holy Week Hoax

Truth about the resurrection

During the Holy Week, the entire world pauses to reflect upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Banks close on Good Friday and churches are filled to the maximum for Easter sunrise services. Obvious questions of the Holy Week's Biblical accuracy are ignored as people are busy with egg hunts and Spring activities. An honest study of the New Testament will reveal that Y'shua didn't die on Good Friday nor did He resurrect on Easter morning.

The Holy Week is flawed from the start with Palm Sunday error. Palm Sunday is taught to be the day that Y'shua was lauded with palm branches as He rode a donkey into Jerusalem. The Bible never indicates that this took place on Sunday.

“Good Friday” is when Y'shua is believed to have been crucified. The idea of a Friday crucifixion is problematic if compared to the time and date of the resurrection. Y'shua Himself said, “for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” Matthew 12:40. There are not three days and three nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. From this passage one must conclude that either the Bible is wrong or the traditions of a Good Friday death and Sunday morning resurrection are in error. No stretch of the imagination can create three nights between Friday and Sunday morning.

Easter is always after the full moon of the Spring Equinox. The date was originally set by the Roman Catholic Church to coincide with a yearly festival of worship to the fertility goddess named “Ishtar.” For 1,730 years the resurrection has been celebrated on

Easter Sunday, but that doesn't make the date correct. To understand when the Messiah was raised from the dead, one must recognize when a Biblical day begins and ends.

From creation, the Almighty considers a day to begin and end at evening. "And the evening and the morning were the first day," Genesis 1:5. Even today the Jewish people regard Friday evening to Saturday evening as the seventh day Sabbath. The Biblical week begins and ends on Saturday night. Leviticus 23:32, "from evening unto evening, shall ye celebrate your Sabbath."

John 20:1 reveals the truth concerning the resurrection, "The first [day] of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher," KJV. The word [day] is in parenthesis as the translators added this word to the Bible. The verse accurately reads that Mary came to the tomb as the first day of the week began, near 8pm on Saturday night. The Savior had already risen from the dead before dark! Matthew 28:1-2 shows two women visiting the tomb shortly after sundown on Saturday night. Again, the tomb was empty at the end of the Sabbath on Saturday night.

The scriptures are clear that Y'shua spent three days and three nights in the tomb before rising from the dead slightly before sundown on Saturday night. This means that Y'shua's' triumphant entry in Jerusalem occurred on a Saturday and that the Savior was killed on a Wednesday afternoon. So much for Good Friday!

Celebrating the resurrection on Sunday morning is at best bad timing and at worst a violation of Ezekiel 8:15-18. If the timing of the death of Messiah is incorrect, then what other errors can be found within traditional Christianity? "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Colossians 2:8.

Evils of Easter

Truth about Easter eggs

What do rabbits, eggs, and the resurrection of the Savior really have in common? The Easter story that most of the world knows is one of hope, joy, and an empty tomb. The Easter story of history is quite different.

Like many other popular holidays, Easter is actually a mix of ancient occultic practices and Biblical ideas. From the name of the holiday to the use of baskets and bunnies, many evil customs of idolatry have been fossilized in Easter. Thousands of years before 33AD the fertility goddess “Ishtar” was worshipped as people died eggs and arose early for sunrise services.

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1934) states: “Easter, Ostara, or Ishtar was the goddess of Spring in the religion of the ancient Angles and Saxons. Every April a festival was celebrated in her honor. With the beginnings of Christianity, the old gods were put aside. From then on the festival was celebrated in honor of the resurrection of Christ, but was still known as Easter after the old goddess.”

The true origin of Easter is more about fertility and mother earth than the Bible. “The egg was a sacred symbol among the Babylonians. They believed an old fable about an egg of wondrous size which was supposed to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates River. From this marvelous egg - according to the ancient story - the Goddess Ishtar (Semiramis), was hatched. And so the egg came to symbolize the Goddess Easter,” The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. 9, p. 309. Three month old infants were sacrificed to Ishtar and their blood was used to dye eggs in honor of the false god. To imbue fertility upon their growing season,

Pagans would roll these eggs on their fields. The eggs were then hidden from evil spirits to later be collected in baskets.

The word “Easter” appears only once in the King James Version of the Bible (and not at all in most other translations). From this one appearance a true concern arises. Here, the King James translators mistranslated the Greek word for Passover as “Easter.” Acts 12:4: “And when he [King Herod Agrippa I] had apprehended him [the apostle Peter], he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.” The Greek word for “Easter” in this verse is “pascha.” This term is properly translated over 28 times in the Bible as “Passover.” Passover is a yearly festival that recalls Israelite’s exodus from Egypt. This holy day was given to mankind (and not just the Jewish people) as an everlasting commandment. Passover was part of the original faith of the Apostles and the Savior. Sadly, the mistranslation in the book of Acts is just one example of how the true festival of Passover has been replaced with the idolatry of Easter.

Neither the apostles nor the Messiah commemorated Easter. “Constantine the Great, Roman emperor, convoked the Council of Nicaea in 325. The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox,” says the History Channel. For the first 300 years after the Savior’s crucifixion, the early church kept the festival of Passover as commanded in Leviticus 23.

The holiday of Ishtar/Easter is problematic for a person who seeks undefiled worship. The mixture of bunnies, baskets, and the Bible believer certainly is perplexing. “YHWH is spirit and those that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth,” John 4:24.

Crucifixion Facts

Truth about the death of Messiah

Fact #1: Crucifixion is an ancient method of execution that caused extreme pain as the body was tortured to death. The Romans perfected this technique, which was used only upon the most hideous criminals. One foot would be pressed backwards against the other while a nail would be driven through the arches. Iron nails were also driven deep into the skin near the person's wrists. With each breath, the body would painfully flex up and down upon the nails. This motion created excruciating agony as the weight of the body was pressed upon the muscles and nerve endings. Cramps, fatigue, and knotting would lead to the pectoral muscles being paralyzed. The victim's heart would eventually stop due to a loss of blood and the buildup of carbon dioxide in the lungs.

Fact #2: The crucifixion of the Messiah is prophesied throughout the Old Testament. Many verses speak vividly about His passion. For example, Psalm 22:16 read, "For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet."

Fact #3: The Roman method of crucifixion used during the time of Jesus was not upon a cross but most likely straight stake or tree. "Messiah hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," Galatians 3:13. History records that the few times a cross shaped beam was used for an execution, the shape resembled the capitalized letter T and not the lower case t shape.

Most English Bibles poorly translate the term "cross" to continue this error. In the New Testament, the word translated for "cross" is

the Greek phrase “stauros.” According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, this term literally means “stake” or “upright beam.” The popular cross shape was imported by the Catholic Church from neighboring pagan religions. This fact renders the cross as an incorrect symbol and virtually insignificant during Biblical worship.

Fact #4: The hands/palms of Y’shua were not nail scarred. The Romans could not have placed the nails into the hands of a criminal as the palms were not strong enough to support the weight of the body. Instead, nine to twelve inch nails were driven deep into the arms of the sufferer. The space between the small bones of the wrists, *radial and ulna*, were strong enough to allow the body to hang for hours in agony. A nail in the hand would have broken many bones. Psalm 34:20 and John 19:36 state that not a single bone was broken in His body; therefore He could not have nail scarred hands. Some archeologists actually believe that ropes, not nails, were used to hold the Messiah to the tree.

Fact #5: The Jews did not kill Y’shua. Nor did the Romans. No one took the Savior’s life from Him. The Bible clearly shows that He gave up His life freely for all mankind. “I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again,” John 10:17-18. Because the wages of sin is death, the Savior gave His life upon a tree. He became cursed to pay the penalty of sin. The death and eventual resurrection of the Savior provided hope for all mankind. “For YHWH so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him would not perish but have everlasting life,” John 3:16.

Gay Pride and Original Sin

Truth about original sin and homosexuality

June is a special month for graduations, weddings, and summer activities. June 2009 was particularly unique as the Obama administration recognized this time as the first ever National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride month.

In a proclamation posted on the whitehouse.gov website, Obama wrote that "My Administration has partnered with the LGBT community to advance a wide range of initiatives. The LGBT rights movement has achieved great progress, but there is more work to be done... During LGBT Pride Month, I call upon the LGBT community, the Congress, and the American people to work together to promote equal rights for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

Sexual preference is certainly a divisive issue that raises many debates in the political and religious arenas. This subject isn't taboo to the Bible. The Scriptures clearly define homosexual behavior as against the Almighty's perfect will as revealed in the Law of Moses. 1 John 3:4 states that "sin is lawlessness." During Biblical times the punishment for sodomy was death. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them," Leviticus 20:13. In the New Testament, Paul commented, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of YHWH? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of YHWH," 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

Homosexuality, like eating pork, is abominable to the Almighty. "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable," Leviticus 18:22. The Bible also addresses the issue of sexual orientation. While many would argue differently, the Scriptures do indeed indicate that people are born gay. A person is also born a thief, a liar, a murderer, and an adulterer. The doctrine of original sin states that each baby is born into sin. Since homosexuality is a sin then each and every person is born gay.

Sin is a genetic defect passed down from Adam to all mankind. From parent to child throughout the generations, sin has affected the entire human race. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous," Romans 5:12, 19.

The doctrine of "original sin" teaches that one doesn't become a sinner after doing something wrong. Instead, each person is born into sin. RC Sproul said, "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners." Some people act upon the sinful desire and choose to live the LGBT lifestyle. Others resist or deny this temptation and live straight. The fact that a person is born sinful raises one final point. The solution to the birth defect of sin was given in John 3:3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Heaven," John 3:3. The sinful actions of Adam polluted the human race. Sin separates mankind from the Creator. The Messiah conquered the power of sin through His life, death, and resurrection. June 2009 may have been Nation LGBT Pride Month but true pride can be found in walking in holiness before the Almighty as a born again believer.

Pentecost Power

Truth about the feast of weeks

The Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA) suggest that Christians should celebrate Pentecost exactly seven weeks after Easter Sunday. Lutheran churches commemorate the day through special prayers and adorning their sanctuary with bright red colored vestments, signifying the fiery tongues of Acts 2. Pentecost, or Whitsunday, is considered to be the birth of the church as it was on this day that the Holy Spirit filled those gathered in the upper room.

The *Holman Bible Dictionary*, a Baptist publication, states that "Pentecost is a Jewish festival at which the Holy Spirit came on the early church." Judaism remembers Pentecost, or "Shavuot in Hebrew, as the exact day that Moses received the first five books of the Bible (called the Torah) on Mount Sinai. Observant Jewish people keep the day holy by attending special worship services, eating dairy products, and conducting an all night vigil dedicated to study. On this night, it is said that the Holy Spirit will visit those waiting in worship to sweeten their tongues.

Celebrating Pentecost was nothing new for the first disciples of the Savior. They had regularly kept the "feast of weeks" in accordance to the Torah. The word "Pentecost" is from the Greek language as "pente" is a reference to a 50 day interval that starts with Passover. In Leviticus chapter 23 Bible believers are instructed to count 50 days until Shavuot. The traditional Jewish calendar starts this counting after the Sabbath day of Passover. This results in Shavuot occurring exactly fifty days after Passover, which could be on any day of the week. (Some Torah keeping groups wait until the seventh-day Sabbath after Passover to begin counting. This choice results in Pentecost always falling on a Sunday.) "You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Shabbat, from the day

when you bring the Omer of the waving seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall count, fifty days... You shall have a holy convocation for yourselves on this very day; you shall do no laborious work; it is an eternal decree for all generations," Leviticus 23:15-16, 21.

At His ascension into heaven, the Savior instructed his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1 finishes with a small group of believers in the tiny upper room of a house. Then in Acts 2 the counting of 50 days was completed and the day of Pentecost had fully come. One hundred and twenty people were filled with the Spirit and began to speak in diverse tongues. The Bible clearly indicates that this did not take place in the upper room but at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Acts 2:2, "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." The upper room isn't mentioned. The phrase "house" is an idiomatic expression that indicates the "house of worship" or "temple." 120 people could not have fit into the tiny attic space of a first century house!

Acts 2 then shows that many people at the temple heard the disciples speak in tongues as 3,000 accepted the Jewish Messiah. Such events taking place at the temple site further validates that Christianity was originally a sect of Judaism and was never intended to become a separate religion. Since that first century Shavuot, Mainstream Christianity has argued over the validity of tongues and the Pentecostal experience. The ELCA and many in Christendom ignore the correct date and history of Pentecost found in Leviticus 23, Exodus 19, Acts 2, and Deuteronomy 9. By celebrating the Feast of Shavuot you will come into the joy of obedience and the revelation of YHWH's spirit.

Finding Relevance in the Holy Days

Truth about the fall festivals

A recent Time magazine cover story listed the "Re-Judaizing Jesus" as one of the "Ten Ideas That Are Changing the World." According the editors of Time, the Hebrew roots movement will have more impact on the future than money and politics. The article explains that to properly understand the Savior of the New Testament one must accept the precepts and customs of the Old Testament. Such a return to the Rabbi Y'shua leads many people to begin celebrating what are mistakenly called the "Jewish Festivals." These are days of worship that were not given only to the Jewish people but for all who call upon the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Leviticus 23:2 explains, "Concerning the feasts of YHWH, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are MY feasts." The Biblical festivals are holy days that the Almighty has chosen. They are HIS feasts, which include Passover and Pentecost in the Spring and several festivals that usually occur in September or October.

The Feast of Trumpets is most easily recognized as Rosh Hashanah, though the Bible never makes this distinction. It is a commanded time to gather for celebration and the blowing of trumpets, which occurs on September 19th this year. During Temple times a set of twin silver trumpets were sounded along with a ram's horn called a "shofar." This day is also considered the first of the "ten days of awe" that lead up to and include the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Trumpets is symbolic of the return of Messiah to the world to set up His kingdom. "Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound..." 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

The next special day of worship is Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. It was on this day, during Temple times, that the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies and present a special once a year sacrifice. Atonement was granted if the people were truly repentant of their sins and the priest was obedient in his actions. Today, Yom Kippur is observed by fasting for a period of 25 hours. “It shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before YHWH your Elohim,” Leviticus 23:27-28. Yom Kippur is prophetic of the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20.

The last festival of the Fall season is the joyous Feast of Tabernacles or “Sukkot.” During this seven-day celebration believers are commanded to remember the wilderness journey of the nation of Israel by dwelling in tents. “Seven days shalt thou keep a feast unto YHWH thy Elohim in the place which YHWH shall choose; because YHWH thy Elohim shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the work of thy hands, and thou shalt be altogether joyful,” Deuteronomy 16:15. Prophetically, the four sided sukkah pictures the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven in Revelation 21.

The fall festivals of YHWH are opportunities to experience true Biblical worship as the Creator intended. Many Christian leaders, from John Haggee to Joseph Falwell, are advocating the celebration and relevance of the Leviticus 23 festivals. When a person begins to keep the Festivals of Elohim their eyes are often opened to a greater understanding of the Scriptures and end times prophetic events.

Happy Birthday Jesus

Truth about the Savior's birth

How would you feel if your friends and family celebrated your birthday at the wrong time each year? Well, though the world recognizes December 25th as the birth date of the Messiah, the Bible actually alludes to His birth taking place in the fall. The Scriptures and historical records do clearly indicate that the Savior was most likely born during the Festival of Tabernacles, which occurs in September or October.

The Festival of Tabernacles, called “Sukkot” in Hebrew, recalls the wilderness voyage of the Israelites towards the Promised Land. For forty years the Hebrew people dwelt in tents and were fed heavenly manna. To remember the exodus journey, the Israelites were instructed in Leviticus 23 to hold an annual seven day celebration. “You shall dwell in tents seven days, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt,” Leviticus 23:42-43.

The story of John the Baptist proves that the birth of the Savior took place during Sukkot. Elizabeth (John's mother) was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Y'shua conceived (Luke 1:24-36). John's father was a priest serving in the Jerusalem temple during the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). Nine months from the temple service would have been about the month of March for the most likely time for John's birth. Adding another six months (the difference in ages) brings us to the end of September as the most likely time of the virgin birth.

Y'shua the Redeemer was born in the town of Bethlehem, in order to fulfill a prophecy found in Micah 5:1-2. This Bethlehem birth occurred because of a Roman census that was taking place. For tax purposes, King Herod and the Romans were known to take their

censuses according to the prevailing customs of the occupied territories. Each Hebrew male journeyed to Jerusalem three times a year, at Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The towns around Jerusalem (like Bethlehem) would fill to capacity as the observant Hebrews made their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There was no room at the inn because the vacancies were filled by the travelers.

John the Baptist was born at Passover and Messiah was born 6 months later during Sukkot. He was given the circumcised and then given the Hebrew name “Y’shua” on the eighth day. The puzzle of the Messiah’s birth date comes together with the knowledge of this festival. The birth of the Savior was not an independent event that could have occurred on any date. The Sukkot birth was a prophetic picture of “Emmanu-el” or “god with us.” John 1:14 says that the “word became flesh and dwelt among us.” The Greek term for “dwelt” in the oldest manuscripts is the exact same Greek word used to reference the Old Testament “tabernacle.” So, this verse could actually read – “the word became flesh and tabernacle among us.” The manifest presence of the Creator was the message of Sukkot during the times of Moses, the birth of Y’shua, and today.

With just a little investigation, the Feast of Tabernacles can be established as the time that the Messiah was born of a virgin. Y’shua celebrated Sukkot in John 7, thus putting His stamp of approval upon this feast day. Sukkot is not a “Jewish holiday,” but rather a Biblical festival given to all believers for joy and spiritual growth. Happy birthday Y’shua!

Luther and the Supposed Reformation

Truth about the 95 thesis

Christians throughout the world celebrate the last Sunday in October as "Reformation Day." This is in remembrance of how Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517. Luther's actions exposed the Catholic Church as full of false doctrine, superstition, and ignorance. His main disagreement centered on salvation by grace through faith. After Luther's courageous acts, the Protestant movement gained popularity. Luther changed the Sunday worship service to focus on preaching instead of the Eucharist, but he left other Catholic traditions intact. The "new" Lutheran worship style differed little from the Catholic Mass. "Luther retained the basic order of the medieval Mass along with the ceremonial aspects of lights, incense and vestments," Maxwell, Outline of Christian Worship, page 77.

Luther talked much about the "priesthood of all believers" but did not allow the reformation to affect the services of worship. Luther said, "It is not now nor ever has been our intention to abolish the liturgical service of God completely," Luther's works, LII, 20. Accordingly, the pulpit and not the altar table is the central element in most contemporary churches. Many similarities still remain between the Catholic Church and most Christian denominations like Episcopal, Lutheran, and Methodist. Did Luther go far enough? Was the Reformation the needed resistance of evil and the complete return to righteousness?

Sadly, Luther's actions did little to change church worship. Yes, Luther led a drastically needed reformation of doctrine BUT the Protestant movement has continued to mirror many Catholic traditions. It's been almost 500 years since the first Reformation

Sunday but the church is still stuck in incorrect Catholic practices. Here are a few examples:

"Is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify," said Cardinal James Gibbons.

History shows that Christ-mass is a leftover holiday with symbols of Madonna and child which were borrowed from Egyptian worship of Isis and Horus. This is in violation of Exodus 20:3. On June 29, 2008 the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments banned the sacred name of "Yahweh" from being used in liturgy or music. This is in violation of Exodus 3:30.

Catholicism and much of the modern church teaches that the Pastor or Minister acts as a mediator for confession, sin, or learning of doctrine. This is in violation of 1 Timothy 2:5.

Luther participated in a reformation that continues until this day. Many people are laying aside unbiblical practices and searching for the truth. This movement will continue until the return of the Messiah. The Savior will make His second coming when the truth faith is restored completely. He will return when there is a full reformation. "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of YHWH; and He shall send Y'shua Messiah, which before was preached unto You: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which Elohim hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began," Acts 3:17-21.

Behind the Mask of Halloween

Truth about All Hallow's Eve

A pig may wear lipstick, but it's still a dirty farm animal. The pig will return to its ways of rolling in the mud and eventually smear the Mary Kay paint. Like this proverbial pig, we can reason excuses for Bible believers to celebrate Halloween but the argument does no good. Does it matter that this holiday is evil? Should it concern us that the customs involved in Halloween were once used to worship demons? "Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil," 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22. Halloween practices, from dressing in costumes to bobbing for apples, were once part of pagan worship. These actions are repeated today by people who are unaware or simply don't care about their true meaning. Time may have passed but their origins and true purpose remains the same.

The history of Halloween as an evil day of satanic worship can't be denied. It is a historical fact. "The observances connected with Halloween are believed to have originated among the ancient Druids, who believed that on the evening, Saman, the lord of the dead, called forth hosts of evil spirits, New Encyclopedia, Vol. 12, p. 152.

"The Druids, an order of priests in ancient Britain, believed that on Halloween, ghosts, spirits, fairies, witches, and elves came out to harm people. They thought the cat was sacred and believed that cats had once been human beings but were changed as a punishment for evil deeds. From these Druidic beliefs comes the present-day use of witches, ghosts, and cats in Halloween festivities. The Druids had an autumn festival called Samhain, or summer's end. It was an occasion for feasting on all the kinds of food which had been grown during the summer," The World Book Encyclopedia, volume 9, page 25.

Is Halloween really an evil celebration? "During this time interval on October 31 the normal order of the universe is suspended, the barriers between the natural and the supernatural are temporarily removed, the sidh lies open and all divine beings and the spirits of the dead move freely among men and interfere sometimes violently, in their affairs," *Celtic Mythology*, p. 127. Clearly, Halloween is an ancient religious holiday that over time has evolved into a secular celebration.

Today ancient customs that were once used to conjure up spirits have been adopted by the modern world of entertainment and profit. Some cultures call it the "Day of the Dead" or "All Saint's Day" but the holiday is still the same.

Dressing up children for trick-or-treating or walking through a haunted house may be fun, but such actions are inherently immoral. The Scriptures tells us to "Abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

How did Halloween become part of the current society? What does church history teach? "The celebration of All Saints' Day is attributed to Pope Boniface IV, who dedicated the Roman temple, the Pantheon, to St. Mary and the Martyrs on the thirteenth of May, 610. Boniface set the day aside as a memorial to early Christians who died for their beliefs without official recognition of their sanctity, so that 'the memory of all the saints might in future be honored in the place which had formerly been devoted to the worship, not of gods but of demons'. The clergy encouraged their flock to remember the dead with prayers instead of sacrifices. People were taught to bake 'soul cakes' - little pastries and breads - to offer in exchange for blessings rather than trying to appease the spirits with food and wine. Villagers were also encouraged to masquerade on this day, not to frighten unwelcome spirits, but to honor Christian saints. On All Saints' Day, churches throughout

Europe and the British Isles displayed relics of their patron saints. Poor churches could not afford genuine relics and instead had processions in which parishioners dressed as saints, angels and devils. This religious masquerade resembled the pagan custom of parading ghosts to the town limits. It served the new church by giving an acceptable Christian basis to the custom of dressing up on Halloween. In addition, the Church tried to convince the people that the great bonfires they lit in homage to the sun would instead keep the devil away - God's mortal enemy in the new Christian religion, *Halloween, An American Holiday, An American History*, by Lesley Pratt Bannatyne. Thanks to Pope Boniface, new Christian meanings were given to ancient pagan practices. Is this acceptable to the Almighty?

The only thing worse than blatant outright Satanic worship is secret homage to demons that is disguised behind seemingly normal practices of society. Bible believers have been called to be "in the world but not of the world." Halloween is an excellent opportunity to take a stand for righteousness and be a light to society. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind," Romans 12:2.

In Matthew 10:5 the Savior said, "do not go in the way of the pagans." Paganism is practices and principles that are not Christian or Biblical in origin. Many Pagan practices, like Halloween and other holidays, have been borrowed by the contemporary Church and thus polluted much of the faith. Christians should sway from such practices and prove create a distinction in the world.

Some churches compromise with Halloween alternatives like harvest festivals or Biblical costume parties. Again, such compromise is not allowed by the Scriptures. Pagan practices can not be transformed into holy deeds. Paganism can not be redeemed. Paganism can only be avoided. The truth about Halloween can be found in encyclopedias, Internet searches, and

even the on History Channel television network. This holiday is evil and should be avoided by those who claim to worship the Almighty of the Bible. Lipstick on a pig doesn't change the pig and nothing can change Halloween.

Turkey Talk

Truth about Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is more than just a time to gather with family to enjoy a good meal. It is a religious holiday that calls Americans to reflect upon their life, examine their ways, and give thanks for their blessings. History records many lessons that can be learned from Thanksgiving. In 1621 a group of religious Puritans left England to seek a land that would allow them religious freedom. Persecution pushed them to make a “pilgrimage” to America. It is from this journey that they became known as the “pilgrims.”

These Christian Puritans were conservative Bible believers who kept much of the Law of Moses. They were similar to the “Quakers” in that they promoted separation from pagan influences that still remain in Protestant Christianity. The Puritan’s desire was to achieve and preserve simplicity or 'purity' of faith that they felt had been lost amid Christianity. They came to America in order to continue the reformation away from Catholicism and the Church of England. The Pilgrims very likely kept a kosher diet and celebrated the feast days of Leviticus 23 like Passover or Sukkot. “The pilgrims based their customs on the Bible,” says Gloria Kaufer Greene, a food and holiday expert. “They knew that Sukkot was an autumn harvest festival, and there is evidence that they fashioned the first Thanksgiving after the Jewish custom of celebrating the success of the year’s crops.”

When the Pilgrims settled in America they were greeted by the Wampanoag Indians. History records about 90 Indians and 50 Puritans shared a meal of thanksgiving together sometime between September 21 and November 9. Based on the numbers, it was probably the Indians who brought most of the food. And let us not

be mistaken, it was the Pilgrims who were the visitors and not the hosts to this meal.

For that first and historic Thanksgiving there was no football and there was most likely no turkey. The only written eye witness account of the first meal was by colonist Edward Winslow to his friend in England. In this letter he states that they ate “wild fowl and venison.” He doesn’t specify if there was deep fried turkey or not.

Corn might have been a plenty but the cornucopia was surely missing. The Puritans would have never allowed this now popular centerpiece. The cornucopia, which dates back to the 5th century BCE, is a pagan symbol of Greek mythology and fertility. Its origin and meaning is directly opposed to the personal holiness kept by the Puritan Pilgrims.

When they first gathered, the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving was not a scheduled event. It became an American ritual 200 years later. President George Washington declared November 26, 1789 a day of thanksgiving and prayer in honor of the establishment of the new government. Washington wanted this holiday to be renewed yearly but faced harsh criticism from Thomas Jefferson, who stated the government had no authority to observe a religious holiday. It was in the midst of the civil war that President Abraham Lincoln declared the final Thursday in November as a national day of gratitude. Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln all agreed that Thanksgiving is a spiritual holiday for worship and appreciation.

This year, millions will bow to their television and pay homage to sports. Most will gorge with the gods of appetite and gluttony. Some will recognize the spiritual significance of this day, reflect upon their blessings and give thanks. May we all desire to be like the Pilgrims and return to a purity of faith that has been lost over the years.

Outlaw Christmas? Bah Humbug!

The truth about Christmas

Can you imagine America without Christmas? The idea seems preposterous as the jolly holiday has become engrained in the American culture. A recent poll shows that 92% of Americans, including atheists and Muslims, celebrate Christmas. This holiday brings people together with the hope of love and peace on earth. Right? Well, history records a different perspective.

The first settlers understood the dangers of Christmas. The yuletide was actually outlawed in America during the 1600s. In Boston from 1659 to 1661 those who exhibited the Christmas spirit were fined five shillings. In England Sir Oliver Cromwell led the ban as a means to rid the society of mistletoe, nativity scenes, and eggnog. Why ban Christmas? Beside the obvious lies about Santa Clause, is there something wrong with the holiday?

“The traditional customs connected with Christmas have developed from several sources as a result of the celebration of the birth of Christ mixed with the pagan agricultural and solar observations at midwinter. In the Roman world Saturnalia was a time of merrymaking and exchange of gifts. December 25 was also regarded as the birth date of the Iranian mystery god Mithras, the Sun of Righteousness,” Encyclopedia Britannica. Mithras worship started before Messiah was born and continues unchanged to this day. “Do not learn the practices of the heathen... For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not,” Jeremiah 10:2-4.

Followers of the Savior have been called to be “in the world but not of the world.” 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.” The principle is that one should abstain from all practices of evil origin. This would include Christmas.

However, there is a winter holiday for believers who want to follow the example set by the Savior.

The world celebrates Christmas. The Messiah celebrated Chanukah in John 10:22-23, “And it was at Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication, and it was winter. And the Messiah walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.” Chanukah isn't just a Jewish holiday. It is a set apart time of rejoicing and reflection for all followers of the Bible. Believers are to follow the Savior's every example. Remember that the Savior was a Hebrew-speaking Jew. What Jew would be at the Temple during Chanukah and not join the celebration? John 10 clearly indicates that He rejoiced at Chanukah and thus put his seal of approval upon this day.

The Hebrew word “Chanukah” literally means “dedication.” Chanukah is an eight day celebration that commemorates the dedication of the Temple, after it was desecrated by the Greek army. Christmas has a pagan past but the account of Chanukah is historical fact. Chanukah is based upon an actual military battle won by a small group of Hebrews. The Maccabee family led victory over the Syrian tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanies, in the 2nd century B.C. Chanukah is NOT the “Jewish Christmas,” but an altogether separate celebration of victory over paganism. There are games, songs, and traditions that recall the miracle of Chanukah without pagan roots. Today, some organizations seek to ban Christmas as a means of political correctness. Perhaps the founding fathers were right when they outlawed Christmas for spiritual correctness.

Don't Let Santa Fool You

The truth about December 25th

Children may be fooled, but most adults know that December 25th is not exactly when the Christ-child was born. Just a little research into this date reveals that the Church Fathers simply used an already pagan festival celebrating the re-birth of the sun to commemorate the birth of the Savior. It may be Christmas time but it's not time to celebrate the birth of Messiah.

The World Book Encyclopedia clarifies, "The first mention of December 25 as the birth of Jesus occurred in A.D. 336 in an early Roman calendar. The celebration of this day as Y'shua' birth date was influenced by pagan unchristian festivals held at that time. The ancient Romans held year-end celebrations to honor Saturn, their harvest god; and Mithras, the god of light... As part of all these celebrations, the people prepared special foods, decorated their homes with greenery, and joined in singing and gift giving. These customs gradually became part of the Christmas celebration," Volume 3, Christmas.

For many years the Eastern Church commemorated the Epiphany on January 6. The 12 Days of Christmas would begin on December 25 and then count forward. The Bible doesn't give a specific date for the Messiah. The Scriptures do state that some shepherds were present when Mary gave birth. Luke 2:7-8 states that the shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks when an angel appeared. One problem with a December 25th is that winter is extremely cold and rainy in Israel. The weather forces shepherds to find shelter for their livestock during the colder months. It is highly unlikely that the shepherds were outside in the middle of December.

The modern nativity scene is misleading as well. The Bible never says that the Wiseman visited Y'shua at the manger. According to Matthew 2:11, the wise men didn't arrive on the scene until Y'shua was a young child.

The story of John the Baptist points us to the true date of the birth of Messiah. Elizabeth (John's mother) was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Y'shua was conceived (Luke 1:24-36). John's father was a priest serving in the Jerusalem temple during the course of Abijah (Luke 1:5). Nine months from the temple service would have been about the month of March for the most likely time for John's birth. Adding another six months (the difference in ages) brings us to the end of September as the most likely time of Y'shua's birth.

There is no possible way that the Messiah was born in December. The modern date of Christmas is incorrect. Could other Christmas traditions be full of error as well? Some say to "put Christ back into Christmas." But, can believers conquer the pagan influences of ancient times, by giving these customs Christian religious meanings? Consider Jeremiah 10:2-4 which was written six centuries before the Savior came: "Do not learn the practices of the heathen." What did the heathen do that was so despicable? What practices are believers to stay clear from? What custom was so horrible that it should never be repeated? "Do not learn the practices of the heathen... For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not," Jeremiah 10:2-4.

The incorrect date and origin of customs implies that Christmas is simply paganism wrapped with a Christian bow.

The Immaculate Deception

The truth about Mary

No immaculate conception? Just the thought of such sounds blasphemous and wrong. However, no where does the Bible teach the doctrine of Immaculate Conception. Search the scriptures or read the Gospels and find absolutely nothing about the Immaculate Conception. Yes, one can see that the Savior was born of a virgin named Mary. The virgin birth is prophesied in Isaiah and came to pass in Luke 2. But the virgin birth and the Immaculate Conception are two distinctly different doctrines.

Believe it or not, the theology of the Immaculate Conception teaches that for the Messiah to be born sinless, that his earthly mother was sinless. This Catholic teaching has crept its way into Protestant churches who claim to believe in the Immaculate Conception without exactly knowing what it is. The Immaculate Conception actually regards the birth of Mary who was “without any stain of original sin, in her mother's womb: the dogma thus says that, from the first moment of her existence, she was preserved by God from the lack of sanctifying grace that afflicts mankind, and that she was instead filled with divine grace. It is further believed that she lived a life completely free from sin,” says encyclopedia.com. The Catholic Encyclopedia states Pope Pius IX defined this dogma in 1854. This edict also stated that Mary was the second Eve, totally sinless, and absolutely pure.

Clearly, the deception concerning the conception leads to an unhealthy recognition of Mary. It also leads to a wrong understanding of the Messiah. Error leads to error. It is taught that Mary had to have been sinless in order to give birth to a sinless Savior. The Pope teaches that since Mary was sinless then she is due homage and worship.

Mary was a normal human, affected by the sinful nature of Adam. “By one man sin affected the world,” Romans 5:12. We know that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of YHWH.” This “all” includes “all” of humanity and mother Mary! “As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one,” Romans 3:10.

The subject of the Savior’s birth is important to consider as it reveals the facts about His nature. The Messiah did NOT inherit his humanity from Mary. The scriptures show that Mary was sinful; therefore if Y’shua had a “normal” conception then she would have passed her sinful nature onto Him.

Mary was a willing servant but she wasn’t sinless. She agreed to carry and care for the baby in her womb. Thus, she acted as a surrogate mother of the Messiah. A surrogate mother is a woman who agrees to bear a child for a couple who are childless, usually due to wife being infertile or unable to carry a baby. The child grows inside the surrogate mother but has not biological relationship with the mother. This is exactly what we see with Y’shua and his earthly mother. The Almighty passed human sperm and egg and implanted a heavenly body within Mary. Hebrews 10:5 states that this was a “body prepared” in Heaven before the Savior came to earth.

Mary agreed to enter into covenant with YHWH to carry the baby in Luke 1:38. This doesn’t make Mary sinless. She was nothing more than a vessel.

Mary was not sinless or anything special. There was no immaculate conception of her body. The Savior came with sinless flesh to offer His life as a ransom for humanity. Put your trust in Him and not in religion or fables. Get to know the real Savior and worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

What Time Is It Anyway?

The truth about the calendar

With the New Year comes fireworks, champagne, and the purchase of an updated calendar. The calendar industry reports sales in the billions with designs featuring comedy, landscapes, and of course swimsuit models. You can choose a desktop or wall chart of days but you can't choose to use the most accurate telling of time. Historians agree that the calendar of today has been through so many changes that it is almost impossible to know exactly what year it is.

Most of the world uses the error-filled Gregorian calendar that was made popular by Pope Gregory XII. This calendar shows the year to change on January 1. Yet before this dateline, several countries celebrated the New Year at different times. The Romans recognized March 1 while the Byzantine Empire held September 1 as the start of the year. The Jewish people still change their calendar in mid September.

The Gregorian calendar is a supposed improvement upon the model created by Julius Caesar. When Caesar created his monthly calendar, he named each period of days after a different Greek god. January was named for Janus, the Roman mighty one of portals. May was named for Maia, the female deity of fertility. July was given its title after Julius Caesar himself. This isn't the only pagan connection to the modern calendar.

The Romans and Greeks had their pantheon of gods to honor. So, they developed a system of unified worship based on the calendar. This pattern continues today. Each day of the week actually retains its original name, given by the Romans, to signify the time to worship a different god. Monday is the day to worship the

moon. Thursday is Thor's Day. Sunday is honored as "solis dias"- the venerable day of the sun.

Using these titles for the days and months is in direct opposition to a Biblical principle to not pronounce the names of false gods. Exodus 23:13, "And in all things that I have said to you take heed: and make no mention of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth."

Perhaps we should return to the Biblical reckoning of time? Throughout the Scriptures there is only one day that is given a specific name. The Seventh day is called the "Sabbath" or "Shabbat" in Hebrew. All other days were counted off from the Sabbath. The months were also counted from the spring time of Passover and the month of "Aviv" as seen in Exodus 12:1-3.

The dating of our modern calendar is also incorrect. We are told that there have been 2009 years since the birth of Messiah. The term "AD" is short for "Anno Domini" or "in the year of our Lord." The problem is that Y'shua couldn't have been born in the year 1AD. The gospels show that the Savior's birth occurred during the reign of Herod the Great. Well, Herod's died in the spring of 4BC. Therefore, Messiah's birth had to take place at least four years before the traditional date! (Herod's death is recorded by Jewish historian Flavius Josephus in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 17, Chapter 8.)

These calendar errors make a startling point. If we are mislead concerning the actual dating of the year or naming of the days, then what other parts of our life and culture also contain error? Much time has passed since the events of the Bible took place. Sadly, as the calendars have changed so has mankind. The Almighty is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Amazing Grace and God's Law

Truth about the age of grace

The hymn “Amazing Grace” is probably the most well known anthem of Christianity. The song was written by the captain of a slave-trading ship named John Newton. After his conversion, Newton left the horrible seas and eventually joined forces with a member of the European parliament to end slavery. Newton was successful, as a bill written by his partner William Wilberforce was passed to outlaw slave trade in 1807. Heavenly amazing grace had taken the wretch of a sinner like John Newton and transformed his life.

“Grace” is unmerited or undeserved favor. Though “grace” is often the subject of Sunday sermons, the term is usually misunderstood and misrepresented. Psalm 89:2 states that the world was formed upon the foundation of grace. The Hebrew word used in this verse and throughout the Old Testament for “grace” or “mercy” is “chesed.” This term appears over 240 times in the Old Testament to explain how the Creator relates to His creation. Grace is not a New Testament idea! Somehow, it has become a mainstream Christian belief that God has changed to now accept people through grace when they were once accepted by obedience to the Law of Moses. The Elohim of grace has been incorrectly portrayed as dealing with people differently at different times. This demonic idea insinuates that what was wrong to do during the “dispensation of the law” is no longer a sin because Christians are now “under grace.” The doctrine of “dispensationalism” was made popular by the Scofield Reference Bible and is now ingrained in the mind of most church leaders. The word “dispensation” appears only four times in the KJV and never to infer that there are different periods of YHWH’s temperament. *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* says, “The modern theological use of the term is not in

Scripture.” There is no such thing as an “age of grace” or the “dispensation of grace.”

Noah, Abraham, Moses and others all found “chesed” or “grace” in the eyes of YHWH. Their belief was accredited to them as righteousness. From creation, salvation has always been “by grace through faith,” Ephesians 4:23. Those who put their trust in the Mighty One of Israel during Old Testament times were granted eternal life through chesed. The Law of Moses was not given as an instrument of salvation. Obedience to the Biblical commands cannot redeem anyone. The Law of Moses was given by the Almighty to explain how a person should relate to Him and other people. The Law defines sin and sets a standard for righteous behavior. According to Romans 3:23, a person who sins is under the death penalty of sin until the gift of amazing grace is accepted. This means that the entire world is “under the law” until they accept the Creator’s chesed and are then placed “under grace.” A person is saved by grace through faith in the shed blood of Messiah and then should live a life of obedience to the Law. “Sin shall not have dominion over you because you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Heaven forbid!” - Romans 6:14-15.

Grace doesn’t replace the Law. The Law doesn’t replace grace. The two work together to transform lives. The amazing grace that changed the life of John Newton is still available today. The lost can be found and the blind can see if a person will accept grace and then live in righteousness.

Prophecy and Hamas

The truth about the end of days

Over the years, various people have made some pretty bad predictions of the future. Some of history's all-time prophetic goof records that King George II said in 1773 that the American colonies had little stomach for revolution. In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn't have time for it. These folks were inherently wrong. Can a person tell the future? Well, through the words and prophecy of the Scriptures we can get an idea of future events and even a time line of when the battle of Armageddon may occur.

The 24th Chapter of Matthew provides many insights into the end of days. “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved,” Matthew 24:4-13. Notice that the Messiah doesn't mention a 'rapture' but insists that “he that endures until the end shall be saved.”

In this same chapter the Savior compared the wickedness of the last generation to the days of Noah. “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man,” Matthew 2:37. Here, the Savior was giving mankind a hint regarding the timing of His return. To understand this prophecy we must look to the original Hebrew used in the account of Noah in Genesis 6.

“The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually,” Genesis 6:5.

“The earth was corrupt and filled with violence,” Genesis 6:12

“The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and I will destroy them,” Genesis 6:13.

The increase of wickedness prompted the great flood cleansing. In these verses, the Hebrew word translated as “violence” and “wickedness” is a message from beyond. The actual word in the Hebrew is “hamas.” The world was destroyed because sin/violence/hamas increased. The Savior was speaking of the growth of “hamas” when He said, “as it was in the days of Noah so it will be when the Son of Man returns.”

Today, “Hamas” is the name of the Islamic terrorist organization that uses negative propaganda and military might to wage war against Israel. The Savior prophesied the exact name of the group that would oppose Israel and bring forth the time of Jacob’s trouble. Perhaps, we indeed are living in the time that will see the violence/hamas increase until the return of Messiah.

The Unsolved Mystery of Hell

The truth about eternal death

In the fall of 1988 a television series debuted that focused on lost loves, UFO sightings, fugitives and homicides. “Unsolved Mysteries” was hosted by a trench coat clad Robert Stack and was an instant hit. By the end of its eighth season, it was responsible for 87 reunions, capturing 140 criminals, and solving over 300 cases.

One unsolved mystery that would interest even the late Robert Stack is the subject of “hell.” The Scriptural understanding of such a place is very different than the notion of everlasting flames as seen in the literary classic “Dante’s Inferno.” Hell is referenced in the Old Testament with the rebellion of Korah against Moses in Numbers 16. The Bible actually says, “the earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all the men who were with Korah and all their property. They and all they possessed descended alive into Sheol.”

The Ancient Hebrew word “Sheol” literally means the “underworld of the dead.” The term speaks of an abode, thought to be deep within the earth (Psalms 88:6, Amos 9:2). Strong’s Exhaustive Dictionary calls it a “subterranean retreat, grave, hell, or pit.”

Korah rebelled and was swallowed alive by sheol/hell. The same is true for those who rebel against the Almighty’s Law today. Romans 6:23 states that the “wages of sin is death.” Spiritual death is separation from the Creator, which comes as a result of a lifestyle of sin.

The New Testament calls “hell” a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” where the “worm does not die, and the fire is not

quenched.” In the Bible, the word most often translated as “Hell” is derived from the Greek word “gehenna” or the “valley of Hinnom.” The Messiah often referenced “gehenna” as He spoke about the eventual punishment for the wicked. His listeners understood exactly what and where He was referencing. The valley of Hennah was the trash dump for the nation of Israel. In GeHinnom there was constant burning of waste, dead bodies, and trash until the items were totally consumed. GeHinnom is a picturesque term used to describe the harshest of conditions for those who do not accept the gift of eternal life. Perhaps the only thing worse than eternal burning is being totally annihilated like burnt trash?

The Bible teaches that only those people who are “born again” will inherit eternal “life.” All others will experience eternal “death” and cease to exist. This is worse than eternal burning! There will come a time when the lost souls will be annihilated. This is called the “Second Death” and is referenced throughout the book of Revelation.

Ezekiel 18:20 enforces this idea, “The soul who sins is the one who will die.” In Matthew 10:28 the Messiah said, “Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can *destroy* both soul and body in hell.”

Finally, in John 3:16 the Greek word used for “perish” illustrates this point clearly. The verse says, “For YHWH so loved the world that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.” This Greek word translated “perish” literally means “to destroy, put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end, to kill.” The idea of eternal punishment is not supported by the most popular Evangelistic verse! Those who do not accept the Messiah will face a time of torment in Hell/Sheol/GeHinnom and will then be utterly destroyed along with Hell itself. Mystery Solved. Hell exposed. Robert Stack would be proud.

Swine Flu and Swine Food

Truth about unclean foods

The swine flu has sparked fear in the entire world as dangers of an outbreak spread from Mexico City to Hong Kong. Thousands of years before the H1N1 virus scare, the Bible classified the pig as an unclean animal and unfit for human consumption.

Noah was told fill the ark with seven pairs of all clean beasts and two pairs of the unclean in Genesis 7:2. Biblically, a distinction was made between clean animals, like chicken and cows, and unclean animals. The need for more clean animals on the ark shows that these would have been used for food and sacrificial worship. The need for less unclean animals on the boat was because these animals reproduce quickly in liters and wouldn't have been considered as "food" for Noah and his family.

A pig is unclean for many reasons including the fact that it will eat anything, yet the animal lacks the proper digestive system to release poison from its body. Thus, the swine's sickness can be easily transferred to the person who eats the animal. Worms, called enzymes, also live inside the blood stream of swine and can be easily passed to humans. Such is also the case for shrimp, lobsters, vultures, and other scavengers. It is true that swine produce very little sweat from their skin. The inability to perspire keeps waste stored inside their body. The Center for Disease Control states that H1N1 can not be caught from eating swine. Yet, there are no less than seventy different types of diseases including trichinosis that can be caused by eating pork.

The scriptures call many unclean animals "abominations" whose carcasses that should not even be touched. Mainstream Christianity teaches that the dietary laws of the Old Testament have been

superseded by the New Testament. One misunderstood passage about this subject is Acts 10:9-19. In these verses Peter is said to have been extremely hungry. He is also confused about the acceptance of the Gentile believers. He then has a vision about various four-footed creatures. Peter is told to slaughter and eat as all are now made clean. When the vision concludes, Peter doesn't eat barbecue pork. Instead, he understands that the vision is not about unclean foods but unclean people. He proclaims, in Acts 10:28, "You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but YHWH has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

Another verse of confusion is found in the New International Version of Mark 7:19, "For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") Here, the Savior is speaking about the tradition of religious hand washing. The words in parenthesis are found in most modern translations but not in the King James Version Bible. Nor are the parenthetical words found in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament. This commentary was added by Bible translators in an attempt to free people from the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Regardless of such confusion, the precepts of the Bible are eternal. With or without the H1N1 virus, the pig was unclean for Noah and is still unclean today.

The Bible Healthcare Plan

Truth about universal healthcare

The debate over healthcare reform in the United States is a needless argument of partisan politics. Americans would not need universal coverage if Bible believers simply followed the Scriptures in regards to health and charity. The followers of the Savior should be a shining example of fitness and generosity to the needy. The Bible has much to say in regards to physical, emotional, and spiritual well being. “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from YHWH? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor YHWH with your body,” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Each person has been “fearfully and wonderfully made” to enjoy the best of life. Laziness and disease stop people from experiencing true abundance. This is not the Almighty’s will! The Bible clearly indicates that YHWH wants His children to be healthy in spirit and in body. 3 John 1:2 “Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.”

Sadly, the church is just as obese and just as sick as the rest of the world. Physical and spiritual corruption has continued to fester since perfection was lost in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given a diet from the best of the earth which included fresh fruits, vegetables and no meat. The couple was tempted to eat the forbidden as the original sin came in the form of food. The wrong diet was chosen and the result of their disobedience brought sickness, pain, and death into the world. In Genesis 7, Noah is permitted to eat the meat of certain animals that were designated as “clean.” Later in Leviticus 11, Moses reviews which animals are to be considered “food” and are fit for human consumption. And though mankind is allowed a lifespan of 120 years in Genesis 6:3,

this potential for a long vibrant life is seldom experienced. Unhealthy personal choices and dangerous habits rob people of the physical fullness the Bible offers. "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags," Proverbs 23:20-21. Most sickness can be attributed to overeating, consuming unhealthy items, and not having enough physical activity. "One who is lazy in his work is a brother to one who destroys," says Proverbs 18:9.

The Bible indicates that the assembly of believers were to be an example to the world in all areas of life. From their abundance, believers should be caring for the needy and unfortunate. There would be no need for Government welfare or healthcare if the Church cared for the poor and regularly taught personal responsibility. "Religion that YHWH our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world," James 1:27

President Ronald Reagan was right when he said, "government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." The answer to the current healthcare dilemma isn't more government involvement, but religious involvement by those who profess to follow the Savior. For if the people of YHWH would rise up in holiness to cleanse their bodies and commit themselves to providing for the needy, the government handout lines would soon turn to places of faith that can offer more than a meal or a prescription.

Heaven: It's Not What You Think

Truth about the new Jerusalem

Each day 150,000 people across the world pass away. To answer the questions of life after death, every major religion offers the promise of heaven in one form or another. Strict followers of Islam are told that they will have 70 virgins waiting on the other side of martyrdom. Mormonism speaks of ruling planets and Hinduism teaches reincarnation as different beings. The Christian view of heaven is a curious mix of Biblical fact and folklore. Biblically, heaven is not a place where people will spend eternity singing hymns, floating around on clouds, or listening to non-stop sermons. Heaven is not even a Bible believer's final destination!

The pearly gates or doorways into Heaven are each named after one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Revelation 21:12, "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel." To enter into the gates, one must associate with a tribe of Israel. The Scriptures clearly indicate that there is not a Baptist, Lutheran, or even a Christian door to Heaven.

The picturesque mansion over the hill top is really the Holy Temple on the mountain top of Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem (mistakenly called "heaven") is the realm in which YHWH's presence is manifest. It is more magnificent than any person can imagine and is the place where the angels and all believers who have departed because of death now live, Hebrews 12:22-24. In the New Jerusalem, people will be occupied with living and enjoying the best things in life. Believers will recognize loved ones and fellowship with others, Luke 23:42-43.

The Messiah is now in Heaven preparing the place for future events according to John 14:2. At the end of the Great Tribulation there will be a 1,000 year reign of YHWH upon the earth. Isaiah 66 states that during this time, all nations will keep the Law of Moses, celebrate the seventh-day Sabbath and New Moons. Then, the universe will be transformed as Heaven descends to earth. Revelation speaks of a huge squared city of the New Jerusalem that will come down from the sky to rest upon the planet. Clearly, heaven is not some place in a far away galaxy but is actually very earthly. Revelation 21:2, "And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from YHWH out of heaven." The New Earth will have no sea, sun, or moon. The paradise of the Garden of Eden will also be restored. "He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and YHWH Himself will be with them and be their Elohim. And YHWH will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away," Revelation 21:3-4.

The final destination for those who put their trust in YHWH and His Messiah isn't an eternal church service, but the New Jerusalem. Such knowledge of Heaven demands a paradigm shift in the mind of the believer. For if Jerusalem and Israel will be important in the world to come; perhaps it should be a priority today. The promise of Heaven is in reality the promise of the restoration of the nation of Israel. "On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem. The YHWH will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one YHWH, and his name the only name," Zechariah 14:8-9.

Understanding Hebrew Idioms

Truth about Hebrew phrases of speech

Comments like “a bull in a china shop” and “when the cows come home,” fill the English language. These terms are called “idioms.” An idiom is a phrase that can’t be taken literally and doesn’t always stick out like a sore thumb. It’s a manner of speaking that is natural to native speakers and can be confusing for others. Every culture has its own collection of sayings that suggest thoughts. When a teen says something is “off the chain,” the teen is actually giving their seal of approval. Such an age-specific phrase doesn’t cross the culture barrier very easily as our minds take in foreign information word-for-word, instead of thought-for-thought. A person who is new to English would be easily confused if he heard the phrase “absent without leave.” There are also many Hebrew idioms that are hidden within the Scriptures which can be easily misunderstood.

The Scriptures were originally written in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages. For hundreds of years, Hebrew idioms have been literally translated into English. The problem is, many times, the words are translated correctly, but the original Hebrew thought is lost. The words are there, but the meaning is missing. To understand this, just imagine writing that someone “kicked the bucket” and imagine your reader actually thinking a bucket was physically kicked.

When idioms are hidden behind literal reading, confusion sets in. Most people don’t recognize the hidden Hebrew idioms that they read in the Bible. One such statement was used by the Savior in the Gospel of Matthew. “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, not one jot or one tittle

shall pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled,” Matthew 5: 17-18. For most modern-day Christians, the previous verse means that the Torah and the other books of the “Old Testament” have been fulfilled, or done away with. They say that, “all was fulfilled” when Y’shua said, “it is finished.” Is this really what the Jewish Messiah meant? Just consider the Master’s own words. Has heaven and earth passed away? Of course not! Then, the Law and the prophets remain necessary and essential to living the Almighty’s will.

The Messiah quoted a Hebrew idiom when He said He came not to destroy the Law or the prophets. He was using a rabbinical phrase that was familiar to His audience. During Biblical times and today, if someone heard a Bible teaching and didn’t agree, they would say that the Teacher was “destroying the law.” If someone heard a teaching they thought was the right interpretation they would then say, “yes, this is fulfilling the law.” These are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. Read in context, the Savior had been accused of misinterpreting the Law, yet He said that He was actually rightly and correctly teaching it. Traditional Jewish writings support this idiom, “Should all the nations of the world unite to uproot one word of the Law, they would be unable to do it,” Leviticus Rabbah 19:2.

Hundreds of idioms are found throughout the Scriptures such as “if your eye is evil” or “heap burning coals.” The changes occur when the idioms and phrases of speech are taken out of the Hebrew language can really mix up the truth. We should not gloss over the confusing “contradictions” in the Scriptures. Nor should we mix up the modern and the ancient. To best understand the Bible, one should learn to study, and to live the Biblical culture.

Say Hello to Shalom

Truth about peace

For every language in the world there is a particular way to say "hello." For example, "hola" is 'hello' in Spanish. "Ni hao" is Chinese for 'greetings.' "Bonjour" is how the French say 'good day.' And, "shalom" is 'hello' in Hebrew.

Like saying "aloha" in Hawaii, wishing someone "shalom" carries many meanings. Shalom is used in Israel for "hello" and "good bye" and "peace." Isn't it amazing that in Israel, a country plagued by terrorists, the term most-often used is Shalom? Regardless of settlement pullouts and suicide bombers the desire and aspiration of every Israelite is peace. This hope to live in peace is the desire of all mankind worldwide. In this quest for peace, soldiers have died and kings have conquered. Yet true shalom is greater than just the absence of war and it is more than a friendly greeting. It is better than a fleeting feeling of happiness. Shalom is the central message of the Bible, the reason the Messiah came, and the answer to the all of the problems in the universe.

By using the phrase "peace" so loosely in the modern world, the true Biblical understanding of the word has been lost. "Peace" in English doesn't adequately describe the Hebrew term shalom. Genuine Shalom is the presence of the Holy One. This Shalom is literally His "wholeness" manifest.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines "shalom" as, "to be well, happy, complete, in good health, prosperous, to be whole, and wholly." The events of Luke, chapter 8 shed some interesting light on this.

"But as He went the people thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanched. And Y'shua said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, 'Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest thou, Who touched Me?' And Y'shua said, 'Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.' And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, 'Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made the whole; go in shalom,'" Luke 8:42-48.

In this story, the woman with the issue of blood received her healing as she touched the tzitzit (fringes) upon the garment of the Messiah. Her faith led her to reach out for the Savior, and the end result was healing. Not only did the flow of blood stop; she was also completely made whole. Don't miss this. She was healed and made whole. She had found the Messiah. The void in her soul was now overflowing with shalom. Her life was now filled with Him. The woman had come face to face with the Prince of Peace and she would never be the same.

By the power of Shalom a person can walk in faith amidst the troubles of life. Through His Shalom one can make it though a bad day or a string of terrible events. The book of Ephesians proves how this is possible. "He is our Shalom, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us," Ephesians 2: 14. A person's shalom is the presence of the Master. It is Him. Nothing more. Nothing less. Do you have a relationship with Y'shua Sar HaShalom – the prince of peace?

Rise of the World Ruler

Truth about the Antichrist

The Bible speaks of the rise of a leader who will unite the world in an effort to establish peace and financial stability. This man will have a charismatic ability to powerfully influence people. The scriptures give him several names like “son of perdition” or the “man of lawlessness.” Like the plot of a Stephen King thriller, the Bible lays out end time events which center upon the evil Antichrist.

His coming will climax a strong delusion of error. “For this reason YHWH sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness,” 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12. The man of sin will speak great things as he conquers the world through peace. Many will accept him as the Christ, the Messiah, sent from heaven to rescue the world from pain. His words and deeds will promise hope as he establishes himself as “anti” or “in the place of” the true Messiah.

Daniel 8:23-25, “In the end time, when evil men are at their worst state, a ruler with a fearsome face and who is able to understand mysterious sayings, shall rise up. And he will have very great power, but his power is not from himself: and he shall destroy terribly, and shall be successful, and accomplish, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall spread deceit; and he shall exalt himself in his own heart, and in the name of peace he shall destroy many. He shall also stand up against Messiah; but he shall be destroyed by Him and not by human hands.”

We can learn from Daniel 9:27 that the Antichrist will broker a peace agreement with Israel for seven years. This agreement will

include the start to the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and a promise to end war. This is indeed the start of the “Great Tribulation.” Half way through this peace deal, the Antichrist will be empowered by demons. “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws,” Daniel 7:25. The Antichrist will use demonic powers with lying signs and wonders as he leads a final world war.

The phrase “antichrist” is only found in two chapters of the entire Scriptures. Here, Bible writers emphatically declare his presence. “The spirit of antichrist, of which you have heard is coming, is now already in the world.” 1 John 4:3. Who is this man of sin? Some have suggested that he is Prince Charles of Wales, President Barack Obama, or even the Catholic Pope. His identity will be made known only to those living in truth. All others will believe his lies. Those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of Life will not fall prey to the deception.

Prepare now for the rise of the antichrist by living a faith of truth. Compare your beliefs to the whole of scripture and question tradition. Don’t believe the strong delusions of humanism or religion. As you follow the truth you will know exactly who the man of sin is while the rest of the world follows after the beast of Revelation. In Luke 21:8 the Savior said, “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them.”

Sacrifices are for Today

Truth about the sacrificial system

The Bible speaks of many end time events including wars, pestilence, famine, and the rise of an evil character called the “Anti-Christ.” One apocalyptic event occurred in 2009 as a Jewish group, called the “Temple Mount Faithful,” transported a thirteen ton stone through the city of Jerusalem. This stone will be used as the holy cornerstone for the soon to be built Third Temple in accordance to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. It is at this Temple that animal sacrifices will be made in accordance to the Law of Moses.

Indeed, sacrificial worship is mentioned in Daniel 12 and Matthew 24 in connection to the rebuilt temple. Though PETA may not be in agreement, Jewish people pray three times a day for the reinstatement of the service to the Holy of Holies and the sacrifices of Israel. With the rebuilding of the Temple will come a return to the offering of animals.

Many people get confused regarding sacrifices. The commandments concerning the sacrifices remains and have not been abolished. "The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our MASTER remains forever," Isaiah 40:8. The truth is that since the temple is not standing, one actually obeys the Law of Moses by not offering animal sacrifices.

The Old Testament has hundreds of commands regarding Temple worship and sacrifice. The detailed commands surrounding the temple and tabernacle show us how meticulous we should be when coming before YHWH. Each of the sacrifices commanded in the Scriptures, from the red heifer to the Passover lamb, points to the Messiah's sacrifice.

The sacrifices before the Savior's death pointed to His coming. However, they did NOT stop when He died. The sacrifices continued being made until the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE. The book of Acts shows that the early believers continued to make sacrifices at the Temple. Paul also made sacrifices and took vows at the Temple AFTER the Messiah's death! Just as the sacrifices before His coming pointed to Him, the sacrifices AFTER His coming pointed BACK to Him.

Churches have "altar calls" every Sunday. This is a time for believers to come forward with their sins and problems to find solace through prayer. Today's altar calls do not involve death or sacrifice but repentance and prayer.

When Y'shua surrendered His life, He set the prime example for us to follow. May we pray, "not my will, but thine will be done." This is the whole issue of the sacrifices and the binding of Isaac. Y'shua gave up his very life and has called us to do the same. We are to climb upon the altar and offer ourselves to Him. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to YHWH, which is your act of reasonable worship. And be not conformed to the pattern of this world: but be transformed by the ongoing renewing of your mind, that you may discern what is the good, acceptable, and even the perfect, will of YHWH , " Romans 12:1,2.

Even if sacrifice looks like loosing, it is actually about receiving. When a person gives an offering, they are emptying their hands to be filled again. It is better to give than receive. Just picture a person clenching a lamb that is to be offered, and then releasing that lamb to be killed. Only after the animal is sacrificed can the blood be applied.

Need for Endtime Gloom and Doom?

Truth about the end of days

A 2009 *Newsmax* magazine cover story featured a lengthy discussion about the return of Y'shua and possible apocalyptic events. According to the feature, "public buzz about the Biblical last days is at its highest level since 9/11." The Pew Research Center found that 79% of American Christians believe in the Second Coming of Christ. Today the doomsday prophet is not some bearded man with a placard proclaiming "the end is near." Instead, gloom and doom seems to be the message of newspapers, the Internet, and television. News headlines read like Bible prophecy. "And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven," Luke 21:11.

On any given day, there are wars in 30 to 40 nations in the world. Rumors of wars swarm about Israel, Iran, and Korea. Over seven million people have died since 1970 due to war.

Pestilence continues to grow as new "super bugs" are becoming resistant to drug treatment. The H1N1 swine flu spread faster than the Center for Disease Control can track. And the HIV Aids virus has killed more than 25 million since 1981. HIV is at pandemic levels in many areas including China, Asia, and Africa.

Famine as well is wide spread throughout the planet. The World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the world is under-fed while another one-third is starving. Every 3.6 seconds someone dies of hunger. Such horrible news isn't new. The world has always had false messiahs, wars, ethnic violence, starvation, disease, and earthquakes. The Savior said that the last days would see such events increase in frequency and size. "For nation shall rise against

nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of birth pangs,” Matthew 24:7-8.

Perhaps the surest sign that time is short is the return of the nation of Israel to the Middle East. To Israel the Almighty said, “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land,” Ezekiel 36:24. Many prophecy teachers consider the reestablishment of Jerusalem as the capital city as THE sign of an impending apocalypse. “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled,” Luke 21:24. The Messiah promised that the generation that saw such a miracle would certainly behold His return. (Matthew 24:34)

Does this mean that the return of Y’shua is imminent? Well, many sorrows have begun, but there is still more that must occur before the eastern sky splits. To state that “Jesus could return at any time” is to ignore numerous statements in the Scripture about the rise of an anti-Christ leader and a huge world war against the tiny nation of Israel. How can a person prepare for the coming of Revelation? What should someone do about the mark of the beast? Some believers are storing food while others are learning survival skills. Many are buying gold in anticipation of the collapse of the dollar. The Savior addresses such a dilemma when He said, “Watch and pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things and stand before the Son of Man,” Luke 21:36. The world will come to an end one day. Between now and then, it’s important to focus on Spiritual growth. The pursuit of holiness will guide the believer through whatever the future holds. Listen to the voice of the Spirit. If you are led to take certain precautions then do so. But, don’t allow fear of Armageddon stop you from living an abundant life.

Star Trek and the Bible

Truth about the priestly blessing

Star Trek is one of the most recognizable film franchises in the world. The original television series launched the entire sci-fi genre and the careers of many Hollywood stars. The characters of Captain James T. Kirk and Spock have become engraved into the American culture. Statements like “beam me up Scotty” and “live long and prosper” are well known to both the young and old. The Vulcan hand salute of parted fingers has an interesting Biblical origin.

It was 1968 when William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy were filming a Star Trek episode that called for Spock to give a special greeting. The original Star Trek novel by Alan Dean Foster had the human-alien hybrid kneeling before others. However, the idea of such a strong character bowing in reverence seemed uncomfortable. Shatner and Nimoy drew upon their Jewish roots and knew exactly what symbol should be used. The Vulcan hand salute was then transferred from the memories of the Holy Temple to the television screen.

For thousands of years, the “w” shaped symbol of parted fingers has been used by the genealogical descendants of Jewish priests called “Kohanim” and other spiritual leaders. The Vulcan gesture is a picture of the windows of heaven and the Hebrew letter “shin.” It is raised high as a special blessing from Numbers 6 is proclaimed. The phrase “live long and prosper” could be considered a paraphrase of this special prayer. “May YHWH bless you, and keep you; May YHWH make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; May YHWH lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace,” Numbers 6:24-26.

For Christianity and Judaism this is the final benediction of many worship services. It is a prayer of mercy, protection, substance, and peace. This blessing calls for the Creator's favor and holy name to be upon all who follow the Scriptures. It is not some magical practice on the part of the priests, as they have no power over the divine. The text makes it very clear that while the priests may pronounce the words, it is the Almighty who does the actual blessing.

The Jewish people have a rich faith that is full of symbolism and Spiritual power. Such traditions have great meaning that can be lost if one is totally closed to the Hebrew roots of Christianity. "What advantage then has the Jew? Much in every way; chiefly as they were entrusted with the very oracles of YHWH," Romans 3:1-2. Judaism isn't all bad. Judaism isn't all good either. One must earnestly search for the true path of faith that hangs between the balance of our ancestor's practices and the Almighty's divine will.

The Almighty chose the Jewish people to preserve the Scriptures from error. Many of the traditions that surround their devotion, like the Vulcan hand symbol, bring added significance to life. Such traditions can be adopted by Bible believers if they are void of pagan origin, not prohibited in the Scripture, and if the action does not grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible never bans tradition but it does speak against actions that make void the word of YHWH. There are many customs of Judaism and Christianity that are beneficial for the Believer.

Leonard Nimoy wrote of this in his autobiography, "The special moment when the Kohanim blessed the assembly moved me deeply, for it possessed a great sense of magic and theatricality... I had heard that this indwelling Spirit was too powerful, too beautiful, too awesome for any mortal to look upon and survive, and so I obediently covered my face with my hands. But of course, I had to

peek." The world hasn't been the same since that quick glance towards the hand of blessing.

To Tithe or Not to Tithe: that is the question

The truth about giving ten percent

Tithing is a perplexing issue for churches that proclaim that the Old Testament covenants have been done away and superseded by the New Testament. This is because there is not a single command in the New Testament to pay tithes to the church. Regardless of this fact, many preachers suggest that tithing equals blessing and those who withhold gifts will be under a curse. Verses on this subject are often taken out of context and used against believers to persuade them to give more. What does the Bible really say in regards to tithing?

Tithing is an Old Testament idea that first appears in the book of Genesis. Abraham is visited by a priest named Melkizadek in Genesis 14. As an act of servitude and respect, Abraham gives Melkizadek ten percent of all his belongings. This is the one and only time that Abraham is seen giving a tithe. Years later, as the tabernacle camp was set up, the Israelites were commanded to bring the first fruits of their harvest and livestock to the priests. This ongoing tithe was accompanied by an annual tithe of 10% in Deuteronomy 14:22 to the Levites. An additional 20% gift to the poor every third year is actually mentioned in Deuteronomy 14:28! These tithes and offerings supported the priesthood, the work of the tabernacle, and provided a type of “welfare” system for the needy. Deuteronomy 14:25 gives instructions for converting harvest into money, which could be used in developing civilizations. Overall, the combined tithes of those living during Biblical times was close to 24% of their harvest or income.

At the time of the Savior, tithing to the Levitical Priesthood was a well established practice. In Matthew 23:23, the Messiah rebukes a group of leaders who tithed properly but didn’t show mercy to

their fellow man. The followers of the Apostles met regularly on the first day of the week to collect an offering for those who spread the Gospel. (They wouldn't carry money on the seventh day Sabbath as buying or selling on this day is forbidden in Nehemiah 13:9.) When the Temple was destroyed in 70AD the giving of sacrifices and tithes stopped for the Jewish people.

Later, as Roman Catholicism spread, tithing was similar to a tax. The doctrine of giving 10% to the church was canonized at the Synod of Macon in 585AD and the Council of Trent provided punishment of excommunication if anyone withheld a tithe. During the seventh and eighth centuries, the church increased it's ownership of land in Europe. The ten percent rental fee for land was transferred from the secular world of business to the Christian realm. Such actions ensured the Roman church collected it's tithes from the poor and the rich. In 1285, tithing was sanctioned by English statute law which led to mandatory tithes being collected by secular governments for hundreds of years.

Today, tithing is obligatory of church members and leaders. The offering plate is passed at most services as the church is considered the "storehouse." The church's modern plea to give 10% does not stem from Biblical precepts but from tainted tithing history. If the Law of Moses has passed away, then tithing has been abolished as well. Those who suggest the abolishment of the Mosaic Law and still teach tithing, are continuing the errors of history and possibly deceiving their followers for financial gain. Perhaps during these times of economic woe, Christians will reconsider this subject and either accept the Law of Moses or reject the principle of the tithe.

The Untruthful Trinity

The truth about the godhead

There is one specific Christian doctrine that puzzles both clergy and lay people. When asked about this idea, some pastors explain that the mystery is so great that it can not be comprehended. Few seminary professors can point to specific Bible verses on the subject and no one can find the word “trinity” within the pages of the Bible. The scriptures never use this term. So, should a person in blind faith accept the trinity as true?

The Trinity was first introduced to the faith to appease polytheistic converts during the Nicean Council of 325AD. The Egyptians had their trinity of Osiris, Horus, and Isis and the Babylonians used the triangle to symbolize their triune deity. Early church leaders Tertulian and Origen spoke of the trinity and the notion formally became part of church doctrine in the fourth century. It was then that the Catholic Church first began teaching god as being in three separate persons. The New Catholic Encyclopedia says, “the Trinity is not directly and immediately the word of God. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not taught in the Old Testament.”

Many different Trinitarian ideas exist, which generally present the Godhead as three distinct persons yet each equally “god.” Those who defend the trinity will often take segments of Scripture, of an incident, or of a text and try to make them say what the entire Bible refutes.

One major problem with the trinity is that leads to a separation of the godhead. People envision Jesus the Son being sent to rescue the world from an angry Old Testament God the Father. The Holy Spirit is considered to be a flighty personality that rests on some but

not on others. Such ideas could not be farther from the truth. Paul wrote that “YHWH is only one,” in Galatians 3:20. Even the 10 Commandments state, “I am YHWH your Elohim; you shall have no gods except me,” Exodus 20:2. The Hebrew word “elohim” is a plural word that is often translated as “god” in English Bibles. For example, Genesis 1:26 reads: “Elohim said, “Let us make man in our own image. Many people erroneously interpret the plurality of the title “Elohim” as indicating the three Persons of the Trinity. Though this word is plural, that doesn’t mean that there are plural gods. By using the word “elohim” the Hebrew authors are stating that YHWH is plural in majesty. He can’t be put in a box or encompassed in human terms.

What the Bible does teach is “unity.” This is the idea that there is one Elohim who may choose to be revealed in various ways such as the burning bush or the voice from heaven. The Messiah alluded to this when He quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 as He was asked which commandment was the greatest. “Hear, O Israel; YHWH is our Elohim; YHWH is One: And thou shalt love YHWH thy Elohim with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment,” Mark 12:29-30. Notice that He didn’t say that YHWH is three!

The original Hebrew of Deuteronomy 6:4 reads “shema yisrael YHWH eloheynu; YHWH echad.” The Hebrew word “echad” is the word for “unified, unique, and special.” This is also the numeric word for one.

The Bible says that even the demons know better than to believe in a triune god. James 2:19 says, “you believe that there is one Elohim, good! Even the demons believe that and shudder.” For the most compelling evidence against the trinity, simply consider the many words spoken by the Messiah on this subject. The Savior often said of doing only what the Father commanded. In John 10:30 He stated, “I and the Father are one.” Truly, there is only one divine

will. There is only one divinity. The Trinitarian idea of “god in three persons” doesn’t pass the litmus test of the Scriptures. There exists the Father or “YHWH” as revealed in Exodus 3. The Messiah is certainly 100% divine yet is subject to the Father. The Holy Spirit is the Almighty’s power at work.

The trinity doesn’t have to be a mystery as it can certainly be understood as untruthful. “Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true YHWH, and Y’shua whom you have sent,” John 17:30.

The Test of Holiness

The truth about lashon hara

The spiritual life to be holy and blameless before the Almighty can be frustrating at times. Yes, with so many books, articles, conferences, interpretations, doctrines, theologies, and creeds flooding the believer, just trying to walk in faith can be a challenge. “We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell,” James 3:2-11. Controlling the tongue is a great starting place to begin if you truly desire to walk in holiness.

The purpose of the spoken word is to express the emotions of the heart, to build up or tear down. Proverbs 18:21, “The power of life and death is in the tongue.” Words are thoughts verbalized. Y’shua said in Matthew 12:34, “The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart.” What we think, what we believe will eventually manifest through the mouth. Herein lies the battle of the ages, we must choose to speak either life or death. For in a split second our innermost thoughts can become our outermost expressions. We must choose our words carefully. Washington Irving once said, “The tongue is the only tool that grows sharper with use.” While, the Psalmist prayed, “Set a guard of YHWH over my mouth, keep watch over the door of my lips,” Psalm 12:4.

We must constantly be on guard against “lashon hara or “evil speech.” This includes any negative communication like gossip, slander, slur, lying, or perverse speech. We all know people who claim to be super-spiritual believers yet their witness is destroyed by a tongue full of gossip. Well, lashon hara hurts three people: “he who relates it, he who accepts it, and of whom it is said.” The basis against speaking lashon hara is found in Leviticus 19:16 & 17, “Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life.” Exodus says, “do not spread false reports,” and in Titus 3:2 the word tells us to “speak evil of no man.” Truly, these verses are speaking against more than just lying. Lashon hara is negative or perverse speech – even if it is true. A biblical example of lashon hara is the twelve spies who were sent to inspect the Promised Land. The ten fearful spies who brought a negative report were spreading lashon hara while the two spies whose report was made in faith spoke words that glorified the Creator. Either our words are full of faith or fear, life or death, blessing or curses.

Biblically, the expressions of the mouth prove who we are. The words we speak are indications of the state of our heart. For example, the Bible divides people into two categories; first there are the wise whose words are full of encouragement, truth, love, and inspiration. Second there are the wicked or foolish, whose words are many and whose expressions are often evil.

The wise person speaks blessings continually. “The tongue of the wise brings healing,” Proverbs 12:18. The scriptures also say in Proverbs 15 that a wise or righteous person speaks the right things at the right times and these words are pure and pleasant.

The Bible often speaks of the wicked in reference to the terms of their speech. The wicked are full of violent words, which are of little value. The wicked pour forth curses like a sewer and “the advice of the wicked is deceitful,” Proverbs 12:5. To the wicked Y’shua said, “You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of

the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks,” Matthew 12:34. While the righteous pray that Yahweh will use their tongue for good, the wicked say “our lips are our own, who is lord over us,” Psalm 12:4.

The old cliché is true, “garbage in, garbage out.” But, what if you fill your mind with good things? “Good in, good out” works just the same! Just ask the Messiah, who said, “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him,” Matthew 12:35. Like a super computer that just needs to be programmed correctly, your tongue’s output will equal your mind’s input. This could be why we are told in Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” From thinking on things that are of good report we ourselves will become of good report. The tongue is our true test of holiness. If you truly want to be holy, you need to start with watching your words. “You will have to give an account for every idle word you have spoken,” Matthew 12:36.

The Truth Will Set You Free

Truth about the emet

Have you ever been to a restaurant, ordered a steak and had the whole cow served to you on a platter? Of course not. Just the idea of eating a humungous cow sounds ridiculous. No one could chew that much meat. No one could stomach that much food. When you eat out and order a steak the server brings you just a slice, just enough to satisfy your hunger for that moment. With a good steak, the savory taste lingers in your mouth for days, making you hungry for another piece of steak cooked to order and prepared to perfection. As steak is to the stomach so truth is to the soul.

You see, the truth is much like a choice cut of beef. You digest a little at a time, which just makes you hungry for more. Like craving a favorite dinner, when a person tastes real truth, the desire for more just grows greater. The problem is most people have been on a vegetarian diet of lies instead of the meat of truth.

Though the Bible says to “seek and you will find” a vast majority live as the Bible teaches to “sit and the truth will come to you.” Most people are happy with the life they have, never questioning the status quo or searching if what they have been told is really so. Yes, the average Joe is happy trusting the government, the television reporters, his preacher, and his parents. What about you? Are you happy with your life of faith or do you feel a spiritual void deep down inside? Have you allowed your culture or family to dictate your holidays and beliefs? Do you take what people tell you at face value or do you research to find out what is right? You can’t be free until you know the truth. “Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free,” says John 8:32.

In its essence, truth is unwavering, undeniable, and totally honest. Truth is. It is not always pretty nor is it flattering. And as the old saying goes, ‘the truth hurts.’ The truth brings pain because it shocks our senses and our perception of the world. Though we might try to argue, the truth remains. It wakes us up from our slumber and causes us to examine further. And truth does not change. It is not relative but universal. Though the professor may say that truth is plural and subjective to each person, it is not. Our understanding of truth may be relative to circumstances and events; however truth remains the same no matter how we try to twist it to our own desires. Truth is not plural but absolute and infinite. It distinguishes between right from wrong, fiction and nonfiction, and facts and lies. From the news reporter to the earnest spiritual seeker the pursuit of truth can reveal some startling information.

In Hebrew the word for truth is “emet.” This word literally means ‘stability, trustworthiness, establishment, and certainty.’ Truth is emet; it is forever established as fact. Emet is an action-oriented term, therefore truth is something you do and not just believe. Emet communicates faithfulness and leaves no room for variance or lies. And emet is all about trusting. Because emet is an action word it creates friction in the world when someone tries to decipher emet from untruth. Emet cuts the strings that tangle the world in deception and lies.

Consider the story of Rosie and her roast...

Rosie always makes the most tender and juicy roast for dinner. The recipe is a family tradition passed down from generation to generation. On special occasions the family knows to expect their favorite dish of Rosie’s roast. Oddly though, before she puts the meat in the pot to cook, Rosie always cuts the largest end off of the hunk of meat. She’s done this for years and it seems to work. One day as she was cooking the roast, her husband asked her why she would cut off the biggest and best end of the meat before cooking it. The best part of the dish was

being thrown away. She responded, "Well, I'm not really sure, my mother taught me to do this so let's ask her." Rosie then telephoned her mother for the answer to this perplexing question. But, her mother wasn't much help. She simply stated that she saw her mother do the same, so they needed to ask her. Rosie and her husband then set off for the nursing home to pay a visit to Rosie's grandmother. As the couple spoke with grandma they found the surprising answer to their question. Grandmother laughed as she said, "One day while I was preparing the roast I realized that my pot was too small for such a huge piece of meat. So, I simple cut off one end. I guess your mother saw me do this and has done it ever since!"

Sadly most people treat their convictions the same way Rosie treated her roast: never having reservations about their beliefs, never searching for the reason behind traditions, and never doubting if what they have been handed down is the truth. Then there are people like Rosie's husband who noticed something was amiss and simply asked a question. It seems just asking the question of "why?" and being open and receptive to the truth can advance a person's life and faith. What about you? In the story of Rosie roast who do you most resemble? Are you like Rosie who just does what everyone else does? Or are you similar to Rosie's husband who questions the status quo?

Many in the society of faith encourage people not to question and research the facts concerning what is presented from the pulpit. Churches are looking for spectators, not participators. The majority of church leaders would be insulted if a member of their group doubted a point made during a sermon. While in the Dark Ages people were not allowed to have copies of the Bible to study for themselves, today's problem is that we have many copies of the written Word, yet our Bibles lay on dusty shelves while our minds totally accept whatever is taught as the truth. Just think about it. When was the last time your pastor encouraged you to check out what he was teaching?

Though the world is full of lies, the truth is out there. However, the truth does not just come to people sitting on pews. Knowing and living the truth takes involvement and desire to live the abundant life spoken of in the Bible. For the Messiah himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” To know the truth is to truly know Y’shua and have a personal relationship with the Bible. The word “emet” is spelled with the Hebrew letters aleph-mem-tav. It is simply amazing that these are the first, middle, and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The truth is the emet. The emet is found in the Hebrew language. This further illustrates that hidden truth can be found in the Bible when the Scriptures are viewed from a Hebrew perspective. To know the truth a person must dig, research, study, and pray. And to know the truth a person must begin to question and query. It is time to get serious about living the truth. Its time to be more like Rosie’s husband who questions rather than Rosie who copies. Who knows, you may find out you’ve been missing the best part of your dinner.

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“Emet” is the Hebrew word for truth.

The vision of Emet Ministries is to teach, live, and share the truth of the Scriptures. Emet Ministries has grown into an international ministry, reaching people with teachings, audio messages, free resources, school of ministry prayer support, and various outreach programs.

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