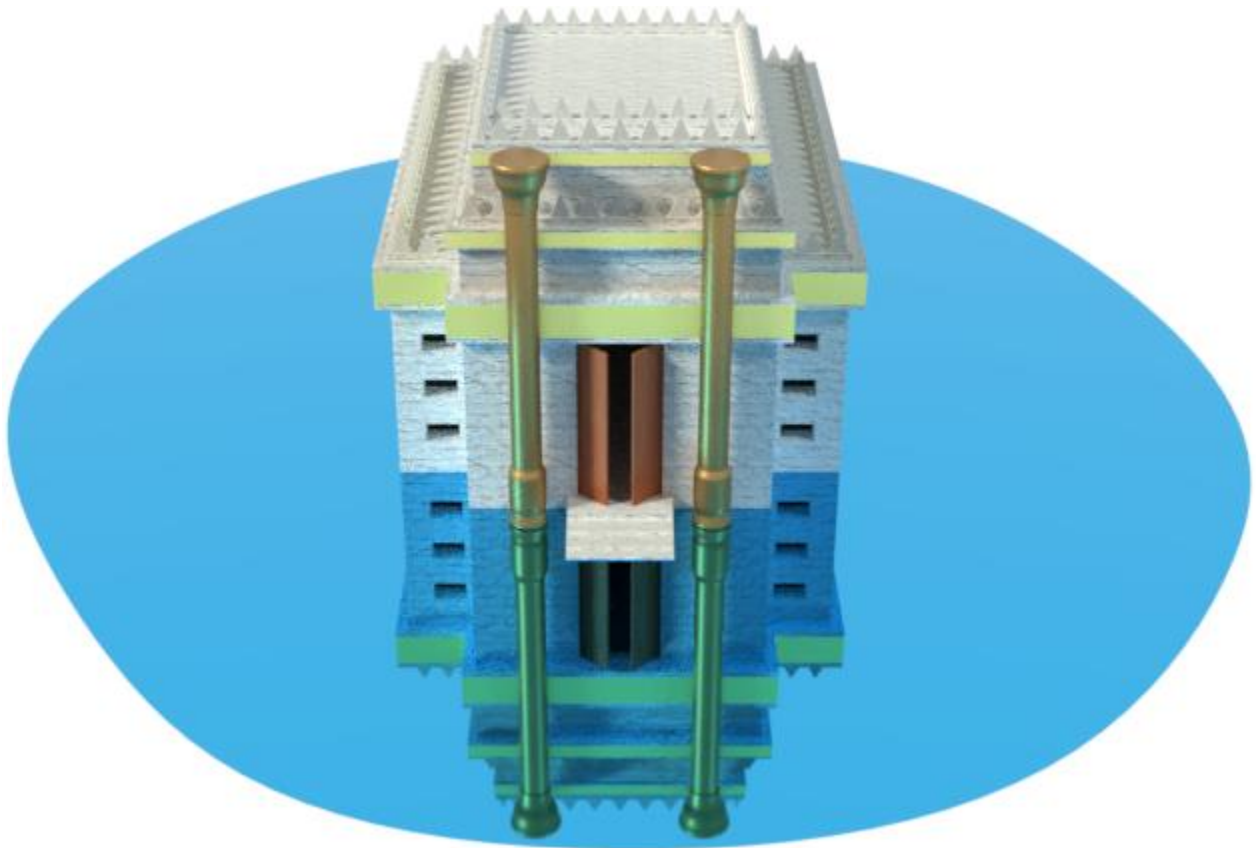


The Two Temples

(A Christian Workbook)



“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,
and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)

David P. Aguilar

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Introduction

In one of the best known chapters of all Scripture, King David said with confidence, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the House of Yahweh forever.” (Psalm 23:6) The House of Yahweh is a place of glory. It is a place of peace, and a place of reverence. It is attended by angels, guarded by Cherubim, and designed to stand firm for all eternity.

The house of Yahweh is a mysterious place. The presence of the Most High dwells therein (1 Kings 8:13), although the Creator cannot be contained by all of the Heavens. The fact that our Almighty Father can be both infinite and at the same time able to dwell with man is one of the most glorious revelations of His character. Not only did His Presence light the physical Temple, but all the majesty of Heaven came to earth in the course of mankind’s history, dwelling in human flesh to set before us an example of what we are to be. For those who accept this great revelation, and look upon the character of Yahshua, the Son of the Most High and the One in whom this parable was fulfilled, they also may become representatives of Heaven on earth

What *is* the House of Yahweh? What *is* His Temple?

As with other things in the Scriptures, there is a letter and a spirit of every principle. The letter of the Law, for example, is “Thou shalt not kill.” (Exodus 20:13) In addition to this, there is a spirit of that Law that is founded on the same principle. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:15) To understand, and to cling to, the letter of the law – any law – without understanding the foundational principle itself is to deny the spirit of that law, and as it is written, without the spirit the letter of the Law brings only death. (2 Corinthians 3:6) In this book we will explore both the letter and the spirit of the Bible’s teachings about the Temple of Yahweh, that our understanding may be full.

We have already begun to see one application. The physical “Temple” of the Old Testament was a sign, a pattern, for the body of the individual believer. (Romans 8:11, 1 John 3:24) Christ Himself was the Seed, the origin and perfect representation of this principle whose worthy example we are instructed to follow. Yet this is not the end of the story. After His death and resurrection, the Messiah became the “Head” of a larger concept, and as He is our Savior and Redeemer, it becomes necessary for us to know exactly what that means.

Looking at the Scriptures regarding the Temple, particularly those in the New Testament, we find some interesting statements that are often read, but seldom fully understood.

“Know ye not that ye are the Temple of Yah, and that the Spirit of Yah dwelleth in you? If any man defile the Temple of Yah, him shall Yah destroy; for the Temple of Yahweh is holy, which Temple ye are.” (1Corinthians 3:16, 17)

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“And what agreement hath the Temple of Yah with idols? For ye are the temple of the living Elohim; as Yah hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Almighty One, and they shall be my people.’” (2Corinthians 6:16)

The first application of the Temple of Yah is the body of the individual Christian. (See also John 14:23) The verses from the letters to the Corinthians are often used to explain that we must honor our Temples – meaning we are to take care of our bodies, acknowledging that we are bought with a price. We belong wholly to the Son by whom we live, and to whom we have yielded our lives, therefore we do indeed bear this responsibility as stewards of the property of Another. This is a sure and most important teaching, and may be supported by many other Scriptures (e.g. Romans 12:1), however in his address to the Corinthians specifically, Paul was talking about something else.

Looking carefully at the two passages cited above, we find an interesting pronoun: “ye.” This pronoun is plural; it is used to indicate that a given statement is addressed to more than one hearer collectively. When Paul says, “ye are the Temple of God,” what he means is exactly that – that the “Body of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:12) which is one Body but consisting of many members, is the Temple of God. He explicitly states this in other places to the same audience: “Now ye [plural] are the Body [singular] of Christ, and members in particular.” (1Corinthians 12:27) Just as we, collectively, are the Body of Christ, so are we, collectively, the Temple of God, as the previous verses point out.

It is only as a connected body, “fitly joined together,” (Ephesians 4:16) that we can truly accomplish the mission that the Messiah has set before us. In prayer to His Father, Yahshua said of His disciples, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:22, 23) When the Temple is finished, constructed and all set together, and then dedicated, it is then that fire comes down from Heaven to bless the work, and to establish the dwelling-place of the Most High with mankind. (2 Chronicles 5:1, 13, 14; Revelation 21:3) It is then that the Gospel will truly go around all the world, and then the end of tears, pain and death will finally come. (Matthew 23:14)

We as individuals are the representatives of Yah on earth. We as individuals are His Temple, because He dwells in us by the Holy Spirit and through His Son. (Galatians 2:20) It is also just as true that we as a collective people, as the Church of Christ, are this Temple; each individual member is a “stone” in the larger and glorious construct. (1 Peter 2:5) We find in the Bible, then, two ideas to consider when we are discussing the Temple of Yah. Considering the very nature of the Godhead, that of a Father and a Son bound together by a common Spirit, this multiple application should not come as a complete surprise. Similarly, just as the Father is Spirit (John 4:24) and the Son was made flesh (John 1:14), so human beings, made in the Image of the Elohim – and restored to that Image by salvation – are linked by nature to a Temple of the Body (the individual self) and a Temple of the Spirit (the Church of Christ).

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Adventist writer Ellen G. White understood the intimate connection between these two concepts when she wrote, “Church relationship is not a light matter. Every believer should be whole-hearted in his attachment to the church of God. Its prosperity should be his first interest.” [*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, September 1, 1888] Far from being a statement to promote loyalty to an earthly institution rather than Christ, this sentiment makes note of the fact that an individual connection with the Redeemer directly involves a connection to His Body on earth, and that if the connection with the Head is there and functioning, the connection with the Body must follow. (Acts 2:41, 42; 9:26) Christ and His Body are as one flesh, joined in a spiritual marriage. (Ephesians 5:29-32)

Understanding these Two Temples, therefore, and applying the principles of these teachings to our lives and our community, is a key to our Christian experience. The purpose of this book is to facilitate an exploration of this topic, to invite readers to an examination of themselves as individuals, and an examination of the Creator who set these things in place.

It should be understood that this is a workbook, and therefore reads like one. The topics are tied together closely, and sometimes the material may overlap in order to treat the individual subjects fully. I have attempted to make the transition from chapter to chapter as smooth as possible, but at the same time I have balanced that with modularity. An individual who wishes to read about one specific topic and not others may simply turn to that chapter in section 1 or 2 and see it covered effectively. Some technical notes on the book follow here, in order to allow readers to get the most out of this work.

- 1) All Bible readings are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted, with the exception of the Names being changed. Some examples:
 - a. “God” usually becomes “Almighty One” or “Elohim,” and “the LORD” becomes “Yah” or “Yahweh” in the Old Testament readings.
 - b. “Jesus” generally becomes “Yahshua”, “God” becomes “Yah,” and “Lord” becomes either “Yah” or “Yahshua” (depending on the subject matter) in the New Testament verses.
- 2) Pronouns referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (“He,” “Him,” “His,” “It,” etc.) are all capitalized in Bible verses. So are certain key terms such as “Book of Life” and “Woman” when used in reference to the Church.
- 3) At times I have clarified the punctuation of the King James Version. Some features of the text such as colons (:) have come to signify a different thing than when the Bible was first translated. For example, a section of Psalm 119 reads in the original, “I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.” In modern English, this is more correctly written as follows: “I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me.” I have made minor changes such as this without comment.
- 4) I will sometimes capitalize the word Church, and sometimes leave it with a small “c.” This is not an inconsistency – where I use the word “church” it generally refers to the diverse organizations that claim this title. When I use the form “Church,” it is in reference to the

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spiritual Body of Christ, the Body of believers that is currently (or from the perspective of the timeframe used) being faithful to the Head, which is Yahshua.

- 5) Brief comments on Bible verses are added directly into those verses in [square brackets]; longer comments and discussions of the verses are recorded outside of the “quotation” signs that enclose the text.
- 6) Entire verses are not always quoted. Sometimes I will introduce the speaker in context and then take the verse from where he or she began to speak, leaving out the initial section. For example, Isaiah 6:5 begins, “Then said I, ‘Woe is me! for I am undone...’” If I have introduced the speaker as Isaiah in the preceding sentence, however, I may leave out the “Then said I,” and continue directly from his statement: “When Isaiah encountered a vision of the Most High upon His Throne, he fell on his face and declared, ‘Woe is me! For I am undone...’ (Isaiah 6:5)” The readers of this work are encouraged to study the passages from which verses are taken for themselves, in order to maximize their understanding of the principles I employ.
- 7) After each chapter, several “workbook” style sections follow. First is a series of quotations by Ellen White that re-iterate some of the principles in the Bible study (chapter) preceding it, and then a set of self-examination questions that congregations are urged to discuss in group settings. At a recent *Feast of Unleavened Bread* held by the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church congregation in Guys, Tennessee, a similar activity was undertaken throughout the course of the gathering, and it was a great blessing to both the members and the visitors.
- 8) Additional studies on key subjects are indicated by references to one of the five Appendices.

May Yah bless all who seek Him, and may they be found of Him in peace.

- David P. Aguilar

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Section 1 – The Body Temple

The apostle Peter wrote, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual House, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Yah by Yahshua the Messiah.” (1Peter 2:5) The overall purpose of this work is to look at that spiritual House, but before we talk about the House as a whole, we must look first at the stones.

Acknowledging that the Temple of Yah, in Its widest application, is the collective Body of believers leads to some interesting and relevant questions. “Why should we become part of this Temple?” “What does it mean to be a stone in the House of Yah?” These questions are examined in considerable detail in Part 2 of this work, where I would say this book truly begins. Yet before every journey we must count the cost. Before each adventure we must make sure that we are equipped for what we may find on the way.

In order to have the tools to succeed at this Christian life, we must first make sure of what we are doing. The Messiah asks us for nothing except all that we are – our broken hearts, our imperfect lives. When we surrender these things to His loving care, He takes that which has been broken and He mends it – and then He glorifies it. But we must know what it is we are giving up, for what man would give a gift to his father without knowing what is inside the box, under the wrapping paper and beneath the ribbons?

Paul tells us, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of Yah, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Yah, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1) He asks for reasonable service – that is, intelligent service. We do not follow blindly, but assent to His will being worked out in our lives. The purpose of this first, initial part of *The Two Temples* asks us to count the cost of laying everything at the foot of the Cross. When we have confidence that we have done this, then we are ready to lose sight of selfish desires, and to enter into the meaningful, conscious, eternal service of others.

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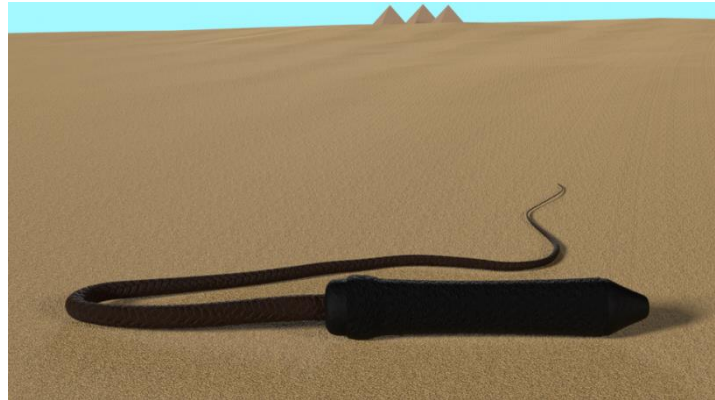
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Section 1: Chapter 1 – The Foundation: Who is Yahweh?

When our merciful Father in Heaven heard the cry of His people, bound in slavery by the idolatrous nation of Egypt, He sent a messenger to deliver them. He raised up a man named Moses, who was called, and chosen, and faithful, to be a witness in the earth that Yah was the Almighty One, that He was sovereign over the designs and plans of even the leader of one of the earth's greatest kingdoms.

As providence would have it, however, there was an obstacle. As both a religious and state figure in Egypt, the Pharaoh was no respecter of the God of the Israelites. In response to Moses' request that the Hebrews be released, the king of Egypt said, "Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go." (Exodus 5:2)

The king of Egypt was not an unintelligent man. As a result of his royal education, he was a capable politician, and he was surrounded by some of the greatest minds of the ancient world. In spite of this, Pharaoh could not be considered, from a spiritual viewpoint, a *wise* man. The Scriptures tell us that, "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is



understanding." (Proverbs 9:10) Without knowledge of the Almighty One, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and without a clear understanding of His character as revealed in these latter days through His Son Yahshua, we cannot be wise. Any examination of what Yah wants for our lives must begin ironically with a question first posed in the Bible by a heathen king. "Who is Yahweh?"

Pharaoh's answer came in the form of plagues upon his land. Yahweh is both the Redeemer and Judge of men, and the lesson for Egypt was a harsh one, because they rejected the gentler lesson that was initially offered to them in mercy. Moses did not come up to the palace with war in his heart; indeed, he had every reason to be sympathetic to the royal family, having been raised within the culture of the nation of his people's captivity, and having been shown love and maternal protection by a princess of the land. (Exodus 2:1-10) Had Pharaoh given respect to the servant of Yah, his nation and his own firstborn son would have been spared. Yet Pharaoh hardened his heart, (Exodus 8:15) and Yah allowed it to happen (Exodus 10:1) in order to bring His people out with a mighty hand, and as a testimony against both the false gods of Egypt and the mighty armies of men.

"Who is Yahweh?" It is a question upon which hangs our eternal salvation. Yahshua the Son spoke of this, saying, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Yahshua

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the Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3) In these very last days the question has come up again, for many who claim to know Him – who cry out “Lord, Lord” at the thought of His salvation – do not know Him, or they would accomplish His will. (Matthew 7:22, 23) This is the reason why, within the last message of the Gospel to the world, called by some the “Three Angels’ Message,” the character of Yahweh is described for the benefit of those who dwell on the earth. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear Yah, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’” (Revelation 14:6,7) It is a call to know Yah, to have reverence for Him, and thus to be wise. It is only the wise virgins, after all, who enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; the others are not known by the Bridegroom. (Matthew 25:1-12)

From the first third of the Everlasting Gospel, we learn several things about who Yahweh is. First, we see that He is to be revered or, in the language of the Authorized Version, “feared.” There is a holy fear that is associated with understanding who Yah is. When Isaiah encountered a vision of the Most High upon His Throne, he fell on his face and declared, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.” (Isaiah 6:5) No one, upon encountering the presence of Yahweh, will feel justified or righteous based on his own merits. No matter how victorious they are over sin, they must acknowledge that it is only by the life of the Son within them that they live, and that they have no “goodness” of themselves. Yah is holy, and the only acceptable response, the only possible response, to His presence is overwhelming awe.

Second, we see that He is Judge. The first of the angels declares that “the hour of His judgment is come.” Yah is the source of all righteousness. Our morality, our ethics, our concept of right and wrong, all these spring from, and must be brought into harmony with, the judgments of the One who has come indeed to judge. This is the case for all who wish to claim a relationship with Him.

Third, we come to understand that Yahweh has a right to judge the universe – the universe is His. He is the Creator of all things, “the heaven, the earth, the sea and the fountains of waters.” Of Yahshua the Son, through whom the Father’s creative acts were accomplished, it is said, “by Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him.” (Colossians 1:16, 17)

Now that we see some of what the Bible says about Yah, that He is the Creator and Judge, and thus worthy of our highest respect and reverence, what does the Record tell us about His nature, His character?

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Since we began by looking at the Exodus, it might be beneficial to draw something more from that topic which has already been introduced. When Moses was being called to deliver the Israelites, the Heavenly King said to him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good

land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them." (Exodus 3:6-9)

We may parallel that with the character of the Son, as described in New Testament, "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:15,16)

We see from these things that Yahweh, though different from mankind, is nevertheless the pattern after which men were created. Our emotions, our desires, our motivations and feelings, all these have counterparts in the divine mind, though His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9) It is written, "Gracious is Yahweh, and righteous; yea, our Almighty One is merciful." (Psalm 116:5) What we find in these passages is that we have a Father who is very **personal**. That is to say, He represents His purposes toward us by means of emotions that can be considered very "human." He hears the cries of His servants who are afflicted. He knows their sorrows; He desires the peace and happiness of His creation, made in His image. He says to us, "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end [or "the end for which you are hoping"]. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:11-13) Our Father, Yahweh, is personally interested in us as individuals, for again it is written: "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before Yah? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke 12:6, 7)

It should not be thought that Yah's love is reserved only for those who actively obey Him. Though He can only directly and consistently bless the lives of those who seek Him, His love extends even to those who will ultimately be lost through their own rejection of His mercy. In no place is the love and tender character of Yah more eloquently expressed than by the gracious way in which He treats even the unrepentant sinners. Yahweh mourns over those who do not accept His salvation, as He once did over Ephraim, the tribe which exemplified the rebellious nature of Northern Israel: "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the

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yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt Him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” (Hosea 11:3, 4, 7, 8)

In Hosea, chapters 11-13, we see Yahweh lamenting over His rebellious people, seeming at times even hesitant to execute the judgment they have brought upon themselves. (Hos 11:9, 10) Yet ultimately sin and love cannot coexist, for they are true opposites, and it is written: “For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their Elohim, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, Yet Yahweh testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, ‘Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the Law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.’ Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in Yahweh their Almighty One. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam [an evil king] which he did; they departed not from them; Until Yahweh removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.” (2 Kings 17:7, 13, 14, 22, 23)

For those who are tempted to think that Yah is an impersonal Creator, that He simply set the universe in place and then hid His face in a cloud of stars, the touching appeal recorded in Hosea, and the books of the other prophets, should be testimony enough to merit rethinking that concept of the Father and Son. As a man appeals to his wife whom he loves, so does Yahweh appeal to His people; and as a man would sacrifice himself for the good of his beloved, so Yahshua was given – yielding up His life as a ransom for our own. That is who our Father is.

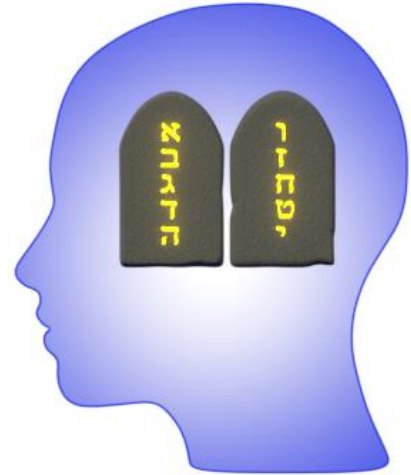
Of course, no discussion of Yahweh’s character would be complete without an examination of how He set the universe in place, and we read from the passages in Revelation and 2 Kings that there is a “judgment.” The basis of this judgment is the idea that there is a divine will our Creator has for us; and our response to that will for our lives indicates to others, to Heaven, and to ourselves, what the quality of our faith truly is. Some believe that it is impossible to know whether or not we are living up to Yah’s expectations. Paul tells us differently. He says, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Yahshua the Messiah is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5) Unless we are “reprobates,” or worthless individuals, we are capable of knowing whether or not we are in the faith. Although no man can be righteous before Yah, for those who are “in the faith,” and living up to the light they have, holding on to the grace of Yah that keeps us from all sin, Yah Himself is their righteousness. (Jeremiah 33:16) That is also who Yahweh is – for the believer, He is our righteousness.

The expectations Yah has for us are simple: they are that we love Him, and we love our fellow man. (Matthew 22:37-40) Those who do these things wholeheartedly have certainly accepted Yahshua as Savior and Substitute, for no man can perform these things unless the Spirit of Yah is within him. The means by which we define that “love” are pointed out by the Ten Commandments

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and the testimony of His messengers. Those who understand the nature of Yah, and His character, never see the things He tells them to do as a restriction on human freedom, or a painful and burdensome duty. The apostle John, who wrote the most eloquently about the love of the Father, tells us, “He that loveth not knoweth not Yah; for Yah is love... By this we know that we love the children of Yah, when we love Yah, and keep His commandments. For this *is* the love of Yahweh: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments *are not grievous.*” (1 John 4:8; 5:2, 3)

We, who find our delight in serving others and in the Law that Yah has given to us for our own good, (Deuteronomy 5:29) acknowledge that Yahweh is love, and we can say with the Psalmist, “O how love I thy Law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou, through thy commandments, hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:97-103)



Those words were written by a man who knew Yahweh. Because of His knowledge of the Creator he had more wisdom than the ancients, including the Pharaoh of Egypt. Because of his knowledge of the Creator he had understanding, and he had joy in the Law of Yah. Indeed, he rejoiced that the Almighty had given him guidelines to ensure his continued happiness and prosperity. The judgment of Yahweh, rather than a thing to dread, became a blessing from which he had no desire to depart. The words of His mouth, which will serve to condemn the unrepentant sinner, were “sweeter than honey” to His servant. The Psalmist knew the love of Yahweh, and therefore His commandments were not grievous to him.

Had Pharaoh only known Yahweh in this way, and His character, he would not have hesitated to release the Hebrew slaves. What would the loss of some of his labor force mean, in light of the plans that the Almighty had for establishing a kingdom on earth to teach eternal salvation to every kindred, and tongue, and nation? Pharaoh himself would have directly benefited from his submission to the will of Heaven, a course of action he eventually undertook anyway – after great personal tragedy. Those who know Yahweh today do not hesitate to seek out and perform His will, no matter *what* the cost appears to be at the time, for His will is truly sweet to those who know Him and trust in His purposes. In the end “every knee shall bow,” (Romans 14:11) and acknowledge that Yahweh only gave us good instruction, laws not only to protect us from harm and develop us for eternity, but to enable us to be everlasting blessings to those with whom we are to have contact. “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me,” says Yahweh, “and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29) That is what He wants for us, and this is who He is.

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Quotations:

Yahweh is gracious and merciful:

“Our God should be regarded as a tender, merciful father. The service of God should not be looked upon as a heart-saddening, distressing exercise. It should be a pleasure to worship the Lord and to take part in His work. As the people of God meditate upon the plan of salvation their hearts will be melted in love and gratitude.” [*That I May Know Him*, page 263, paragraph 2]

“Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshipping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshipping the true God.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 59, paragraph 8]

“Although Satan has misinterpreted God’s purposes, falsified His character, and caused man to look upon God in a false light, yet through the ages God’s love for man has never ceased. Christ’s work was to reveal the Father as merciful, compassionate, full of goodness and truth. The character of Christ represented the character of God. The only begotten Son of God sweeps back the hellish shadow in which Satan has enveloped the Father, and declares, ‘I and My Father are one; look on Me and behold God.’” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Thirteen*, page 243, paragraph 3]

“In redemption God has revealed His love in sacrifice, a sacrifice so broad and deep and high that it is immeasurable. ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son...’” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 11, paragraph 2]

We have a Father who expresses loving emotions:

“There is nothing so great and powerful as God’s love for those who are His children.” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 192, paragraph 5]

“Christ wept at the sight of woe. Let His tenderness come into your hearts. Practice self-denial that you may have wherewith to relieve the sufferings of God’s children.” [*Our High Calling*, page 198, paragraph 3]

“Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, [Christ] represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 17, paragraph 5]

“The tender compassion of God is toward His people. Faith, wondrous faith--it leads the people of God in straight paths. Without this faith we shall certainly misunderstand His dealings with us, and distrust His love and faithfulness. Whatever may be the trials and sufferings, ... let there be no faintheartedness, no peevish repining, no complaining.” [*Our High Calling*, page 323, paragraph 4]

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“He who could not see human beings exposed to destruction without pouring out His soul unto death to save them from eternal ruin, will look with pity and compassion upon every soul who realizes that he can not save himself.” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 22, paragraph 5]

The Laws of Yahweh are expressions of His character, and were provided for our blessing:

“The law of God requires that man shall love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself. When through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, this is perfectly done, we shall be complete in Christ.” [*God’s Amazing Grace*, page 145, paragraph 6]

“Man gains everything by obeying the covenant-keeping God. God’s attributes are imparted to man, enabling him to exercise mercy and compassion. God’s covenant assures us of His unchangeable character.” [*God’s Amazing Grace*, page 158, paragraph 3]

“God’s law is the security of life and property and peace and happiness. It was given to secure our present and eternal good. The antediluvians transgressed this law, and the earth was destroyed by a flood.” [*The Upward Look*, page 294, paragraph 4]

“If the law given by God for the benefit of the poor had continued to be carried out, how different would be the present condition of the world, morally, spiritually, and temporally! Selfishness and self-importance would not be manifested as now, but each would cherish a kind regard for the happiness and welfare of others; and such widespread destitution as is now seen in many lands would not exist.” [*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 536, paragraph 1]

Questions:

- 1) Do I search the Scriptures with the intention of discovering who my Creator is?
- 2) Do I look for the beauty of my Father in the works of nature?
- 3) Do I see the effects of rebellion against Yahweh’s Law manifest in some aspects of the natural world?
- 4) Do I ever make a distinction in my mind between the character of the Son and the character of the Father?
- 5) Have I ever had the thought that Yah is not personally interested in my happiness?
- 6) Do I sometimes feel prompted by my circumstances to doubt that the Father is in control?
- 7) Do I remember to reflect on the miracles that Yah has performed on behalf of His people in the past in order to deliver them from great trials?
- 8) Do I remember to reflect on the trials of those whose history is recorded in the Bible, such as Job, and the blessings they gained from their experiences?
- 9) Do I love my enemies in the same way that my Father loves His?
- 10) Do I view the misfortunes of others as I understand the Almighty to view them?
- 11) How do I deal with the temptation to consider the leadings of Yah burdensome?

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12) Do I understand that the universe Yah created will naturally work for those who work with it, and against those who work against it?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 2 – Fitting In: What is Man?

Now that we have seen who Yahweh is, and know that we may search the Scriptures to discern His will for our lives (2 Timothy 3:16, 17), we next need to examine where we fit into this picture of our Father’s character. The Psalmist wrote, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained... what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psalm 8:3) When viewing the vast heavens and the magnificence of the created worlds, it is easy to be humbled by the scale and power of our Creator; but in spite of all that, we find that He has compassion on the very least of us here on earth. Well might we ask, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” That is the question we will be answering in this chapter.

We read of the origin of mankind in this verse: “And Yahweh Almighty formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7) We see here that man became a soul (literally a “living being”) at the integration of two elements: a body formed of the dust of the ground, and the spirit or breath of life. Just as the Two Temples reflect the aspects of body and spirit, so does a living man.

It is further written of the decision to make man, “And Elohim said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’” (Genesis 1:26) Like Yah, man was intended to have dominion, control over the physical world. Humans were to be His representatives on this planet, ruling nature on His behalf. But this is not the only aspect of Elohim incorporated into His image.



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Unlike any other being of the earthly mold, man was created with moral responsibility. Unto no other creatures were spoken “instructions” given to govern their obedience. The plants and animals over which man was to have dominion were created with their instincts set in place... biological programs were implemented to govern their patterns of behavior. But this was not the case with man. Humans were created with bodily needs and drives like the animals and plants, but the “image” of the Creator imposed over this basic model granted Adam the ability to reason and to choose. For this cause only was he instructed, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (Genesis 2:16, 17)

Man was created with the ability to either obey or disobey. This was the crowning act of creation. An intelligent, personal Deity formed beings that were *just like Him*... able to create, able to be self-motivated, able to reason, and able to choose. We saw in the last chapter that Yah is love; it is His defining characteristic, and there can be no love without the decision to love. There may be human affection that springs forth from familiarity, or human desire that springs forth from the biological nature of man, but *Agape*, that special kind of love unique to spiritual beings, comes from a knowledge of the Father and Son, and is the result of choosing to enter into an eternal union with our Creator and Savior.

Freedom brings with it responsibility, however, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” (Luke 12:48) Even the human family is an example of this teaching. The child of the home has the least responsibility in terms of that family’s well-being. The “job” of the child is to be obedient to the instruction of the parents, and to learn the values of that home. The adults of the family have great responsibility in comparison to this. Theirs is the task of educating the little ones, providing resources for the family members, and defending the home from loss. With maturity comes greater freedom, and thus greater responsibility.

The freedom given to man, and the responsibility that this entailed, inherently involved the potential for disobedience. This concept has given some Bible students difficulty. “How it is that Yah could ‘allow’ disobedient behavior, if He is a sovereign God?” they ask. Some have attempted to resolve this by claiming that Yah is ultimately and *directly* responsible for evil, and that the entrance of sin, while a mystery to us, is part of the intended and active will of God. There are verses which, taken without regard to the revealed character of Yah, and due in part to a lack of understanding of Biblical phraseology, seem to support this view.

“Who are we to question Yah’s will?” is the argument often made. And while it is true that His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts more lofty than our own, (Isaiah 55:9) this particular argument was made in the book of Job by Zophar the Naamathite (Job 11:7-10) as an “explanation” for the sufferings inflicted upon an innocent man. Zophar was answered by Yah Himself, who declared to him and his associates, “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job [the innocent man] hath.”

We may not be at liberty to question the *authority* by which Yah’s decisions are made. Nevertheless, we are completely free to question the methods and reasons behind what He does –

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with an attitude of reverence. Man is granted this freedom, and in fact the Scriptures invite this kind of examination. To a rebellious nation the Almighty said, “O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.” (Micah 6:3) To His faithful disciples the Son said, “Henceforth [from this point onward] I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:15)

There are some who go to the other extreme, believing that Yah created all things and then simply left the system to run itself. There is a great curse on those who believe that He is not active in the events of the universe, “that say in their heart, ‘Yahweh will not do good, neither will He do evil.’” (Zephaniah 1:12) They are not cursed because Yah curses them, but because such as accept this mindset will be unable to understand His ways, ways which ultimately lead to eternal life. Even the Bible, according to this way of thinking, is ultimately the invention of humanity to compensate for what cannot be known, and therefore we must simply “do our best,” and walk on in blindness. Atheism and Agnosticism, alternate approaches, have similar lines of reasoning, though they do not acknowledge Yah at all.

The truth about the matter, as with so many other things of a spiritual nature, lies somewhere in the middle. Yah created man, and even in His Sovereignty granted him true freedom. Though He is not actively responsible for sin, He allows it as a consequence of that freedom, and in some passages of Scripture takes responsibility for its presence. (e.g. Isaiah 45:7) There is no need for confusion on this topic, however. When we come to grasp what “love” truly means to our Father, and that He can only receive that obedience which is offered in freely given love, we begin to realize that the presence of sin is a price, a great price, that He has paid for our dignity. It is a dignity that exists only by virtue of the gift He has given us, the impress of His image on our souls. Because Yahweh allows us this freedom – and only because He allows us this freedom – we are able to truly and actively love both Yah and our fellow humans.

That is who Man is.

The story of man, given briefly, is this: Sin entered human history due to a human’s choice. Redemption entered human history due to the choice and Sacrifice of Yah. We may be individually saved by our personal decision to accept the Sacrifice made on our behalf.

Life is all about choices. The will of man, when it is sanctified by intimacy with the Divine, becomes the most powerful influence on earth, and the channel by which Yah may lead His people home. It is written, therefore, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” (Mark 9:23) Unto man was given the great commission, to spread the Good News of Salvation. (Mark 16:15) Unto man was given the responsibility for the welfare of the poor, both financially and spiritually speaking. (Leviticus 25:35, Ezekiel 3:18)

The gift of grace is the ability granted to mankind so that, even though wholly depraved and sinful of himself, he may seek Yah. No natural man may, of himself, approach the Father, because the legacy of Adam forbids it. “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after Yah.” (Romans 3:10, 11) Yet it is also written, “And now, for a little space, **grace** hath been shewed from Yahweh our Almighty One, to leave us

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a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our Elohim may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.” (Ezra 9:8) We must understand both these things together, and then the harmony will appear.

We are told of this great gift: “the grace of Yah that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.” (Titus 2:11) Through the Sacrifice of the Son we are given grace to repent. Even many who came before this event have obtained grace by faith in the Cross which was (for them) yet to come. Because of what we have seen in the Christian age, we understand how this came to be: “Yah having provided some better thing for us, that they [who lived before Yahshua] without us should not be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:40) “And I,” says the Messiah, “if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32)



Thus it must rightly be said: “Yahweh is good unto them that wait for Him, *to the soul that seeketh Him.*” (Lamentations 3:5) Far from being a contradictory statement to Romans 3:10 and 11, (which state that none seek Yah) Jeremiah, the author of Lamentations, simply points out the difference

that the gift of grace makes in the experience of man. By grace we may seek Yah. There is a “little space” during which mankind may repent of its sins; this life is granted to us that we may believe in the Son of Yah and be saved. This is the hope of Man.

“Sirs,” said the penitent prison guard to Paul and Silas, “what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30) The reply came, a blessed ray of light in a dark and godless life, “Believe on the Lord, Yahshua the Messiah, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (verse 31)

The question has been asked, and must be asked, “What does it mean to believe on the Lord?” This also is provided for our instruction. “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Yahshua, and shalt believe in thine heart that Yah hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9) This is the basis of Christianity, that through Adam sin entered the world, and all became subject to the resulting sinful nature of humanity. In His infinite pity, our Creator sent His Son, the Word made flesh, to pay the debt we thus owed to a holy Judge. We, by believing that Yahshua conquered both life and death and was therefore “raised... from the dead,” enter into the hope of a like resurrection to eternal life. “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) This is the intended destiny of Man.

Now, what is salvation? And what does it mean to be saved? Some believe that simply accepting Christ with our words “seals the deal,” and therefore our conduct following is unimportant. In Romans 10:9, they appear to have some justification for this, however verse 10 gives us some qualification to that idea. The passage thus reads, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be

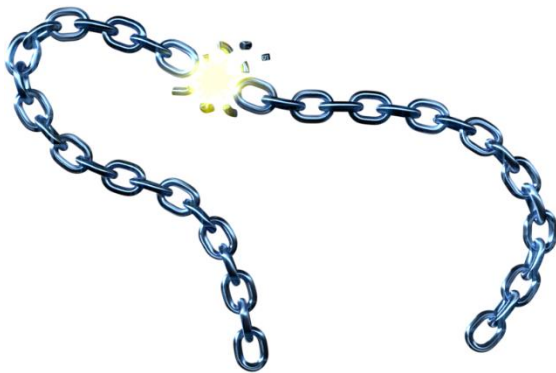
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saved. For *with the heart man believeth unto righteousness*; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9, 10)

With the heart, men believe unto righteousness. Those who truly believe display actions that are invariably righteous. If any would dispute this claim, John writes, “Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as [Yah] is righteous.” (1 John 3:7) Here is the balance between faith and works spelled out. Salvation is by faith, and that salvation comes by faith only. Yet that faith which is true will lead men to do righteous acts. Those who are truly converted to the Way can practice no other mode of life. “Whosoever is born of Yah doth not commit sin [or unrighteous acts]; for His Seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of Yah.” (1 John 3:9)

There are those who, having never truly experienced for themselves an abiding in Christ with unbroken victory, seek Scriptures that appear to lessen the impact of the Gospel. The most common of these arguments are discussed in **Appendix A**, yet it should be abundantly clear from the witness of the Scripture itself, and the record of the apostles themselves, that “all things are possible” indeed, for those who believe. “Because of our old, sinful nature,” some say, “we can never be completely free of sin.” Those who say this are correct, because those who would say this still *have* their old, sinful nature. Yet for every Bible believing Christian, the promise is given, and claimed: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) In these latter days, it is indeed a narrow road to life, “and few there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:14)

Again Paul tells us, “sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the Law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the Law, but under grace? Yah forbid! Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But Yah be thanked, that ye *were* the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Romans 6:14-18) Paul restates the idea from Romans 10 here. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness”, and then he will have “obeyed from the heart.”



This echoes the words of Yahshua Himself: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” (John 8:34) But immediately are we given the remedy: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (verse 36) This is the invitation to Man.

Salvation is not just a “spiritual experience.” It is an experience that changes the whole person: mind, spirit and, in some cases, body. We certainly become healthier human beings, even physically, as we abide in the will of Yah. “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear Yah, and depart from evil. It shall be health

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to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.” (Proverbs 3:7, 8) “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” (3 John 1:2)

Our actions change. The way we look at the world and our fellow human beings changes when we have been converted to the way of Yahshua. It becomes as natural for us to do righteousness as it was for us to sin in our previous lives. What were occasional flashes of “goodness” before, granted as tokens of love from Heaven, become the consistent pattern of our lives, and it is as far from us to willfully sin as the east is from the west. (Psalm 103:12) Because of grace, once sinful man may exercise the gift of faith and grab hold of the life being offered to us through the Son of Yah.

The Law, the works, the actions... these do not save us. The Law exists only to tell us what sin is, and our works only reflect the reality of our unity or disunity with that Law. (Romans 3:20, 7:7) This continues to be true even after conversion is experienced. (Matthew 5:17-19) It is grace that gave us a chance at life; it is faith that keeps us from transgression; is love that binds us forever to the heart of Yah. We were once of darkness, every one of us, (Romans 3:23), “But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yahshua the Messiah, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)

This is the redemption of Man.

Quotations:

Man is a free, morally responsible creature:

“The experience of Adam is a constant warning and reproof to us. We are not to turn aside from the word of God under any circumstances; but the Lord compels obedience from no one. He gives the human agent all the help that he requires to be an overcomer, but leaves him free to place himself, with his inherited and cultivated tendencies, under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, or to follow his own imaginations which are only evil, and that continually. He leaves him free to choose his associates from the pure and the righteous, or from among others. He compels no one to obey Him.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Four*, page 198]

“The whole family of God are included in the responsibility of using their Lord’s goods. Every individual, from the lowest and most obscure to the greatest and most exalted, is a moral agent endowed with abilities for which he is accountable to God.” [*Christian Service*, page 13]

“When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie--to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to choose another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us.” [*Steps to Christ*, page 72]

The actions of a man are significant influences in the lives of others:

“God has enjoined the duty upon His human agents to communicate the character of God, testifying to His grace, His wisdom, and His benevolence, by manifesting His refined, tender, merciful love.” [*God’s Amazing Grace*, page 229, paragraph 5]

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“God desires us to give--cheerfully, willingly, gladly. None can keep His law without ministering to others. Happiness is the gift of God to him who, in the spirit of Christ, toils for the good of others.” [*The Signs of the Times*, January 22, 1902, paragraph 10]

“Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, to their children. [*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 561]

“What the cause most needs is consecrated young men and women, who feel a personal responsibility for the advance of the work, and who will cooperate with divine agencies to shed light into the moral darkness of the world.” [*Testimonies on Sabbath-School Work*, page 57]

Human beings may choose their own path in life:

“The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man – the power of decision, of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will.” [*Ministry of Healing*, page 176]

“The path which I have set before you, He said, is narrow; the gate is difficult of entrance; for the golden rule excludes all pride and self-seeking. There is, indeed, a wider road; but its end is destruction. If you would climb the path of spiritual life, you must constantly ascend; for it is an upward way. You must go with the few; for the multitude will choose the downward path.” [*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 138]

“True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan’s control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.” [*Desire of Ages*, page 466]

True freedom and eternal life lie in submission to Yah’s will:

“Christ came to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature,’ and His life declares that humanity, combined with divinity, does not commit sin.” [*Ministry of Healing*, page 180]

“If men strictly and conscientiously kept the law of God, there would be no drunkards, no tobacco inebriates, no distress, penury, and crime. Liquor saloons would be closed for want of patronage, and nine tenths of all misery existing in the world would come to an end. Young men would walk forth with erect and noble forms, free and elastic step, clear eye, and healthy complexions.” [*Temperance*, page 164]

“The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. ‘The truth shall make you free;’ and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration of one’s self, – to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought into subjection, is ‘the law of liberty.’ James 2:12” [*Desire of Ages*, page 466]

“Do not dishonor God by one expression of inefficiency and inability to overcome fully, entirely, and gloriously through Jesus Christ, who has died to redeem you, and make you a free man. Conquer, yes, conquer. Put your will every moment on the side of God’s will. Think hopefully and

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courageously. In faith cry out against Satan, and looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of your faith, say, ‘Jesus, my Redeemer, I am weak. I cannot do anything without Thy special help. I hang my helpless soul on Thee.’” [*Our High Calling*, page 41]

Questions:

- 1) Do I understand that I am entirely without merit of my own in the sight of Yahweh?
- 2) Do I understand that I am as precious to Yah as the life of His only begotten Son?
- 3) How do I judge success as a human being?
- 4) Do I realize that the purpose of afflictions is to purify my faith, and to get me to trust wholly in the providence of Heaven?
- 5) How do I react when things do not turn out as I expect?
- 6) Do I examine my actions and my circumstances to see why things do not always turn out as I expect?
- 7) Do I consider how my decisions will affect both my own life and the lives of others?
- 8) How responsible do I feel for the way my life is turning out?
- 9) How responsible do I feel others are for the way my life is turning out?
- 10) Do I ever say, “I cannot,” or “I always try to,” or “I’m working on it,” when discussing some aspect of my walk in Christ?
- 11) Do I actively seek to know Yah’s will, and to perform it, or do I try to see how much I can “get away with” unnoticed?
- 12) Am I conscious of the fact that an individual always acts out his or her true, core beliefs?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 3 – Shaping The Stone: The Great Controversy

The expression “The Great Controversy” is a familiar one to Seventh Day Adventists. In this study, however, we are going to look at it from a somewhat different aspect. To a member of the Adventist Church, this phrase immediately brings to mind conflict on a universal scale. Images of angels and demons battling over human destiny, and the charges leveled by Satan against the character of the Father and Son may enter the mind.

This chapter looks at that very same conflict, the warfare between the influence of Christ and the influence of Satan, but on a very small scale – that of the individual soul. Even the larger conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness boils down to the choices made by individual men. The center of the controversy is not man, it is the character of Yah; that is what is on “trial” before the universe, (Romans 3:4) but it is the collection and quality of redeemed human souls that represents, in a sense, the “scoreboard.”

Men, by uniting their wills with the divine influence, prove Satan’s charges false. It is the originator of sin who first claimed that Yah was a liar, (Genesis 3:4) and that His Law was unjust. In this way he has destroyed kingdoms, deceived whole nations, and led multitudes away from the life-giving influence of the Creator. (Isaiah 14:12-17; Revelation 20:3, 8) By His sinless life Yahshua “spoiled Principalities and Powers; He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Colossians 2:15) As for us, “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.” (1 John 2:6)

The Great Controversy in our individual lives comes down to who we will choose to be our master – Christ or Satan, the Author of righteousness, or the originator of sin. A man or woman who wishes to be a Temple of Yah as an individual, and a stone in the Temple of Yah as a collective people, must first be prepared. When the earthly Temple, which is a pattern of the true and heavenly Temple, was being built, it was said, “And the house which king Solomon built for Yah [...] when it was in building, was built of stone made ready *before* it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.” (1 Kings 6:2, 7) We lively stones must be “made ready” *before* we can be brought to the House to truly find our place.



Furthermore, any location at which Yah was to be worshipped could not have been shaped by human tools, or by human hands. “And there shalt thou build an altar unto Yahweh thy Almighty One, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of Yahweh thy Elohim of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto Yahweh thy Elohim.” (Deuteronomy 27:5, 6) Our efforts, our tools, cannot equip us for service to Yah. We are

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wholly unable to render reasonable service to a holy Master (Joshua 24:19), or even to *bring* ourselves to that point by any possible effort, yet by Him we can be shaped, and prepared, and made “whole stones.”

The Great Controversy in our lives is whether or not we are willing to submit to this shaping process by the right Master. Though we will look at this process in more detail in the corresponding chapter of Section 2, the decision to begin this refinement is just that: a decision, a personal choice. As we saw in the last chapter discussing the nature of man – human beings, by virtue of the image of Yah placed upon them, are capable of true freedom of will. The ability of man to choose to seek Yah in spite of his original sinful nature exists within the confines of Yahweh’s sovereignty and foreknowledge due to the principle of grace. Just as there are two forces at work in the universe as a whole, so there are two forces that work in the heart of mankind. To those who had fallen into disobedience to the Gospel of Christ, Paul once wrote: “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Galatians 5:17) Because the Galatians had chosen to walk in the flesh, they were unable to fulfill the will of Yah. (Galatians 5:7, Romans 8:7, 8) What we see described there is a warfare, and the two influences that work upon the character of man are the Flesh and the Spirit.

We know that “Yah is Spirit,” (John 4:24) and speaks to us through spiritual means. (1 Timothy 4:1) The purpose of this communion is to have us subdue the flesh. (Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 9:27) We also know that Satan seeks to lead men astray by appealing to the “lust [or desires] of the flesh,” (1 John 2:16) and *his* aim is to have us reject the leadings of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16, Mark 3:29) Putting these two ideas together, then, we see that Yah would have us control our flesh through the action of the Spirit, and Satan desires that we overcome the Spirit through the influence of the flesh. These two opposing principles represent the Great Controversy in man.

Though man finds himself thus in the middle of these two great forces, he cannot remain on the fence for any real length of time. Those who are not wholly in Christ are wholly on the side of Satan, (Luke 11:23) and this is the natural condition of mankind. Yet, as we saw in the last chapter, the grace that has been given to humanity, that undeserved gift, allows him to come to the “middle ground,” and to exist there long enough to choose his master. Our Holy Father “covers” Himself and does not destroy iniquity immediately, to provide us this space to repent. One who is redeemed



chooses Yah and Eternal Life; his previous life is destroyed and he is remade in the image of Christ – his originally intended estate. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17) “Yahshua answered and said unto [Nicodemus], ‘Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Yah.’” (John 3:3)

The individual who chooses to be led by the desires of the flesh remains a slave to Satan. “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. “ (James 1:14, 15) The desire of the flesh, by itself, is a temptation to reject the Spirit. At that point, *the mere desire is not*

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sin. Christ Himself was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet [was] without sin.”

(Hebrews 4:15) At times His human flesh strained under the will of the Father, and He was led therefore to pray, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matthew 26:39) There are many in the world today living under a feeling of condemnation, and cannot trust in the victory over sin, because they misunderstand the natures of temptation and sin.

Having come in “the likeness of sinful flesh,” (Romans 8:3) the Messiah was subject to the same trials that have always tormented the sons of Adam. But, as the rest of Romans 8:3 and into verse 4 points out, He subjected Himself to the Spirit of His Father, and thus “condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (verses 3, 4) The victory over all the world that was guaranteed by that humble submission will be the topic of reverence and study for ceaseless ages.

As He did, so we are called to do; “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16) The way we begin to walk in the Spirit is outlined in the Gospel of Yahshua.

We know that the natural man cannot serve Yah, “for all have sinned and come short of the glory of Yah.” (Romans 3:23) The Law came before the Gospel in Scripture and in human history for a simple reason – without a knowledge of sin, and the extreme sinfulness of man, no one will recognize the need for the cross. “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Yah forbid.

Nay, I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, ‘Thou shalt not covet.’” (Romans 7:7) Now, obeying the Law cannot make us righteous. The Law is not given to make anyone just before Yah, but simply to point out what righteousness is. “Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin. Because the Law worketh wrath: for where no Law is, there is no transgression.” (Romans 3:20, 4:15)

The sinner who acknowledges that the Law is just and true, and that Yah’s way is best, finds himself convicted before the universe of transgression, and we see that according to the same authority who first made the Law, the penalty for transgression is just as absolute. The wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23) The Great Controversy in a man reaches its climax at the moment he acknowledges the justice of Yah’s will. What he does then places him on one side of the controversy or the other.

For those who will live, they ask out of the anguish of the knowledge of guilt, “What must I do to be saved?” And to the joy of the hopeful, they find that a Sacrifice was provided as the ransom for helpless humanity. (Mark 10:5) In the Exodus from Egypt, a lamb was slain by each family who wished to escape the judgment of Yah upon the firstborn sons of the land. The blood of the lamb was placed on the doorposts, and the angel sent to execute this judgment passed by whatsoever house was so marked. In the last days this symbol is fulfilled in its true, spiritual form. The blood of “the Lamb of Yah, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) is placed on the

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foreheads of the faithful as a mark of acceptance, (Ezekiel 9:4, Revelation 7:1-3) and the mercy of Yah extends to these elect few who have accepted the truth about the controversy.

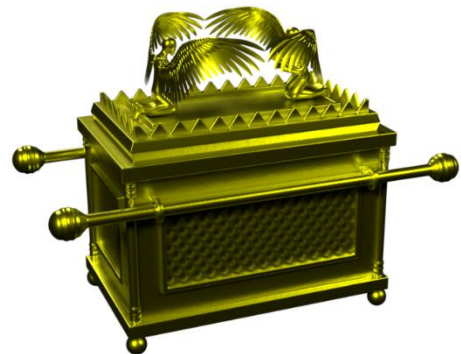
We become Temples of Yah by being filled with His presence, His Spirit. In order to do this, we must first acknowledge that we have no power in ourselves to be just before Yah. At that point, we then accept the Messiah's sacrifice on our behalf. We put ourselves in His place (who was crucified for us) and allow Him to put Himself in *our* place; in doing so He enters into us, and lives His pure life through us (Revelation 3:20), fulfilling the justice and mercy of Yah and preserving us through His judgments into eternal life. Like Paul, we then say, "I – through the Law – am dead to the Law, that I might live unto Yah. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of Yah, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:19, 20)

We do not seek to perform the works of the Law in order to be righteous in Yah's eyes. In fact, we see that by that Law we are "dead." It is only when Christ lives in us that He becomes our life, and then we cannot fail to obey, for understanding that sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4) Paul wrote, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Yah forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1, 2) The basis of every Law of Yah is love; love for the Almighty and love for our fellow man. (Matthew 22:37-40) The Ten Commandments are certainly no exception; the first four deal with our love and commitment to our Heavenly Father, and the last six with our love and commitment to our neighbor. For those who are born again, the Decalogue becomes the very mode of life – no longer is the Law written on tablets of stone, but on the tables of our hearts. (Psalm 40:8, 2 Corinthians 3:3)

This, to follow the pattern of the previous chapter, is the "Conversion of man." A converted man becomes the Temple of Yah on the earth. No specific pope, or bishop, or cardinal, or minister, or reverend, pastor, or prophet, is the "vicar of Christ," but every sincere believer in the meek and humble Son of Man may claim this title.

During the time of the nation of Israel, what is it that made the Temple of Yah different from the temples of the pagan gods?

Simply this: It had no *idol* contained within. The Tabernacle had a mercy seat and Cherubim guarding the place of the manifestation of Yahweh's presence, but there was nothing in the Temple that directly represented Yah Himself. It was the Almighty's very Presence within the temple that made it a holy place, not a graven image that represented Him. (1 Kings 8:11) For a man to be a temple of Yah according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 3:16), he also must be filled with the true Presence of Yah, and not an idol or image representing Him. Many claim to be Christian; many claim to be servants of the Living God – but by their fruits you may know them. Many worship an image, a picture of Yah in their minds that does not correspond to the gracious Elohim represented in the Bible.



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Do they love Yah above every other thing or person in their lives? Do they acknowledge the holiness and justice of His Law? Do they obey and teach His ways, considering them to be blessings, and not burdensome? These things were given by the Scriptures that we may test the spirits of those who would be teachers of the Gospel, and disciples of the Son. (Mark 12:30; 1 Timothy 1:8; Matthew 5:19; 1 John 5: 2, 3)

Those who would be filled with the presence of Elohim must know who He is. (John 17:3) After we know the Father and Son, and after we acknowledge in ourselves our need (for only those who hunger and thirst for this righteousness will be filled – Matthew 5:6) we are given the instruction: “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.’” (Acts 2:38)

When we have the Spirit we are able to overcome the sins of the flesh. (Romans 8:1, Galatians 5:16) When Yahshua lives in us by His Spirit, we cannot be defeated by trial or temptation. We thenceforth have the power of Yah Himself to overcome unhealthy appetites, unchristian tendencies, and every temptation that would lead us off the path of righteousness. We are dead to self, and alive only through Christ Yahshua who knew no sin. We will have chosen our Master by the grace of Yah.

Now, *baptism* is the outward symbol of this inner change. Of both the change and the symbol, Paul writes: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Yahshua the Messiah were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him, by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more – death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto Yah. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto Yah through Yahshua the Messiah, our Lord.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto Yah, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto Yah. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law, but under grace.

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the Law, but under grace? Yah forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But Yah be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” (Romans 6:3-18)

This is how the Great Controversy in our lives ends. We have seen the desolation of our sin. We have realized that we only have a choice between two masters – Christ (unto righteousness) or Satan (unto death). We have seen our great need, our utter helplessness before the courts of

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Heaven. We have accepted the Sacrifice of the Messiah on our behalf. We have repented of the sins that made us guilty – turning away from them forever more. And finally, as Peter explains in Acts 2:28, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us a Temple of Yah on the earth. In this condition, we are free from all known sin and walk in the newness of life. We are spiritually resurrected, and continue putting away all those sins of which we were once ignorant as we learn of them, maintaining our holiness in Yahshua. (1 John 3:3) “The Temple of Yah is *holy*, which Temple ye are.” (1 Corinthians 3:17) About that there can be no controversy.

Quotations:

The choice for man boils down to the decision between Christ and Satan:

“But the infinite sacrifice of God in giving Jesus, His beloved Son, to become a sacrifice for sin, enables Him to say, without violating one principle of His government: “Yield yourself up to Me; give Me that will; take it from the control of Satan, and I will take possession of it; then I can work in you to will and to do of My good pleasure.” When He gives you the mind of Christ, your will becomes as His will, and your character is transformed to be like Christ’s character.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 2*, page 686]

“[Yah’s] servants today would do well to ask themselves, ‘What kind of will am I individually cultivating? Have I been gratifying my own desires, confirming myself in selfishness and obstinacy?’ If we are doing this, we are in great peril, for Satan will always rule the will that is not under the control of the Spirit of God. When we place our will in unison with the will of God, the holy obedience that was exemplified in the life of Christ will be seen in our lives.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 2*, page 692]

“Souls are now in the valley of decision, and Satan sees that for him the time for determined action has arrived. God alone must be your trust; nothing less than a divine agency will be able to counter-work the power of Satan.” [*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1895]

The indulgence of fleshly appetites* destroys the influence of the Spirit:

“The inhabitants of the Noachian world were destroyed, because they were corrupted through the indulgence of perverted appetite.” [*S.D.A. Bible Commentary Volume 1*, page 1090]

“As our first parents lost Eden through the indulgence of appetite, our only hope of regaining Eden is through the firm denial of appetite.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 230]

“Adam and Eve fell through intemperate appetite. Christ came and withstood the fiercest temptation of Satan and, in behalf of the race, overcame appetite, showing that man may overcome. As Adam fell through appetite and lost blissful Eden, the children of Adam may, through Christ, overcome appetite and through temperance in all things regain Eden.” [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Three*, page 161]

*Note: This is not speaking of food as such (although for some people it may apply), but desire for earthly things in greater measure than heavenly things.

The influence of the Spirit subdues the fleshly appetites in men:

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“We are to love God with all our heart, might, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. This love will elevate the taste, subdue the appetite, and control the passions. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, these are the fruits of the Spirit. ‘They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.’ They are endowed with the heavenly endowment, even with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is of great value in the sight of God. God requires us to reach the highest standard.” [*The Signs of the Times*, November 30, 1888]

“He who alone was able to bring order and beauty out of the chaos and confusion of nature’s darkness--is able to subdue the rebellious heart of man and bring his life into conformity to the divine will. His Spirit can quell man’s rebellious temper.” [*In Heavenly Places*, page 31]

“Those who are really under the influence of the Holy Spirit will reveal its power by a practical application of the eternal principles of truth. They will reveal that the holy oil is emptied from the two olive branches into the chambers of the soul temple. [see Zechariah 4:1-6] Their words will be imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit to soften and subdue the heart. It will be manifest that the words spoken are spirit and life.” [*This Day with God*, page 359]

True conversion ends the controversy in individual souls:

“Christ is to receive supreme love from the beings He has created. And He requires also that man shall cherish a sacred regard for his fellow beings. Every soul saved will be saved through love, which begins with God. True conversion is a change from selfishness to sanctified affection for God and for one another.” [*Selected Messages Book 1*, page 115]

“When true conversion takes place, there is a transformation of character. Christlikeness is seen. Pride no longer rules the heart.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Eighteen*, page 142]

“If we are true to our vow, there is opened to us a door of communication with heaven--a door that no human hand or satanic agency can close.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 146]

Questions:

- 1) Do I acknowledge that my actions on this earth represent either the influence of Christ or the influence of Satan?
- 2) Do I appreciate the intimate connection between the body, spirit and entire soul?
- 3) Do I understand that the true battle to decide the War has already ended, and that my role now is merely to stand firm under the banner of the Victor?
- 4) Do I understand that my full confidence in the Savior is vital? That unbroken trust leads to unbroken victory?
- 5) Do I give thanks for the gift of grace that allowed me the freedom to choose between life or death?
- 6) In what ways has the Spirit of Yah allowed me to overcome sinful tendencies in my life? (i.e. “What is your testimony?”)

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- 7) How often do I rejoice that I have been set free from transgressions?
- 8) Do I seek to know Yahweh as He truly is, or have I become content with my current concept of His glory?
- 9) Does my decision to make Christ the Master of my life lead me to a burning desire for union with His principles, His character and His people?
- 10) Are we walking in the newness of life now, or are we awaiting the resurrection (or translation) of our bodies before we lay claim to eternal life?
- 11) Do we give thanks when we see the fruit of the Spirit revealed in ourselves and our brethren?
- 12) Have I settled the great controversy in my individual life firmly and decidedly, walking in the promises of Yah?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 4 – Polishing The Stone: The Balance

At the end of one of his doctrinal expositions, Paul writes to the Roman Christians, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.” (Romans 3:28) On the other hand, James explains at the end of one of *his* discourses, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

Some have been perplexed by the apparent disunity between these ideas, and many others have been confused by Paul’s position on the Law of Yah. In some places, he appears to be throwing out the importance of the Law altogether (e.g., Romans 10:4) and some have used these passages to do just that. In other places, he speaks very highly of the Law, explaining that by Yah’s instructions we know what sin is (Romans 7:7) and that there is a lawful use of the commandments of the Almighty (1 Timothy 1:8) though it is perverted by many.

Romans 2:13 gives the answer. The inspired author writes, “For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified.” We need to understand what this means. Paul is not here saying that the doers of the Law shall be justified *because* they are doers of the Law. No. Rather, the doing of the Law is a characteristic of those who shall be justified, both of the Jews and the Gentiles (Romans 2:11, 14). In other words, those who are justified by faith (Romans 5:1) *become* doers of the Law, (1 John 5:3, James 2:8) which has moved from the tables of stone to the tables of the heart at the point of conversion. (2 Corinthians 3:3)

In the last chapter, we touched on the decision to be made between Christ and Satan. We saw that it is only by an understanding that we are guilty, and made worthy of death, by the Law that we see the need for Christ the Savior. Now we are going to go into more details on what this means, and what becomes of us after we have made the right decision. Since men were created in the image of Yah, and since we acknowledge that the Almighty is a perfect Creator, why was there need for a Law in the first place?



Paul asks the same question: “Wherefore then [serveth] the Law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator.” (Galatians 3:19) The words “serveth,” as indicated by the brackets, was added in an attempt to make the passage more clear. Without it, however, the original wording of the question becomes even more striking – not only need we ask why we should *serve* the Law, but the bigger question also has relevance: “Wherefore then the Law?”

Paul tells us the Law was added because of transgressions. In Galatians 3, Paul is discussing the covenant of faith made between the Almighty and Abraham, the “father of faith.” The question

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arises in Paul's discourse because of what is often asked to this day: "Isn't faith enough?" The answer is both Yes and No, and therein lies **The Balance**.

Faith, on its own, is enough if it is a true faith. But the mere profession of faith, the mere confession of the lips, is not enough if the heart is not in agreement. We are told that "the devils also believe, and tremble." (James 2:28) The word "believe" there, *pisteuo*, is the same word used throughout the New Testament for "have faith." Demons believe in Yah, but they "tremble" because their faith does not lead them to repentance and righteousness. For humans, however, we are told this: "... with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9, 10) As we saw in a previous chapter, a man who has made confession "unto salvation" believes "unto righteousness," or righteous acts. This is the difference between men under grace and demons (and blasphemous men) under condemnation. Righteousness is not merely a state of mind, it is a state of mind that manifests itself in proper conduct. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He [Christ] is righteous." (1 John 3:7)

We may know what proper conduct is only by looking to the Law, for it is the Law alone that the Bible – Old Testament and New – uses to define both sin and righteousness. "I had not known sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.'" (Romans 7:7) "Therefore if the Uncircumcision [Gentiles] keep the righteousness of the Law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?" (Romans 2:26) Righteousness does not come by the Law, not by knowledge or by obedience, (Romans 3:21, Galatians 2:21) but the Law exists to tell us what righteousness is. Christ's mission was to magnify that Law and make it honorable, for with the example of His life and death He proved it to the universe as both righteous and unchangeable. (Isaiah 42:21, Psalm 119:42)

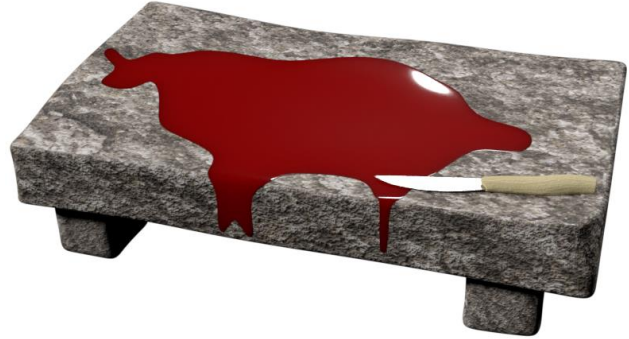
The Law was given, in its complete form, to the nation of Israel. However, it was not given to them for their secret possession. The Hebrews were to spread the knowledge of the Law, and thus the knowledge of Yahweh Himself, to all the world. (Micah 4:2, Psalm 22:27) The purpose of providing the Law to a chosen people was so that through them every nation might be absorbed into the religion of the Almighty, (Esther 8:17) to await the Sacrifice to come so that no people, or country, or group would be ignorant of eternal life. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) In a sense it was the failure of the Jewish system that led to the Church, the "Ekklesia" or "called-out" people. (Matthew 21:43) We know that Yahshua would have died for a single lost sinner, therefore had the Hebrews been faithful in general, those heathen who refused to acknowledge Yahweh would have nevertheless been allowed by the Father to overcome Jerusalem and the Messiah – for a time – so that the Sacrifice could be provided. (Zechariah 12-14) Had this taken place, however, the original keepers of the vineyard would have continued to be the "nation of priests" providing the Gospel to the world; this would have been their great privilege.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that *only* which is of the Law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." (Romans 4:16) All who accept Christ by faith become the spiritual heirs of Abraham, and partakers of the promise once given to Israel after the flesh. (Romans 4:12, Galatians

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3:7, Ephesians 2:10-13) They become, by faith, justified in the sight of a holy God, and reconciled to the Law which we have all violated, and through which we have all become worthy of death; “but now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” (Romans 6:22, 23)

David writes of the Law to which Christ atones us: “The Law of Yahweh is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7) It may seem strange for the Bible to say that “the Law [...] is perfect, converting the soul.” Christians know that it is the Holy Spirit of Yahshua that converts. Yet this statement is also correct, and here again we see The Balance. Without the Law, there would be no knowledge of sin, no conviction of sin, and no motivation to cling to the Savior and be converted. The teaching that the Law is perfect, and that the Law converts the soul is not one of those temporary ordinances that was “against us,” and made of no effect by the Cross. (Colossians 2:14) The perfection of the Law was never truly against us, but always for us, for our eternal benefit. So is its ability to convert. (Deuteronomy 5:29) It is because the Law cannot be changed that blood was required to release the descendants of Adam from their inheritance, a cursed earth and a cursed nature. The wages of sin is death, and death there was... but now, after Christ has died and we have died in Christ, there need be death no more. There is sin no more.



The Balance is simply this: Those who have been converted obey the Law. It is faith that Justifies, but it is the Law that has convinced them of guilt and led them to the Savior, (Galatians 3:24) and it is the Law that provides the very “code of conduct” for the godly man. Men, even converted men, do not, and cannot, obey in their own strength, or by their own power, but it is Christ in them that truly obeys. (Galatians 2:20) Their obedience is accomplished by uniting their will with Christ, and allowing Him to live where the “sinner” has died. Obedience to the Divine Law is the work of Divinity.

Christ came to “magnify the Law, and make it honorable,” (Isaiah 42:21) as we have already said. But does this mean we are released from it, as if the Law itself (and not merely the guilt of its violation) was a burdensome weight? We are told that for those who love the character and nature of the Almighty, and have a clear view of Him, the commandments He gives us “are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3) We are also told of a class of people in the early Church described by Paul as those who “*profess* that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” (Titus 1:16) Let that never be said of any who hear these words.

Some contend that Yahshua, by fulfilling the Law, allowed it to be set aside. The Savior Himself declared, “Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17) If fulfill does not mean “to destroy,” then His job to “magnify” it must mean something else. Let us look at how He handled the Law in His teachings:

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“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” (Matthew 5:21, 22a)

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27, 28)

“It hath been said, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.’ But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery.” (Matthew 5:31, 32a) “And He saith unto them, ‘Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.’” (Mark 10:11)

“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ‘Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.’ But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.” (Matthew 5:33-35)

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” (Matthew 5:38, 39)

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.’ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:43-45)

In everything, Yahshua expanded, *but did not diminish*, what was accomplished through Moses. Even the “eye for an eye” Scripture was not invalidated, but made better, for the original teaching ensured that a life could not be required for an eye or a tooth. Similarly, in the reference He makes to the teaching that “hath been said,” apparently commanding the Hebrews to “hate thine enemy,” this is not actually a quotation from anywhere in the Old Testament. Some of the Psalms do come close, as when King David expresses his feelings in poetic language regarding those who oppose Yahweh’s plans (e.g., Psalm 139:21, 22). However as with the teaching on divorce, the traditionalistic guardians of the Law had corrupted the intents and purposes of the Scriptures to elevate man and lower the Almighty – and the Messiah came to set these things right. It had indeed been said to “hate thine enemies” ... but not by Yahweh the Almighty One. This is an extremely important thing to understand, as we are Temples of the very Spirit that gave those commandments. The principles of Moses, in every least case, were upheld by the Redeemer. (John 8:28-30)

“Then Yahshua said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.’” (John 6:23) Through Moses, a complete record of the Divine Law was given to humanity, (2 Kings 21:8, Nehemiah 10:29)

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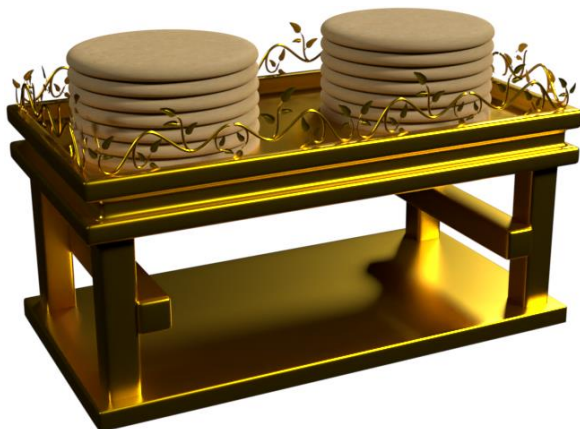
however it was not given with a full spiritual understanding, but an earthly. It was like the bread of the earth; (Luke 4:4) and when the Savior came He gave us the more pure understanding of that same Law – and it was like “the true bread from heaven.” This is the reason Paul says, “before faith came, we were kept under the Law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.” (Galatians 3:23) It was not because there was no faith before Christ, obviously, (Hebrews 11:4-38) but because a full understanding of the Balance between faith and Law had not yet been provided, and would not be provided until the life of Christ and the Cross.

Before the Cross, “these all [mentioned in verses 4-38], having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Hebrews 11:39-40)

Now that faith, by which even the Old Testament believers were saved, has been “made perfect” in Christ, and the Promise has been made manifest to the world. No longer do we look forward to the end of the Controversy between righteousness and sin, but backward to the victory already won.

Yet, in seeing how the Messiah handled the Law, we come to understand that perfect faith. We come to understand how it is that a perfect faith, the “faith of Yahshua,” (Revelation 14:12) leads to perfect words, “the testimony of Yahshua,” (Revelation 12:17) and a blameless life, “the righteousness of Yahshua.” (2 Peter 1:1) This righteousness is not of us, not of our obedience to the Law, (Philippians 3:9) for “the letter killeth,” (2 Corinthians 3:6) yet all of it, every least point of that Law, leads to faith in the Savior and His sinless life, given to us as a free gift of grace.

Some will say that those who subscribe to this aspect of the Gospel only keep “parts” of the Law, since the Law also says to circumcise, (Genesis 17:11) to sacrifice animals, (Leviticus 5:1-10) to subscribe to a religious system mediated by priests and Levites, (Exodus 28:1) to wear distinctive clothing and symbols of our religion, (Numbers 15:38) and to put those who violate this covenant to death. (Exodus 21:12-17) This last point of accusation is particularly common.



It is not true, however, that New Testament believers only keep parts of the Law. They do in fact keep all of it! The Messiah’s death did modify the way in which certain specific rituals were to be upheld, not doing away with the least part of any of them. Paul tells us specifically that the parts of the Law that dealt with the priestly, sacrificial system, that which was established solely to point to the coming Messiah, was changed – but not destroyed or made invalid. (Hebrews 7:12) This verse is the *only* one in all Scripture that speaks of a “change” in the Law, except for the modifications attempted by the enemies of Yah. (Daniel 7:25) Paul also tells us specifically that those practices which were established solely to indicate a blood descendant of Abraham are now

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to be understood in a purely spiritual way, having been merely “a covenant in [...] flesh.” (Genesis 17:13, Romans 2:29)

Christ’s death broke down the “the middle wall of partition” between those who are Abraham’s genetic stock, and those who are his spiritual children. (Ephesians 2:14) Thus, “Circumcision is nothing, and un-circumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:19) The principles of the Law, such as those contained in the Decalogue, were and are completely eternal, (Genesis 17:13 again, Psalm 119:44) but certain practices associated *with* the Law, given for reasons of foreshadowing, were always known to be temporary until Christ should end the sacrificial system – although this is little understood today. (Daniel 9:27, 1 Corinthians 5:7)

By understanding that it was only the priestly system that was altered when Yahshua Himself became our High Priest and took those practices to Heaven with Him, (Hebrews 9:11-14) and that there need be no distinction now between literal and spiritual Jews, (Romans 10:12) the actions and beliefs of the early Christians, which continue to be held by the Remnant in these last days, become crystal clear. The parts of the Law not associated with the sacrificial system or the Hebrews as a nation, these were not changed in the least. On the contrary, they were “made honorable” by Him who embodied their every principle.

The Ten Commandments, the New Moons, the Feasts, the way to eat and drink that will best glorify the Father and Son, (1 Corinthians 10:1) all of these remain parts of the measure of righteousness, to be established and affirmed by Christ and His people, and not by the opinions and traditions of mortal men. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an Holy day, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath – which are a shadow of things to come – but the Body of Christ.” (Colossians 2:16, 17 – literal translation, see **Appendix B**) All of these continue to be defined as “righteousness” by the Law, and all of these are held in grateful reverence by the faithful body of Christ.

“Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.” (Romans 3:31) The Law, established through faith, and deadly without faith: this is The Balance, and it is one that the Savior understood well, saying of that which Moses provided, “if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:47) Remembering what “to believe” means in a Biblical sense, this is a powerful statement.

Quotations:

Justification is by faith:

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 111]

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God’s will and keep

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in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.” [*Faith and Works*, page 103]

“The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God’s forgiving grace.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 107]

“Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God’s boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal.” [*Faith and Works*, page 104]

A justified person will live a righteous life:

“But while God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins or neglecting known duties. God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” [*Faith and Works*, page 100]

“The apostle James saw that dangers would arise in presenting the subject of justification by faith, and he labored to show that genuine faith cannot exist without corresponding works. The experience of Abraham is presented. ‘Seest thou,’ he says, ‘how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?’ James 2:22. Thus genuine faith does a genuine work in the believer. Faith and obedience bring a solid, valuable experience.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 115]

“We show our faith in God by obeying His commands. Faith is always expressed in words and actions. It produces practical results, for it is a vital element in the life. The life that is molded by faith develops a determination to advance, to go forward, following in the footsteps of Christ.” [*In Heavenly Places*, page 109]

Violating the Law of Yah leads to both spiritual and material loss:

“By the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unvarying certainty. The reaping testifies to the sowing. Here no pretense is tolerated. Men may deceive their fellow men and may receive praise and compensation for service which they have not rendered. But in nature there can be no deception. On the unfaithful husbandman the harvest passes sentence of condemnation. And in the highest sense this is true also in the spiritual realm. It is in appearance, not in reality, that evil succeeds.” [*Education*, page 108]

“Thousands need to be educated patiently, kindly, tenderly, but decidedly, that nine tenths of their complaints are created by their own course of action.” [*Medical Ministry*, page 225]

“In our work for the fallen the claims of the law of God and the need of loyalty to Him are to be impressed on mind and heart. Never fail to show that there is a marked difference between the one who serves God and the one who serves Him not. God is love, but He cannot excuse willful disregard for His commands. The enactments of His government are such that men do not escape

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the consequences of disloyalty. Only those who honor Him can He honor. Man's conduct in this world decides his eternal destiny. As he has sown, so he must reap. Cause will be followed by effect." [*The Ministry of Healing*, page 180]

The Decalogue and the principles of the rest of the Law continue to be a standard for Christian life:

"Jehovah engraved His ten commandments on tables of stone, that all the inhabitants of the earth might understand His eternal, unchangeable character." [*Lift Him Up*, page 141]

"This is the wisdom Paul exercised. He approached the Gentiles not by exalting the law, but by exalting Christ, and then showing the binding claims of the law. He plainly presented before them how the light reflected from the cross of Calvary gave significance and glory to the whole Jewish economy." [*Testimonies to Southern Africa*, page 16]

"In setting aside the law of God, men know not what they are doing. God's law is the transcript of His character. It embodies the principles of His kingdom. He who refuses to accept these principles is placing himself outside the channel where God's blessings flow." [*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 305]

"The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined." [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 134, see **Appendix C**]

Questions:

- 1) Do I understand the purposes for which Yahweh provided the Law to mankind?
- 2) Do I acknowledge that obtaining justification is rendered necessary by the Law, but does not result from obedience?
- 3) Do I appreciate the intimate connection between the Law and grace?
- 4) Do I take note of the fact that the Law is Yah's method of revealing the difference between righteous and sinful acts?
- 5) Have I made it my practice to judge all things according to Yah's method?
- 6) Am I able to understand the way in which the Savior magnified the Law and made it honorable?
- 7) Do I see the character of the Messiah present in the Old Testament ordinances?
- 8) Do I see the mission of the Messiah foreshadowed in the Old Testament rituals?
- 9) Do I lay claim to the perfect faith of Yahshua, accepting it as a free and guaranteed gift of grace?
- 10) Am I able to understand Paul's explanation of the significance of Yahshua's death as it relates to the sacrificial system?

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11) Am I able to explain to others why the outward symbols of Judaism no longer have significance to the believer?

12) Do I rejoice in the blessings promised to me in the 10 Commandments?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 5 – Mortar: Eyes To See

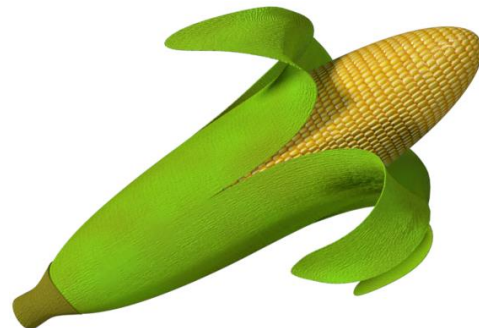
“But nobody is perfect!” This is one of the most common objections that evangelists of the Victory message meet when dealing with those who have accepted a compromised form of the Gospel. The Scriptures tell us that all things are possible for those who believe, (Mark 9:23) and that it is the Father’s desire that we be free from sin, (1 Corinthians 15:34, 2 Peter 3:9) and that whatsoever we ask of the Creator with full confidence and faith is ours; (John 11:22, Mark 11:23) therefore, how can anyone fail to receive the character of Christ?

Is it true that nobody is regarded as perfect in the Scriptures? Or that “Christ is the only one who was perfect?” The answer is no, and the reason is because the word “perfect” in the Bible is not always used to describe a state of being to which no improvements can be made. The Messiah was the only one who *maintained* perfection from birth to death, and in that sense He is unique, and thus qualified as a Sacrifice for all mankind. As we examined in previous chapters, for the rest of us it is true that “all have sinned,” and thus required the atoning blood of Yahshua to restore, or atone, us to the Divine standard. We enter into His experience, becoming “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,” (2 Peter 1:4) when we are born again.

Christ’s perfection of character was such that no “improvements” could be made, yet we are told that He did grow in grace and knowledge. (Luke 2:40; Hebrews 5:8, 9) He was the “last Adam,” (1 Corinthians 15:45) who succeeded where the first had failed.

Those described in the language of Scripture as being “perfect,” though they likewise required growth in grace and knowledge, include Noah, (Genesis 6:9) Job, (Job 1:1) the Israelite kings David (2 Samuel 22:31), Asa (1 Kings 15:14), Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:3) and others. Those who trust and obey the Messiah, receiving His life as their own (Galatians 2:20) and turning away from all known evil (Job 8:20) are also considered to be perfect in this particular way. (Colossians 1:28, 2 Timothy 3:17, Psalm 101:6) They may not know everything, and thus make errors in judgment, (Isaiah 1:17; James 5:19, 20) but if their “hearts” are perfect, (2 Chronicles 6:9) indicating true conversion, their characters are considered perfect in the Biblical sense, through the grace of the Son of Yahweh. They will naturally turn from all that is revealed to them as “sin.”

The Savior described Christian perfection in a parable. “And He said, ‘So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.’” (Mark 4:26-29) When we are born again, of



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“incorruptible seed,” (1 Peter 1:23) we are as those crops. There needs to be growth before the plant is ready for the harvest, but there is no stage of development at which the corn is less than perfect. “First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;” but growth makes the plant “mature,” not perfect – it began as a perfect seed.

The question is how we judge perfection, and indeed all things. With whose eyes do we view ourselves and the world? In his distress Job asked the Almighty, “Hast thou eyes of flesh? Or seest thou as man seeth?” (Job 10:4) His meaning was that the Creator may not be adequately able to judge the suffering of man, having never experienced humanity. A few centuries later, Job’s answer came. “We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15) By His suffering the Son became the captain of our Salvation, (Hebrews 2:10) experiencing the world as a man, yet He was able to maintain his condition “without sin;” and this was because of His eyes.

It was because the Almighty did *not* have “eyes of flesh” that He permitted Job to come to trial. To human eyes and minds, this was a course of action both unfair and harsh, for Job was described as being “a perfect man” even before his trial. Ultimately, however, Job’s suffering was of the greatest benefit to himself, (Job 42:12) his friends, (verses 9, 10) and to countless generations who have been comforted by the record of his life. (James 5:11) Yahweh is capable of judging rightly, for He knows all, and sent His Son to experience all, yet the vision of the Godhead is made with the “eyes of the Spirit.” We, His children, are invited to see the world through the eyes of our God.

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” (Revelation 3:18) Do we wish to judge situations in the correct way? We must have the right eyes. An “ungodly witness” is one who wishes to avoid the less pleasant aspects of true Christian growth, (Proverbs 19:28) and will often quote the Savior’s partial statement, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Matthew 7:1) Unfortunately, they neglect to read or acknowledge the entire passage, which runs all the way down to verse 5.

The heart of the matter is not that we should not judge at all, but that we should not rush into judgment without a clear view of the circumstances. The conclusion of the teaching is this: “first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and *then shalt thou see clearly* to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:5)

When we can see clearly our judgment is righteous, and then the Bible actually encourages us to judge – not the ultimate end of any human being, but the state of affairs at any given time. “It is joy to the just to do judgment: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” (Proverbs 21:15, Micah 3:8) In truth, it is not we who judge, but Christ, and we merely repeat His judgments, having seen all with His eyes. “Judge not according to the appearance [that is, with the eyes of flesh], but judge righteous judgment.” (John 7:24) We may say with Him, “my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30)

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The Savior had perfect trust in the Father. This caused Him to have a perfectly accurate worldview. He was not concerned with fame, with fortune, with acquiring possessions for this world. He was not distressed at the political situation of the time, although the Romans' lordship over His people was a constant topic of discussion by those in Palestine. His eyes, the eyes of the Spirit, were fixed on eternal things. Having seen Himself in the Scriptures with those eyes, He knew His role and walked in the path that had been laid out in the plan of Salvation from the foundations of the world.



Is His worldview our own? Do we have the eyes of the Spirit, walking by faith and not by earthly sight? (2 Corinthians 6:7) Do we process all that our senses tell us through the knowledge and vision of the Spirit, having the “mind of Christ,” (1 Corinthians 2:16) and “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?” (2 Corinthians 10:5) Paul’s letters to the Corinthians were largely calculated to teach them about having the right kind of eyes.

How does our experience correspond to that which has been promised to us? Christ claimed the promises of the Father, for it was written of Him, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His Law.” (Isaiah 42:4) Believing this, He did not fail. King David claimed the promises of Heaven, saying, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin [Heb: *lo echatah* – “I will not sin”] against thee.” (Psalm 119:11) Believing this, he did not fail, being named “a man after [Yah’s] own heart.” (Acts 13:22)

The view of the world that shapes our experiences, or the atmosphere in which we live, forms the framework into which we fit all we know and can know. It is the mortar that holds together the elements of our lives, and this atmosphere may take on many forms:

Those who believe that they cannot succeed are seeing with the eyes of flesh and living in an **Atmosphere of Failure** – those who dwell in this atmosphere will naturally fail. The Scriptures tell us, “add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2 Peter 1:5-7, 10b) We are invited to come to the place from which we shall never fall.

Those who believe that “self” is the most important thing in the universe are seeing with the eyes of flesh and living in an **Atmosphere of Selfishness** – those who dwell in this atmosphere will naturally fail. The Scriptures tell us, “Then said Yahshua unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24) And, “Let us not therefore judge [that is, to condemn or belittle] one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” (Romans 14:13) And also, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.” (Philippians 2:3) We are invited to experience the benefits of true humility.

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Those who believe that we will be allowed to suffer unnecessarily, whether physically, mentally or emotionally, are seeing with the eyes of flesh and living in an **Atmosphere of Fear** – those who dwell in this atmosphere will naturally fail. The Scriptures tell us, “Yah hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7) And, “I, Yahweh thy Almighty One, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, ‘Fear not; I will help thee.’” (Isaiah 41:13) And also, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18) We are invited to be made perfect in love.

Those who believe that others do not like them, and have an irrational conviction that they will be turned away, are seeing with the eyes of flesh and living in an **Atmosphere of Rejection** – those who dwell in this atmosphere will naturally fail. The Scriptures tell us, “In every nation he that feareth [Yah], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” (Acts 10:35) And, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35) And also, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yahshua the Messiah.” (1 John 1:3) Ultimately, because of our faith we will be “hated by all men” anyway, (Mark 13:13) but we are invited to live in an assurance of true acceptance nonetheless.

Those who believe that they never have enough of what they need are seeing with the eyes of flesh and living in the all-too-common **Atmosphere of Want** – those who dwell here will naturally fail. The Scripture tells us, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of Yah, and of Yahshua our Lord, According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.” (2 Peter 1:2, 3) And, “when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.” (Mark 6:7, 8) And also, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10) We are invited to withdraw from this condition, very much like the Atmosphere of Failure, and live the abundant, contented life.

While it is true that the powers of darkness are arrayed against the believer, those who begin to jump at shadows and become paranoid without practical reasons are seeing with the eyes of flesh and have fallen into the subtle trap of the **Atmosphere of Victimization**. This, like the other atmospheres, naturally leads to failure. The Scripture tells us, “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10:19) And, “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” (Romans 8:37) And also, “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, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) There is often a fine line between recognizing the wily devices of the enemy and creating our own personal demons, but we are invited to see with the eyes of the Spirit, and to perceive the strait and narrow path to victory.

In all these, we see an application of the principle, “According to your faith be it unto you; for as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (Matthew 9:29, Proverbs 23:7a) We create the environment,

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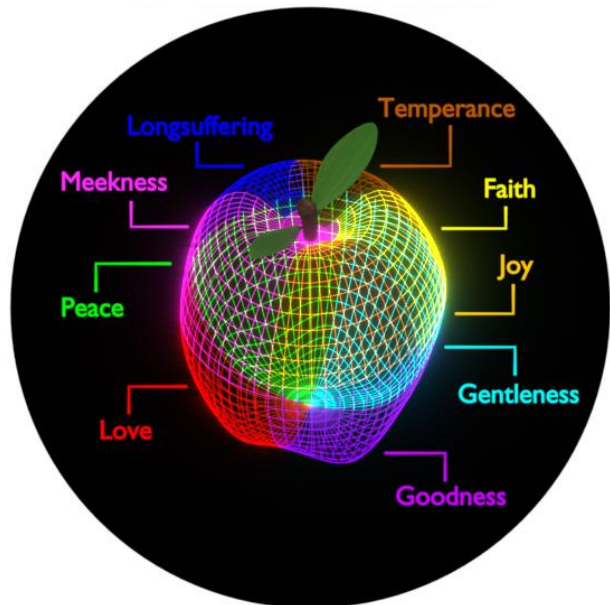
or atmosphere, in which we live based upon what we truly believe. We are spiritually *defined* by what we truly believe. Those who believe they are going to be rejected may “strike first” by rejecting others. Those who are convinced that others are unwilling to help them may respond by withdrawing from the very ones they were meant to serve, and be of no help to anyone. Generally speaking, those living in fear of someone or something we will never experience the joy of loving – for love and fear cannot coexist – and suffer eternal loss.

For those who believe that they do not have enough to accomplish their goals, real and imaginary obstacles will assuredly keep them from success. The belief that the interests of the “self” are most important will also cause the belief that others feel the same way; this is a perversion of the principle of true Christian individuality. The result is that those bound up in selfish pursuits are never able to join themselves in loving communion to any fellowship or group of people – even the Body of Christ.

But we have a choice; we are invited to believe the promises of Yah, and accept them as true, rejecting the alternative of a defeated life. One of the areas in which Job’s trials caused him to grow was to expose and have him overcome the Atmosphere of Fear. Job lamented, “The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me,” (Job 3:25) and by his experiences he was able to put a more firm trust in the omnipotent hands of the Almighty. (Job 42:2) We must choose to exist in either an atmosphere of Light, in which love, life and righteousness exist – or an atmosphere of gross spiritual Darkness, in which ignorance, discouragement and sin thrive. The true believer lives in the former: an atmosphere of **Success, Humble Service, Confidence, Acceptance, Abundance and Victory**... the very atmosphere of Heaven.

There may be many “works of the flesh,” (Galatians 5:29) just as there are many unhealthy atmospheres in which one may live. There is, however, only one “fruit of the spirit” of which love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance are interconnected attributes. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Likewise, there is only one atmosphere of Heaven, of which the “good” virtues, such as acceptance and abundance, are parts of the unified whole.

Something that must not be forgotten is the other principle that the Messiah brings out in Matthew 7:1-5. The “sins” we so easily see in others may be a reflection of flaws in our own personality, projected outward, and seen with the “eyes of flesh” as coming from others. These may not be deliberate transgressions, but “blind spots” that we recognize when coming from an outside source. When you are approaching others in an attempt to help them discern a flaw, you *must* “first cast out the beam out of thine own eye.” If we are not always examining ourselves to



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better understand who we are in Christ, we will fail to develop those positive attributes of character designed to bless ourselves and others. “He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” (2 Peter 1:9)

There is cause for concern if an individual begins to ascribe negative characteristics to “everybody,” seeing these things in even those who are in Christ, and in those for which we have no reasonable cause for suspicion. For example, accepting the feeling that “everybody is against me,” especially if that includes members of the Church, is a reflection on the way that person’s spiritual eyesight works. Accepting the statement that “Nobody likes me,” is an indication that the speaker has forgotten love of both Yah and His people. The commonly held belief that “everybody deliberately sins from time to time” is an indication of a corrupted faith, for we are told that “whosoever is born of Yah doth *not* commit sin.” (1 John 3:9) It must be remembered that temptations will come, and they will often be subtle, but those who hold fast to those precious promises we have been given in the Bible will overcome.

As we allow the Word of Yahweh to define our reality, we quickly come to the place where we are able to discern what is and is not true. The promptings of the flesh, the whispers of demons, these will be recognized for what they are, and they will be rebuked by the heart led by the Spirit. In the Messiah we have clear eyes, able to see the truth as it is defined by the Creator, and what we see, we will speak in right judgment. As John wrote, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” (1 John 1:3a) Our words will be right, our judgment will be right, and all because we have the right eyes to see.

Quotations:

Men are significantly influenced by their view of Yah, themselves and the world:

“Let us put away every idol. Let us seek God earnestly, and with the spirit of a little child take hold of our long-neglected work, and redeem the time. When we have less of self, and more of Jesus, we shall view these things in the right light. Let selfishness be uprooted, let the love of Jesus reign in the heart, and many souls will be saved as the result.” [*The Present Truth*, January 26, 1893]

“There are many invalids today who will ever remain so because they cannot be convinced that their experience is not reliable.” [*Testimonies for The Church Volume 3*, page 69]

“The less you meditate upon Christ and His matchless love and the less you are assimilated to His image, the better will you appear in your own eyes, and the more self-confidence and self-complacency will you possess. A correct knowledge of Christ, a constant looking unto the Author and Finisher of our faith, will give you such a view of the character of a true Christian that you cannot fail to make a right estimate of your own life and character in contrast with those of the great Exemplar.” [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Four*, page 375]

“In His light shall we see light, until mind and heart and soul are transformed into the image of His holiness.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 1*, page 335]

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Man's eyes must be fixed on the things of Heaven, not of earth:

“God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where [...] our great High Priest [...] is interceding for His people.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 209]

“A company I then saw pressing through the crowds of people with their eyes intently fixed upon the heavenly crown. As they earnestly urged their way through the disorderly crowd, angels attended them, and made room through the dense throng for them to advance. As they neared the heavenly crown, the light emanating from it shone upon them, and around them, dispelling their darkness, and growing clearer and brighter, until they seemed to be transformed, and resembled the angels.” [*Spiritual Gifts, Volume 4B*, page 108]

“Christ has made every provision for us to be strong. He has given us his Holy Spirit, whose office is to bring to our remembrance all the promises that Christ has made, that we may have peace and a sweet sense of forgiveness. If we will but keep our eyes fixed on the Saviour, and trust in his power, we shall be filled with a sense of security; for the righteousness of Christ will become our righteousness.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 1, 1908]

The atmosphere of Heaven contains no room for doubt:

“Satan is at hand to suggest a variety of doubts; but if you will open your eyes in faith, you will find sufficient evidence for belief.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Nine*, page 204]

“Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light.” [*Desire of Ages*, page 323]

“Those who are perpetually talking doubts and demanding additional evidence to banish their cloud of unbelief do not build on the Word. Their faith rests on circumstances; it is founded in feeling. But feeling, be it ever so pleasing, is not faith. God's Word is the foundation upon which our hopes of heaven must be built.” [*In Heavenly Places*, page 106]

The atmosphere of Heaven begins here on earth:

“The faces of men and women who walk and work with God express the peace of heaven. They are surrounded with the atmosphere of heaven. For these souls the kingdom of God has begun.” [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 32]

“Communing thus with God, Enoch came more and more to reflect the divine image. His face was radiant with a holy light, even the light that shineth in the face of Jesus. As he came forth from these divine communings, even the ungodly beheld with awe the impress of heaven upon his countenance. His faith waxed stronger, his love became more ardent, with the lapse of centuries. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul. He lived in the atmosphere of heaven.” [*Gospel Workers (1915)*, page 52]

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“Seek God with a broken and contrite spirit, and you will be melted with compassion toward your brethren. You will be prepared to add to brotherly kindness, charity, or love. It will bring heaven nearer to us. We may have the sweet peace and consolation of God in doing this work. These steps will take us into the atmosphere of heaven.” [*My Life Today*, page 98]

“He who receives Christ by living faith has a living connection with God... He carries with him the atmosphere of heaven, which is the grace of God, a treasure that the world cannot buy.” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 112]

Questions:

- 1) Do I understand the way in which the word “perfection” is used in the Scriptures?
- 2) Do I acknowledge the significance of Christ’s life within me as the replacement of my old character with the new?
- 3) Have I accepted the testimony of Scripture as that which is “true,” and judge all things by that standard?
- 4) What are some significant differences between the eyes of flesh and the eyes of the Spirit?
- 5) Do I view even my most difficult experiences as opportunities, rather than setbacks?
- 6) Do I always seek to learn something about myself and Yahweh by the trials in my life?
- 7) Do I give thanks always that I have what I need to succeed in life?
- 8) Have I had a tendency to blame others for my misfortunes?
- 9) Have I claimed the acceptance of both Yahshua and His people, living in the joy of that fellowship?
- 10) Can I think of other negative atmospheres I have seen in people?
- 11) Have I examined myself to ensure that I am clean of those imperfections?
- 12) Are there things about my body, mind or spirit that I wish were different? If so, why aren’t they different?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 6 – Fitly Joined Together: The Principles of Dis-Ease

This chapter is going to examine a very specific application of the principles set forth in the previous two. Chapter 4 dealt with the balance between faith and works, between belief and actions. The topic of Chapter 5 was the atmosphere we create around ourselves due to our worldview. Understanding these two things allows us to exploit the principle of cause-and-effect to our advantage. Christians are in a unique position to benefit from the laws of the universe, including the spiritual and moral laws, because theirs is the privilege of knowing the Creator who set those very laws in place. The Messiah taught His disciples an important truth while speaking with the Father in Prayer. He said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Yahshua the Messiah, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

It is knowledge of the Father and Son that brings us into harmony with *Agape*, that pure, selfless love that is the foundation of the very universe. “Beloved, let us love [have Agape for] one another: for Agape is of Yah; and every one that loveth is born of Yah, and knoweth Yah. He that loveth not knoweth not Yah; for *Yah is Agape*.” (1 John 4:7, 8; 2:10) We have seen from the last chapter that “perfect Agape casteth out fear,” (1 John 4:18) thus the cure for a state of fear is to accept the security and love of Christ.



There is a broader application to this also, for fear is but one of the manifestations of the state of dis-ease. Physical diseases, whether caused by pathogens, incited by environmental conditions, or developed due to a lack of some nutrient, are manifestations in the material world of a violated principle in the vast majority of cases. This may be taken too far; the idea is not to lay blame on the patient so much as to see if we can find out how the disease may have been avoided, and how it may be prevented from recurring in the future.

Transgression, a violation of Agape, leads to suffering. Direct transgression does not always lead to direct suffering, of course, and when the disciples asked whether an afflicted individual was suffering due to his own sins or those of his parents, the Savior replied, “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” (John 9:3) We also know that the wicked and intemperate may appear to flourish for a time. (Psalm 94:3) We may not always readily see the reasons for our immediate suffering, (Job 6:2 – 4) but we may be certain that the reasons diseases exist in the first place is because pain, sickness and death entered into our human experience through sin.

We are assured in the Scriptures, “As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come.” (Proverbs 26:2) We are also promised, “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Yahweh thy Almighty, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Yahweh that healeth thee.” (Exodus 15:26)

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This is a very important teaching, and reveals clearly the purposes of the Creator toward His helpless creatures. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you,’ saith Yahweh, ‘thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected [hoped-for] end.’” (Jeremiah 29:11) The reason Exodus 15:26 mentions the commandments and statutes is not because God will be “pleased” with our obedience and reward us with health and prosperity in a legalistic fashion, but because – as we read in a prior chapter – the commandments and statutes themselves were given because we benefit automatically by applying them. (Deuteronomy 5:29) It should be noted that the phrase “diligently hearken” does not mean merely to “listen closely.” In the language of Moses’ audience, the word “hearken” meant to regard, to consent, to obey. He tells us, “I am Yahweh that healeth thee,” revealing His desire that we should be well, the organs and systems of our bodies “fitly joined together,” through His principles, as He tells us later on in no uncertain terms by the pen of His messenger: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” (3 John 1:2)

His thoughts toward us have not changed in the thousands of years between the authorship of Deuteronomy and 3 John. They will never change; His desire for us is that we should be healthy and whole (whole stones for His altar – Deuteronomy 27:6) in both body and spirit. In order to accomplish this, He uses not miracles primarily, not faith-healers or bronze snakes, but simple rules around which our bodies were designed to allow us to make the best use of these marvelous vessels in which we live.

In diet, we know that Yah gave His people laws of food. This was not merely to test their loyalty, but because certain foods are not the most healthy for our systems. The Cross of Christ did not change our bodies, nor did it alter the chemical and biological properties of the flesh of certain animals. What was good and healthy for an Israelite 4000 years ago is, in general, healthy for a human being today. Paul makes a statement, often raised to give evidence for the position that the food laws were dissolved by the Redeemer’s ministry, that goes as follows: “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Yahshua, that there is nothing unclean of itself.” (Romans 14:14a)

What is not often noted is that in Paul’s discourse about food, it is never the nature of the meal itself under examination, but the matter of ceremonial uncleanness. This is precisely the issue being discussed between Christ and the Pharisees when He said, “There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him?” (Mark 7:15, 18)

In Mark, the question was about whether or not a Jew could be defiled if he did not “wash” in a ceremonial way. (Mark 7:5) In Romans (and the identical argument made to the Corinthians), the food was considered defiled by some because it had been offered to idols, (1 Corinthians 8:4) not because it had been cut out of a pig or a lion. Long after Christ’s death, Peter continued to refuse to eat meats that were unclean, (Acts 10:14) and of course the vision shown to him was a lesson that he should not treat non-Israelites the same way as unclean foods, not that Yah has in fact made all food healthy for consumption. (Acts 10:28, 34, 35) No such understanding was ever received by the disciples from the Messiah’s words or example. In fact, in prophetic vision Isaiah tells us that even in the very last days those who did not trust Yah enough to follow His principles

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(including those of a good diet) will be found wanting. (Isaiah 66:17) They did not do all, including eating and drinking, for the glory of Yahweh and the health of their bodies. (1 Corinthians 10:31, 6:19, 20)

It is not the set of actions that is the problem, in this or any other case, but that the relationship which would have led to righteous actions was not present. Christ does not say to those who are ultimately lost, “Depart from me *because* you worked iniquity,” but rather, “I never *knew* you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:23) There is a tremendous difference. Those who will hear these words directed at them have worked iniquity for the same reason they are ultimately lost... because Christ never knew them, never had an intimate relationship with them, or else He would have led them out of the iniquity, and into conformity with the laws of the universe and the laws of love. The principles for a healthy body through diet, exercise, and other like elements are a part of this harmonious whole. The idea that Yah is not concerned with our physical health and prosperity is belied by the verse from 3 John, and the statement, “And the very God of peace sanctify you *wholly*; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Take note, the “body” is a part of that which is to be sanctified and preserved.

The focus of this first section of *The Two Temples* is to look at our individual body temples. We read in the prophetic books, “But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.” (Isaiah 28:7) Here is another example in which changes to the body affect mental and spiritual processes. Wine and strong drink may have a more immediate and dramatic effect on behavior than foods, yet any substance which causes us to be unnaturally stimulated or sedated stands outside the character and example of the Messiah.



On the cross, as the Lamb of Yah was offering Himself as the ultimate Sacrifice for sin, He was offered a drink of mildly intoxicating vinegar mixed with absinthe or gall (Matthew 27:34), also called wine and myrrh in the parallel verse (Mark 15:23), yet He refused it. We learn the significance of His refusal from early religious writings that point this out as a common practice. A condemned prisoner was often given “wine containing a grain of frankincense” or some similar concoction “in order to benumb his senses.” [Talmud *Sanhedrin 43a*] The principle under which the Messiah was operating, however, was different than that of wishing a release from pain. Each of the children of Yah is told to offer Him his body as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [his] reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1) Anything affecting reason would diminish the beauty of that service, and this firstborn Son did not shrink from leaving us the perfect example.

Some have been surprised to learn that there were two occasions during His crucifixion on which Christ was offered a similar drink. On the first He refused it, which is the event referenced above.

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(Matthew 27:34, Mark 15:23) On the second, however, He “received it,” (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; John 19:29, 30) There is some potential for confusion here, yet reading the accounts given shows us that at the point He accepted the drink His mission of service was already accomplished. John writes, “After this, Yahshua knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, ‘I thirst.’ Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Yahshua therefore had received the vinegar, He said, ‘It is finished,’ and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” (John 19:28-30)

His saying, “I thirst,” and receiving the drink was, as John wrote, “that the Scripture might be fulfilled,” which reads, “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,” (Psalm 69:21) The only permissive commandment given in the Proverbs regarding intoxicating drinks is this one: “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more.” (Proverbs 31:6, 7) This is, as indicated, for those who are “ready to perish,” and this is certainly not descriptive of anyone in the active, living service of the Most High.

For a more complete treatment of this matter in the Bible, the reader may see **Appendix D**.

The things we take into our bodies, though they may not make us spiritually defiled, (Matthew 15:11) can certainly render us unfit for proper, reasonable service. Paul writes, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” (1 Corinthians 9:27) On this earth our bodies are where we live, and they are given to us as surely as any other talent, gift or resource, to husband and care for as Yahweh’s own property. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:20) Let us not be as unprofitable servants, and show ourselves to be poor stewards of this physical form our Master has given us, but rather let Him say in reference to this meager shape of flesh, “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.” (Matthew 25:23)

The intelligent use of food and drink may be a large part of our contribution to keeping the body healthy, but it is certainly not all of it. Exercise, while it “profiteth little” compared to spiritual fitness, (1 Timothy 4:8) nevertheless has an increasingly relevant role in the modern world. During the time of Paul’s letters, travel was done on foot or by caravan, work was done in the fields and not in the office buildings, and an administrator would often go out personally to survey that over which he had charge. “Exercise” as understood then was generally for soldiers and athletes, and not for laymen, who had no need of it for health reasons, yet today more than ever we must apply the principle given, to “glorify God in your body,” (1 Corinthians 6:20) in this way. We are told that Yah would have us in good physical health, (3 John 1:2) and we know that a lack of exercise is detrimental to this ideal; therefore, we cannot (in faith) neglect to ensure that our physical bodies are in good working order for the service of the Almighty.

The same principle applies to our water intake. The body of human beings is composed of 70% water. If we are what we eat, as the common saying goes, how much more are we what we drink?

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Medical science demonstrates that every system of our bodies, from the circulatory to the lymphatic, depends on the abundant presence of clean, unpolluted water in order to properly function. Water is a near universal solvent for transporting nutrients, and the body's cleansing agent when removing waste. Though we may go for many days without food, we die quickly when water is withheld.

Even more quickly do we die when air is restricted. "Studies have shown," according to one advertisement for an indoor air-cleaning system, that the pollutants indoors may be five times that which exists outside. While the commercial intends to convince people to buy their product, which makes their indoor air more suitable for their bodies' use, the more logical (and less expensive) solution is to go outside once in a while! When possible, the clean, fresh air of the countryside should fill our lungs, and speed oxygen to our brain and our every interconnected cell. There are few moods that cannot be lifted by a breath of fresh air and a walk in the sunshine.

Speaking of which: sunlight, we can determine from those who have had some, promotes good health. Despite the concerns of many due to the risk of overexposure, the pale, weak forms of those who do not see much of it should be warning enough.

In our previous studies, we saw in more than one place that the laws of Yah were given for the benefit of human beings, and not for His own pleasure – except that He is pleased as His children prosper. The Ten Commandments are no exception to this, and we find that the laws given to us in those, determining the way in which we express our love for the Creator, and our love for our fellow men, truly blesses those who obey as much as those to whom the obedience is extended. In other words, those from whom we do not steal are benefited by our obedience to the 8th commandment, and we also are benefited by our understanding of this characteristic of the One we serve.



The Sabbath commandment, which instructs a day of rest in seven, is certainly a priceless gift when it comes to our physical as well as spiritual well-being. Though we may rest on any day of the week, and some contend that any day we choose to be our "Sabbath" is as good as the seventh, we are told that "Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:11) It is the seventh day that was both blessed (made joyful) and hallowed (made holy and set aside for special purpose). Although it cannot be wholly understood by those who have not truly experienced the Sabbath

blessing, the seventh day IS blessed, and hallowed, (Isaiah 58:13, 14) and is the appointed time to cease from our labors and enter into the joy of Yah. To substitute what we believe, or what tradition teaches, or what our church leaders say, for "Thus saith Yahweh," is a recipe for disaster. Rest is as much an element of health, and an antidote to disease, as any other, and rest is sanctioned in the very commandments of the Almighty.

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But finally, our atmosphere is key to our well-being. An atmosphere of failure, fear, rejection, selfishness, or any of the others we have examined is destructive to our spiritual health; and it is damaging to our physical soundness as well. The Scriptures tell us that, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Proverbs 17:22) Again we have this instruction from the Word, "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear Yahweh, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." (Proverbs 3:7, 8) Furthermore, "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24)

Those who trust in Yah, and humble themselves before Him, those who depart from evil and maintain a cheerful spirit even in the midst of adversity, these are the ones who experience health and soundness of both body and mind. The laws that Yah has set in place are not rules to test our loyalty, but guides to lead us into that abundant life we were promised through both creation and redemption. Some have objected to the idea that the principles of physical health should come under the heading of "righteousness," but a faith that does not lead to practical behavior, and practical results, is not worth the infinite price the Savior paid to grant it.

Yah says to us that as we follow His ways, shining the light of freedom from sin and relief from oppression before all men, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of Yahweh shall be thy reward." (Isaiah 58:8) Let His people, the very Temples of His Spirit, say, "Elohim be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." (Psalm 67:1, 2)

Quotations:

Our Heavenly Father is interested in our physical well-being:

"Our bodies belong to God. He paid the price of redemption for the body as well as the soul. . . . God is the great caretaker of the human machinery. In the care of our bodies we must cooperate with Him. Love for God is essential for life and health. In order to have perfect health our hearts must be filled with hope, and love, and joy." [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 147]

"God has pledged himself to keep this living machinery in healthful action if the human agent will obey his laws and co-operate with God." [*Healthful Living*, page 31]

"The words spoken to Israel are true today of those who recover health of body or health of soul. 'I am the Lord that healeth thee.'" [*My Life Today*, page 135]

Though we may not be knowingly or directly responsible, disease always has a cause:

"Many act as if health and disease were things entirely independent of their conduct and entirely outside their control. They do not reason from cause to effect, and submit to feebleness and disease as a necessity. Violent attacks of sickness they believe to be special dispensations of Providence, or the result of some overruling, mastering power; and they resort to drugs as a cure for the evil. But the drugs taken to cure the disease weaken the system." [*Medical Ministry*, page 296]

"In many cases the sickness of children can be traced to errors in management. Irregularities in eating, insufficient clothing in the chilly evening, lack of vigorous exercise to keep the blood in

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healthy circulation, or lack of abundance of air for its purification, may be the cause of the trouble. Let the parents study to find the causes of the sickness and then remedy the wrong conditions as soon as possible.” [*The Adventist Home*, page 263]

“Disease is an effort of nature to free the system from conditions that result from a violation of the laws of health. In case of sickness, the cause should be ascertained, unhealthful conditions should be changed, wrong habits corrected. Then nature is to be assisted in her effort to expel impurities and to reestablish right conditions in the system.” [*Ministry of Healing*, page 127]

“The greater number, however, suffer because of their own wrong course of action. They disregard the principles of health by their habits of eating, drinking, dressing, and working. Their transgression of nature’s laws produces the sure result; and when sickness comes upon them, many do not credit their suffering to the true cause, but murmur against God because of their afflictions. But God is not responsible for the suffering that follows disregard of natural law.” [*Ministry of Healing*, page 234]

Our state of mind has much to do with our physical health:

“Indolence is a great evil. Men, women and youth, by dwelling upon themselves, think they are in a much worse condition than they really are. They nurse their ailments, and think of them, and talk of them, until their usefulness seems to be at an end. Many have passed into the grave when they might have lived, and ought to have lived. Their imagination was diseased. Had they resisted the disposition to yield to infirmities and be overcome by them; had they summoned to their aid the powers of the will, they might have lived to bless the world with their influence.” [*The Health Reformer*, July 1, 1868]

“Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life-forces and to invite decay and death. . . . Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 2*, page 458]

“Faith is a mightier conqueror than death. If the sick can be led to fix their eyes in faith upon the Mighty Healer, we shall see wonderful results. It will bring life to the body and to the soul.” [*Ministry of Healing*, page 62]

The restoration of unity with the natural law is of greater benefit than medical drugs:

“By the use of poisonous drugs, many bring upon themselves lifelong illness, and many lives are lost that might be saved by the use of natural methods of healing. The poisons contained in many so-called remedies create habits and appetites that mean ruin to both soul and body. Many of the popular nostrums called patent medicines, and even some of the drugs dispensed by physicians, act a part in laying the foundation of the liquor habit, the opium habit, the morphine habit, that are so terrible a curse to society.” [*Counsels on Health*, page 89]

“When the abuse of health is carried so far that sickness results, the sufferer can often do for himself what no one else can do for him. The first thing to be done is to ascertain the true character of the sickness and then go to work intelligently to remove the cause. If the harmonious working of the system has become unbalanced by overwork, overeating, or other irregularities, do not

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endeavor to adjust the difficulties by adding a burden of poisonous medicines.” [*The Ministry of Healing*, page 235]

“Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness [temperance], rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power--these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature’s remedial agencies and how to apply them. It is essential both to understand the principles involved in the treatment of the sick and to have a practical training that will enable one rightly to use this knowledge. The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature’s process of healing and upbuilding is gradual, and to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice. But in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind.” [*Counsels on Health*, page 90]

Questions:

- 1) Do I believe that Yahweh is interested in my body’s prosperity as well as my spirit’s?
- 2) Do I see His desire for my health in the commandments He has given?
- 3) Do I often become ill?
- 4) If I do become ill, do I seek to discover why?
- 5) Have I understood that my frame of mind can directly affect my health?
- 6) Have I cherished a spirit of criticism, unkindness, depression, competitiveness or anger?
- 7) Do I feel that others around me cherish such spirits?
- 8) Have I, like Daniel, “purposed in [my] heart” (Dan 1:8) to honor Yah with my eating and drinking?
- 9) Do I set a good example for others while doing so?
- 10) Do I rest not only my body, but also my mind, on the days of rest with which our Father has blessed us?
- 11) Am I aware of any ways by which I can improve my health?
- 12) Do I trust in the Savior that He will preserve me from illness as long as I do not invite disaster myself?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 1: Chapter 7 – A Settled Place: The Principles of Rest

Rest, as we saw in the last chapter, is one of the vital elements of human health, whether we are discussing the body, mind or spirit. So important was this principle that it found expression in one of the very articles of the Decalogue. A stone that is strained too much cracks, and if it is a part of a wall, the entire structure is weakened by the disintegration of a single brick. So it is with the Temple of Yah. We are told, by way of another analogy, “That there should be no schism [separation] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:25, 26)

In the section of the book following this chapter, we are going to look at the Spiritual Temple of the Almighty, of which we are individually single bricks. In this last chapter that looks at individuals as Temples in their own right, we bridge the gap between the two concepts, and see that by each individual body-temple standing in place, maintaining wholeness, the entire structure stands together in Christ and is built up a glorious whole. The principle by which this is accomplished is through the right application of one of the laws of health – rest.

The commandment in the Law regarding this principle reads as follows: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh thy Almighty One: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” (Exodus 20:8-11)

Though some may obey this simply because “God said so,” and not understanding the blessing it truly is, the Messiah told us, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) This blessing has always been a gift to man, and made to serve our spiritual and physical well-being. Before the Law was given on tables of stone, the 7th day was sanctified,” or set aside for righteousness. (Genesis 2:3) During the time of Israel it was a national symbol of loyalty to the Creator of Heaven and earth, and an invitation extended to the Gentiles. (Jeremiah 17:24, 25; Isaiah 56:6) During the time of Christ it was a burden imposed by the Pharisees, but restored to its original blessing by the Savior. (Mark 2:28; 3:4; Luke 14:5) After His Sacrifice, it was a continuing commandment left with His disciples. (Luke 23:56) In the Church age, it continues to be “a shadow of things to come.” (Colossians 2:17) In the New Heavens and New Earth it will remain a time of rest, fellowship, and worship. (Isaiah 66:23)

Despite all this, the day *by itself* has no value. If one keeps the 7th day as a period of time during which to do no work, to refrain from buying and selling, to take physical relaxation, yet does not use the hours to draw closer to the Most High, the blessing is wasted. The Pharisees and Sadducees who crucified Christ were Sabbath-keepers. It did them no good, for they crucified the Lord of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:28) To keep the letter of the Law, yet miss the spirit of it, which is “Rest,” is to

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deny the commandment altogether. Paul tells us, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6) To be sure, although we have examined, and will examine, many “laws” during the course of this workbook, it is always with an eye to understanding why the principle was given, and the benefits that our Father intended us to gain by them. How do the teachings that our Creator gave us establish us as Temples of his Glory in either the spiritual or the material world? This is one of the questions we seek to address.

In the Book of Hebrews, the Bible gives us a beautiful teaching on the true meaning of the Sabbath rest principle. “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the unfaithful ones in Israel under Moses – Heb 3:17] but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, ‘As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.’ For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, ‘And God did rest the seventh day from all His works.’ And in this place again, ‘If they shall enter into my rest.’”



“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, ‘To day, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ For if Yahshua had given them rest, then would He not afterward have spoken of another day.

“There remaineth therefore a rest [Gk: Sabbatismos – a keeping of the Sabbath] to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Hebrews 4:1-11)

To summarize all that: yes, Israel of old was told of the Sabbath day, yet their understanding of the day of rest was not “mixed with faith,” and thus they often fell away, neglecting to understand what it was that the Almighty was truly trying to show them. Many did not enter into the true “rest” to which the day was pointing, and thus, even today, there “remains” a true Sabbath-keeping for the people of God. Paul explains it in this way, “he that is entered into [Yah’s] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His.” Those who have truly entered the Sabbath rest no longer attempt to be justified by their actions; they no longer strive to be good or pure by their own efforts alone.

Indeed, to enter into the true Sabbath means to acknowledge that we are justified by faith, and to be content to have Yah be our righteousness for us. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 64:6) “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 8:5) “In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, YAHWEH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 23:6)

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We know that it is the people of the city that are called by that name, and not Christ Himself, for the parallel passage in Jeremiah 33:16 says that this is the name by which “she,” meaning the city and her inhabitants, shall be called. It is understanding this, all of it, that allows us to enter into the true rest that Yahshua has prepared for His people.



The Spirit of Sabbath is more than just the day, it is contentment. The day continues to be a sign in the physical world of that spiritual rest, and continues to be a day “sanctified” for this use, see **Appendix B**, yet this is not the rest of which it was said, “Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Hebrews 4:11) Many who entered into the letter of the 7th Day commandment fell after the various examples of unbelief, but those who enter into the rest of Yahshua the Messiah need never fear falling. As Temples, they will stand forever. As stones in the Spirit Temple of Yahweh, they will maintain their place for all time; as the Master has said using a somewhat different visual description, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my Elohim, and he shall go no more out.” (Revelation 3:12a)

How important is the spirit of the Sabbath rest? It is of the ultimate importance. Had the Sabbath rest been understood by even the mighty angel Lucifer, sin could not have found entrance into his soul, and thus all creation. The archdemon said, as he fell from grace, “I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of Elohim: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” (Isaiah 14:13, 14) Lucifer wanted more than he had been given, despite his place of highest honor. He was not content.

How different was the spirit of the apostle Paul, who wrote in the midst of a lifetime of hard, and often thankless service to the Master, “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philippians 4:11-13) This is the spirit, the very essence, of the Sabbath.

As he reflected on his long and eventful life, King Solomon wrote these words, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

This is not to say that we must develop a fatalistic attitude toward life, and not attempt to accomplish anything. Instead, we must take from those words that Yah has appointed set times for all things, and that our job is to find our place within His divine plan. As Solomon concludes at

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the end of this very book, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear Elohim, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

From our previous lessons, we should understand that the keeping of these commandments is not blind obedience, but a loving and intelligent assenting to the things given to us by an omniscient and benign Father. In Christ we are more than servants, and He points this out as He speaks to His followers, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:15)

This is nothing new, and even the Old Testament believers had knowledge of this desired familiarity, ““And it shall be at that day,’ saith Yahweh, ‘that thou shalt call me Ishi [my Husband]; and shalt call me no more Ba’ali [my Lord/Master].”” (Hosea 2:16)

Thus we work, as a contented wife for her husband, to please him, and not because he has threatened her with violence if, on his return, the supper is not on the table. And as we work, we never cease to give Yah the glory for the energy, the will and the perseverance to complete the tasks set before us. By doing this, we lose sight of “self,” and labor in the knowledge of His care over us, “Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Yahshua the Messiah.” (Philippians 1:6) As we enter into the rest Christ provides for us and cease from our own labors, we find that it doesn’t matter that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” and that of our own selves we can do nothing. Christ covers us with a clean garment, His own garment of righteousness, (Zechariah 3:4) and our actions spring forth naturally from His indwelling Spirit that fills our hearts. (Galatians 4:6)

The prophet Isaiah foresaw the day of the Redeemer’s appearing. Speaking of Him hyperbolically, with reference to a servant named Eliakim, (God raises up) with the voice of the Father he said, “And I will clothe Him with thy robe, and strengthen Him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into His hand: and He shall be a Father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place; and He shall be for a glorious Throne to His Father’s house. And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.” (Isaiah 22:21-24)

We know this is a reference to the Messiah, for He applies the same symbolism to Himself, stating to the apostle John, “These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth...” (Revelation 3:7) The important concept in that passage for the purpose of examining the principle of rest, however, comes from the promises given to the Messiah, and the reason why they can be fulfilled.

All the glory of the Father’s house, we are told, was to be hung on the Servant. The offspring were to depend upon Him, and all the vessels... but why? The Son of Yah is a safe place on which to hang these things, because He is fastened “as a nail in a sure place.” This is a reference to the building of the Temple, or indeed any structure: “Then Solomon began to build the house of Yah at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where Yahweh appeared unto David his father, in the place that

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David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite. And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents. And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.” (2 Chronicles 3:1, 8, 9)

A lot of nails went into the building of the Temple, and with good reason. The construction and organization of the Sanctuary was a detailed and delicate task, designed for a supremely important function. If the foundation, framework and walls could not be trusted, the Temple could hardly be a proper representation of the building of Yahweh. Christ is represented in other places as the “chief corner stone” of the Temple of His Father, (Ephesians 2:20) and here in Isaiah as a nail on which was hung the entire plan of Salvation. We, who are to be like Him, must possess that characteristic as well.

Nails were employed in matters sacred, profane, and idolatrous, to fasten something in place, “that it should not be moved.” (Isaiah 41:7, Jeremiah 10:4) The righteous may profess, “I have set Yahweh always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” (Psalm 16:8) “He only is my Rock and my Salvation. He is my defense; I shall not be moved.” (Psalm 62:6) In these things we see security, and confidence, and trust... we see Sabbath.

It is often through trials and adversities that we learn to put our trust in the Almighty. It may take a bit of pounding to set a nail in place, but when it *is* in place, it is a safe point on which many things may be hung. The Spirit of the Sabbath for a believer is that, after he may have tried to be just before the Almighty, after he realizes that he can of his own efforts do nothing, he gives up, surrenders, and allows himself to be set in the place his Father has had for him all along.

Peter says of the Savior, humble yourself before Him, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” (1 Peter 5:7) He says of Himself, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28) We are not promised an easy walk, only an easy burden. (Matthew 11:30) “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” Christ tells us, but at least our consciences will be clear as we undergo those troubles and, “Be of good cheer,” He assures us, “I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) As we trust Him, and allow Him to guide us to where we need to be, we will be able to endure any suffering, any trial, and we will not grumble, we will not lose our peace or our contentment. We remain in Sabbath, and we will not be moved.

When we have this peace, it is not for our sakes alone, for Christ’s peace was such that He was able to bless others therewith. He said to His disciples, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27) This peace is not like that of the world, which counts peace as an absence of war. The peace of Yahshua, the Sabbath of Yahshua, is deeper, and more powerful. In the midst of adversity, in the middle of war, we abide in peace and we have perfect confidence and trust. As



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the Psalmist writes, “Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.” (Psalm 91:5-7) We are not told that we will be removed from these troubles, or that they will be taken from us, but that we will be at peace with them, wholly unafraid. When we have this trust in the providence of our Father, those around us will see it as well.

Paul writes, “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

“But thou, O man of Yah, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.” (1 Timothy 6:6-12)

By this profession, by this word of our testimony, we will stand as Temples of the Most High, sure against the storm, a safe port on which others may rely, and a witness of the glory that dwells within us by the Spirit of Yahweh. When we have done this we have surely entered that rest which awaits us, and we are ready for eternal fellowship with the saints of Elohim – both here and in the world to come.

Quotations:

The Sabbath was given as a blessing to mankind:

“Great blessings are enfolded in the observance of the Sabbath, and God desires that the Sabbath day shall be to us a day of joy. There was joy at the institution of the Sabbath. God looked with satisfaction upon the work of His hands. All things that He had made He pronounced ‘very good.’ Genesis 1:31. Heaven and earth were filled with rejoicing. ‘The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ Job 38:7. Though sin has entered the world to mar His perfect work, God still gives to us the Sabbath as a witness that One omnipotent, infinite in goodness and mercy, created all things. Our heavenly Father desires through the observance of the Sabbath to preserve among men a knowledge of Himself. He desires that the Sabbath shall direct our minds to Him as the true and living God, and that through knowing Him we may have life and peace.” [Testimonies for the Church Volume Six, page 349]

“The Sabbath and the family were alike instituted in Eden, and in God’s purpose they are indissolubly linked together. On this day more than on any other, it is possible for us to live the life of Eden. It was God’s plan for the members of the family to be associated in work and study, in worship and recreation, the father as priest of his household, and both father and mother as teachers and companions of their children.” [Sons and Daughters of God, page 181]

“When there shall be a ‘restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21), the Creation Sabbath, the day on which Jesus

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lay at rest in Joseph's tomb, will still be a day of rest and rejoicing. Heaven and earth will unite in praise, as 'from one Sabbath to another' (Isa. 66:23) the nations of the saved shall bow in joyful worship to God and the Lamb." [*The Desire of Ages*, page 769]

The spirit of the Sabbath day is rest:

"Jesus would teach his disciples and his enemies that the service of God was first of all; and, if fatigue and hunger attended the work, it was right to satisfy the wants of humanity, even upon the Sabbath day. That holy institution was not given to interfere with the needs of our being, bringing pain, and discomfort, instead of blessings. 'The Sabbath was made for man,' to give him rest and peace, and remind him of the work of his Creator, not to be a grievous burden." [*The Spirit of Prophecy Volume Two*, page 196]

"The holy hours of the Sabbath have commenced. I thank my heavenly Father for the peace and rest of spirit that I have in Him. I can trust in His love." [Undated report of a camp meeting in Ashfield, Australia; published in *Manuscript Releases Volume Four*, page 103]

"To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Savior. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' Matt 11:28" [*The Desire of Ages*, page 289]

Resting is a vital part of human health, both spiritually and physically:

"I was shown that Sabbath-keepers as a people labor too hard without allowing themselves change, or periods of rest. Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor, yet still more essential for those whose labors are principally mental." [*Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 8, 1867]

"The restfulness which is in Christ Jesus, the peace of Christ, how precious, how healing its influence, how soothing to the oppressed soul! However dark [the Christian's] prospects, let him cherish a spirit to hope for good. While nothing is gained by despondency, much is lost." [*The Upward Look*, page 102]

"My son, you need the peace of Christ. God is your Father. He would have you take more time to rest, that you may have a healthy spiritual experience. He loves you with a deep and tender love." [Letter to J.E. White and wife; published in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, page 1808]

Complete trust in Yah and His Son is vital to our Christian walk:

"All blessings are bestowed upon those who have a vital connection with Jesus Christ. Jesus calls them to Himself not simply to refresh us with His grace and presence for a few hours, and then to send us forth from His light to walk apart from Him in sadness and gloom. No, no. He tells us that we must abide with Him and He with us. [...] Trust in Him continually, and doubt not His love. He knows all our weakness and that which we need. He will give us grace sufficient for our day." [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 117]

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“Unless there is genuine conversion of the soul to God; unless the vital breath of God quickens the soul to spiritual life; unless the professors of truth are actuated by heaven-born principle, they are not born of the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. Unless they trust in the righteousness of Christ as their only security; unless they copy His character, labor in His spirit, they are naked, they have not on the robe of His righteousness. The dead are often made to pass for the living; for those who are working out what they term salvation after their own ideas, have not God working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.” [S.D.A. Bible Commentary Vol. 4, page 1166]

“The Lord Jesus loves His people, and when they put their trust in Him, depending wholly upon Him, He strengthens them. He will live through them, giving them the inspiration of His sanctifying Spirit, imparting to the soul a vital transfusion of Himself. He acts through their faculties and causes them to choose His will and to act out His character. With the apostle Paul they then may say, ‘I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me’ (Gal. 2:20).” [That I May Know Him, page 78]

Questions:

- 1) Do I ever believe I have too little to work with?
- 2) Do I ever believe that I have too much to do?
- 3) Have I understood the blessing in the Sabbath beyond the physical rest that the day itself provides?
- 4) What is my true motivation for my obedience to Yah’s laws?
- 5) Do I seek to find blessings in adversities?
- 6) Do I see difficult times as “obstacles,” or “challenges?” What distinction do I make between the two?
- 7) Do I manifest a spirit of resistance against advice that is given to me?
- 8) Do I tend to constantly offer advice even when it is not requested?
- 9) Do I know how to ask others for help?
- 10) How do I deal with temptations to become unjustly angry?
- 11) How do I deal with temptations to become depressed?
- 12) Do I rejoice that I have the peace of Yahshua, even when things are not going as I had planned?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 2 – The Spirit Temple

Now the task may be undertaken in earnest. We have seen the principles of being a Temple of Yahweh with our bodies, minds and souls. Hopefully, by now every reader has – with humility, awe and tears of joy – given his or her heart wholly over to the service of the Messiah. If *Section 1 – The Body Temple* may be seen as a study leading up to this surrender then *Section 2 – The Spirit Temple* may be considered a handbook to baptism, the physical symbol of this surrender, and then “life after death.”

By being baptized, one is not merely baptized into a mystical, invisible, disorganized society of believers. The world’s churches may function that way, but it was not so with primitive Christianity, and it is not so with the Remnant of believers at this end of the age. (Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Corinthians 12: 18-28; Revelation 14:1) In a few days, we will be living in the society of the blessed angels, the faithful of all ages, and the Father and Son of eternity Themselves. However, those who cannot learn to function as a harmonious body on earth will never learn it in the hereafter; and so we are given the blessing of other people – some like us, and some not so much like us – from whom we may learn.

The Bible tells us that we are the Temple of Yah, fit together like stones in a building, both leaning on and supporting each other so that the structure stands firm. In the following chapters, we will be examining how to go from being an individual Vessel of the Spirit to being one of the flock. We will come to learn the balance between individuality – being one’s own person, and individualism – standing apart from others and believing that we need no one else.

Psalm 133, in its entirety, reads, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there Yahweh commanded the blessing, even life forevermore.” This idea, this great blessing leading to life forevermore, is the subject of the remaining portion of *The Two Temples*.

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Section 2: Chapter 1 – The Foundation: Honesty & Integrity

Lie not one to another,” Paul tells us, “seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” (Colossians 3:10) The same author tells us, “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” (1 Corinthians 3:18) In many ways, the most dangerous liar is he who manages to deceive himself, for he may speak to others with the authority of absolute conviction, and mislead many.

The Scriptures have a very important lesson for us in the history of two prophets during the days of the kingdom of Israel. We are told of a prophet that was sent by Yah to deliver a message to Jeroboam, a king of Northern Israel who had turned to idolatry, and was leading many into those practices with him. (1 Kings 12:28-33) The prophet was instructed to eat no food and drink no water during his journey as a symbol of Yahweh’s utter rejection of this land of newfound idolatry. He carried out his mission well, and pronounced a swiftly-fulfilled prophecy against the false altar raised by Jeroboam. He was protected from harm at the hands of the king by the direct intervention of divine agencies, and he refused the temptation to accept favor from those against whom he had spoken his warning. (1 Kings 13:1-10)

On the way home, however, a dramatic and potentially disturbing series of events occurred. We read, “Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of Elohim had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, ‘What way went he?’ For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

“And he said unto his sons, ‘Saddle me the ass.’ So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak; and he said unto him, ‘Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah?’

“And he said, ‘I am.’

“Then he said unto him, ‘Come home with me, and eat bread.’

“And he said, ‘I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place; for it was said to me by the word of Yahweh, ‘Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.’

“He said unto him, ‘I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of Yahweh, saying, ‘Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.’ *But he lied unto him.* So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

“And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of Yahweh came unto the prophet that brought him back; and he cried unto the man of Elohim that came from Judah, saying, ‘Thus saith

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Yahweh, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of Yahweh, and hast not kept the commandment which Yahweh thy Almighty commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which He did say to thee, “Eat no bread, and drink no water,” thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.’



“And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

“And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, ‘It is the man of Elohim, who was disobedient unto the word of Yah: therefore Yahweh hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of Yahweh, which He spake unto him.’” (1 Kings 13:11-26)

Like David beholding the death of Uzza in 2 Samuel 6:6-9, some may be tempted to question the justice of the Almighty in delivering up to death one who had so recently been highly favored by Heaven. It would seem that the job security of a prophet is rather low, yet reading on we understand exactly why such a swift judgment befell the messenger from Judah. Although the false prophet mourned the loss of the true one, we are told that, “After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.” (1 Kings 13:33, 34)

But it was more serious than even this. A short while later the prophet Ahijah predicted, “Yahweh shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land, which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking Yahweh to anger. And He shall give Israel up because of the sins of

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Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.” (1 Kings 14:15, 16) We know from the Chronicles of Israel that this is exactly what happened.

Would Jeroboam have turned from his evil ways had the prophet been true to his message, and provided a more constant example of faithfulness to the word of Yah? Would such tragedy have come upon Israel if the false prophet had not set out to deceive the real servant of Elohim? Perhaps, and perhaps not... but we do know that because of the messenger’s inconstancy, Jeroboam had a ready excuse to doubt even the miracles he had witnessed, and an entire nation suffered the consequences of his actions. Despite Yah’s final, desperate warning through His unfaithful servant’s death (hence the dramatic and seemingly difficult episode we have been examining), this fallen king became the measure of iniquity for all the northern kings who came after him. (1Kings 15:34, 16:26, 22:52; 2Kings 3:3, 10:29, 13:2, etc.) As a more well-known prophet rightly says of corrupt rulers: if the leaders of a people cause them to err from the path of righteousness, even “they that are led of them are destroyed.” (Isaiah 9:16)

Jeroboam had a responsibility to his people, and he failed them. The prophet from Judah had a responsibility to Yah, to the nation, and to Jeroboam, and he failed them. The false prophet had a responsibility to the divine messenger, and he failed him. Because of their lack of integrity and honesty, countless lives and countless souls were lost who might otherwise have had greater occasion to receive the knowledge of the truth. Yes, each individual is accountable to the Almighty for his own decisions, yet we do not exist in a vacuum, and we *are* our brothers’ keepers!

To those who know the truth the Master instructs, “When I say unto the wicked, ‘Thou shalt surely die,’ and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die; because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

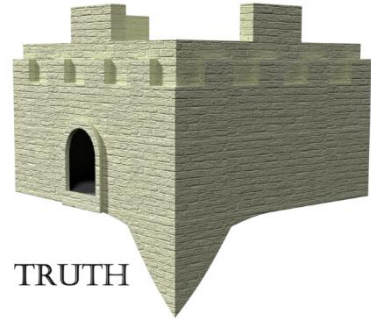
“Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.” (Ezekiel 3:18-21)

The common threads in the example from 1 Kings are integrity and honesty. If those who knew the truth had stood firmly by it, much may have been averted. If those who knew the truth had spoken truth, the loss may not have been so great. The reading from 1 Kings is dramatic, not only because it gives several examples all in one passage, but because the office of those involved was such that the effects of their failure in this regard could be displayed in a most obvious fashion. Essentially, the more authority one has, and the higher one’s office, the greater position one is in to do damage to others. With that power comes responsibility, and the closer we get to Heaven the more important sanctified speech and honest hearts become. In Zephaniah 3:9, Yah says of the last days, “then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve Him with one consent.”

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Of course, we saw from the beginning that lying was of the “old man and his deeds,” and is not going to be found in one who is “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of Elohim, which liveth and abideth for ever.” (1 Peter 1:23) Even so, the Apostles warned those who were of the faith from falling into the trap of self-deception. We can know if we are walking in integrity from both self-examination and the fruits that we produce, “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.” (Galatians 6:3-5) We all have to give an account of ourselves.

Honesty and integrity are the foundations of the Spirit Temple, “For the word of Yahweh is right; and all His works are done in truth.” (Psalm 33:4) Historically, when those who professed to be the people of Yahweh did not communicate with each other out of pure hearts, or with pure speech, the walls crumbled, the roof caved in – and the nation went into captivity. “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for [or *because*] we are members one of another.” (Ephesians 4:25) The first work done on the rebuilding of the Temple after the exile in Babylon was to lay the foundation. (Ezra 3:10) If the foundation of truth is not laid in sincerity, no amount of good intentions or spiritual gifts will make the house great, and “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3)



TRUTH

This very teaching is given in another well-known figure from the Scriptures. Paul writes of the believers’ spiritual armor: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of Elohim.” (Ephesians 6:14-17)

Note well the progression. Before righteousness, before the preparation for spreading the Gospel, before the sword of the spirit – before even faith... there must be truth. Truth comes first, a love for the truth and a knowledge of the truth. It binds the rest of the armor to the believer, and holds it together. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Yah,” (Romans 10:17) but if one has not heard the true Word of Yah, or received it from one who speaks of it with honesty, how will that faith be grasped? Truth is the foundation. Truth spoken to others, and integrity or “truth in the inward parts,” (Psalm 51:6) are what the Master requires on which to build His House.

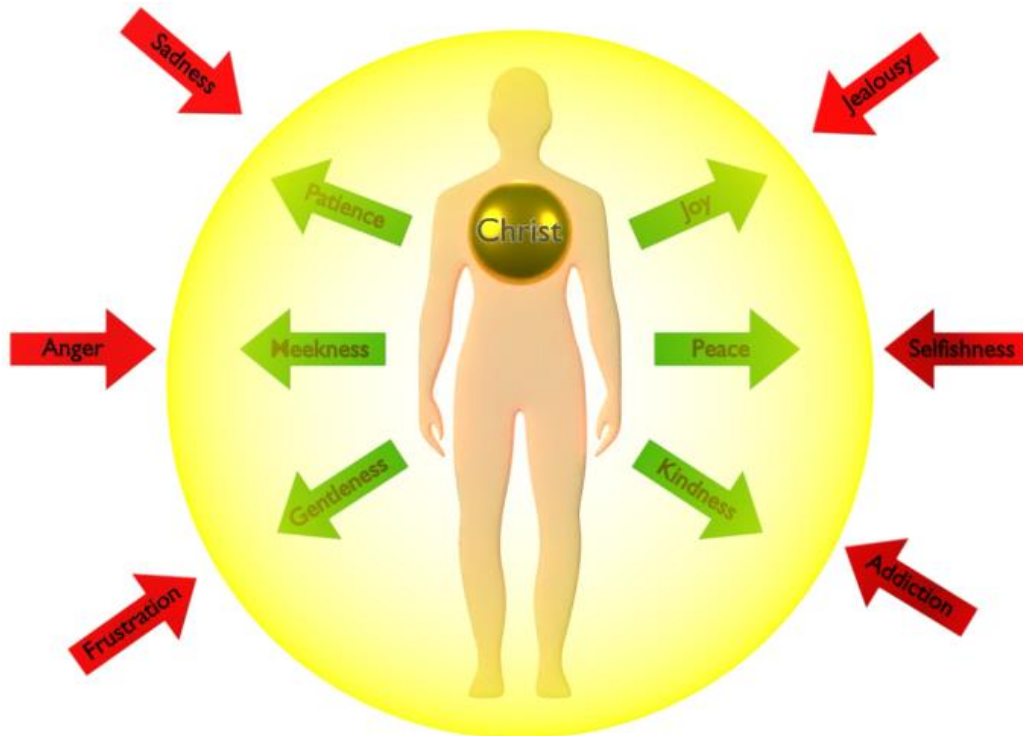
The foundation of Yah’s government is truth; His Son tells us, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” (John 14:3) and Paul illuminates our figure by saying, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Yahshua the Messiah.” (1 Corinthians 3:11) Christ is, among other things, “the truth,” and thus He is the foundation – the “chief Cornerstone” of the foundation of the Spirit Temple. (1 Peter 2:5, 6; Ephesians 2:20) This is exactly why Paul says, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.” (Colossians 3:10) The “new man” is the image of Christ, the image of truth, to which men are restored by conversion. By becoming

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Temples of the Spirit of Truth (John 15:26, 16:13) in their bodies, they lay the foundation for becoming part of the Spirit Temple.

People certainly ought to know when they are deceiving others willfully, but by this we can be sure we are not deceiving ourselves either, and thus walking in integrity: “He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:21) We have to be willing to look at ourselves in the light of Heaven Itself, to stand in the judgment of the Father and Son, and to bring what we see to light. We can do this with confidence, remembering that “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Yahshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1) Judgment, as we use the term here, is not condemnation, but an honest evaluation of ourselves when necessary without shame, without fear, and without excuse. The Almighty knows us already, therefore we gain nothing by hiding from Him... but only by being willing to search can we find and be cured. For individuals, some things may be “personal” regarding other humans, but nothing need be “secret.” If there is anything within someone that causes shame, that person in need of healing. They are invited to come to the light, for therein they will no longer be able to deceive themselves.

Understanding from a previous chapter the importance of the role of viewpoints and atmospheres, we have to look at ourselves from the viewpoint and atmosphere of Heaven. While no man is equipped to judge his own *overall* progress, (1 Corinthians 4:3) we know enough to be able to tell that we are walking in the truth we currently have. We are told, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Yahshua the Messiah is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5) In other words, unless you have no discernment whatsoever, you cannot help but know whether or not Christ is in you; dishonesty cannot abide in His presence.



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In our words about ourselves, we may show our honesty. Those who have accepted the promises of Heaven have everlasting life, (John 3:36) peace, (John 14:27) joy (Luke 6:23) and every good thing from the Father. (Matthew 7:11) Never more do such people say, “I am...” followed by a negative characteristic, for in Christ we are of light, and not darkness. Due to external factors, we may certainly feel sadness, anger and pain, but an honest testimony will define them as feelings, as emotions, and not let them define us and our experience in the Messiah. We may say, “I feel sad,” or “I feel angry,” but the “I ams” are reserved for the true testimonies: “I am joyful,” “I am at peace.” Any sentence beginning with “I am,” that can also be sincerely started with, “*In Christ* I am...” is the claiming of a promise. This simple thing, when practiced, puts us beyond the power of many temptations, for as James writes, “Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.” (James 3:3, 5) “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.” (Proverbs 18:21)

Though much more may be said about the virtue of honesty and being true to one’s self from the Scriptures, for the sake of brevity we must content ourselves with looking at the principle and its importance, and leaving the detailed studies to the individual readers. For the exposition of this principle, no better place can be found than the words of the inspired Psalmist:

“Yahweh, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart; he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour; In whose eyes a vile person is contemned [held in contempt, not *condemned*]; but he honoureth them that fear Yahweh. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not, he that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent: he that doeth these things shall never be moved.” (Psalm 15:1-5)

One who “speaketh the truth in his heart” is honest, and has no evil words for others. One who sticks to his commitments even “to his own hurt, and changeth not,” has integrity, and he may be used to wonderful effect by the One who has messages of love, peace, and sometimes warning, to send. Those who have asked for, and received, these gifts of our Father abide in His tabernacle. This does not mean merely in a spiritual sense, but also that we will be in fellowship with the others who are joined to that tabernacle, even while here on earth. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of Elohim is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and Elohim Himself shall be with them, and be their Almighty One.’” (Revelation 21:3)

While the ultimate fulfillment of this text is yet future, the Spirit Temple is among us now, and the fellowship of the saints has already begun. “But *ye are come* unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in Heaven, and to Yah the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Yahshua the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:22-24) Its foundation is Truth, and its doors are open wide to receive the earnest seeker.

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We may be confident that have truly accepted Yahshua's promises; therefore, He will hold us steady on the path of life, and with both humility and boldness we say, "Hear the right, O Yahweh, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal. Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." (Psalm 17:1-4) Those who are entirely one with Christ are both one with each other and separate from sin. Those who are one with Christ are at one with truth, and no deception is found in us. As the Scripture says of this Remnant people, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. *And in their mouth was found no guile*: for they are without fault before the Throne of Elohim." (Revelation 14:1, 5)

Quotations:

One of Yah's main attributes is truth:

"Truthfulness and integrity are attributes of God, and he who possesses these qualities possesses a power that is invincible." [*My Life Today*, page 331]

"The character of God is righteousness and truth; such is the nature of His law. Says the psalmist, 'Thy law is the truth;' 'all thy commandments are righteousness.'" [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 41]

"Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour. He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God." [*The Faith I Live By*, page 59]

The Foundation of Yah's government is truth:

"Honesty and strict equity are in perfect harmony with all the principles of truth, in perfect harmony with God's holy law. Our every act should bear a reliable testimony to the validity of truth. Yet those who live on this plan will have a cross to bear." [*Manuscript Releases Volume Thirteen*, page 232]

"God will never, never allow any man to pass through the pearly gates of the City of God who does not bear the signet of the faithful, His government mark. Every soul who is saved will cherish pure principles, which proceed from the very essence of truth. He must fasten himself by golden links to the everlasting power and love of the God of truth. He must be loyal to the principles of God's word, loyal to the everlasting covenant which is a sign between man and his Maker." [*Medical Ministry*, page 123]

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“Satan offered Christ the world and its riches if He would pay homage to the principles of evil. So Satan presents to us the advantages to be gained by wrongdoing. He whispers to us, ‘In order to succeed in this world, you must serve me. Do not be too particular about truth and honesty. Obey my counsel, and I will give you riches, honor, and happiness.’ In obeying this counsel we are worshiping Satan instead of God. It will bring us only misery and ruin.” [*The Story of Jesus*, page 47]

“Justice, honor, love, and truth are the attributes of God’s throne. They are the principles of His government... These are jewels to be sought after and cherished for time and for eternity.” [*Our High Calling*, page 80]

Our Integrity should be seen in every area of our lives:

“The eighth commandment condemns [...] theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life. It forbids overreaching in trade and requires the payment of just debts or wages.” [*The Adventist Home*, page 392]

“When you lose your conscious integrity, your soul becomes a battlefield for Satan; you have doubts and fears enough to paralyze your energies and drive you to discouragement.” [*Our High Calling*, page 94]

“Honesty should stamp every action of our lives. Heavenly angels examine the work that is put into our hands; and where there has been a departure from the principles of truth, “wanting” is written in the records.” [*Child Guidance*, page 154]

“The Holy One has presented his law to us as a standard of character. And the Lord is our judge, as well as our law-giver, and our king. There can be sinless human agents, who will not swerve from the strictest truth and honesty. Abraham was God’s representative in his generation. God calls him the father of the faithful.” [*The Gospel Herald*, August 1, 1906]

Honesty and reliability are foundational to our dealings with others:

“A man may not have a pleasant exterior, he may be deficient in many respects, but if he has a reputation for straightforward honesty, he will be respected. Stern integrity covers many objectionable traits of character. A man who steadfastly adheres to truth will win the confidence of all. Not only will his brethren in the faith trust him, but unbelievers will be constrained to acknowledge him as a man of honor.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume 2*, page 437]

“In the Christian world today fraud is practiced to a fearful extent. God’s commandment-keeping people should show that they are above all these things. The dishonest practices which mar the dealing of man with his fellow man should never be practiced by one who professes to be a believer in present truth.” [*This Day with God*, page 337]

“In our dealings with our fellow men, as well as in our relations with God, we are to show strict justice and honesty. Every human being is to be estimated according to the price that Christ has paid for his redemption. Our fellow men are of as much value as we are, and God calls upon us to treat them as we would be treated.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, December 1, 1896]

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Questions:

- 1) Do I make the Bible, and the promises of Christ to me, the basis of truth?
- 2) Do I give thanks that I have received everlasting life, peace, joy and gentleness from the Son of Yah?
- 3) Am I conscious of the fact that in the things I say about myself I may deny these promises?
- 4) Do I see a difference between the sentences, "I am angry," and, "I feel angry?"
- 5) Am I willing to speak unpleasant truths to others for their own good?
- 6) Do I ever do things with the primary purpose of having others think better of me?
- 7) Have I ever compromised my convictions in order to make peace with others?
- 8) Do I consider myself to be an honest individual?
- 9) Do other people agree with that?
- 10) Do others feel comfortable entrusting me with information, property, money or their company?
- 11) Am I ever afraid of being asked an embarrassing question?
- 12) In what ways do I show others that Yah is a God of truth?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 2: Chapter 2 – Fitting In: Forgiveness

Although this book is divided into two sections, the topics covered by both halves are essentially the same. While in Section 1 we examined certain concepts on an individual scale, Section 2 expands on them and introduces a social setting. For example, Chapter 1 of Section 1 dealt with the question “Who is Yah?” while Chapter 1 of Section 2 discusses Truth, the foundation of the Spiritual and Collective Temple. Yah is truth, and thus the same essential principle is covered. This is much the same for all seven chapters of both sections. Chapter 2 of Part 1 was called, “What is Man?” This chapter deals with forgiveness – the means by which Yahweh has been able to deal with fallen man, and the way in which we humans must deal with each other.

When discussing the Law, we saw that it was “added because of transgressions.” (Galatians 3:19) There has always been a standard of faith, a standard of truth, and that standard is the character of the Creator Himself. When Adam was created, he was designed with a natural knowledge of righteousness, and a tendency to obey. Because of this, no standard of behavior needed to be marked out in Eden. No rules or regulations were given to keep Adam safe from the results of rebellion, for the concept of rebellion against the Most High was alien to his mind. Indeed, even the Tree of Knowledge was permitted as a test only because there was one already questioning the authority of Yah, and His character – that standard of truth. Satan was “a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (John 8:44)

When Adam did fall, it was due to the combined efforts of the tempter himself (Genesis 3:1-5) and the inducements of his wife whom the serpent deceived. (Genesis 3:6) Now, Adam knew the commandment against this action, and unlike his wife was not deceived by Lucifer directly, therefore the greater responsibility was his. (1 Timothy 2:14) Thus it is that “in Adam [not Eve] all die,” yet “even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)

A system of forgiveness was put in place immediately upon the fall of mankind, for we read that, “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Yahweh Elohim make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Genesis 3:21) They had invited death into the world; by death they would be clothed, and ultimately – thousands of years later – by death they would be redeemed. The Creator forgave His creation, although He did not remove the consequences of the sin. Death is still with us, and will be until that last enemy is destroyed. (1 Corinthians 15:26, Revelation 20:14)



In writing of the Son of Yah, Paul gives thanks for Him, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:14) The life of the Savior was one of forgiveness, and His mercy and longsuffering were designed to lead all to repentance. (Romans 2:4) He walked among people who had condemned Him to death – either directly or indirectly – by their transgressions, and He gave His life willingly that we may be saved. Isaiah wrote with

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prophetic certainty, “He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of Elohim, and afflicted.

“But He was wounded for *our* transgressions, He was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:3-5) Even of those most directly responsible, the officials who sent Him to Golgotha and the very men who nailed Him to the cross, He said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34) It is Divine to forgive in this way, and if we would see life, we must become “partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Peter 1:4)

With the foundation of truth laid, we must build the walls of character, the walls of fellowship. Speaking of the “Spiritual House,” Peter writes, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Yah by Yahshua the Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5) Paul shows us that from the Corner Stone we are built up, receiving life and power from Christ, “From whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:16)

Whether we are talking about how the stones of a temple wall fit together, or the way in which the body’s organs and limbs must work in concert, the message is loud and clear: there must be unity, or the house will fall. While we examine the concept of unity in more detail in an upcoming chapter, we examine the means by which it is accomplished here, and that means is *forgiveness*.

It is forgiveness that has allowed us to continue to exist, for though we became worthy of death in Adam, and in the inheritance of his nature, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Yet that is not the end of the story.

When we accept this forgiveness, we have a responsibility to walk in forgiveness. We are told, “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give.” (Matthew 10:8) This applies not the least to forgiveness, for “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked; because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 2:6, 4:17b) But more than this, it is impossible to accept the forgiveness that Yahshua offers for those whose hearts are not themselves prepared to forgive. Yah is not willing that any should perish, “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:15)

The fault is not in the Giver, if such be the case, but the receiver. We are each to be “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work,” (2 Timothy 2:21) but if that vessel is sealed so that nothing can flow out of it, it is also sealed so that nothing can get in. A heart that is closed, so that it cannot bring forth good things, is just as closed to that which should enter in. Of the woman who anointed the Messiah’s feet, He said, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” (Luke 7:47)

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Just as we have received forgiveness for our transgressions, so are we to forgive others. The Savior said, “Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37) Some wrongly believe that the admonition to “judge not” means we should never point out an obvious evil, however this is not the sense given here, merely that we should not pronounce judgment on others. We are certainly to speak the truth in love, and warn others if their ways are in error. In the same book the Master adds to His previous teaching, “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.” (Luke 17:3) “Open rebuke is better than secret love,” Solomon tells us, “faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” (Proverbs 27:5, 6)

When Peter asked Yahshua how many times he ought to forgive one who transgressed against Him, the Master said, “Until seventy times seven,” meaning a perfect sum... and then He gave the following parable to illustrate His point:

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

“The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, ‘Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.’ Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me that thou owest.’

“And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.’ And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, ‘O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?’ And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.” (Matthew 18:23- 35)

Some may say that this means we must give others free reign to abuse our trust and consent, but this was not the teaching of the Savior. That same chapter gives the pattern for Gospel forgiveness. “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be

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established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

If one will not truly repent, forgiveness will not be appreciated by him. Though you may forgive him in your heart, it is not your obligation to get him to “act forgiven” towards you. Atonement is made when forgiveness is received, not when it is given; Christ offers forgiveness to all, but only those who receive it by faith become one with Him and gain the benefits of that forgiveness so graciously offered. It is the same with men... we must offer forgiveness to all, and forgive truly and sincerely even those who wrong us most deeply – but we must not feel we have failed when we encounter those who refuse to make peace. Yahshua said, “ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake;” (Luke 21:17) and Paul wrote, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men,” (Romans 12:18) knowing that it is not always possible in this sin-broken world.

In dealing even with faithful followers of Christ, misunderstandings are possible. Unity is our strength, but individuality is our privilege, and not all will use the same words, or speak of the same aspects of truth. While all true believers will have “the testimony of Yahshua the Messiah,” (Revelation 12:17) not all will give it in the same way. Though all will speak with the same authority and Spirit, not all will have the same approach. We must have always before us the image of Yah, who suffered long with us, and continues to be patient with us as we grow into “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:13) As we will do this, we cannot be hasty with others, or grow impatient with those who do not yet have a like understanding.

Christ said during His sermon on the mount, “with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you,” (Mark 4:24) meaning that how we judge others will determine the way in which our actions will be considered. Even in an earthly setting, people tend to respond in like manner to how they are treated. It has been observed that this works the other way around as well. The more critical we are of ourselves, the more critical we tend to be of others. Now, in a loving, Christian atmosphere this is as it should be, for if we were more critical of others than of ourselves this would become hypocrisy, and if we were less critical of others than we were of ourselves, we would be unreliable witnesses to the standard of Christ.

The unfortunate thing is that while some see themselves through the perfect eyes of the Savior and acknowledge with their lips that they are forgiven, they treat themselves (and thus others) as if they were condemned. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, leading to undue criticism of both others and self.

Some spend their time worrying that they may have inadvertently committed some sin, but they are putting themselves in the Spirit’s place. Yahshua sent the Spirit to convict of sin, and while we must keep our eyes open and our hearts soft for the leadings of Christian conscience, we cannot afford to jump at shadows either. Yahshua has said of His people, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27, 28) If we commit some unknown trespass, we can be sure that by the law of cause and effect, it will become manifest to either ourselves or others. When it is revealed, then we are accountable, and at this point we seek

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forgiveness and cleansing. “And the blood of Yahshua the Messiah, [Yah’s] Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7) The sin, if it is not continued willfully after it has been revealed, has no power to pollute the heart or separate us from Christ.

Others suffering from the above malady are always seeking to be the conscience of their brethren, always quick to point out flaws, whether real or imagined. If the character of such persons is probed, it is often discovered that a deep self-loathing is hiding in the heart. The principle is that “of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh,” (Luke 6:45) and in speaking of others, he is actually suffering under the log in his own eye.

Both these types of individuals need to walk in forgiveness. While they may have spoken words acknowledging that they have received the forgiveness of Christ, they have not received the love of the Savior in its full measure, for where there has been a true acceptance of forgiveness... there is peace, and there is joy.



In order to love others as we love ourselves, (Matthew 22:39) we do need to have a measure of love for ourselves that is entirely different from “selfishness.” With the world’s talk of self-esteem and self-confidence, this is often a difficult concept for the modern mind to grasp, but love for self does not necessarily imply putting “self” first! In order to truly enter into Christian service, we must go so far as to forget self, and to “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto Yah through Yahshua the Messiah, our Lord.” (Romans 6:11) We acknowledge that Christ is our life, and our confidence is placed in Him – in His forgiveness of us, and in His promises that, “[Yah] which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Yahshua the Messiah.” (Philippians 1:6) This is how a man best loves his own soul.

This is how we fit into the walls of the Spirit Temple. If the edges of the bricks are rough, with sharp irregularities or a coarse surface, both light and air may escape from the gaps. The stones must be shaped and polished, as the next two chapters will explain, but it is forgiveness that allows the stones to be set in place. It is forgiveness that determines where each brick goes, for until we have received the forgiveness of Heaven with great joy, we cannot accomplish our mission in Yahshua.

Consider the experiences of the prophet Jonah. Because He desired to withhold the forgiveness of Elohim from other men who were no less deserving of mercy than himself, he fled from the presence of Yah and refused to carry out his office. Even when he was later compelled to do so, he had no rest and could not remain in place, saying, “Therefore now, O Yah, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3) By the illustration of a plant giving shade to Jonah despite his inability to labor for such a gift, Yah sought to teach the unforgiving messenger the principles of undeserved grace. (verses 6-11)

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There is a lesson for us there as well. Jonah was not an Israelite for his own sake. The nation itself had not been raised up simply to receive the favor of the Almighty; but rather Israel's purpose was to reach out to the heathen nations, and to restore them to the worship of the Creator. (Psalm 22:27, Micah 4:2) Similarly, Christians are not saved for their own sakes alone. The forgiveness we have been granted was not merely to take us to Heaven or to restore us to a renewed earth, but as a sign to the watching universe, and other poor sinners, that there is a God in Heaven who forgives sin, and whose arms are open wide to receive all who will call upon Him with humility and hope. "And the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelation 22:17)

Let us not be silent about the great forgiveness we have obtained at the Right Hand of Yah. None who are filled with love can help but overflow, "and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:25) None who have received the forgiveness of the Master and walk in lives free of sin can help but say, "Now thanks be unto Yah, which *always* causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place." (2 Corinthians 2:14) As we give, so shall we receive, and as we have received, so shall we surely give. Yahshua offers us all – let us accept all, that we may in turn give all. In this way the universe will be filled with forgiveness, the Spiritual Temple will stand with firm and everlasting walls, and we will raise up an altar to Yahweh on this earth upon which the last remnants of sin will finally be consumed away into smoke, never to rise again. (Psalm 37:20; Revelation 20:7-9; Nahum 1:9, 10)

Quotations:

Yahweh is a longsuffering and merciful Creator:

"The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace." [*The Faith I Live By*, page 107]

"God is longsuffering and of tender mercy. Should He deal with us according to our perversity, according to our foolish, erratic course, our changeableness, where would we be? But 'He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.'" [*Battle Creek Letters*, page 77]

"Although Satan has misinterpreted God's purposes, falsified His character, and caused man to look upon God in a false light, yet through the ages God's love for man has never ceased. Christ's work was to reveal the Father as merciful, compassionate, full of goodness and truth. The character of Christ represented the character of God. The only begotten Son of God sweeps back the hellish shadow in which Satan has enveloped the Father, and declares, 'I and My Father are one; look on Me and behold God.'" [*Manuscript Releases Volume Thirteen*, page 243]

Forgiveness is natural to one who is united with Christ:

"If we have the love of Christ in our souls it will be a natural consequence for us to have all the other graces--joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and 'against such there is no law.'" [*In Heavenly Places*, page 244]

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“When the Holy Spirit is abiding in the heart, it will lead the human agent to see his own defects of character, to pity the weakness of others, to forgive as he wishes to be forgiven. He will be pitiful, courteous, Christlike.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 53]

“We can receive forgiveness from God only as we forgive others. It is the love of God that draws us unto Him, and that love cannot touch our hearts without creating love for our brethren.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 131]

“The Lord forgives our transgressions; He pardons our sins; and when we realize the greatness of His mercy, the boundlessness of His love, we become partakers of the divine nature, and manifest the same tender spirit, compassionate forbearance, mercy, and love, and are ready to forgive others.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Thirteen*, page 76]

Our works will reflect the degree to which we have received the forgiveness of Yah:

“We are not forgiven *because* we forgive, but *as* we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own.” [*Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 251, emphasis hers]

“God has enjoined the duty upon His human agents to communicate the character of God, testifying to His grace, His wisdom, and His benevolence, by manifesting His refined, tender, merciful love.” [*God’s Amazing Grace*, page 229]

“The compassion that God manifests toward us, He bids us manifest toward others. Let the impulsive, the self-sufficient, the revengeful, behold the meek and lowly One, led as a lamb to the slaughter, unretaliating as a sheep dumb before her shearers. Let them look upon Him whom our sins have pierced and our sorrows burdened, and they will learn to endure, to forbear, and to forgive.” [*Education*, page 257]

Christian unity depends on the principle of forgiveness:

“Christ wept at the sight of woe. Let His tenderness come into your hearts. Practice self-denial that you may have wherewith to relieve the sufferings of God’s children.” [*Our High Calling*, page 198]

“The return of the prodigal son was a source of the greatest joy. The complaints of the elder brother were natural, but not right. Yet this is frequently the course that brother pursues toward brother. There is too much effort to make those in error feel where they have erred, and to keep reminding them of their mistakes. Those who have erred need pity, they need help, they need sympathy. They suffer in their feelings, and are frequently desponding and discouraged. Above everything else, they need free forgiveness.” [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Three*, page 104]

“Representations have been made to me of some who have borne witness against a brother or a sister instead of going to the erring one and, in kindness and love, pointing out the wrong that has been done. Because of this the happy union which they once enjoyed is broken up. My brethren and sisters, let everything of this character be put away. Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that you may obtain forgiveness and pardon, and that unity and peace may be restored to you. Guard the false tongue. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” Be

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kind and courteous to one another. Do not wound Christ in the person of His saints.” [*Pacific Union Recorder*, May 6, 1909]

Questions:

- 1) Do I hold ill feelings towards anyone?
- 2) Do I know of anyone who holds ill feelings towards me? If so, is there anything I can do to alleviate that?
- 3) When I forgive others, do I treat them differently after I have done so?
- 4) Is there any action or insult that I would consider to be “unforgivable?”
- 5) When people wrong me, do I confront them, or do I let things “slide?”
- 6) Do I appreciate it when others come to me if I have hurt them in some way?
- 7) Are there any ways in which my past experiences negatively affect the way I treat others?
- 8) Do I feel uncomfortable being emotionally familiar with other people?
- 9) Do I trust others easily?
- 10) Do I feel vindicated when someone who has wronged me “gets what he/she deserves?”
- 11) Do I feel led to share my faith with others?
- 12) Do I act and speak as if I were truly forgiven by Yah?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 2: Chapter 3 – Shaping the Stone: Teraphim

We have seen before that there was something unique about the Temple of Yahweh. The Philistines had a deity named Dagon, and in the temple of Dagon was a statue of the object of their worship. (1 Samuel 5:2, 3) The worshippers of Ba'al had an image of Ba'al (2 Kings 10:27) and the Amorites and Canannites who served Asherah had a wooden pole (mistranslated "groves") that represented her. (Exodus 34:13) The Temple of the Most High was not like this. The Commandment given to Moses long before the structure was built reads, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I Yahweh thy Almighty am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6)



Taken by itself, verse 4 would prohibit any representation of living things, however we see from even the instructions given to Moses himself regarding the Cherubim (which are in Heaven), and the construction of animal representations to hold up the bronze laver by Solomon, (1 Kings 7:25) that this was not quite the case. The commandment is incomplete without verse 5, which explains that the images were to be avoided as objects of worship. No statue could represent the living God, and even Christ, who was sent as "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15) and mankind that was created "in the image of God" (Genesis 9:6) are alive. Nothing stagnant, nothing lifeless, can represent what is Life Itself, for if we attempt to make it do so, we limit Him to something our minds can create. Even living creations cannot properly do this, and Paul warns against the sure effects of such practices. Those who have done according to this fashion have "changed the truth of Yah into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause Yah gave them up unto vile affections..." (Romans 1:25, 26a) and the catalogue of resulting sins is recorded by the apostle in the verses that follow.

The Temple of the Most High contained nothing that represented Yahweh. It contained a place to seat His presence and, between the Cherubim guardians, above the Mercy Seat and illuminating the place in which rested the Law, Yah represented Himself. His Shekinah, His living fire, would glow behind the veil of angels, and the wise among the Israelites rejoiced that Yah Himself was with them, and not merely a representation that had no vital force. While the Temple did contain objects that represented certain characteristics of the Almighty (the Altars, the Candlesticks, the Shewbread), nothing was provided that represented Yah in His fullness. (Exodus 25-27)

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The Body Temple must be the same way. Yahshua said to the Father, speaking of His disciples, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:22, 23) And again, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20) This is the beauty of the Atonement. No mere representation of the Godhead dwells in the heart of the believer, but the very presence of Yah dwells within us, and we become Tabernacles of His glory, as much as the pattern that was shown to Moses on the mountain thousands of years ago. The Holy Spirit lives in the Body Temple of the redeemed. Far from being a mere force, or simply the activating influence of the Most High, It is a living principle, a divine agency, and the personal presence of the Father and Son in the heart. (John 14:22, 23)

Now, it may be that some have desired to experience this fully, and yet failed to obtain it. They do not understand, perhaps, why their fervor is dimmed, and their zeal lacking. They may want union with Yah, and union with His people, but something is blocking them from doing so. Chapter 3 of Section 1 dealt with this “great controversy” on a personal, individual level... but now we examine it from the perspective of the whole. What is it that would prevent a person from joining himself or herself with a full heart to the work appointed to Yah’s people, uniting with them in fellowship, doctrine, baptism and beyond? (Acts 2:41-47)

The reason is the *Teraphim*. This word is used fifteen times in the Scriptures (left in Hebrew in six places), and if you look up the meaning you find this: “Teraphim – idolatry, idols, image(s), teraphim, family idol; a kind of idol used in household shrine or worship.” [*Strong’s* No. 08655]

Teraphim are household idols. In the physical universe they are generally little images that represented pagan gods. When Rachel stole Teraphim from her father, (Genesis 31:19) these were most likely small fertility figurines, as commentators have suggested; and archaeological research has lent credibility to this idea. This may partly explain why her sister Leah was fertile while Rachel was reaping the harvest of trusting in the influence of wooden goddesses rather than in Yah for conception. This was not the only reason, however, for Exodus 29:31 suggests that it was also by way of rebuke for Jacob, as he loved one wife more than the other.

Seeing what Teraphim are in the physical, we can then apply it to the Spiritual. Teraphim are “idols” that individuals may have, objects of worship aside from Yahweh. The first commandment is not often fully understood. It reads in English, “I am Yahweh thy Almighty One, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:2, 3) Generally, it is assumed that the word “before” means “in place of,” or “above,” and this has led some to go so far as to suggest that the ancient Hebrews embraced certain polytheistic beliefs (i.e., acknowledged more than one god). It is thought that this commandment means that God should have the first place in one’s affections



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and reverence, above anything else that might require obedience and submission. Whereas this is certainly true, the actual reading of that commandment is *even stronger*.

The Tanakh renders Exodus 20:3 as, “You shall have no other gods besides me,” and the Septuagint is almost identical: “Thou shalt have no other gods beside me.” The word “beside” or “besides” is much clearer to modern readers in providing the accurate meaning of that verse, and more true to the Hebrew original. The word “before” in the manuscripts is from “al-pani,” which means “in my presence,” or “in my sight.” What the first commandment literally reads is, “Thou shalt have no other gods in my presence [or in my sight],” not merely *above* Yahweh. This means we will have no other gods *at all*, for there is nothing that exists outside of His view.

While this may seem readily obvious to anyone who considers himself of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the question each must ask is, “How much do I truly believe this?” If we wish to know how well we believe it, we may simply look at our fruits. If there are any “household gods,” they will eventually wreck the household. If there are known principles, beliefs, ideas or tendencies that are maintained in the presence of Yah and that are not in line with His will, then the stone is not yet “shaped” to be fit into the structure of the Spirit Temple.

Spiritually, we are defined by our beliefs. What we believe (and practice) determines what “shape we are in” before Yah. Are we “upright,” or are we “crooked?” Are we “sharp,” or are we “smooth?” Individuals may be “twisted,” “well rounded” or “pointed.” Human language reveals that spiritual and mental concepts may often be described as shapes or physical orientation, and the Bible confirms this analogy. “As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, Yahweh shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.” (Psalm 125:5) “I was also upright before Him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.” (2 Samuel 22:24)

These bring to mind concepts and mental pictures that might well apply to construction, and Paul of course takes the analogy even further by likening the work of evangelism to building the Temple of Yah on the foundation of Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:9-17)

It has sometimes caused some question in the minds of cursory readers of the Bible that Yah says, “thou shalt worship no other god: for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.” (Exodus 34:14) In human terms, jealousy would be considered a work of the flesh (translated “emulations” in Galatians 5:20), but the kind of jealousy that forms a part of the character of the Almighty and His people is much different. Yah says, “I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous **for her** with great fury.” (Zechariah 8:2) Paul writes, “I am jealous over you [the Church in Corinth] with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2) The real danger of idolatry is twofold. First, there is a principle that what we worship, what we behold, we eventually come to emulate. We naturally begin to take on the characteristics of whatsoever we worship. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Yah, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of Yahweh.” (2 Corinthians 3:18) By contrast, those who worship mere creatures become like those creatures, as Paul points out in Romans 1.

Secondly, and by a very closely related principle, knowledge of Yah and Yahshua is life itself. (John 17:3) Knowing Them does not merely lead to life – it is life, for because of our knowledge

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of them their Spirit dwells in us, (John 14:6-23) and those whose affections are turned away from Them they cannot live, but we will be lost. Yah is jealous, but He is not jealous for His own sake – rather, He is jealous for us. When He does things to preserve His own reputation, it is only so that His name will be exalted that others may draw near to Him and receive life. Yah has no need to receive praise, but He created the beings of His universe to obtain benefit from the act of praising the Creator; thus idolatry, worshipping something that cannot give life, is truly “sin,” since the wages of sin is death.

Peter writes that we are to be “lively,” or living, stones in the Spiritual House. (1 Peter 2:5) The righteous king Hezekiah said in inspired prayer, “For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.” (Isaiah 38:18, 19) Those who are to be part of the Temple must be alive; and since we are alive, we have no known Teraphim in our spiritual households.

From my own conversion experience, and from evangelizing to others, I have drawn knowledge of something that I call “The Last Idol.” This idol is not “last” in terms of the final thing to be cleared away, for even converted persons may have little figurines hidden in the shadows to be revealed by the Spirit’s sweeping. Rather, the idol is often the “last” in a series of defenses that the natural mind builds up against the power of the Gospel. It is the final sin, principle, theory or object that prevents conversion. In a sense Yah’s glory is irresistible – one either accepts it and becomes united with Him, (Colossians 1:27, Romans 15:7) or resists it and is destroyed. (Numbers 16:19-21) While this does not occur immediately, Isaiah tells us of the Day of Judgment: “And the glory Yahweh shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 40:5) For some, this is a comforting thought, (verse 1) but for others this will be a “day of darkness.” (Zephaniah 1:15)

The difference is not in the glory, but in the individual beholding the glory. We are told that “The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand.” (Proverbs 12:7) Those united with the Spirit Temple, being filled already with that glory in an invisible sense, are merely seeing the ultimate fulfillment of a promise they have accepted long ago. They accept this by being converted, by becoming Body Temples of the Spirit, by joining the Body of believers in a “sure covenant,” (Nehemiah 9:38) and this can only be done in earnest by the destruction of the Last Idol.

This Last Idol can be seen as the household idol that actually guards the house. It is the thing to which people are referring when they say, “So much have I given to Yah, but no more; not this thing.” The Messiah said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:62) The thing that causes a man to look back after considering (and maybe even actually starting) the work of Yah, is the Last Idol. It is the first (in importance) of the Teraphim.

For Lot’s wife, her Last Idol was the life to which she had grown accustomed in the evil cities under judgment. (Genesis 19:26) The Teraph in her spiritual house jumped up in an unguarded moment, and snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. For some, their Teraphim are their appetites,

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(Philippians 3:19) for some it is a characteristic or a habit. For some their most important idols are their husbands, wives, family in general. But Yahshua cautions us, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:37) If a family member is doing something that keeps us from the fellowship of the spiritual family, we must remember that our first loyalty is to Yah. For a certain class this will take great personal sacrifice, indeed a death to self, but it is only by overcoming the Teraph that life can be experienced.

Yah does not require of us more than we can give, but He requires everything we can. Nothing else, or no one else, has ever required this of us, thus those who are faced with the crossroads of Faith-or-Flesh are tempted to believe, “This is too much!” Everything they cherish more, or as much as, Yah comes to their minds as they count the cost of discipleship. If they are willing to give up the idol, if they move forward in faith and surrender it, they have given up that “most precious thing,” and nothing is impossible to them! If they have already surrendered what they once thought was most precious, they cannot long resist the conviction of the Spirit when It begins to sweep the rest of their house for remaining Teraphim.

When the Last Idol is cut down Yah can dwell in the house, and at this point life, fellowship and unity are possible. Paul writes to those in the Churches who had disagreements and divisions, “Ye are yet carnal. For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3) The carnality of the natural man reveals a household not free of the idols, primarily the idol of “self,” and while carnal, the man can experience no true fellowship. Genuine, full conversion is needed. He is not yet shaped to fit into the wall of the Spiritual House at his appointed location, and like Lucifer’s demons, “neither was their place found any more in Heaven.” (Revelation 12:8) They were in no “shape” to survive the glory of Yah.

Now, it must be understood that no man who comes to the Father through the Son has a full measure of knowledge. Even Paul, after many years in fellowship with Christ and service to Heaven, wrote, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12) Again he tells his readers that he moves forward in faith, “Not as though I had already attained [the resurrection of the dead], either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:12) A couple verses down, however, he writes, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of Yah in Christ Yahshua. Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (verses 14, 15)

A contradiction? Absolutely not, and in fact this reveals the very principle that we have been approaching. The first word Paul uses for “perfect,” when he says, “Not as though I ... were already perfect,” is the word *teleioo*, which means “complete,” “brought to an end.” Paul is saying he still has much to learn, as he explicitly states in 1 Corinthians 13:12. At the same time, he says, “Let us... as many as be perfect, be thus minded.” The word there, while coming from the same root, is a different form, *teleios*, “mature,” “wanting nothing necessary to completeness.” So then, Paul is not yet complete, but is lacking nothing necessary for that completeness, and is moving

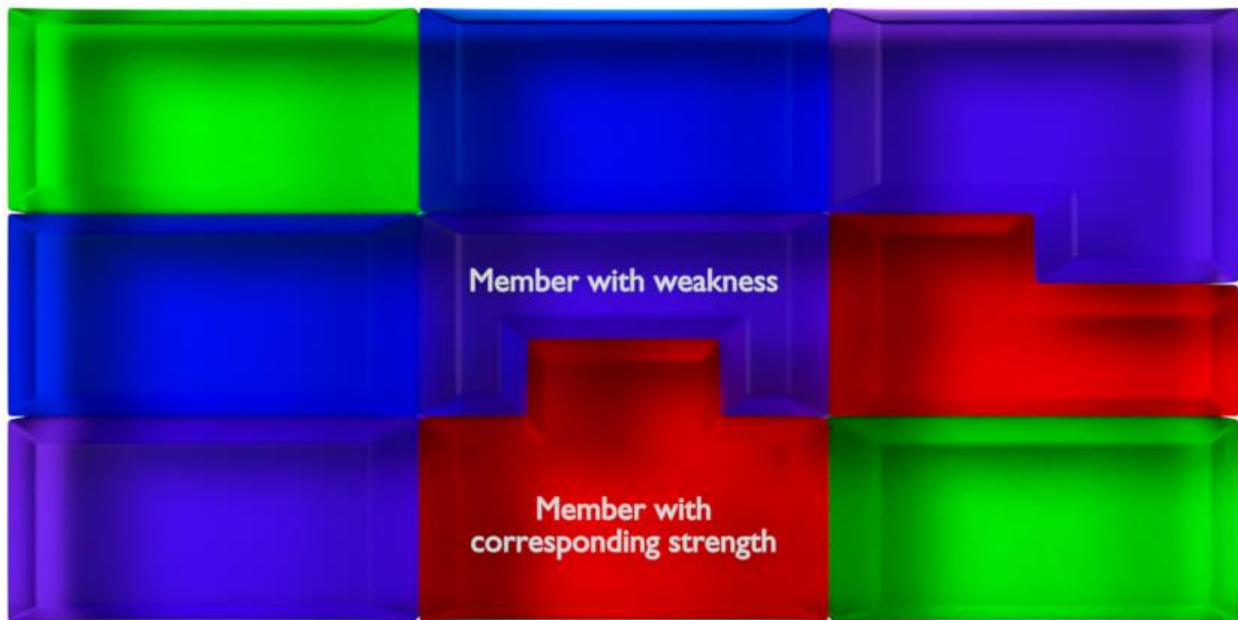
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toward the “prize of the high calling of Yah in Christ Yahshua.” If there is something you need to know while advancing, “God shall reveal even this unto you.”

This is progress. Progress in Christianity is not rising, falling, and rising again. It is rising, and then rising still higher. We are changed into His image “from glory to glory,” not through a series of peaks and valleys, and though our feelings may not always correspond to our experience in the Spirit, it is our faith that He is always leading us further on the path, “For if our heart condemn us, Yah is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.” (1 John 3:20) The one who is born of Yah “doth not commit sin,” (1 John 3:9) and as long as he abides in Yah, and Yah in him, he will be subjected to a growing process during which he is instructed, “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17) We must “learn” to do well, for though we have already “all things that pertain unto life and godliness,” (2 Peter 1:3) we do not yet know all things.

Here we see a perfect harmony between Paul and Peter. We have all the things we need for completeness, and we must now advance, putting away such Teraphim as we find, cleaning out our houses, and shining more perfectly. There is more on this process in the next chapter, but the focus now is the beginning of that process. If one is away from the Spiritual House, a Teraph must be found. If one hears this message, and loves it, but cannot seem to find his/her place in the Temple, there is a Last Idol that must be cut down before the person can be shaped for inclusion in the sacred walls.

When we are in good spiritual shape we are brought to the House. The Scriptures tell us of the construction of the earthly Temple: “And the House, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.” (1Kings 6:7) The stones were prepared, shaped, before they could be included.



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During a recent New Moon meeting of the Church, I said this, “Only when we are wholly surrendered to Christ do we have a place to fit in the Temple, a Christian-shaped gap in the wall that only our talents and strengths can fill. [It is] a Christian-shaped gap in the wall that is designed to show our strong face while supporting our weaknesses, reinforcing us on the sides where we require assistance. Each hole is perfectly prepared to bolster our blemishes and reveal our smooth, polished surfaces, so that the house may be perfect and beautiful, even though composed of members who have (none of them) always been faithful and realized their full potential by a lifelong abiding in Christ.

“‘All have sinned.’ Yah had a plan for the life of every human, but that plan can only be perfectly realized with a life of commitment that begins at birth. No members have not sinned *from birth*, so we all have blemishes. The purpose of Church membership and sanctification is to polish those away... But even so there are weaknesses in terms of temptations that may be harder for some or not others. So the ‘you-shaped hole’ is designed to have you fit in just where you need to be: revealing the strong; and the stones around you are strongest where you are weak.”

Herein lies the beauty of being united under the banner of Christ, and the next chapter deals with the sweeping away of those household idols that remain after one’s place in Christ has already been found.

Quotations:

Idolatry is not restricted to physical objects:

“The great reason why the church has not more efficiency and power is that its members love the world. They reject the Spirit of God, and fill their hearts with idols. They love the world, and the things of the world, and of all such the words of inspiration declare, “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” They are not, as was Christ, in the world but not of the world. The Lord can not manifest Himself to professed Christians who love the world; for spiritual things are spiritually discerned.” [*The Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1898]

“With many the work is too superficial. Outward forms take the place of the inner work of grace. . . . The theory of the truth has converted the head, but the soul temple has not been cleansed from its idols.” [*Reflecting Christ*, page 208]

“No magnificence of outward display can please God when the heart is serving idols and the hands are polluted with iniquity. The Holy Spirit will unite with those in the church who, with contrition of heart, will walk humbly with God. To all who look to Him and walk in the footsteps of Christ, He gives sanctification, comfort, and victory over the world.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Fourteen*, page 102]

We must be free of idols to stand before the Most High:

When Moses came from the divine Presence in the mount, where he had received the tables of the testimony, guilty Israel could not endure the light that glorified his countenance. How much less can transgressors look upon the Son of God when He shall appear in the glory of His Father, surrounded by all the heavenly host, to execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law and

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the rejecters of His atonement. [...] ‘In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, . . . to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.’ Isaiah 2:20, 21.” [*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 340]

“In the Jewish age, all the revealings of God to his people, everything relating to his worship, was closely connected with the sanctuary,—with the tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterward with the temple. Here God was worshiped; here the sacrificial offerings were presented before him. Here was the breastplate of the high priest, set with precious stones, from which messages from Jehovah were received. Here, in the holy of holies, overshadowed by the wings of cherubim, dwelt the perpetual token of the presence of the Holy One, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Here was the ark of the covenant, containing the tables of the law,—the ark which was to Israel the symbol of the divine presence, and the pledge of victory in battle. Idols could not stand before the sacred ark of God, and death was the penalty of a rash, irreverent touch or the glance of curiosity.” [*The Signs of the Times*, June 3, 1886]

“The word of God tells us how we may be perfect Christians, and escape the seven last plagues; but they took no interest to find this out. Other things diverted the mind, idols were cherished by them, and God’s holy word has been neglected and slighted. God has been trifled with by professed Christians, and when that holy word shall judge them in the last day, they will be found wanting. That word that they have neglected for foolish story books, tries their lives. It is the standard, and their motives, words, works, and the manner they use their time, are all compared with the written word of God, and if they come short, then their cases are decided for ever.” [*Spiritual Gifts, Volume 4B*, page 12]

Confessing known sins precedes baptism (finding one’s place in Christ):

“While God can be just, and yet justify the sinner through the merits of Christ, no man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ’s righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 115]

“Men may talk of freedom, of gospel liberty. They may assert that they are not in bondage to the law. But the influence of a gospel hope will not lead the sinner to look upon the salvation of Christ as a matter of free grace, while he continues to live in transgression of the law of God. When the light of truth dawns upon his mind, and he fully understands the requirements of God, and realizes the extent of his transgressions, he will reform his ways, become loyal to God through the strength obtained from his Saviour, and lead a new and purer life. ‘Whosoever abideth in Him,’ says John, ‘sinneth not; whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him.’” [*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, February 8, 1897]

“Not one should be buried with Christ by baptism unless they are critically examined whether they have ceased to sin, whether they have fixed moral principles, whether they know what sin is, whether they have moral defilement which God abhors. Find out by close questioning if these persons are really ceasing to sin, if with David they can say, I hate sin with a perfect hatred.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Six*, page 165]

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Justification (conversion) is not the end of the journey:

“When through repentance and faith we accept Christ as our Saviour, the Lord pardons our sins, and remits the penalty prescribed for the transgression of the law. The sinner then stands before God as a just person; he is taken into favor with Heaven, and through the Spirit has fellowship with the Father and the Son. Then there is yet another work to be accomplished, and this is of a progressive nature. The soul is to be sanctified through the truth. And this also is accomplished through faith. For it is only the grace of Christ, which we receive through faith, that the character can be transformed.” [*Selected Messages Book 3*, page 191]

“There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 116]

“Sanctification is a progressive work. It is a continuous work, leading human beings higher and still higher. It does not leave love behind, but brings it into the life as the very essence of Christianity.” [*In Heavenly Places*, page 31]

“‘The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.’ Through obedience comes sanctification of body, soul, and spirit. This sanctification is a progressive work, and an advance from one stage of perfection to another.” [*My Life Today*, page 250]

Questions:

- 1) Do I understand the nature of Yah’s jealousy, and the nature of the evil of idolatry?
- 2) What were some of the spiritual Teraphim of the people mentioned in the Bible?
- 3) How did they overcome these idolatrous things?
- 4) Do I give thanks to Yah for releasing me from the things that once held me in bondage?
- 5) Am I aware of what my gifts and talents are?
- 6) Do I feel that my gifts and talents have a place in the Church?
- 7) Do I feel that others in my fellowship are better than I am?
- 8) Do I feel that I am better than anyone else in terms of Yah’s love?
- 9) Do I see my progress in Christ as a continually upward walk?
- 10) Is there anything I have that I am not sure I would surrender to Yah if He requested it?
- 11) Do I rejoice in the strengths of my brethren?
- 12) Do I seek to alleviate the weaknesses in my brethren?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 2: Chapter 4 – Polishing the Stone: Communication

We introduced, in the last chapter, the subject of the Teraphim. These “household gods” pollute the house of Yahweh, both on an individual and a corporate level, and prevent the manifestation of the Spirit of the one true Sovereign, who has told His people, “Thou shalt have no other gods before [beside] me.” (Exodus 20:3) We saw from the record of the building of Solomon’s Temple, a pattern of the Spirit Temple, that the stones must be “shaped” before they can be brought to their place in the structure. This is accomplished by the putting-away of all known sins, all known idols, and then one’s role may be identified and unity with the Body becomes possible. Those who say, “My way or no way,” are irregular stones that will never be fitly joined to those who are built up “an spiritual House.” (1 Peter 2:5)

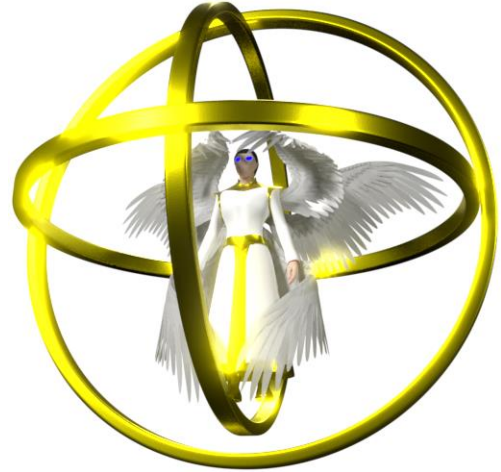
We also saw that though the stones may be brought to the temple and set in place, bound there in covenant agreement (as we will discuss in the next chapter), there is still a work of polishing to accomplish. We are justified, declared righteous with the righteousness of Christ, the moment the heart is given to the Messiah in unreserved submission. But this is not the end of the story; we must also be sanctified, we must “learn to do well,” (Isaiah 1:17) and thus grow up into the holiness of the Son of Yah. This is truly the work of a lifetime, yet it must be accomplished. While some say, “Only believe,” meaning by this that once one has claimed a relationship with the Messiah they are guaranteed Heaven regardless of their walk in the future, this is not a belief founded in the Scriptures.

In a very real sense, the convert has no “work” to do of his own. We are told that the secret of success, of abiding in Yahshua, is to “labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” (Hebrews 4:11) The believer maintains an attitude of rest, an attitude of having ceased from his/her own works, (Hebrews 4:10) yet there is a balance there as well. The energy, desire and commitment to accomplish the works of righteousness come to us from the Father through the Son – and thus it is the work of Yah *in us*, and not we ourselves. (Philippians 1:16) Nevertheless, we are no less free by our bondservice to love, and must choose to do that which we know to be right. We ascribe all the “work” as such to “Christ in [us], the hope of glory,” (Colossians 1:27) yet He has not stolen from us the blessings of freedom, individuality and voluntary love.

To put that in another way, the Scriptures tell us to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” (Philippians 2:12) not with sweat and effort. “Fear and trembling” accurately describe the emotions one must feel when he becomes aware of the true magnitude of the decision placed before mankind – the work as such is an effort of will and mind, not of trying to perform the right actions.

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When Isaiah encountered the holiness of the One whom he served, he said, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.” (Isaiah 6:5) We work, yes... we labor, yes... but Hebrews tell us the nature of that work. We “labor therefore to enter into that rest.” Our true work is to learn how to trust Yah, to come to the decision that He is worthy of our full dedication, and that His way has been established from the foundations of the world and beyond. Thus, when He says to us, “Arise, go unto Nineveh,” (Jonah 3:2) we arise.



In Section 1’s Chapter 4 we saw “The Balance” between faith and works; and here, when applied to the Spirit Temple in preparation for applications to the communal “Body of Christ,” we visit the idea again. When we have entered into the Rest that Christ offers us, the true spirit of the Sabbath, obedience becomes (not *automatic*, which implies no effort of will or choice, but) *natural* – the thing we do. It becomes a practical (as opposed to theoretical) impossibility for one who abides in Christ to commit known sin (1 John 3:6), and so he lives a life free of those Teraphim he has identified; he has a clean house. But now, in the setting of the Body of Christ, the believer has a chance to see himself through the eyes of others, and a search for those idols not yet identified can begin in earnest.

How important is this process? Is it not enough to be justified and claim a relationship with Christ? The problem with that idea is that a true relationship with Christ naturally leads to a sanctifying experience for the convert. Just as “faith without works is dead,” (James 2:26) so a relationship with Christ that does not lead to a sanctifying walk is a counterfeit, a pale imitation of the true, saving covenant between the Divine and the mortal.

While for some people, such as the thief on the cross, (Luke 23:39-43) salvation comes at the last moment with no chance for an education in the things of Yah, justification without sanctification is incomplete under ordinary circumstances. It is written, “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:14) The word for holiness there, *hagiasmos*, is the same and only word that is translated as “sanctification” in English; e.g., “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification [hagiasmos] and honour.” (1 Thessalonians 4:4) Sanctification, for the convert, is necessary for readying himself to stand in the presence of the Most High. “He that endureth to the end,” we are told, “shall be saved.” (Matthew 10:22)

How do we grow as Christians? What blessing has our Father given us by which our stones, brought and set in the wall of the Spirit Temple, may be polished to reflect most perfectly the light of the Lamb? The principle is given plainly by Solomon in his wisdom: “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17) As the hammer beats the sword into a smooth, consistent form, or as a file makes the edge of a blade keen, so friction and

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interaction between an individual and other members of the Body refine the surface of the lively stone.

This is not always a process that is pleasant to our senses, to our perceptions, for it is written, “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” (Isaiah 48:10) Yah Himself is a “consuming fire,” (Deuteronomy 4:24) and Malachi writes of the Son, “But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap.” (Malachi 3:2, 3)

On the day of Yahshua’s return, the wicked one who opposed Him during the time of His saints’ ministry will be consumed by His Spirit and destroyed by “the brightness of His coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8) Similarly, those who miss the first resurrection of the saints when the Messiah returns with His sin-destroying glory must await the second resurrection after the thousand years of Satan’s imprisonment are ended and experience the judgment that follows. (Revelation 20:5)

For those who have been declared justified by the Redeemer, there is an opportunity to prepare one’s self for this great event. It is written, “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment.” (1 Timothy 5:24) This is the major principle of which we are speaking in this chapter: being open.



Nature reveals to us a truth – that which sticks out the most receives the harshest treatment. When the winds blow, the highest mountains erode the most quickly. The ocean washes away the small outcroppings before the large cliffs. Sandpaper wears down the irregularities, and makes sure that the resulting surface is uniform and smooth. Similarly, the habits of Christians can only be polished if those things that are irregular and rough are exposed to the abrasive surface of instruction, correction, reproof and, if necessary, rebuke. King David may be our example in this, asking the Father, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psalm 51:7) Hyssop was a rough, fibrous weed that was used to scrub things; the mental picture the Psalmist was communicating should quickly become apparent.

The way to hunt for hidden Teraphim is to expose yourself to others. Be available for communication, which is the underlying principle of unity and the strength of any people. Malachi tells us of the Remnant, “Then they that feared Yahweh spake often one to another: and Yahweh hearkened, and heard it, and a Book of Remembrance was written before Him for them that feared Yahweh, and that thought upon His name. ‘And they shall be mine,’ saith Yah of hosts, ‘in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own Son that serveth him.’ Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth Elohim and him that serveth Him not.” (Malachi 3:16-18)

How important it is that the believers speak often to one another! By this we show the watching universe that we truly are one; by this we become identified with the Son and are thus spared; by

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this we prepare ourselves to discern between the righteous and the wicked. Paul tells the Corinthian Church, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” and “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:2a, 3) Christ tells us we are not equipped to judge others until we ensure that the log is out of our own eye, (Matthew 7:5) thus those who live and reign with Christ, returning to establish His justice as witnesses to the final judgment, must have their own houses, their own spiritual eyesight, cleansed.

We must learn to communicate with each other clearly, and take those principles to the world as we tell them of the Savior’s love. Yah tells us of the last days, “then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve him with one consent.” (Zephaniah 3:9) The gift of communication is one of the greatest blessings men have received from the Father of Spirits. With the tongue we may both bless and curse, (James 3:10) but it is the privilege of the redeemed to use this great power for the benefit of themselves and others.

Holiness, or sanctification, is necessary for the success of our walk and, as we have seen, the fulfillment of our salvation. The mechanism by which this is done, therefore, is also vital. The Bible points this out most dramatically, cautioning us to “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised). And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” (Hebrews 10:13-27)

Take note of how closely the Scriptures connect fellowship with the safeguards from falling away into unbelief and willful sin. If necessary, the man of God will stand by himself against a nation of rebels (1 Kings 18:22) but it is neither pleasant nor entirely healthy to do so. Even Elijah, who was translated to the Eternal Kingdom without seeing death, longed for companionship, and was appointed a helper. (1 Kings 19:14-16) The prophet raised up schools to train those Israelites who sought to serve the Almighty, giving them the name “sons of the prophets,” so that there would be a body of believers active among the chosen people. (2 Kings 2:3, 5)

In addition to weekly gatherings on Sabbaths (Luke 4:16), the Almighty has also given His people monthly times for meetings (New Moons – 1 Samuel 20:5, Isaiah 66:23) and annual feasts for His family. (Deuteronomy 16:16) The experience of being a servant of Yahweh has never been an isolated one, for although we are called as individuals, and saved as individuals, the Father who called us is quick to connect us with brothers and sisters to help us on the way. (Acts 2:41, 42) Paul, the mighty apostle to the gentiles, was immediately introduced to another believer for instruction after his conversion, (Acts 9:17) and he embarked upon no independent ministry, but joined himself to the existing apostles before setting out with their blessing. (verses 26, 27)

A balance must be sought between unrestrained zeal and complacency when dealing with the Christian walk. Some, like Lazarus’ sister Martha, desire to always be busy with the “things” of Christianity: evangelism, preaching, etc. Yet the Messiah says to such, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good

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part, which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:41, 42) Mary, the other sister, had chosen to sit a while at Yahshua’s feet and hear His instruction.

Communication enters into all these areas. By interacting with others who seek Heaven, we have an opportunity to both teach and learn. We receive instruction by the experiences of others, and we benefit others with the things we have been through. We equip ourselves in the spiritual home for warfare in the world, and this applies to both the literal family unit and the extended family of the Church. Those who have great zeal encourage those who would lag behind, and those who tend to plan ahead can help to guide those who have the energy to rise up and go to the vineyard at any given moment. In this way the body works as one, as we will examine in detail in the next few chapters.

The blood that flows through the veins of the spiritual Body is the Spirit, and by our communication with each other we keep that life-force moving smoothly. As it is the same Spirit that dwells in every believer, every stone of the Temple, (Ephesians 4:4) so we must understand that the only real disagreements that arise between two converted people will have miscommunication at the root. There can be no difference in motive or intention if both are born of the Spirit, therefore when differences become sharp the root of the problem must be sought, and it will generally be revealed that an important misunderstanding exists in the mind of at least one participant. Thus, Yah’s purpose in allowing the misunderstanding becomes clear.

Some may believe that their mission in the Body is to uncover the flaws and shortcomings of everyone else, but this spirit will not be helpful in uncovering Teraphim unless it be the idols of the one who wishes to sweep the others’ houses uninvited. We must each be willing to examine our own corners, and we must all be willing to submit to the judgment of those who love us. We are told, “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for Yah resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5) When Adam discovered in himself an unclean place, he made the mistake of trying to cover his shame with an artificial layer. (Genesis 3:7) It was the natural thing to do under the new circumstances, but Yah desired a better covering for His erring children – with His own hand He provided them with a more suitable shield for their nakedness. (verse 21)

The situation is similar with us. When it is revealed that something exists in us that needs to be put away, the “natural” reaction might be to hide it, to pretend it does not exist and to hope that “it will go away.” Yet we are children of the light, children of the Spirit, thus we do not go with the tendencies of the flesh in this matter, but rather we bring what we find to the light of judgment (not condemnation – Romans 8:1) that it may be burned away. David wrote, “O Yah, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,” but at the same time, “Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O Yahweh, quicken me according to thy judgment.” (Psalm 38:1,



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119:149) The judgment of Yah is not condemnation to those who truly seek His face; we are told in another Psalm, “Judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.” (94:15)

The righteous do not fear judgment. They do not fear to be examined – they examine themselves, and they submit to the judgment of others if they trust that these others are likewise seekers after the truth. The Messiah gives us the recipe for dealing with dissensions in the Church. If someone has wronged you, go to him and speak of the matter. If he will not hear, take a witness or two. If he still refuses to hear the matter, bring it to the Church’s attention. (Matthew 18:15-18)

When we speak of the “Gospel Order” outlined here, we usually look at it from the point of view of the one who has been wronged, but it may be beneficial as we close this discussion of communication that we look at it from the side of the one who is approached.

If someone approaches us saying that we have wronged him or her, how do we deal with it? It should not be considered here that we have done something to *deliberately* hurt another at this advanced point in our study of Christian virtues, but what if we have accidentally or ignorantly offended the other person? The first thing we must ask ourselves is, “Is this true?” We must be willing to listen to the offended party, and to see if there is any way we could have handled the situation they are presenting in a more loving way. If we find this to be the case, we ask for the person’s forgiveness and unity is restored. If we honestly cannot see how our actions have been in error then the intervention of independent witnesses will be useful; but the important thing is that we do not ask for witnesses to prove ourselves right, for Yahshua is our justification, not our own words or actions. If others can see an error in our actions or words that we cannot, we must seek to discover why this is so.

Only by a deep heart-searching can certain rough areas be discovered so that they can be smoothed, but we must trust in Yah that every situation, every meeting, every interaction He allows, is so that we can have the opportunity to look at ourselves from various angles, and make ourselves ready for the day when we will stand in His sight. Blessed are the ones who have accepted the invitation to sweep their house of Teraphim while it is yet day, and blessed are they who have brothers and sisters in Christ who are willing, if invited or led by the Spirit of peace, to help them look. For such a one as this, he will hear those welcome words before the City of the great King, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” (Matthew 25:21)

Quotations:

Self examination is an important aspect of the Christian journey:

“The living Word must dwell in us richly, else we can never sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. We must live by the Word, and take self in hand, closely examining ourselves to see whether we love God, or are bound up in our own conceit. Every heart that is not subdued by grace is treacherous, and will lead to ruin.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 1, 1900]

“Not all are pursuing a course of indifference. There are some who are reviewing their past mistakes, and are learning from these mistakes the lessons that God would teach them. They are

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making close examination of self. These workers are studying their own lives in the light of Christ's perfect example, and are becoming changed into the same image." [*The General Conference Bulletin*, June 6, 1913]

"Let there be a close examination of self. Do not seek to hide yourself under your citizen's dress, saying that you are doing as others do, and therefore you cannot be far out of the way. Yes, you may do as many apostates who live today have done. Some are even now travelling over this ground. But is the picture a pleasant one? If with the experience of others before us we walk contrary to the way of the Lord and are punished, whom have we to blame but ourselves?" [*The Kress Collection*, page 113]

Both young and old have a responsibility to soul-search:

It is frequently the case that aged persons are unwilling to realize and acknowledge that their mental strength is failing. [...]They should lay aside anxiety and burdens, and occupy their time as happily as they can, and be ripening up for heaven." [*Testimonies for the Church Volume One*, page 423]

"Young men and women need more of the grace of Christ, that they may bring the principles of Christianity into the daily life. The preparation for Christ's coming is a preparation made through Christ for the exercise of our highest qualities. It is the privilege of every youth to make of his character a beautiful structure. But there is a positive need of keeping close to Jesus. He is our strength and efficiency and power. We cannot depend on self for one moment." [*Messages to Young People*, page 47]

"Those who work indifferently and half-heartedly will never succeed. Young and old should read the word of God; and not only should they read it, but they should study it with diligent earnestness, praying, believing, and searching. Thus they will find the hidden treasure; for the Lord will quicken their understanding." [*Messages to Young People*, page 259]

Communication is key to successful fellowship and evangelism:

"God wants us to be a help and strength to one another. He wants us to speak words of hope and courage." [*In Heavenly Places*, page 174]

"God has enjoined the duty upon His human agents to communicate the character of God, testifying to His grace, His wisdom, and His benevolence, by manifesting His refined, tender, merciful love." [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 229]

"Men who live in the atmosphere of Christ's presence will communicate the principles of heaven in conversation, in spirit, in tenderness, because they are learning of Christ. They will set a right example to their associates." [*Loma Linda Messages*, page 322]

"Many misunderstand the object for which they were created. It was to bless humanity and glorify God, rather than to enjoy and glorify self. God is constantly pruning His people, cutting off profuse, spreading branches, that they may bear fruit to His glory and not produce leaves only. God prunes us with sorrow, with disappointment and affliction, that the outgrowth of strong, perverse traits of character may be weakened and that the better traits may have a chance to develop. Idols must be

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given up, the conscience must become more tender, the meditations of the heart must be spiritual, and the entire character must become symmetrical.” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 289]

Being open before others is a necessary part of Christian growth and communication:

“The true, honest expression of a sister, or brother, or friend, given in genuine simplicity, has power to open the door of hearts which need the fragrance of Christlike words and the simple, delicate touch of the spirit of Christ’s love.” [*My Life Today*, page 178]

“God is dishonored when we fail to speak the truth plainly to one another. But we are to speak the truth in love, bringing tenderness and sympathy into our voices.” [*Selected Messages Book 1*, page 87]

“Human minds vary. The minds of different education and thought receive different impressions of the same words, and it is difficult for one mind to give to one of a different temperament, education, and habits of thought by language exactly the same idea as that which is clear and distinct in his own mind. Yet to honest men, right-minded men, he can be so simple and plain as to convey his meaning for all practical purposes.” [*The Voice in Speech and Song*, page 168]

“Our conversation should not be upon our own disappointments and trials, but upon the love of Jesus and the better home in Heaven. Dear reader, let your conversation be honest. Use sound speech which cannot be condemned, that it may minister grace and knowledge to the hearer.” [*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1884]

Questions:

- 1) Do I consider myself an honest, open individual?
- 2) In general, do others agree with my opinions about myself?
- 3) If something bothers me, do I bring it up, or do I pretend that everything is going well? Apply this question to even “minor” disagreements or doubts.
- 4) Do I consciously seek to speak in such a way that others will understand my meaning?
- 5) Do I make an effort to see things from the point of view of those with whom I am speaking?
- 6) What does Paul’s statement, “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some,” (1 Corinthians 9:22) mean to me?
- 7) Do I quit (doing, speaking, trying) when things become difficult?
- 8) Do I believe that the other members of my congregation are supremely interested in my well-being and comfort?
- 9) Do I resent being rebuked for an action I have done?
- 10) Do I fear being chastised for voicing my opinion?
- 11) How did Yahshua deal with being unfairly accused of wrongdoing?

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12) Which of these two sentences, if both are said sincerely, is more easily received?

a) "I believe you are in error about this."

b) "You have made a mistake."

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

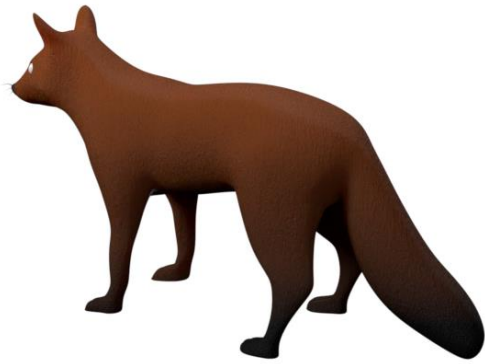
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Section 2: Chapter 5 – Mortar: Agreement

Just as the way that we individually view the world shapes our personal experiences in this life (see Section 1: Chapter 5), so the way we view the world as a collective Body shapes our experiences as a Church, and determines the direction we walk as a people. The means by which a set of individuals can function together, and possess the same goals and values is through the principle of agreement. While the importance of agreement in accomplishing any project is demonstrated in every aspect of life, it finds no more eloquent advocate than the words of the Scriptures. It is written, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3) With these simple words Amos points out an enduring truth.

When the judge Samson wished to destroy the harvest of his Philistine enemies, he used a clever method to do so. We are told, “And Samson said concerning them, ‘Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.’ And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.” (Judges 15:3-5)



Foxes are very fast animals, and it has been pointed out that Samson had to have been very clever, very fast, or the recipient of a miracle, to catch three hundred of them. If he had merely tied a firebrand to each fox’s tail, there would have been little chance for complete destruction of the heathen crops. The animals would merely have fled the area as quickly as they could, and set fire to the land around them. But by tying the fire between the tails of the creatures Samson ensured that they would not be able to agree on a direction to run, each trying to get as far from

the fire behind it as quickly as possible. Because of this, he was able to let them go “into the standing corn,” and was assured that they would remain there in a confused panic until the foliage was properly consumed.

If humans attempt to work together, but have a poor concept of agreement, much destruction likewise results. If members of a Church do this, the very harvest is in danger of fiery desolation. Christians have a job to do, a sacred responsibility given to us from Heaven, for Yah desires to work through us for the ingathering of His people. He said to us, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16: 15, 16) This great work was not committed unto angels, but unto men who have had the experience of being redeemed by the blood of Yahshua, and can therefore speak from their hearts and their history.

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But what results if there is no agreement among those who claim to have the truth? This can be seen most dramatically when we are considering different denominations and faiths. The great song of the atheist and skeptic, when casting contempt upon those who profess association with the Messiah is that “there are all these different churches, all claiming to be right.” The unbelievers are not to be blamed for this particular observation, because they see that there is no agreement.

Yet even within a single organization claiming to be of the Way, this lesson must be well learned. Paul asks, “whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3) When some of the angels came out of agreement with the Throne of the Most High, there was a separation between those who remained faithful and those who did not. It is exactly the same way among men. John writes of some who would no longer agree with the teachings of the apostles, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1 John 2:18, 19)

In John’s day deceptions were seeping into the Church of Yahshua. Indeed, they had begun long before, and Paul was quick to warn the elders of the congregation at Ephesus that, “after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” (Acts 20:29) Those who accepted the false teachings began to spread the deceptions and subtle errors among the sheep of the spiritual pasture, and the apostles were quick to counter the mistakes. John’s letter reveals to us that those who would not agree with the apostles’ teachings did not long remain in the Church, but left to draw disciples after themselves, and to reveal to all the world that they were not in harmony with the ones who received the instruction of Christ Himself.

If those who had received the faulty gospel had been humble, they could have been shown the errors in a way that would have made sense to their minds, and been confirmed by their spirits. Solomon counsel us, “Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.” (Proverbs 8:33) If someone has the testimony of Yahshua, and walks according to the light he has, do not refuse to hear him when he speaks. Healing is possible among the humble, but “Yah resisteth the proud,” as it is written in James 4:6 and confirmed by the experiences of those early days.

Handling disagreements is a key to unity, the subject of the next chapter, and it is a process that is well taught in the words of the Bible. The biggest obstacle to coming into agreement is that which we have been examining: the Teraphim, the household gods. Our last few chapters have described them and explained how to uncover them, and now we see the importance of being clean from these mental and spiritual idols. The ones who left the Church as John records had made an idol of their own understanding, their own doctrines. Amazingly, despite the fact that the apostles, who were in the best possible position to know the truth, opposed them, they stubbornly resisted submission to their judgment. While the traditions of men are in opposition to the Divinely inspired truths, (Mark 7:8) the traditions of the apostles were founded in the teachings and example of Christ, and are to be trusted. (2 Thessalonians 2:15)

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We have already seen, in previous chapters, the “Gospel Order” for handling disagreements, and it is worth examining that passage again. It is found here, “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” (Mathew 18:15-17)

There are three stages to this process outlined in the passage. First, go by yourself to the one with whom you have disagreement. If that does not work, take a witness or two. If that does not work, as a last resort bring it to public attention. We find the graciousness of our Father revealed in these steps. He would have us attempt to establish an agreement amongst ourselves with as few others involved as possible. What began as a private matter is best settled as a private matter, and it is always a shame when others must become involved.

Just as mortar between the stones of a building holds the bricks in place, and causes them to fit together perfectly even if the edges are not yet fully worn smooth, so agreement between two individuals causes them to be able to work together as one, even though they have different minds, opinions, and individual preferences. The Messiah applies this not only to those of the same faith, but to anyone at all. He says, “Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.” (Matthew 5:25) Even when dealing with those who actively seek to do us harm, if we agree with them in all we are able without compromising principle, we will avoid much unnecessary strife.



Paul writes, “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay,” saith Yah.’ Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:17-21)

Take note of both the wording of Paul, and the words I have used. The apostle writes, “if it be possible,” do this, and I pointed out that we must agree with people “without compromising principle.” There is a place for disagreement, although it may unfortunately lead to separation. The apostles wrote of this subject as well, for it was far too important to leave to human opinion. They gave examples such as this: “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” (Titus 3:10, 11)

In another place Paul writes, “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with

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idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man *that is called a brother* be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-11) It is far better to have an open disagreement that others can see, than to have one claiming to be in unity with you yet actively opposing your purposes. Solomon writes, “Open rebuke is better than secret love.” (Proverbs 27:5)

This, of course, will not occur for any real length of time in the Spiritual Temple, but it will certainly happen between those of the faith and those who would tear it down. Paul asks the churches, “And what agreement hath the temple of Yah with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as Yah hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Almighty, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate,’ saith Yah, ‘and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,’ saith Yahweh Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:16-18) We cannot claim to be in agreement with those whose understanding of Yah, and His purpose for our lives, are in opposition to our own. From such we are separate by the very nature of our beliefs, yet within the family of the Holy One these things cannot be.

The witnesses against Christ were known to be false, because “their witness agreed not together.” (Mark 14:56) If those who claim to be the witnesses FOR Christ do not agree, they will be known to be false for exactly the same reasons. The Master prayed for His disciples “that they may be one,” as we will examine in further detail next chapter. But the way in which this unity is accomplished is by coming into agreement. When we can agree on our purpose, when we stand on the same foundation and are heading for the same goals, then we come into unity.



“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18, 19) This passage follows on the heels of the Gospel order presented above, and with reason. Christ explains to His followers the great power that agreement gives to the converts. The prayer of a single man is enough to

produce great miracles. It is written that “Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.” (James 5:17)

Yes, where necessary a single man can accomplish the will of the Almighty. Yet He is pleased to have His people join their petitions together. A sick person is not encouraged to find a single Church member to pray for him, but rather, “let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.” (James 5:14) The Bible advises us, “let us walk by the same rule [of faith], let us mind the same thing.” (Philippians 3:16) “Let us hold fast our profession.” (Hebrews 4:14b) “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,

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that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16) In all these things, we are told, let us *agree*.

For a final example on the importance of agreement, we must consider the character of our Creator Himself. What importance does He place on agreement? If we can understand this, and grasp it with our hearts, our way cannot but be straight before Him. In this we become like Him, in that we will be obeying this commandment to seek agreement, not because He instructed us to do so, but because (as in all things) it is a part of who He is, and thus shared with us for our edification, our growth, our very lives.

We began this series of studies looking at the Egyptian monarch, and his reaction when Moses came to him and demanded in the name of Yahweh, “Let my people go.” Some have asked, and the question is a good one, “Why did not Yah simply take His people? Why did He send Moses to Pharaoh in the first place, when He could have commanded the Israelites to leave, and could have protected them from the king’s army?”

The answer is, “Because of agreement.” Even when the Almighty goes to the extreme of constraining someone, forcing them to perform an action due to an overwhelming need on the part of His elect, He always seeks to obtain as much agreement from all parties as possible. While Yah is Sovereign, He has an incredible and almost inexplicable respect for the freedom He has given His created beings. From man He desires love, and thus He has created us with the ability to choose. “Where the Spirit of Yah is, there is liberty,” we are told, (2 Corinthians 3:17) and it is only in that atmosphere of liberty that we may truly choose to love.

Yah desired that Pharaoh let the Israelites go. His will would not be restrained by the course of one arrogant human, of course, and so the Almighty sent steadily increasing plagues in an attempt to convince the heathen monarch of His power, giving him an opportunity at every step to bow to the One infinitely greater than himself. This is in line with the Gospel Order, an attempt to cause as small a stir as possible. Yet “Pharaoh hardened his heart,” (Exodus 8:32) and because it was at Yah’s plagues, and because it was allowed by Heaven, it is also written that “Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh.” (Exodus 9:12) Both are true, yet we see from the actions of both parties that while the decrees of the Almighty were those that caused the heart to be hardened, it was the king’s own choices that ultimately led to his rejection of the Spirit of grace.

This is an important teaching to understand, that Yah takes responsibility for the decisions of others to some degree, and the wording of the Scriptures supports this. Yet it must not be thought that any human beings are forced by a Holy God to sin, or to reject the Author of Life. The “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” (Romans 9:22) those who will ultimately be lost, are so fitted because of their own choices, for they reject the “much longsuffering” (same verse) of the loving Father who sought to bring them into agreement while it was yet day.

The reason why the Creator did not destroy Lucifer the instant he sinned was because He desired the entire universe to understand the true results of transgression before it was removed, so that it would never rise again. It must be understood, and agreed upon, by the entire universe that Yah is not an arbitrary Lawmaker. He does not command obedience at a whim, but rather has set the laws of the universe in place. They are perfect laws for created beings, and those who obey them will

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live while those who reject them will necessarily die. Though Yah knows the end from the beginning, He is sensitive to the fact that WE do not; while He would have every right to command and perform, for love's sake He brings us into agreement before He works.

Of those who are finally destroyed because of sin, even of those who are lost in the Day of Judgment, Yah brings them into agreement. It is written, "'As I live,' saith Yahweh, 'every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.'" (Romans 14:11) And to Christ, the Judge on that day, "at the name of Yahshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Yahshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of Yah the Father." (Philippians 2:10, 11) When every soul sees the beginning, sees his transgression in light of the opportunities he was offered to live, sees his rejection of the infinite sacrifice of the Messiah, then he will understand the mercy and justice of the Throne.

Their agreement will be a forced one, as was the agreement of Pharaoh in Egypt, yet it will be agreement nonetheless, for who can speak against the wisdom of One who knows all things? But a better thing remains for we who are saved, for the time remains that man may agree with Yah freely and in peace, and accept healing, and we are become ministers of that great blessing, that great truth.

Yet while we take this message to the world, we are aware that in Christ our agreement has begun at home, in the Spirit Temple. Where there is agreement in matters of the Spirit, there is a safe place into which converts may be brought. Yahshua said to the Hebrews of a divided and worsening system, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Mathew 23:15) May that never be said of us, for "if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (Mark 3:24, 25) This is never more true than when it is applied to the Spiritual House. Let us not end up as foxes with burned tails, and no beautiful Harvest to take to the Master. Let us agree.

Quotations:

Agreement brings man into harmony with Yah:

"A covenant is an agreement by which parties bind themselves and each other to the fulfillment of certain conditions. Thus the human agent enters into agreement with God to comply with the conditions specified in His Word. His conduct shows whether or not he respects these conditions." [*God's Amazing Grace*, page 158]

"To them that believe, Christ is precious. His Spirit moving upon the mind and heart of the believer is in perfect agreement with that which is written in the Word. The Spirit and the Word agree perfectly. Thus the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are born of God." [*In Heavenly Places*, page 144]

"God has commanded us, 'Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy;' and an inspired apostle declares that without holiness 'no man shall see the Lord.' Holiness is agreement with God. By sin the image of God in man has been marred and well-nigh obliterated; it is the work of the gospel to restore that which has been lost; and we are to cooperate with the divine agency in this

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work. And how can we come into harmony with God, how shall we receive His likeness, unless we obtain a knowledge of Him? It is this knowledge that Christ came into the world to reveal unto us.” [*Lift Him Up*, page 279]

Agreement brings man into harmony with man:

“Upon the virtue of Christ’s sacrifice for us we are all agreed. His prayer for us is that we may be made perfect in one. Shall we not, by obeying His word, make it possible for God to answer this prayer?” [*The Signs of the Times*, November 26, 1902]

“In every place where there are two or three that love God, and keep his commandments, they should speak often one to another of the blessed hope, and should unite their prayers at the throne of grace. God will listen to their humble petitions. He will register their names in his book, and will preserve them in the hour of trial and temptation. Frequently these little meetings are precious occasions. Jesus has promised, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ And if they ‘shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.’” [*Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, October 14, 1884]

“Unless sanctified, soul, body, and spirit, man will be in danger of manifesting an unkindly spirit toward his brother who does not agree with his ideas. There is no such narrowness with God.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Twelve*, page 372]

The principle of agreement allows unity without dictatorship:

“I have seen many families shipwrecked through overmanagement on the part of their head, whereas through consultation and agreement all might have moved off harmoniously and well.” [*The Adventist Home*, page 310]

“If a man is sanguine of his own powers and seeks to exercise dominion over his brethren, feeling that he is invested with authority to make his will the ruling power, the best and only safe course is to remove him, lest great harm be done, and he lose his own soul, and imperil the souls of others. ‘All ye are brethren.’” [*Christian Leadership*, page 35]

“It is right for the workers to counsel together as brethren; but that man who endeavors to lead his fellow workers to seek his individual counsel and advice regarding the details of their work, and to learn their duty from him, is in a dangerous position and needs to learn what responsibilities are really comprehended in his office. God has appointed no man to be conscience for his fellowman. It is not wise to lay so much responsibility upon an officer that he will feel that he is forced to become a dictator.” [*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, page 477]

Agreement is necessary for the success of the Great Commission:

“The disciples had just been disputing as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They could not agree. One would claim the honor for himself; another for himself. None of the disciples were in a proper frame of mind to comprehend the significance of coming events, or to appreciate the solemnity of the present occasion. They were not prepared to participate in the Passover Supper.” [*Reflecting Christ*, page 261]

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“Perfect agreement should exist in the plans laid for the publication of our books and periodicals, that the light which they contain may be quickly carried everywhere, to the nominal churches and to the world. Much more should have been accomplished in the sale of our books than we see accomplished today.” [*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 143]

“In union there is strength; in disunion there is weakness. God’s chosen ones are to reveal to the world their union one with another. It is not possible for a few to walk to heaven alone because they can agree with no others. God’s people are to be a unit. If some entertain ideas so peculiar that others cannot accept them, they should compare notes in a teachable spirit, and all should be willing to learn. They should make the most strenuous efforts to be one, to come into the unity of the faith in the bonds of peace.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 27, 1897]

Questions:

- 1) Can I think of examples in the Bible where two people (one of the faith and one not of the faith) disagreed with each other? How was the matter resolved?
- 2) Can I think of examples in the Bible where two people (both of the common faith) disagreed with each other? How was the matter resolved?
- 3) How do I deal with a situation in which I find myself disagreeing with what someone is saying?
- 4) How do I handle it when someone approaches me and indicates that he/she does not agree with me?
- 5) Do I make it a habit to “get support” for myself before presenting a troubling issue to the person it most directly involves?
- 6) Do I feel I have suffered a loss when I agree with someone?
- 7) Do I feel I have suffered a loss when I come into agreement with Yah?
- 8) Do I always look for the blessing in unpleasant situations, agreeing with Yah that whatsoever circumstances occur were allowed by Him for some purpose?
- 9) How do I feel when I cannot convince someone that I am correct?
- 10) Do I ask others for help when I need it?
- 11) Do I ever compromise my principles in an effort to agree with anyone?
- 12) Would I be comfortable if someone else had to compromise his/her principles to agree with me?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Section 2: Chapter 6 – Fitly Joined Together: Unity

This chapter picks up right where the previous one left off, for the principles of unity and agreement (the subject of the previous study) cannot be separated. Agreement is the “mortar” that holds the Christians in place as lively stones in the Spiritual House. Yet agreement, and unity as its result, cannot come at the expense of truth. The prophet says, “Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, ‘Peace,’ and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar; say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar that it shall fall; there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.” (Ezekiel 13:10, 11)

Those who teach lies may indeed obtain agreement. They may indeed build a wall for a house of spirits and form a bond of unity. It is written of even the wicked forces at the end of the world, “Yah hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of Yah shall be fulfilled.” (Revelation 17:17) But the end of any building that is structured on deceit will be destruction on the Day of Judgment. Recall that the Foundation of the Temple of Yah is *truth* and *integrity*, therefore if the foundation is not a Rock, and that Rock the Son of Yah, it will be rent apart with hailstones, and it will fall before the wind of Yah’s justice.

For Christians there is a better place prepared. The Spirit Temple has walls that are built on agreement: not only between men, but between men and the Creator. This true agreement leads to an everlasting unity that will never be broken, for as the foundation stands firm, so will the walls. This is true spiritual health; just as Chapter 6 of Section 1 spoke of the principles of disease in the natural world, so now we show the cure for much affliction spiritually.

We alluded to the prayer of Christ for His disciples in the chapters before this one, but it is presented here in its fullness, that we may see what He said. Very few prayers of the Messiah are recorded in the Sacred Volumes, therefore we must consider this one, the longest, of great significance. It spans an entire chapter in the New Testament, and we read it thus:

“These words spake Yahshua, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Yahshua, the Messiah whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of



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the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

“As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John 17:1-26)

John 17 has been called the “Church Creed” of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. We have no document as our formal position on theology, aside from the Bible. We have no external set of rules that qualifies an individual for being numbered among us. Like the early Church, we seek those whom the Father has called, and to whom He has revealed His Son. Through our word, those who seek the justification of Christ find it, and the Scripture is fulfilled, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)

This chapter began with some strong words from the prophet Ezekiel, because the idea of unity is one that has suffered much abuse in recent years. In other works, such as the book *A Sure Covenant*, it is demonstrated from the Bible that “unity of faith” means far more than a common declaration of the lordship of Christ and a belief in the Cross. True unity is a covenant relationship, it is an agreement as solemn as marriage, which was indeed given to man as a symbol of the unity between the Father and Son, and thus the Godhead and mankind. True unity is as fiercely intimate

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as the prayer in John 17 indicates. It is a closeness that is shared by the Father and the Only Begotten, a union that allows no denominational, traditional or practical separation.

Though many of the concepts of this chapter have been examined in the previous sections, we see here the importance of pulling together as one. The prayer in John 17 reveals that Christianity that is not united is a falsehood, and it is powerless to win any hearts. Yahshua asked the Father of His disciples, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:21-23)

Let none miss the significance of those words, repeated as they were for emphasis. Twice He prays that His followers be in unity “that the world may believe/know that [Yah] hast sent [the Son].” If we are not one, the world will not know this. As I pointed out in the last chapter, unbelievers cannot be wholly blamed for their position, due to their observation that the professed witnesses for Christ are not in agreement with each other. The words of the Redeemer have proven to be true.

It is also of note that Yahshua reveals the source of the power by which unity is possible. He says, “the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one.” We become one because of the shared glory. Peter writes of our relationship to the Almighty in these words, “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of Yah, and of Yahshua our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:2-4)

When we come into agreement with Yah through the Sacrifice of the Son, we become “partakers of the divine nature,” and the glory to which He called us is revealed both to us and through us to others. When this glory is revealed, we have the means by which we become “one.” The word “glory” as given in John 17 is from the Greek *doxa*, from which we get the word “doxology,” a prayer or hymn of praise. Its basic meaning is “opinion,” or “judgment,” although Biblically it is generally used to mean brightness, splendor, majesty, excellence, etc. But knowing that, how do we apply these definitions?

The answer is very simple. When you give doxa to Yahweh, you praise Him, you exalt Him by submitting your judgment and opinions to His own. You agree with His decrees, you find yourself in harmony with His character and majesty, and thus you declare Him both directly and indirectly to be worthy of your loyalty, trust and worship. By doing so you “glorify” Him, and cause His presence to shine before others. Yahshua, by submitting His will to that of His Father, could truly say that He had glorified Him on this earth. We, who walk as He walked, now say the same, for He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father.” (John 14:12)

When we give glory to Yah, when we surrender to His plan for our lives and thus partake of the divine nature (the same Spirit that motivated the Son), we find that our fellowship with the

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Godhead necessarily expands to encompass those who are also members of that fellowship. In a past CSDA sermon it was explained that the kingdom of Yah is like the wheel of a wagon. In the center of the wheel, the very hub of all things, is the Throne of Yah. Believers are like spokes on the wheel, and it can be easily observed that though the spokes come from all directions, the closer they get to the center of the wheel, the closer they are – by the very nature of that wheel – to each other.



True unity for every believer, for every “spoke,” comes when they are all “one” with the Center. We find, as we examine the parable, that the “end point” of every spoke is in the hub, thus the end point of the Gospel, the objective of evangelism and teaching, is to bring all the worshippers into unity. At this point, they are truly the Spirit Temple, with the stones as united in harmony as parts of a human body. “But speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:15, 16)

Never more clearly was this demonstrated than in the record of the early Church, as Peter preached the risen Savior to the Hebrews who had gathered in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. After delivering his speech, we read that he made this conclusion: “Then Peter said unto them, ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Yahweh our Almighty One shall call.’ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, ‘Save yourselves from this untoward generation.’” (Acts 2:38-40)

And here we see the Gospel’s purpose being fulfilled: “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

“And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising Yah and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (verses 41-47)

Peter preached the Gospel, and the result was a set of believers that “had all things common,” and praised Yah with “singleness of heart,” each one esteeming others better than himself, each one giving what he did not need to those who did have need. This was the result of the Gospel in the first century. It is the result of the Gospel in the last century. Wherever the true Gospel is preached in power, the people will come together in unity. This is *doxa*: this is glory.

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We read Christ's parable of the last days, in which He says, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, 'Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?' He said unto them, 'An enemy hath done this.' The servants said unto him, 'Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?' But he said, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."'" (Matthew 13:24-30)

When He was explaining the parable a few verses later, Yahshua specified that "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 13:37-43)

In these last days, there is a separation taking place between those who truly serve Yah, and those who do not. Even before the Son of Man comes, the messengers of His will are seeking out the two classes, the wheat and the tares, and separating them. The tares are bound together, and the wheat are gathered together; both are in distinct places – the tares in a bundle to be burned, and the wheat in the Barn. We note that the tares are gathered to be burned, but are not burned yet, until the Judge comes. We note also that the wheat are not yet taken to their final home, this also occurs when the Son arrives at the conclusion of the angels' work; (2 Timothy 4:8) when the tares are cast into the fire and the "righteous shine forth as the sun." But until that time the wheat are in "the Barn," a place in which they are gathered. This Barn is shown to us in the passage from Acts 2, and the prayer in John 17. It is a state of unity, a communion of saints in perfect harmony, and a Church with the power that comes from Yahweh, and from its members being in full and perfect agreement.



While much more could be said on the subject of unity, and whole books have indeed been written, we seek to grasp the principle and importance here. We read of a time of trouble coming upon the earth, but we read also that through this time will come a people who have no reason to fear, because they are in union with the Creator, and in unity with each other. Of them it is said, "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds

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of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.' And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." (Revelation 7:1-4)

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Revelation 14:1-5)

This is Israel after the Spirit, not "Israel after the flesh." (1 Corinthians 10:18, see **Appendix E**) They have the foundation of truth. They have the forgiveness of Yah and have found their places in His plan. They have lives free of Teraphim, and thus praise the Almighty with a pure heart. The communication of the members of this company is earnest and pure, and they have found agreement with each other. They are in perfect unity, and they are heading for their place of rest. All of this is the result of the glory of the Gospel, and the fulfillment of the promise of Christ. This is the Spirit Temple.

Quotations:

True unity as humans is based on the unity shared by the Father and Son:

"The personality of the Father and the Son, also the unity that exists between Them, are presented in the seventeenth chapter of John, in the prayer of Christ for His disciples: [John 17:20, 21 quoted]. The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one." [*The Ministry of Healing*, page 422]

"Think of the importance Christ places on unity. He prayed that the oneness existing between Him and His Father might exist among His followers, that the world might know that God had indeed sent His Son into the world to save sinners. How shall this prayer be answered?--By every believer putting away evil thinking and evil speaking." [*Pacific Union Recorder*, March 13, 1902]

"Christ is one with the Father, but God and Christ are two distinct Personages. Read the prayer of Christ in the seventeenth chapter of John, and you will find this point clearly brought out. How earnestly the Saviour prayed that His disciples might be one with Him as He was one with the Father." [*The Upward Look*, page 153]

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Unity becomes possible only as individuals draw near to Yah:

“If we draw nigh to God, we shall draw nigh to one another. We cannot draw nigh to the same cross without coming into unity of spirit. Christ prayed that His disciples should be one as He and the Father are one. We should seek to be one in spirit and in understanding. We should seek to be one that God may be glorified in us as He was glorified in the Son, and God will love us as He loves His Son.” [*That I May Know Him*, page 246]

“The Bible sets before us a model church. They are to be in unity with each other and with God. When believers are united to Christ the living vine, the result is that they are one with Christ, full of sympathy and tenderness and love.” [*The Remnant Church; Its Organization, Authority, Unity, and Triumph*, page 13]

“All true children of God will reveal to the world their union with Christ and with their brethren. Those in whose hearts Christ abides will bear the fruit of brotherly love. They will realize that as members of God’s family they are pledged to cultivate, cherish, and perpetuate Christian love and fellowship, in spirit, words, and action.” [*The General Conference Bulletin*, July 1, 1900]

Unity with Yah means unity with believers:

“Christianity is not a half-and-half work--a service of God and mammon--but a full conversion to God. Christians have an understanding of spiritual things which unites them with Christ and with one another in love. There is no undecided work about true conversion. It is the work of the Holy Spirit upon human character.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Seventeen*, page 44]

“The closer our union with Christ, the closer will be our union with one another. Variance and disaffection, selfishness and conceit, are striving for supremacy. These are the fruits of a divided heart, open to the suggestions of the enemy of souls. Satan exults when he can sow seeds of dissension.” [*Sons and Daughters of God*, page 286]

“The members of the church of God on this earth are as the different parts of a machine, all closely related to one another, and all closely related to and dependent on one great center. There is to be unity in diversity. No member of the Lord’s firm can work successfully in independence, detached from the others.” [*Testimonies to Southern Africa*, page 58]

The unity of believers gives truth to their witness:

“Unity existing among the followers of Christ is an evidence that the Father has sent His Son to save sinners. It is a witness to His power; for nothing short of the miraculous power of God can bring human beings with their different temperaments together in harmonious action, their one aim being to speak the truth in love.” [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Nine*, page 194]

“The most convincing argument we can give to the world of Christ’s mission is to be found in perfect unity. Such oneness as exists between the Father and the Son is to be manifest among all who believe the truth. Those who are thus united in implicit obedience to the word of God will be filled with power.” [*Bible Training School*, February 1, 1906]

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“While it is true that the Lord guides individuals, it is also true that He is leading out a people, not a few separate individuals here and there, one believing this thing, another that. Angels of God are doing the work committed to their trust. The third angel is leading out and purifying a people, and they should move with him unitedly.” [*God’s Amazing Grace*, page 110]

Questions:

- 1) What is my understanding of the Kingdom of Yah that, while not of the earth, has begun on the earth?
- 2) Do I often find it difficult to understand or to relate to what the members of my Church are discussing?
- 3) Do I work in close connection with my brethren in spreading the Gospel to mankind?
- 4) Do I have a knowledge of my spiritual gifts, and seek to use them to edify the Body of Christ?
- 5) Do I have a knowledge of the spiritual gifts of those around me?
- 6) Do I give Yah praise for the people He has placed around me for fellowship?
- 7) Am I often tempted with feelings of jealousy?
- 8) How do I deal with temptations to become impatient with the problems of others?
- 9) Do I find it difficult to trust the members of the Church with my efforts, time, spiritual gifts, tithes or offerings?
- 10) Are the members of my congregation “those people I see once or twice a week?”
- 11) Do I believe I am growing in faith and holiness through my connection with my Church?
- 12) Can I say, “My pastor (and elders, and fellow members) and I are one?”

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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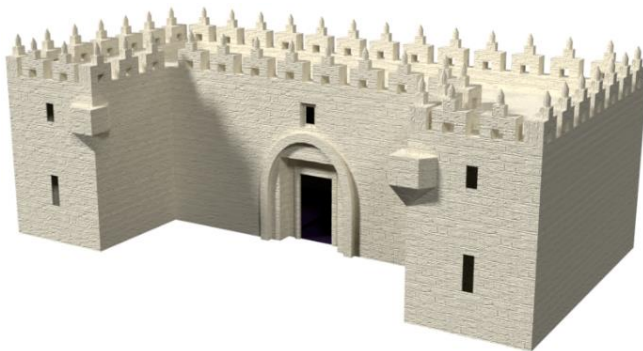
Section 2: Chapter 7 – A Settled Place: Commitment

As we close our series, a brief review reveals to us that we have studied a variety of concepts, some more closely related to each other than others. Throughout, however, the common thread has been that they who believe in the Creator and His Son are called to be a special people, the “very elect,” as the Scriptures describe them. Individually, they know the Almighty, they know themselves, they are aware of the laws of the universe as they relate to humanity. They are aware of the balance between faith and works, and they have eyes to see themselves and others in the true light of Heaven. They are free of unnecessary sickness, healthy in both body and mind, and they rest in the perfect promises of Christ.

As a people, the very elect are grounded in a common truth. They have found forgiveness for their sins, and walk the path of sanctification – finding, and helping others find, unclean areas to put away so that they may be ready to face the Judgment with courage and joy. They speak pure words of love and encouragement, but they are not afraid to rebuke sin when it appears. Their lives are in agreement with the truth as it is in Yahshua, and with each other, and as a result they are united into the final, ultimate weapon for the Gospel: The Sword of Michael on the earth. (Hebrews 4:11, 12)

The Bible contains a hymn of rejoicing from one who has found this blessed estate. The “Song of Degrees of David” reads:

“I was glad when they said unto me, ‘Let us go into the house of Yahweh.’ Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of Yahweh; for there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, ‘Peace be within thee. Because of the house of Yahweh our Almighty One I will seek thy good.’” (Psalm 122: 1- 9)



Jerusalem, or “The City of Peace,” is “a city that is compact together,” which uses a form of the Hebrew word *chabar*, and means literally, “a city that is united.” This glorious song extols the joy of true fellowship, and this wonderful experience is the real power of a people. The Scriptures speak to our Creator saying, “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” (Psalm 22:3)

A temple that does not contain the presence of the Holy One is no true temple. A temple, therefore, that is not united in praise has not yet become what it is to become, “for the joy of Yahweh is [our] strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10)

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Now, men may erect tents for temporary dwellings. In the wilderness, as Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land, they had a “tent of meeting,” and a tabernacle for Yah’s dwelling that could be disassembled for travel. Yet in the land to which Abraham was going, a more permanent structure was intended. Indeed, the temple at Jerusalem was to have stood forever, and this is a pattern of the plan that the Almighty has for His Spiritual Temple, His believers in these last days. Christ says to us, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is ‘New Jerusalem,’ which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (Revelation 3:12)

What lasting good is a house that falls apart? But this Spiritual House will not fall. It is built on a sure foundation, the Word of Yah, of which we are told, “the Word of Yah endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.” (1 Peter 1:25) We seek this permanent dwelling, an everlasting kingdom, a perpetual estate. By faith, we have it.

When Solomon built the Temple to Yahweh, which we have seen as a pattern for the Spirit Temple of believers, he said these words, “I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever.” (1 Kings 8:13) Our testimony is nothing less than this. The last chapter of the first section was about the principles of rest. It was about the spirit of the Sabbath commandment, and finding that perfect peace of body, mind and soul that enables one to endure all things for the sake of the Gospel. Here we see the fulfillment of that principle as a people – and that principle is known as Commitment.

Marriages are joyful occasions. Weddings in both ancient and modern times are events for rejoicing that often last many days. In marriage the physical world closely touches the divine, for just as the Father and Son are one, and just as the believer and the Godhead are to be brought into harmony through the operation of grace, so we read of marriage that two distinct beings become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24) in an illustration of how distinct beings may be considered “one.”

But the illustration does not end there. Marriage was, and is, to be a permanent covenant. Although the permissive allowance for divorce was abused in some ways by the ones to whom it was given, the Creator has never left us in doubt as to His purpose and desire for the uniting of His people: “And this have ye done again: covering the altar of Yahweh with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, ‘Wherefore?’ [Why?] Because Yahweh hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. For Yahweh, the Almighty of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away [divorce]; ‘For one covereth violence with his garment,’ saith Yahweh of hosts, ‘therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.’” (Malachi 2:13, 14, 16)

Similarly, uniting with a congregation of the believers who teach the truth is no less solemn an affair. Paul tells the Church, “I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 11:2) Acts 2, as we have examined before, had a people in harmony with one another, and for this chapter we note the significance of the wording that “they

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continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2:42) They were committed; their Spirit Temple was resting in "a settled place."

An example of the benefits of commitment is given to us in the chronicles of the life of a Hebrew king. The history of King Jehoshaphat is one of the most detailed accounts we have in the Scriptures, perhaps second in length and depth only to that of David and Solomon. He ruled the southern region of Judah after his father Asa, who was less than faithful to the name of Yahweh. (2 Chronicles 16:1-3) Jehoshaphat was more steadfast in his confidence, however, and it was said of him, "Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Ba'alim, but sought to the Almighty One of his father, and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." (verses 17:3, 4)

Yet in spite of his faith, Jehoshaphat was not perfect in his understanding of Yah's will. When Ahab, the wicked king of Northern Israel was attacked by heathen forces, Jehoshaphat stood with him at RamothGilead, against the word of Michaiah the prophet of the Almighty. (2 Chronicles 18:27, 28) After the battle, during which the northern king died, we follow the record of Jehoshaphat, who had miraculously escaped with his life. "And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem. And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, 'Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate Yahweh? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before Yahweh. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek the Almighty.'" (1 Chronicles 19:1-3)

It is apparent that the king took this rebuke to heart, for he renewed his commitment to the way of the Creator. "And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto Yahweh the Almighty of their fathers. And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, 'Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for Yahweh, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of Yahweh be upon you; take heed and do it, for there is no iniquity with Yahweh our Almighty, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.'" (verses 4-7) These and many like reforms did he make in his land. "And he charged them, saying, 'Thus shall ye do in the fear of Yahweh, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.'" (verse 9)

This newfound commitment to the Holy One of Israel was soon to be tested, for in the very next chapter we read that "It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle." (2 Chronicles 20:1)

But what did Jehoshaphat do, with at least three powerful kingdoms in confederacy against him? Did he go to the Northern Kingdom that he had so recently assisted? Did he rely on the intercession of idols, or the strength of even his own armies? No; rather we are told this of faithful Jehoshaphat: "And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek Yahweh, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of Yahweh; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek Yahweh." (2 Chronicles 20:3, 4)

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The king had learned true commitment to the covenant of the Creator. He turned to Him for help in time of need, and that confidence was not misplaced. “And all Judah stood before Yahweh, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of Yah in the midst of the congregation; And he said, ‘Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith Yahweh unto you: Be not afraid nor dismayed by



reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but the Almighty’s. Tomorrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of Yahweh with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for Yahweh will be with you.’ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before Yahweh, worshipping Yahweh.” (2 Chronicles 20:13-18)

We read that Judah was indeed spared from having to fight their own battle, for Yah did the work for them, sending confusion into the ranks of the enemy. It is written, “And when they began to sing and to praise, Yahweh set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of Yahweh. So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his Elohim gave him rest round about.” (verses 22-24, 28, 30)

Commitment to the cause of Yah, consistency in faith, these lead to the rest, to the settled place in which the Temple of Yah will stand forever. Remaining steadfast in Christ is key to surviving the time of trouble at the end, when the battle cannot be fought and won by mortal beings. Abiding in the Son keeps us on the path to life, for “Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not.” (1 John 3:6a)

This is necessary for maintaining the walk of faith. The Savior requires total commitment from His people – not for His sake, but for ours. “Then said Yahshua unto His disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’” (Matthew 16:24) The devotion we have to the Almighty allows nothing to be placed in a higher place, the very first commandment being, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me [i.e., in my presence].” (Exodus 20:2) The Son echoed this sentiment, saying, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not

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worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Matthew 10:37, 12:30) There is a commandment to respect one’s parents, of course, and we are told that “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Timothy 5:8) Yet these commitments, while binding, must be understood as being secondary to the divine faithfulness into which we are being led, and into which we are inspired to invite others.

The Scriptures counsel us, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering (for He is faithful that promised), and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:22-25) Here we see that the commitment to Yah and to Christ is not restricted only to what is called the “vertical direction.” The commitment that springs forth from Agape extends also to our fellow believers.

We notice that in the New Testament mind, as expressed in the words of the Bible writers, the idea of commitment and fellowship were not separated. The assembling of themselves together was an outward expression of their inward commitment to Yah, their desire was to be a holy, unified nation of priests, proclaiming the day of salvation to mankind. This desire has never changed. The people of Yah have always had a “stone of witness,” entering into covenant with their brethren to walk together in agreement with the principles and laws of the Most High. When the Israelites had come out of exile in Babylon, those who returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple of Yah pledged themselves to the Creator and said, “Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.” (Nehemiah 9:36, 38)

Modern believers are sealed into covenant by the Holy Spirit. Some have said that the Holy Spirit IS the Seal of Yah. This is not quite accurate. The two Scriptures that address this topic say that we are sealed *with* the Spirit, (Ephesians 1:13) and *by* the Spirit, (Ephesians 4:30) but the Spirit and the Seal itself are two different things. Paul tells us that Yah “hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (2 Corinthians 1:22) The Spirit is what is sealed within us, but the Seal is that commitment, made freely and lovingly, that we have with Him, and with our fellow saints. We “seal unto” the covenant we make with our Father, and with our brethren, to stand together as a unified body against the darkness that spreads over the world.

This commitment that does not waver is what allows us to perform those miracles the Creator has in store for us, “For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, ‘Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,’ and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.” (Mark 11:23) Individual faith as well as corporate faith is required for the Spirit Temple to stand.

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We notice that people are *saved* as individuals, but they are *sealed* as Tribes; and this is worthy of study. “And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand...” (Revelation 7:2-5)

It is when the people of the Holy One are gathered together in unity and faith, and when they are committed with all their hearts to the “ministry of the saints,” (1 Corinthians 16:15) then the Church will have power to turn hearts to Yah, and to prepare the way for the Son of Man. None need fall short of this grand objective, only let all rest in the promise that Yah will accomplish the work He has begun within us individually and as a people. When those with the Spirit in their hearts (as individual Temples of Yah in the body) join themselves to each other in the Covenant as sure as matrimony, then the corporate Temple of Yah in the Spirit will shine into the darkness a light that will never go dim. In that day when the believer is Sealed, the prayer that the Messiah taught us to pray will come to pass: “Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

Quotations:

Yah desires an unwavering trust from His people:

“God’s promises to us are so rich, so full, that we need never hesitate or doubt; we need never waver or backslide. In view of the encouragements that are found all through the Word of God, we have no right to be gloomy or despondent.” [*The Later Elmshaven Years 1905-1915*, page 376]

“Let opposition arise, let bigotry and intolerance again bear sway, let persecution be kindled, and the half-hearted and hypocritical will waver and yield the faith; but the true Christian will stand firm as a rock, his faith stronger, his hope brighter than in days of prosperity.” [*Last Day Events*, page 181]

“Lift up the standard, beginning with full surrender and continuing in the simplicity of obedience to all the Lord’s commandments, according to His special directions. None of the important things specified in His Word are to be neglected.” [*This Day with God*, page 128]

Commitment is necessary for individual Christians:

“The beginning of yielding to temptation is in the sin of permitting the mind to waver, to be inconsistent in your trust in God. The wicked one is ever watching for a chance to misrepresent

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God and to attract the mind to that which is forbidden.” [*Mind, Character, and Personality Volume I*, page 31]

“I am instructed that every believer must watch unto prayer, lest he fail in the Christian life battle. Every soul must daily seek the Lord with full purpose of heart, morning, noon, and night, and let the mind dwell upon the Word of God, to understand His requirements.” [*This Day with God*, page 128]

“The precious graces of the Holy Spirit are not developed in a moment. Courage, fortitude, meekness, faith, unwavering trust in God’s power to save, are acquired by the experience of years. By a life of holy endeavor and firm adherence to the right the children of God are to seal their destiny.” [*In Heavenly Places*, page 159]

Commitment is necessary for the Body of Christ:

“In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.” [*The Faith I Live By*, page 281]

“There will be an army of steadfast believers who will stand as firm as a rock through the last test.” [*Last Day Events*, page 211]

“The covenant of agreement in church membership is that each member would walk in the footsteps of Christ, that all will take His yoke upon them, and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart. Doing this, “Ye shall,” saith the dear Saviour, “find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:29, 30)” [*Lift Him Up*, page 295]

“When professing Christians are united as one,--one with Christ in God,-- they are representatives of the church of the Firstborn. Unity should ever be the element of preservation in the Christian church. Men and women are united in church capacity by a most solemn covenant with God to obey his Word, and to unite in an effort to strengthen the faith of one another.” [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 6, 1903]

The Gospel is a Sealing Message to prepare us for the Judgment, and then for Heaven:

“Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads – it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved – just as soon as God’s people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume One*, page 249]

“The time has come when we must expect the Lord to do great things for us. Our efforts must not flag or weaken. We are to grow in grace and in a knowledge of the Lord. Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God’s people is finished, we shall have the outpouring of the Spirit of God. Angels from heaven will be in our midst. I want you and all your family to have a part in this

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closing work. The present is the fitting-up time for heaven, when we each must walk in full obedience to all the commandments of God.” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Two*, page 43]

“The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant. In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment and with confidence in Christ as Leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. We are now a strong people, if we will put our trust in the Lord; for we are handling the mighty truths of the word of God. We have everything to be thankful for. If we walk in the light as it shines upon us from the living oracles of God, we shall have large responsibilities, corresponding to the great light given us of God. We have many duties to perform, because we have been made the depositories of sacred truth to be given to the world in all its beauty and glory. We are debtors to God to use every advantage he has entrusted to us to beautify the truth of holiness of character, and to send the message of warning, and of comfort, of hope and love, to those who are in the darkness of error and sin.” [*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 29, 1893]

Questions:

- 1) Do I understand that everyone is committed to something?
- 2) What are the things to which I am committed?
- 3) Do I believe that Yah always answers my prayers?
- 4) Do I have confidence that I am able to do anything the Almighty asks me to do?
- 5) Am I ever tempted to fear what Yah might ask me to do, or to give up?
- 6) Do I study the Word to learn what Yah wants for MY life?
- 7) Is my “faith” separate from my “religion?” That is to say, do I see a difference between what I do and what I claim to believe?
- 8) Am I committed to helping other people?
- 9) Would others be able to say of me that I am a person who lives up to my responsibilities?
- 10) Am I as committed to Christ as intimately as I would be/am to a marriage?
- 11) Am I as committed to His Body (the Church) as intimately as I would be/am to a marriage?
- 12) What have been the fruits of my commitment to Christ and His people?

Exercise:

After contemplating and, if possible, discussing with others the above questions, find a verse or passage of the Bible that gives a promise or an answer for each.

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Appendix A: Victory Objections

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the Victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1John 5:4)

This is a brief essay I wrote for someone who was newly interested in Victory over sin. Naturally, having been subject to the leaven of supposedly Christian teaching, it was all very new to her. In order to provide our response to the most common verses people use to oppose this wonderful promise of our Savior, I compiled the following brief list.

1) *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* (Rom 7:14,15,18, 19)

Response: Paul says in verse 24, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” He then answers it in verse 25 – “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In part b of that verse he says, “So then with the mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Through Christ there is a “law of God” placed in the mind/heart (Rom 2:15) and it is in opposition to the “natural man” of the flesh. With the flesh, we still serve the law of sin, and those who walk in the flesh will sin naturally. However, this is not Paul’s present state, but his state when he was married to the Law (he sets up the time element in verses 7:1-6) and says, “But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (verse 6) The rest of Chapter 7 is his pre-converted state, and not how he is now. He begins with “now” in Chapter 8:1 saying, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

This completes the thought begun in chapter 6. Romans was written as a unit, and never meant to be fragmented, stopping the day’s study at 7:25. It must be read at least from chapter 6 to chapter 8, where Paul says, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom 6:1-2) up till he says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom 8:14) This is all the treatment of one principle: In the flesh, we cannot please God (8:8) and of ourselves, apart from Christ we can only desire to walk in righteousness (7:15), BUT continuing that thought, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom 8:9)

A full reading of that passage sets forth the promise that those in Christ walk in the Spirit, and do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Here is what Paul says of the conversion experience, “Therefore if

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any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2Cor 5:17)

2) *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1John 1:8)*
“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” (1John 1:9,10)

Response: John often speaks repetitively for emphasis, and this verse is an exact double for those which come before and after it. Here are those verses:

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:” (1John 1:6)

“He that saith, ‘I know Him,’ and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1John 2:4)

In each of these cases, 1:8 included, John is speaking to those Christians who are influenced by a heresy known as Gnosticism. The Gnostics taught that once you were converted, nothing you did was bad or evil... that is to say, even if you did bad things, they were not “sin.” The human flesh is by nature evil, even *with* the experience of being born again, and would do evil on its own. Once your spirit was saved, however, you were fine. Remnants of this theology are found in the commonly taught “once saved always saved” view of salvation. John’s entire letter is address to those who were sinning, but saying they were not. And so to THESE people he writes, if we are IN sin (as they were) and “if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us.” In other words, call sin by its right name.

Those who were able to admit to being in sin were to confess, be converted, and then Christ’s blood would be accepted “to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Accepting the blood cleanses us from ALL unrighteousness, not just some; and never more do we willfully (deliberately) commit acts of transgression. It should be pointed out that people still make errors in judgment (e.g., Peter in Galatians 2) but they do not deliberately sin. As John says there is a “sin unto death” which is deliberate, and “a sin which is not unto death” (1John 5:15) for which the Sacrifice (Christ) could be used to atone (Leviticus 5:5) For SDAs, there is even less of a reason to misread this verse. Ellen White says in her writings that John’s letter was written to those who were in great deception, believing that their actions were above what could be called “sin,” no matter how depraved their practices actually were.

3) *“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” (1John 2:1)*

Response: Although this is also in 1John, it is so often used it gets a section of its own. People use this as an “obvious” verse to say that people who are converted still sin – “but if any man sin” they just repent and Christ picks them up again to fall off the cliff another time.

In doing so, they change the word “and” to a “but” and make John contradict himself. Here is what John writes about converts and sin in that very same letter, two chapters away:

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“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” (1John 3:9)

There is no way to misapply this, except that some Christians will teach that John means a Christian will not “continue” in sin. This is not true to the text as it is written or translated. The Greek is even clearer, and a literal translation would be, “Whosoever is born of God misses not the mark. (hamartian ou)” It’s not about continuing in known sin, that part is obvious, but if a person KNOWS a thing is sin, he will not even give in to the temptation at all. Changing that word to mean “continuing in sin” is adding to the Scripture a doctrine that is alien to its consistency and the message of true freedom in Christ.

Further, that phrase “if any man sin” is in the aorist tense in Greek, and is the exact same expression Paul uses when he says, “for all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God.” (Rom 3:23) This is translated in the English as the past-perfect tense (it is NOT, “for all sin”), and so what John actually wrote in the original manuscript is, “if any man have sinned.” If we realize we have been in sin, we repent, and this is what the Advocate, Christ, does in us. He does not pick us up from every fall, He comes into us when we realize we are in need of a Savior, and we can walk with confidence, “For Yahweh shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” (Pro 3:26) There is no contradiction by the same author in the same book of Scripture; John says those who are born of God “cannot sin,” and he maintains this teaching firmly in every verse of his letters. “Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2Peter 1:10)

4) *Speaking of Peter: Peter was with Christ for 3.5 years and he still denied Him during His trial. (John 18:27)*

Response: Strange as it may seem at first, Peter was NOT converted until after Pentecost. Most Christians are where Peter was, walking WITH Christ, but not yet having Him dwelling in their hearts. Just before He died, this dialogue took place: “And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.’” (Luke 22:31,32) Yes, Peter denied Christ during times of severe trial, and so will any who are only walking with Him. But the ones who come unto the full salvation experience can testify like Paul, who is much different than his Romans 7 past, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20)

Peter himself writes (after actually being converted), “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.” (1Peter 4:1) The one who is “crucified with Christ” as Paul puts it, “hath ceased from sin.” True Sabbath rest; “But we have the mind of Christ.” (1Cor 2:16)

5) *David sinned, and yet God calls him a “man after his own heart.”*

Response: David also walked with Christ, but as Ellen White states, he needed to be converted after his sin. For non-Adventists, we need only turn to the Psalm he writes thereafter: “Create in

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me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” (Psa 51:10,12) Creation and restoration are exactly the things that turn the old, sinful man – into the new, spiritual man.

Before this point, although David was faithful inasmuch as he knew, he lied, killed unnecessarily, pretended to be crazy to avoid being killed, and deceived the high priest in order to evade capture by Saul (this later got the high priest and his entire family killed). After this point of conversion, we do NOT see this behavior again. David was a changed man after Nathan pointed out the sin that was in the monarch’s heart.

Christ of course is our example. David died; the 144,000 do not. Even Paul, Peter and John died – they were not as responsible for the light as we, the Remnant, are. We reflect His character more surely than David ever did, and it is written, “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. “ (1Cor 10:6) We have more light, and a more perfect Example to follow.

6) *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:12)*

Response: This is one of those many cases where you just have to look at the next verse and the few that follow. This reads: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Phil 3:13-15)

Commentaries will add in footnotes “apprehended [to the resurrection of the dead.]” Paul is not yet in his new body, and has not yet become all that he can be in Christ. This brings to light the two words translated as “perfect” in the New Testament. Paul says he is not yet “perfect” (teleioo – verse 12) but three verses later says, “let us, therefore, as many as be perfect” (teleios – verse 15). Another apparent contradiction that can be cleared up by the Greek original. The first word means perfect in the sense of completed, finished. For example Christ fulfilled (completed) the Law. The second word means “lacking nothing,” and morally excellent. THIS is the word Christ uses when He says, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.” (Mat 5:48) That Voice gives us the power to DO it through faith in Him as the Creator.

Paul’s statement in Philippians is that he is not yet finished; and if there was more, God would “reveal even this” to him. He had more to learn, as do we all. Yet for all that he knows he grasps, “forgetting those things which are behind,” and is lacking nothing, for as he testifies, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” (Acts 23:1) Every single one of us in whom dwells “the Seed of God” can say that, and it has nothing to do with spiritual pride, because we do not glory in self, but in the Cross by which it is possible. (Gal 6:14)

A couple more things to remember: The New Testament never calls converts “sinners” in the present tense. Paul considers himself a “chief of sinners” (1Tim 1:5) only by virtue of his sinful past (verse 13), obtaining mercy because he did those things “ignorantly in unbelief.” What he

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does teach is that “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom 5:8) And “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.” (2Cor 2:14)

There is not a verse that gives place to deliberate, willful sin after Christ died. I’ve shown strong statements from Paul, Peter and John (there are also ones from James and Jude) which describe conversion as a life completely free from sin. This is the Gospel of Christ. We do not say that God would not forgive the repentant, but that one who is born again – and more, one who will be “without fault before the Throne” as the 144,000 are – will not need to ask! This is a scary, and even blasphemous thought to those who see Christ as He who will pick them up every time they fall; however this “new theology” has no foundation in Scripture, and the true Christ is He who lives in us as the Advocate, Comforter and Savior, eternally and flawlessly (for He is without flaw) keeping us from falling. This is the invitation He has open to all, in the Church age of Laodicea – in which we are living now – “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev 3:20) For Adventists, who consider themselves the Remnant, we are to be a part of the true Body of Christ, separate from sin, unions with the world, and false teachings about the nature of the very One who saved us.

Mrs. White puts it this way, “The principles of righteousness must be implanted in the soul. The faith must grasp the power of Jesus Christ, else there is no safety. Licentious practices are getting to be as common as in the days before the flood. Not one should be buried with Christ by baptism unless they are critically examined whether they have ceased to sin, whether they have fixed moral principles, whether they know what sin is, whether they have moral defilement which God abhors. Find out by close questioning if these persons are really ceasing to sin, if with David they can say, ‘I hate sin with a perfect hatred.’” [*Manuscript Releases Volume Six*, page 165, paragraph 3; Chapter Title: Preparation for Baptism]

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil 4:13)

“But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, ‘With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.’ Jesus said unto him, ‘If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.’” (Mat 19:26; Mark 9:23)

Originally published at <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/eqvic.html>

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Appendix B: On Colossians 2

One of The New Testament passages that seems to present the greatest bit of difficulty to the study of the Sabbath in the time after Christ's death is Colossians 2:16, 17. In most English translations it reads along the lines: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ." (Col 2:16, 17)

Some, on reading this, immediately say, "You see we are not to judge others on the keeping or neglect of the 4th Commandment, because the days for worship aren't important."

But is this what the Scripture is really saying? Looking at that passage, taken from the King James Version, we see two words in [brackets]. The reason they are in brackets is because they were added by translators. Without any "help," the two verses read, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body of Christ." (Col 2:16, 17)

There is a vast difference between these two statements now, and what they are commonly taken to mean. Without the word "is," Paul is actually telling the readers, "Let no man judge you in these matters... which are a shadow of things to come... but the body of Christ." A little background will help to confirm that this reading is the right one.

Colossi was a largely pagan settlement, and among these idolatrous people the Christians had established a Church. Those around the believers were involved in a worship of the planets, the stars and other heavenly bodies, including angels. (Col 2:18) Because of this, some of the believers of Colossi (as in Galatia) were being tempted to join their acquaintances in their worship of times and days, which were often dedicated to false deities and forces of nature. (Galatians 4:9, 10) The apostle to the gentiles immediately counters the error, proclaiming Christ as Creator and Victor, having overcome the evil angels who were receiving worship under the guise of universal guides and principles. (Col 2:15)

This is where our two verses come in. Paul warns the Christians not to let the heathen around them judge them in their keeping of the 7th day Sabbath, and the New Moon, and the other Judeo-Christian Feasts, and their avoidance of food and drink offered to idols, for no one is equipped to judge these things but (except for) the Body of Christ. This is not the only place Paul writes in this manner, for he says in another place, "What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?

But them that are without God judgeth." (1 Corinthians 5:12, 13a) The Church is the guide for its members, and God is the judge of all men.

Finally, as further support for reading the passage as it is literally worded in the Greek, Paul does not say that the Sabbath, or the holy days (or meat and drink, for that matter) have passed away.

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The two verses presented here are often misquoted, with careless readers saying, "...New Moons, or of the Sabbath days, which *were* a shadow of things to come..." and then claiming that they WERE to come, but are now fulfilled in Christ. The problem with this is twofold.

First, the passage says these ordinances ARE a shadow of things to come, and this was written after Christ's death. Isaiah 66 points out the fact that Sabbaths and New Moons will continue to be kept even in the renewed Heavens and earth (Isa 66:23), therefore the teaching that Christ's death made these practices void is manifestly declared false by the words of the prophet.

Second, in addition to this, those who have an understanding of what the feasts mean can easily point out that not every feast was fulfilled in the life and ministry of Christ – yet. The Feast of Tabernacles, for example, represents the final harvest, which corresponds in the New Covenant to the Messiah returning to gather His people at the end of human history. (Matthew 13:20, Revelation 14:16)

Thus, we may be sure that Paul intended his readers to gather from his words exactly what he wrote. To those who had recently converted to Christianity, he said, "Do not let yourself be misled by those who are judging your newfound practices to be useless or flawed, the Body of Christ (the Church) is the only organization on earth that is unpolluted with error and misinformation. The Body of Christ is the means by which we can be sure we have the true religion of the Savior."

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Appendix C: Ten Perfect Promises

And God spake all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Exodus 20: 1, 2)

When asked what the greatest commandment of the ten was, Christ responded, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30, 31)

But how can someone command love? How can an emotion be required of a human being? Well, first of all, by fully understanding what love is in its truest sense, the saying becomes less burdensome. And in fact, it **should** not be burdensome, as declared in 1 John 5:3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." Love is more than just an emotion. It is a commitment. It is a covenant. It is a conscious decision to be dedicated to someone, and to be willing to do what is best for that person.

With Yah, it just so happens that doing what is best "for" Him is actually doing what is best for US. For this reason, the Decalogue is worded as it is, as commandments, with all the "thou shalt"s and the "thou shalt not"s. They are an important part of the covenant we have with the Father, not because He demands it as some arbitrary form of obedience, of course, but because for those don't have these "works," it is generally indicative that they do not have a Christ-like character. And it is character which will decide our final destiny for good or ill.

When Yahshua came to explain the words of His Father's will more clearly, in both letter and spirit, He showed us a perfect life – a life that directly resulted from direct communion with His Father, and from keeping perfectly His Law. For He said, "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (John 8:29) The measure of our character is what we do. Just as "faith without works is dead," (James: 2:20), so Yahshua taught that being able to remain within the presence of the Father is dependent upon doing by faith "those things that please Him."

And the Father made it plain what things please Him in the words of the commandments. And yet, Christ came to magnify the Law, did He not? He came to make it honorable, says Isaiah in chapter 42 and verse 21. So what exactly does this mean? As always, the answer is not only in the Word, but in the "words." Take a look at the first one, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3) A command, right? Well, maybe not only a command.

The wording is very significant, because it does not say, "Have no other gods before me," but "**Thou shalt** have no other gods before me." Suppose I say to you, "You will not take this \$20.00 I have set before you on this table." You can certainly take that as a command, and would be right to do so (it's MY money after all). But at the same time, suppose I add something to that. Suppose

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I said to you, “If I lock you out of this room, you will not take this \$20.00 that I have set down on this table.” Now that’s not just a command, it’s a surety. It’s a promise. Your access to the money is restricted, and therefore it is impossible for you to make off with it.

Let’s use a more fitting example. Suppose I visit someone who is in prison. If I have some authority over this person, I can say to him, “You will not desire freedom.” If this person was dedicated to me, and if he saw a good reason for not wanting to be free – although I can’t imagine what that would be – he might just no longer desire freedom. HOWEVER, if I say to this person that is behind bars, “If I set you free, you will not desire freedom.” Oh! What a different meaning it takes on! What a blessed promise it has become. Of **course** this person will no longer desire freedom if free. It’s just good sense.

Since Christ came to magnify the Law, then we can’t leave Him out of the Decalogue, can we? Let’s see what they become, though, when looked at through the “lens” of His life and death: Commandment one becomes – “If I shalt set thee free in Christ, thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Commandment two: “If I shalt set thee free in Christ, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...” They are no longer commandments! They are promises, assurances of a blessed freedom from self and from sin. And what is this, but the Victory?

The sixth commandment, for example, which would now read, “If I shalt set thee free in Christ, thou shalt not kill,” speaks no longer of just actions, but also of motives. And did not Yahshua say, “But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies?” (Luke 6:27) Christ taught that hatred is the same as murder, lust the same as adultery, insincerity the same as bearing false witness. Therefore, if we read the sixth and other commandments through Christ’s name, we see that we **WILL** not do these things. Not only are we not **supposed** to do them, but we **will** not do them, who are within the body of the Redeemer.

“If I shalt set thee free in Christ, thou shalt not steal.” For those who are living a Christ-like life, with His character, how can they even consider the possibility that they will ever deal unjustly with anyone? It isn’t a matter of keeping or breaking the Law anymore, is it? It is a matter of having or not having the nature of Yah, which will itself forbid the flesh from carrying out these evil deeds. No longer do we struggle with doing or not doing. Just as in my earlier example, it is as if we are locked out of the room with the \$20 bill. And John concurs with this assessment: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and **he cannot sin**, because he is born of God.” (1 John 3:9) Now we see what this means: it is a surety.

We know we will **NOT** do these things, because we are promised that as long as we remain in communion with the Father, we won’t. We are truly justified by faith as we understand this. For it is no longer truly I that live, as Paul says, but Christ who liveth in me. (Gal 2:20)

Yahshua taught that the whole of the Law and the prophets hung upon two things: love of the Father, and love of one’s fellow man. It really is that simple – love for the Father automatically leads to keeping the first four commandments. It is **natural** for us, because we now have His **nature**. Love for our fellow man leads us to keep the last six. Again, we keep them not because we are merely supposed to. It’s not a duty anymore, but for those in Christ, it is our nature, our character. Thus, we are no longer under the Law. It really is that simple – the commandments are

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not burdens, but promises, blessed assurance that we know the Father, and He knows us. This is cause for rejoicing, for another of His promises is, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:28) Amen.

Adapted from <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/eten.html>

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Appendix D: Wine in The Bible

Christians today are divided into two camps concerning the use of alcoholic beverages. While it is fairly unanimous that so-called “hard liquor” has no place in the temple of the Holy Spirit, there is some confusion as to the Biblical viewpoint about the use of less intoxicating, although still fermented, drinks such as beer and wine. As the same arguments tend to apply for both, we can restrict this examination to the latter specifically. Another good reason for doing so is because wine is the more disputed of the two, since one of the claims is that Christ Himself made use of it, and in fact *commanded* its use until His return when He instituted the Last Supper.

I intend to show here, however, that no *fermented* drink was ever used or sanctioned by Yahshua or His disciples, and in fact that the use of any intoxicating drink, to any degree, was strongly and consistently discouraged, if not outright condemned, by the Old Testament, Peter, Paul and of course the Lord Himself. It is my objective to demonstrate that in spite of the fact that there seems to be quite a clear-cut case in favor of the moderate use of alcoholic beverages, this arises as a result of two false assumptions: firstly that the term “wine” in the Bible always refers to an intoxicating drink (either because 1. the word “wine” *today* is almost universally taken to mean fermented liquids, or 2. there is a notion that it was impossible to preserve fruit juices from the effects of decay), and secondly that the word “temperance” as used in the New Testament is to be accurately defined as “moderate use.”

From an expansion of those two wrong concepts, the argument in favor of moderation rather than abstinence can be segmented into about four main subsections:

1) In both the Old and New Testaments, wine is considered in many passages as a blessing, and a gift from God: “*And the vine said unto them, ‘Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?’*” (Judges 9:13)

2) Yahshua used wine Himself, and made it for others to drink: “*So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum...*” (John 4:46)

3) Wine has a deeply religious significance, which overrides its ill effects on the body if it is used in small doses. “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.*” (1 Cor 11:26)

4) Wine was used and recommended by the Apostles, just not in excess: “*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.*” (1 Tim 5:23) “*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.*” (Eph 5:18)

I will deal with each of these four points in the sections below; but we can begin by examining the first of the faulty assumptions, concerning the definition of the word “wine” in the Bible. Is it always used as an alcohol-containing drink merely because modern English considers it so?

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1. Definitions of “Wine”

There are four words that are generally used in the Bible which are translated into the English “wine” or “new wine.” The first of these is *tirowsh* (Hebrew) found in verses like Gen 27:28: “Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.” The second Hebrew word is *yayin* which appears more frequently than the former term in passages like: “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.” (Gen 9:24)

The primary Greek term for wine is *oinos*, and is found in the vast majority of NT passages where the English word appears: “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (Rom 14:21) Another word is also used in the New Testament for wine, but only one time, and it has deep significance, I believe. It’s found here: “Others mocking said, ‘These men are full of new wine.’” (Acts 2:13) The word there is the Greek term *gleukos*. We will examine this verse in some more detail in section four, dealing with the apostles and wine.

The first Hebrew word, *tirowsh*, is found in 38 verses. It is translated as “wine” in English, however in not *one* of these references is it used to hint at fermented liquors. It is always used in the context of fresh vintage, and usually mentioned along with oil and corn, as offerings of the harvest unto Yah. This is the kind that is as “dew from Heaven,” (Deu 33:28), that “cheereth God and man,” (Judges 9:13), that was offered to the Father along with the firstfruits, an **uncorrupt** sacrifice (Neh 10:39) and is clearly found freely in fresh grapes as Isaiah records. “Thus saith the LORD, ‘As the new wine (*tirowsh*) is found in the cluster, and one saith, ‘Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it,’ so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them all.’” (Isa 65:8)

Interestingly enough, Israelites were cautioned against even this form of “wine” in one verse: “Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.” (Hos 4:11) However, this was not necessarily due to the alcoholic content of *tirowsh*, as demonstrated by the fact that Nazarites were forbidden to eat even *fresh grapes* in order to remain ritually pure: “He [the Nazarite] shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, **nor eat moist grapes**, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.” (Numbers 6:3,4) This was, it seems, for either a symbolic reason, or merely because an indulgence in pleasant food too often would draw the attentions earthward during their time of separation and communion with heaven. This is the basis for the “pleasant bread fast” mentioned in Daniel 10:2,3.

Yayin, the second word, occurs much more frequently (140 verses in the Old Testament), and the meaning of this one appears to be more general. It comes from either a root word meaning to “effervesce/ferment,” OR a term for “to tread out,” a description that implies no transformation into an alcoholic drink. Essentially, it can mean *either one*. This is the general term for wine that is constantly spoken against in Scripture. “Wine (*yayin*) is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” (Pro 20:1)

“Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the *yayin*; they that go to seek

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mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red [when it is fermented], when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. ‘They have stricken me,’ shalt thou say, ‘and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.’” (Pro 23:29-35) By the very description of the effects of this *yayin*, including its addictive element, we know that the wine of this passage is that of an alcoholic nature.

Here we see there is a condition of “wine” specified, either “strong drink” in the first verse or “when it is red” in the second, meaning it can have more than one state. It would not be a fair treatment to say that all uses of *yayin* are negative. For example, “And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.” (Gen 14:18) To contend that this was unfermented wine simply because it was borne by a priest, offering no other evidence, would admittedly be a circular argument. However, there *are* other places where *yayin* is used to refer to non-alcoholic wine, which is why in Proverbs the wine that is fermented is specified.

The passage concerning Nazarites again becomes useful: “All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the *yayin* tree, from the kernels even to the husk.” (Num 6:4) That term translated “vine tree,” is actually more accurately rendered, “the tree of wine.”

Here again we find this: “Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink: that ye might know that I am the LORD your God,” (Deu 29:6) where *yayin* is separated from “strong drink,” as opposed to Proverbs 20:1. Even more clearly it is stated: “And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease.” (Isa 16:10) Here it is said that the treaders produce *yayin* in their presses – this statement allows no time for the fermentation of the “vintage” which is obtained.

Essentially, then, we find two terms for the word “wine” in the Old Testament. The first we’ve examined contains, by usage, no hint of a fermented and intoxicating nature. The second appears to be most often used as a debilitating drug, in which case it is strictly warned against, but does not appear to be *exclusively* alcoholic. If it were the case that references to “*yayin*” were always of the fermented kind of beverage, it would rightly be concluded that the Bible is ambiguous in its standpoint about the matter. This is not the case, however, for even this term for wine is consistently separated from *shekar* or “strong drink,” and is considered to be wine from the moment it is pressed out of the fresh fruit of the vine.

In the New Testament, the Greek “oinos” is similarly a general term; and the evidence of this is not only from its usage in the passages we will examine later on, but also from the fact that both the words above from the Hebrew language are translated into the Greek “oinos” in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. Admittedly, the issue of wine in the Bible is a complex one if we wish to get at the truth of the matter, and for that reason, this will be no short article.

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2. Preserving The Blessing

In many of the Old Testament verses, some of which we looked at above, wine is considered a blessing from Heaven, and a sign of prosperity. “Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto His people, ‘Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.’” (Joel 2:19) As demonstrated in the previous segment, most of the time wine is spoken of as a gift from Yah, such as in this verse, the word used there is “tirowsh,” meaning simply that liquid which comes from grapes.

One of the major conceptions that leads people to conclude that any grapebased beverage must necessarily be of the alcoholic type comes from a lack of knowledge about the preservation methods used in the ancient world of avoiding fermentation. This is a fairly widespread belief, and I will confess that I too was of this mind until I began to study the issue. My thought was that the winepresses produced grapejuice, which was used as quickly as possible before fermentation set in, and any that was not consumed in time became the “yayin” which was tolerated (except in the case of priests), but certainly discouraged.

The fact of the matter is, however, that fermented wine in Old Testament days was the *more* difficult liquid to preserve. It needed to be carefully stored, as well as produced, in order to prevent it from becoming vinegar. The fresh juice of the grape, however, could be refined, boiled and subjected to various other techniques for the purpose of preservation without destroying any existing alcoholic content (since it contained none).

Rather than re-invent the wheel, I will merely quote from another study I came across concerning the methods of preserving grape juice in ancient times, complete with references (see Footnote 1 for details):

Quote: “In protest against the assertion that yayin can be used of either fermented or unfermented wine, moderationists make uninformed claims like the following: “Unfermented grape juice is a very difficult thing to keep without the aid of modern antiseptic precautions, and its preservation in the warm and not overcleanly conditions of ancient Palestine was impossible” (3). In fact, it takes no more ingenuity to prevent fermentation of grape juice than to prevent vinegarization of fermented wine. The ancients knew at least five methods of making nonalcoholic wine.

1) Vinous fermentation (fermentation yielding alcoholic wine) proceeds only if the concentration of grape sugar within the must (the unfermented juice) falls within a certain range. Fermentation can be prevented by boiling the must until the sugar concentration exceeds the maximum permitting fermentation. That this method of preserving grape juice was known to the ancients is attested by Pliny (4), Columella (5), Virgil (6), and others (7). Must reduced to a fraction (perhaps a half or a third) of its original volume was commonly known as defrutum (8).

2) Grape juice with enough sweetness to remain unfermented can be made just by pressing dried grapes. Pliny refers to a wine, called raisin-wine, that was made from grapes dried to half their weight (9). Polybius states that passum, a raisin-wine, was the staple drink of Roman women, who, at least in the early days of the Republic, were forbidden to drink ordinary wine (10).

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3) Vinous fermentation occurs only within a certain temperature range, the lower limit being about 45°F. The ancients knew that if a cooled wine was allowed to sit undisturbed, the clear juice poured off from the sediment would remain unfermented for about a year. The benefit of keeping the wine still was that the yeast bodies responsible for fermentation settled to the bottom. This third method of making nonalcoholic wine is described by no less than three Latin writers—Cato (11), Columella (12), and Pliny (13).

Salt retards fermentation. According to Columella, “Some people—and indeed almost all the Greeks—preserve must with salt or sea-water” (14).

The boiling point of alcohol is lower than the boiling point of water. Therefore, by bringing fermented wine to the boiling point of water, the alcohol is driven off. According to Pliny, the ancients made a drink called *adynamon* (weak wine) by adding water to wine and boiling the mixture until the quantity was considerably reduced. This drink was a favorite preparation for the sick and invalid (15).” **Endquote.**

In concluding this matter of preservation from the effects of fermentation, it needs to be noted that the ancients did not know about “alcohol” specifically. All they knew was that the juice from grapes, if left long enough under certain conditions, had effects which were not good for the body. They did not make the distinction between “wine” and “grape juice” as we do today, for we have a greater understanding of the process of fermentation and the vastly dramatic effects of the chemicals produced during that time; and this is *why* there was a general term for “wine,” that includes both types.

Today, in cooking for example, a recipe might call for tomatoes that are firm, without soft spots. We don’t have two different words for the fruits possessing these states; but we simply avoid one based upon its *characteristics*. If it’s good for you, use it. If it won’t do the recipe justice, and won’t give a good result to the overall dish, avoid it. That’s just common sense. As this study progresses, the negative effects of alcohol, even in small doses, cannot be ignored... and let the reader who wishes to please Yah decide if the Bible gives good advice concerning this matter. We will also look at the benefits of unfermented wine, and we will see that due to *its* characteristics, and many positive effects on the body, it may rightly be considered a blessing from our Father in Heaven.

3. Our Savior and Wine

“Jesus Himself was a drinking man.” There are few misconceptions about my precious Redeemer that bother me as much as this statement, and it is made by even the most well-meaning Christians. Some say, “He never forbade it, but as alcohol will put a stumbling block before many brethren, because the law of love I myself abstain.” I think that this is a wonderful argument against drinking in and of itself, and I certainly praise their noble desire to not offend, and to love their neighbors as themselves; however, how much stronger their conviction would be if they understood Yahshua’s position on intoxicants aright!

There are three distinct events as recorded in the Gospels that have given people a wrong idea of our Lord’s attitude towards wine. Not surprisingly, they are all based upon one of the two faulty

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assumptions; the first: that the word “wine” is exclusive to the alcoholic type. As stated previously, the Greek word for wine, as used in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, is “oinos.” Evidence from the Septuagint’s translation of the Hebrew Old Testament indicates that it is also a general term; at least as general as “yayin,” for both that word and “tiroush” were translated to “oinos” in the Scriptures that were used by Yahshua and His disciples. The meaning must therefore be taken from the context of its use; but that of course will be no problem, for Scripture interprets Scripture.

The three events that have led to this issue are these: 1) The wedding at Cana, 2) The accusation of the Pharisees that the Messiah was a “winebibber,” and 3) The use of wine as a symbol for His blood when He instituted the Last Supper.

Let’s examine the first of these. Here are the relevant verses: “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus saith unto her, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.’ His mother saith unto the servants, ‘Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.’ And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, ‘Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.’ And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, ‘Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.’ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him.” (John 2:1-11)

Now here is the key question: what was the nature of the wine there? We can get a few facts from the passage. First, this creation of wine was a miracle, and so that His disciples would believe in Him. Second, this wine was served when the participants had already “well drunk” of the previous wine, for the governor said they had kept this new drink “until now.” Third, the governor of the feast called it “the good wine,” using the Greek term “kalos” for good; the significance of which we will shortly see.

Examining the first of these three points, consider that this creation was a miracle. It was made instantaneously at the command of Christ. When we examine the way in which the Father and Son make things, we find that they are always instantaneous, mature, and perfect. The world was created without a hint of decay or corruption. Yahshua healed lepers, the blind and the lame; and He did it **completely**, a restoration that affected not only the body, but also the soul and spirit: “Jesus saith unto him, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, ‘Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.’ The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.” (John 5:8, 9, 14, 15)

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There is nothing that our Messiah ever made that was not wholly beneficial; His healings followed the pattern of the creation of the Universe and world as described in the early chapters: “And Elohim saw everything that He/They had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (Gen 1:31). To suppose that He generated a substance here which would not be good in terms of health and common sense is to claim that this is the one exception to the Biblical pattern set forth in the rest of the Canonized writings. This evidence is only strengthened by an examination of the next two points.

Aside from it being miraculous, the timing of the event is also important. The governor of the feast stated that this “good wine” was saved till last, whereas wine of this quality was usually served first; while the taste for it was still new. It should be noted that the expression “well drunk,” *methuo*, does not always mean intoxicated, only that one has had his fill. We can look at it both ways and yet arrive at the same conclusion; if *methuo* here means simply filled, we have no problem at all; both wines would be nonalcoholic. If it *did* mean that the “good wine” was not usually served after the attendants were intoxicated, we can still find plenty of evidence that Christ’s gift to the celebrants was not of this quality.

If the guests were already drunk, and our Master provided them with *more* alcoholic beverages, does this not seem to be a conflict of interests for His character? Yahshua’s life was one of joy in His Father’s will, and an example of the utmost purity and self-denial. Furthermore, He encouraged all who met Him to be the same way, both by exhortation and example. “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’” (Mat 16:24) In no way could the Savior condone, aid or encourage drunkenness. **If** the previous wine had been intoxicating in nature (and that is already a big IF), He could not have provided **more** of the same to them without violating a most basic principle of His mission on earth. To love Christ is to know His character... let those who use this incident as a means to justify an indulgence of their appetite meditate on this.

The third point concerns the description of the wine by the governor of the feast. He called it “the good wine.” Now in Greek, the standard term for “good” is *agathos*. “‘And other [seeds] fell on good (agathos) ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold.’ And when He had said these things, He cried, ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.’” (Luke 8:8) There is another word for good, however – *kalos*, which means quite a bit more.

“And Jesus said, ‘Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good (kalos) work on me.’” (Mark 14:6) “I am the *kalos* shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” (John 10:11) The word there means much more than good, it means, “good, *excellent in nature and characteristics*; praiseworthy, noble; morally good; *beautiful by reason of purity* of heart and life, and hence praiseworthy; *affecting the mind agreeably*, comforting and confirming.” All these are according to Strong’s Concordance, and take note of the italicized sections, which I have emphasized. This was the word used to describe the wine which our Master made that day.

In today’s world, “good wine” is generally taken to mean that which is high in intoxicating ability. However, in the earlier centuries, no such connotation existed. Some sources which indicate this quite clearly include:

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“The ancients filtered their wines repeatedly before they could have fermented, and thus the leaven which nourish the strength of the wine being taken away, they rendered the wine itself more liquid, weaker, lighter, and **more pleasant to drink.**” (*Delphian Commentary on Horace*, Book 1, Ode 17).

“Wine is rendered old or feeble in strength when it is frequently filtered. The strength or spirit being thus excluded, the *wine neither inflames the brain or infests the mind and the passions* and is much more **pleasant to drink.**” (Plutarch, *Symposium*).

The persons of ages past apparently had much greater discernment in terms of taste than we do today.

The second set of evidence against Yahshua was that He was accused of being a “winebibber” by His Pharisaical adversaries. We need not take too much time here. This is the passage in question: “And the Lord said, ‘Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, ‘We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.’ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, ‘He hath a devil.’ The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, ‘Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified of all her children.” (Luke 7:31-35)

Now, the first thing to keep in mind when dealing with this passage is that this is an *accusation*. The Pharisees also accused Him of sedition, of breaking the Sabbath, of being possessed, and a host of other conditions of spiritual and moral disorder. That they could consider Him a drunkard should be no great surprise. Secondly, we should not let ourselves be thrown by the contrast between Yahshua and John the Baptist. Christ said that John (in contrast to Himself), came not eating or drinking wine. Looking again at the conditions for a Nazarite (which the Baptist was – Luke 1:15), we find that he was not to touch *anything* that came from the “wine tree,” including grapes. There is no way we can limit our scope of understanding here to include only alcoholic wine.

Christ, contrary to John, had a social mission; and thus He sat with publicans, sinners and Pharisees (Mat 9:10, Luke 11:37), sharing food and drink with them; both bread and wine, to use the general terms for these things. The point Christ was making here was that if He had been ascetic, He would not have been held in any higher regard by the religious leaders. No matter what He did, their spirits were opposed to His, and their accusations would fall upon Him. He was in no way admitting guilt in relation to their charges of being indulgent in intoxicating liquors. While we are on the subject of the Messiah’s teachings concerning wine, we can briefly make mention of two other incidents. The first concerns this parable: “And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.” (Mark 2:22) This is taken as conclusive evidence that in New Testament times, “New Wine” also fermented to become old wine, and then it was used for drinking.

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It has been shown, however, that even new bottles (the word there means “wineskins”) would be burst by the fermentation of grape juice into alcohol. Furthermore, wine was fermented in carefully controlled vats, not in wineskins; these were used exclusively for storage. Therefore, the new wine was not put into new bottles in order to ferment it, but to **store** it. In other words, the reason why new wine was put into new bottles was to keep it *from* fermenting due to contact with the residue left over from the old wine in the previously used bottles. “But new wine must be put into new bottles; and *both are preserved,*” as another author expounds in Luke 5:38.

Secondly there is this statement in the following verse, in which Christ seems to praise, or at least tolerate, an individual’s taste for the more potent form of *oinos*: “No man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, ‘The old is better.’” (Luke 5:39) Taking this verse in its context of the parable above, and the previous verses, we find that Christ is speaking of the Gospel. He considers the Pharisees and their system to be the “old vessel,” and His statements about wine simply meant that if the unconverted religious zealots were to learn of the Gospel, the “new wine,” without first having a change of heart, it would ferment in them, become corrupted, and both they and the message would be lost.

In this verse, saying that a man who is used to strong drink will not desire new wine is in no way a commendation of a “sophisticated” taste. He is saying here that those who have perverted their appetites will find little use for the fresh, unpolluted truths of Heaven, and we find that He was painfully accurate in these last, wicked days.

The final charge against Christ concerning the use of alcohol deserves an article all by itself. This concerns the third major moderationist point listed in the introduction; that of wine having such a deep religious significance that it overrides its harmful effects, particularly if used in reasonably small amounts.

I am speaking, of course, of the Last Supper, in which Yahshua made some modifications to the style and meaning of the Passover festival. Of this event it was written, “And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’” (Mat 26:27-29)

There are at *least* two things wrong with the assumption that alcoholic wine was used in this ceremony. And the reason why this event in particular deserves special attention is because this is exactly where “wine” becomes an issue in the church setting. Many churches today use alcoholic wine in their communion services. I will be as plain as I can on the matter... this is a perversion of what our Lord intended.

The first major error deals with just that, the symbolism. What is that wine intended to represent? Yahshua said, “this is my blood of the New Testament.” The wine in that cup was to signify the most pure, the most uncorrupt, the most excellent drink, for He said of this day some time before, “my blood is drink indeed.” (John 6:55b) Even in the very directions for keeping a proper Passover, we find it clearly stated that no fermented liquid could *possibly* be a fitting representation of our Redeemer’s lifeblood.

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“And this day [the Passover] shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.” (Exo 12:14, 15) In the New Testament, this is specifically connected to the Last Supper: “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor 5:7, 8)

Notice that *leaven* in the New Testament is applied to the doctrine of the Pharisees (Mat 16:6) and that same doctrine is likened unto fermented wine in the Luke verses from the previous section. (Luke 5:30-39) Both fermentation and leaven are used to refer to that which is morally corrupt, to that which is old, decaying and harmful. It was forbidden to use any such substances in the ritual which the Last Supper was representing, upon pain of exile or death, and it’s easy to see why. From the beginning, the Passover meal was a foreshadowing of our Savior’s body and blood – it was absolutely necessary that the participants understand that this was to be a wholly pure sacrifice, so much so that they could not even have leaven in their habitations (Exo 12:19), how then could our Messiah have used an intoxicating liquor to represent this most untainted, this most sweet drink?

Satan is well pleased with the corruption of this sacred ceremony, which is extant in many of the major churches today. And the humans involved are *aware* of the discrepancy, at least to some degree. The Catholics and the Protestants deal with it in two different ways, and **both** are contrary to the explicit commandments of our Lord. This is stated plainly: “And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink ye all of it.’” (Mat 26:27) He told them ALL to partake! The clergy of the Roman church have to a large degree restricted the usage of communion wine to themselves, knowing fully well that this would be an awful compulsion to visit upon the young, the aged, the sick and those with already-existing addiction issues. They know *fully well* that they are teaching in every one of these services that our Messiah commanded something which cannot be fulfilled in good conscience. I say to you that He did no such thing.

Those Protestant denominations which use the fermented form of wine during their Communion services “rob Peter to pay Paul,” as the expression goes, removing one error while introducing another. Thinking to improve upon the Catholic mistake, they return the wine to the congregation. To have mercy upon the feeble, old, young, and recovering addicts, however, they reduce the amount imbibed to a mere sip or two. This just as blatantly violates the spirit of Yahshua’s command, for He bids us to drink deeply of His sacrifice; to fully associate with His death, so that we can fully and literally associate with His resurrection.

Furthermore, we know from Rabbinical literature that the amount of wine served during Passover is no small mouthful. Some sources indicate that not one, but four cups were passed during the traditional ceremony. “The four cups of wine are customarily drunk at the Passover Seder. An innocent-looking choice between wine and grape juice for the Passover Seder can, under appropriate circumstances, become a focus for complex moral, political, and religious issues.”

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Thus begins one examination of the Passover ceremony. This was taken from a website coming from a Jewish standpoint (Footnote 2), and goes into the rules of fermentation in terms of types of grain, showing why wine is not necessarily ruled out.

From a Christian perspective, understanding what that wine symbolizes, the spirit of the choice should be clear, especially since the sheer amount of liquid used in the ceremony Yahshua kept with His disciples can “become a focus for complex moral, political, and religious issues.” The Catholics and some Protestants seem to have fallen off into the left and right ditches on the side of the straight-and-narrow here, and Yah would be pleased if His children will quickly amend this affront to the memory of His Son’s precious and pure blood.

4. The Apostles and Wine

Although I hope the evidence presented above concerning Christ’s attitude towards wine is fairly in depth, it would truly not be complete without an examination of the way the issue was dealt with in the early Church. If I am asked, “Were you there? Do you know for sure?” concerning the Messiah’s decisions relating to alcohol, I would have to reply negatively. However, we can certainly draw conclusions from what is written, the record we are left with, to a quite reasonable degree of certainty. We can also make our study **complete** though, by following along the writings of those who **were** there with Him, and who **did** see firsthand His words and actions, and His mindset in terms of intoxicants (and everything else).

So we turn now to the apostles, as we continue to trace the Bible’s teachings on wine from Old Testament times to our present day. The major portion of this section will deal with the apostles’ teachings on the use of wine, but first I would like to examine a seemingly insignificant event which occurred during the Church’s first Pentecost.

Of the day when the apostles received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, 50 days after the resurrection of the Messiah, we find this written: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:1-4)

The chapter goes on to speak of the devout Jews who were in Jerusalem at the time from “out of every nation under heaven.” (verse 5) The gift of speaking in other tongues was provided at this opportune moment to allow the followers of Yahshua to proclaim His death and resurrection to all those there gathered, in a language with which they were familiar. (verse 8, 1 Cor 14:22) In verse 13, however, the last of that chapter, we find that there were some critics of the evangelical effort, and they expressed their contempt for the preaching, which was “as thunder in their ears.” “Others, mocking, said, ‘These men are full of new wine.’” (Acts 2:13)

In our discussion thus far of the Biblical words for wine, we have come across three so far: *tirowsh*, *yayin* and *oinos*. The last two, one in Hebrew and one in Greek, have been shown to be fairly general – indicating both that which is able to intoxicate, and that which is newly obtained from a

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“**wine**-press.” The first word in Hebrew appears to refer specifically to the non-intoxicating article; and it seems that in Acts 2 we encounter its New Testament counterpart.

The word for wine in Acts 2:13 is found in only that place in the entire set of Scriptures. It is *gleukos*, and those familiar with chemistry should immediately recognize therein the root from which we derive the name of the sugar *glucose*. Glucose is a naturally occurring, simple sugar that is found in fruits, and unlike its processed counterparts, is easily digested by the human body. Newly-pressed grape juice is high in this sugar, and therefore the Greeks referred to it as *gleukos*, or “sweet” wine.

The relevant point is this: no one can get drunk from imbibing *gleukos*. This kind of drink in no way, and in no quantities, can render an individual powerless to control his tongue in the way the accusers perceived the apostles to be. Why is it, then, that those in opposition to the Spirit’s working would make such a ridiculous claim? Only one theory I have heard holds water, although I would be interested in other suggestions my readers may care to make. The theory is this: that the apostles were known to abstain from the fermented forms of wine.

This is the only explanation that seems to make any sense at all, and will be examined in more depth when we discuss the apostles’ teachings on the use of “*oinos*.” Consider, however, that if the apostles **did** ever use *oinos* in its intoxicating version, it would have only made sense for their critics to say, “These men have been drinking too much liquor!” It is significant, however, that instead of that, they *mocked*, saying, “These men are drunk on grape juice!”

If the apostles were merely “temperate” in their use of wine as we understand the words temperance and wine today, there could be no accounting for this statement. It is only if the followers of the Savior had a decided, absolute and *well-known* position against the use of alcohol (both in their ceremonial gatherings and in their daily life) that this verse makes any sense at all.

On to the teachings, then:

In the introduction, we quoted this verse: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Eph 5:18) A surface reading may cause one to conclude that Paul is teaching a moderate use of intoxicants, but that the condition of drunkenness is due to an “excess,” an excessive use of that which is not necessarily bad.

If we look at the meaning of the word translated *excess*, however, and the context of that verse, we get a different meaning from Paul’s words. The word he uses is *asotia* which means “riotousness,” “abandonment,” “lacking moral restraint,” or “recklessly wasteful.” It becomes more difficult to apply this adjective to the state of drunkenness if we look at the meanings of *asotia*. There is no connotation of “too much of a good thing,” but of moral degeneracy, and an unrestrained quality.

Is being drunk on too much wine even “recklessly wasteful,” which is the closest meaning to “excess” given? Turning to the context of the verse, we find that Paul is speaking of being wise (verse 17) and of having nothing to do with evil practices (verses 7, 11-14). Consider also that Paul contrasts being “drunk with wine” to being “filled with the Spirit.” It is therefore not the state of drunkenness that Paul is speaking against (in its broader sense), but the wine itself.

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Unraveling the Greek grammar and sentence structure, we find that Paul is actually saying this: “And be not drunk with wine, for *wine* is recklessly wasteful, riotous, morally degenerate, etc... but be filled with the Spirit of Yah.” Being filled with the Spirit of God is the “good” kind of being drunk (although Charismatics have taken this comparison rather to “excess” themselves) for the kind that comes from wine is the result of a dissolute course of action.

Another passage which is used in an attempt to show Paul’s concession to the use of a little wine is found here: “For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? I praise you not.” (1 Cor 11:21, 22)

Here, the apostle is condemning the mockery that the Corinthian church is making of the Lord’s Supper. In this passage, some conclude that Paul is saying that public drunkenness is wrong, but that to drink in one’s own house is a better arrangement. It should be obvious from reading the passage, however, that Paul is contrasting the “haves” and the “have-nots,” declaring that those who have much bring lavish meals to the occasion; more concerned with display than with the humbling, heart-searching state of mind that was to be present the reverent, though joyful atmosphere of that gathering. (1 Cor 11:26-30)

Paul is contrasting those who are filled with those who are hungry. Drunkenness is not the opposite of hunger, yet he says, “one is hungry, and another is drunken.” The problem is that the word *methusko* is commonly used to refer to the state of intoxication. However, that is not the only definition of that word! It means simply filled, or sated. Paul’s meaning then is clear. Let not some bring their own food in large quantities and consume it before those who don’t have anything to eat. The result of this will be that some are *full*, while others are yet hungry.

There is no mention of alcohol in this passage; those who “eat and drink” in their own houses do so in order to avoid display before others, not to hide their love of fermented wine. Paul writes in another place, “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (Rom 14:21) If he is **now** saying that it IS good to drink wine, only not in the presence of those who can’t afford it, we have a problem. But Scripture interprets Scripture, and there is no contradiction between the two.

We need only to see the way Paul concludes this teaching, in order to get his point; it is not public drinking he is speaking against (while condoning private indulgence), but the lack of a spirit of compassion and sharing that was present at the misuse of the public gathering. “Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.” (verses 33,34) Notice he says “if any man hunger” let him do the things described above, he speaks nothing of “if any man desire wine...”

There is a great uniformity in the New Testament concerning the teachings of the apostles about wine. The advice given to church members is consistently: “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are

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drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.” (1 Thess 5:6-8)

Paul here contrasts sobriety and drunkenness, leading moderationists to claim that the apostle here is simply speaking of not carrying wine-use to excess. However, the word “sober” there is *nepho* in Greek, and there is a unanimity among writers of the existing Lexicons that this means literally, “to drink no wine.” (Footnote 3) Paul therefore is not contrasting excess with moderation, but rather those who get drunk on wine and those who *do not use it at all* in its intoxicating form. Paul himself recommends the use of a form of wine to Timothy, and therefore could not simply say “drink no *oinos*” in any of his letters. We must remember that the term was a general one, therefore the meaning has to be taken from the passages. For this reason the contrast is given between abstinence and drunkenness, so that the reader could clearly see that the wine we are to avoid is not the freshly obtained vintage, but that which makes one drunk. Of the advice to Timothy in Paul’s epistle to the young man we will see the specifics momentarily.

First, to continue the matter of temperance and its use in the New Testament, we turn to Peter, and his parallel admonition. Here he writes, “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye sober, and watch unto prayer.” (1 Pet 4:7) “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Pet 5:8) We can understand Peter’s constant reminders to “watch unto prayer” and to be vigilant, as he himself needed the lesson, during the Redeemer’s agony in Gethsemane. He fell asleep when the Savior required his attention the most, and this was a significant factor in his later denial of Yahshua during the trial.

It is ever Satan’s plan to weaken our defenses, and lure us into situations wherein we will fail at holding up our faith as a shield to his temptations. The Bible writes that he who is faithful in small matters will also be faithful in large; and the converse is also true. Those who fail in small matters will have no power to resist when the telling trial is brought upon them. “Be sober,” Peter says, and his word *nepsate* comes from the same root as *nepho*, and means literally, “be without wine.”

Moderation is not the answer; alcohol, in ANY amount, impairs judgment. Those who think it wise to weaken their minds, even temporarily, even to a relatively small degree; these have little conception of the power of our enemy – a “roaring lion,” as Peter describes him. Yes, Christ gives us the power to resist each and every temptation, but we are constantly, consistently warned to “gird up” our minds, to be sober, to be vigilant; to watch with prayer so that we can accept this grace. We who understand that we are standing on the brink of eternity, with the Day of Atonement at hand, will willingly “afflict our souls,” (Lev 16:31) and search our hearts diligently for traces of impurity, lest the day come upon us unawares. There can be no place in such a life for intoxicants.

So, if fermented wine in ANY amount is contrary to Yah’s purpose for His children, how is it that Paul suggested Timothy use a little for his stomach’s sake? “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.” (1 Tim 5:23) Moderationists will say, “See, Paul says that a **little** wine is actually good for you.” Well, going back to the list of initial assumptions that lead to one believing in the modern definition of *oinos* only, we can see clearly that this need not have been the case.

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Again we may site Paul's testimony to the Roman church that it was not good to drink wine (Rom 14:21), but more than that, we need only look at the medical information now available to us to determine which of the two Paul would have recommended under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

“Gastrointestinal symptoms. Alcohol can cause a wide range of common, uncomfortable but reversible problems, including gastritis (inflammation of the lining of the stomach), diarrhea and weight loss. These interrelated problems are all due to the effects that alcohol has on the lining of the stomach, as well as impairment of intestinal enzymes and transport systems.” (Footnote 4)

Keep in mind that although in small doses this may not always be manifest, Paul recommends to Timothy **regular** use of wine: “drink no longer water...”

Wine that contains alcohol could not have been recommended by Paul for Timothy's “stomach's sake!” Even without the express unction of the Holy Spirit directing the apostle's thoughts and writings, we may also keep in mind that while Paul was writing this epistle, he was in the constant company of Luke, the “beloved physician.”

It may be that Dr. Luke also shared with the writer the benefits of the unfermented oinos. “We are investigating whether purple grape juice may offer an attractive alternative to aspirin.” *A quote from Dr. John D. Folts, Director of the Coronary Thrombosis Research Laboratory, University of Wisconsin Medical School:* (Footnote 5) A host of websites confirm the wonderful medical benefits of grape juice, having positive effects on blood pressure, heart conditions and many other “infirmities” which would have greatly blessed the apparently sickly young man.

Medical studies are showing that wine (in the current usage of the word) may reduce the risk of heart disease, but research shows that the true benefits are found in the fruits themselves and their products. This is best received fresh, so that the positive effects are gained without the intoxicating (and physically debilitating) addition of alcohol to the equation.

Interestingly enough, according to the website for Welch's, (http://www.welchs.com/health_pr/alcohol.html), purple or red grape juice is the best for this and other medicinal purposes; yet another testimony to the power of symbolism in the Scriptures, for these are the colors which would symbolize best the Redeemer's blood shed for the remission of sins and the healing of all nations. As often as we do drink *that* cup, we are blessed by Yah, and not least in terms of physical health.

5. Wine and The Modern World

In the previous section, I made reference to the Day of Atonement, a ceremony in which Israel was released from its sins once a year. Seen through spiritual eyes, we find that this is a foreshadowing of the great Day of Judgment, when Christ returns, forever breaking us free from the curse of sin on all levels. Even our bodies will be redeemed from its corruptible nature, and those who first fell asleep will be raised with us to life eternal.

But before that Day is a time of great trial; not only is this last generation the most wicked, the most sin-sick, but the wiles of the Devil are at their most subtle, and watchfulness must be a decided attitude of the Christian as never before. Everything Yah has ever given us has been for

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our good; but of alcoholic beverages, not one benefit can be pointed out that cannot be obtained from safer, healthier, and probably less expensive sources.

We have seen that there is no moral, Scriptural or spiritual incentive for drinking fermented liquors, but there are plenty of passages that warn against and outright forbid the use of such drinks for those who wish to guard their relationship with the Heavenly Father. The only reason, therefore, a person would drink is either for the purpose of sheer, fleshly pleasure, or because he/she is addicted.

If the reason is the former, a person need only repent, and give this sinful tendency to Christ, who cleanses us from all unrighteousness. We are commanded, “seek ye first the Kingdom,” (Mat 6:33) and the good things of this world will not be withheld from us.

If there is addiction involved, this also may be healed as easily as blindness, leprosy, paralysis – by a word from the Master. Thereafter, however, those who fellowship with him or her have a special responsibility. This is where that verse quoted once or twice before truly comes into play: “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (Rom 14:21) This is yet another reason why those in the Body of Christ cannot afford to stain their testimony with this evil influence.

The whole of the Law is summed up in one concept, our Redeemer taught: that of **love** for one’s neighbor. To include liquor in our lifestyles and in our ceremonies is in conflict with this idea. Aside from the origins of these practices simply being false, they are actually harmful – not only to our own bodies and minds, but they cast stumbling blocks in the paths of those trying to avoid the temptations inherent in fermented drinks.

Recently I spoke with a woman who was a Catholic parishioner. She is also a recovering alcoholic, and she said, “I have a real struggle within myself as to whether or not to partake of the wine during communion.” She apparently goes to one of the churches where the laity is also offered the cup, but the main idea here is that even though she believes the teachings of the Roman Church, and would probably strongly disagree with my research on the fact that wine was never used by Christ and the Apostles – in spite of this, she is *aware* that the use of the intoxicant, even in such a small amount, would be bad for her.

Even some of those who cannot clearly see the doctrinal teaching of abstaining from wine see the idea behind it, the *principle* of it. This was the very heart of Yahshua’s teachings – that we see the *reason* behind Yah’s instructions for our lifestyles, and that we delight to do them because they just make good sense.

Finally, when looking at the modern liquor industry, an appeal must also be made to the Christian for **social responsibility**. Just as with smoking, illegal drugs, gambling etc... although we may not be physically addicted to these things ourselves, we cannot dare to sanction them with our actions. Even less can we afford to financially support the monstrous corporations and companies that make their living on the suffering, disease and death that are the natural results of these evils – a concept I need take no great pains to expound.

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Should I choose to examine this issue alone, the article here presented would be twice or three times its current length. The incidents of crime, the individual and collective misery of humanity as a result of these chemical demons; we must be as far from this satanic agency as the east is from the west. Even before such companies were in existence, even before it could be conceived that the world would become this degenerate, the principle was in effect. Solomon warned us that drinkers would have woe, and in the New Testament, Peter warns us that professed *Christians* who drink, to any degree, not only have woe themselves, but are responsible for those who use our example to turn their foot away from Yahshua:

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Pet 2:11, 12)

6. Conclusion

In terms of examining our relationship with Yah itself, which is always a nice way to conclude any study, we have one final reason to abstain. Aside from being believers, (and whatsoever we do to our bodies, we do also to the Christ who bore our wounds) there is the knowledge that we are priests of the Most High, and this comes with great responsibility. Peter taught that we are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” called to “shew forth the praises of Him who hath called [us] out of darkness into His marvellous light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

And what does the Bible say about Yah’s priests? “Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court.” (Ezek 44:21) “And the LORD spoke unto Aaron, saying, ‘Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons [the priests] with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statue forever throughout your generations: and that ye may put a difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.’” (Lev 10:8-10)

Look at the reason Yah gives for the priests not drinking wine! So that there can be a visible difference between the holy and clean and the *unclean and unholy*. And notice that this is especially true when the priests were in the tabernacle... particularly the most holy place. Where are we as Christians standing in these last days? We are called to minister as priests *always* in the Tabernacle; as it is written: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up *a spiritual house*, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2:5) Sacrifices were offered in the tabernacle, and we not only work forever IN the tabernacle, are a part OF it.

Will we not willingly be clean, then, rather than end up offering “strange fire” as did Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu? (Lev 10) It was for this reason that the first injunction against priests drinking was given in the first place: those in the service of Yah must be clear-headed, especially in these most desperately wicked of times. Ours is the responsibility to show the world the difference between the holy and the unholy. Since we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we fulfill all of the Law; and in the fulfilling of that Law, we naturally avoid all that would weaken our own connection to Christ, and anything that would weaken it for others.

David.

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(<http://www.themoorings.org/life/separation/drinking/drink2.html>)

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07) William Patton, *Bible Wines or The Laws of Fermentation* (repr., Little Rock, Ark.: Challenge Press, n.d.), 24.

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10) Polybius, *Histories* 6 (the relevant passage missing from extant manuscripts), quoted in Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists* 10.440e-f (Loeb ed.).

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13) Pliny, *Natural History* 14.11.83.

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Footnote 3: *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961), *A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York, 1850), *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (1937)

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Adapted from "The Blood of Grapes" (<http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/ewine.html>)

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Appendix E: Spiritual vs. Earthly Israel

Is the church of Yahshua Israel? There have been indications that this is a rather important subject to address, since because of the confusion surrounding it, many errors have crept into “Christian” doctrine. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture, believing that the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem and the reinstatement of animal sacrifices is a part of Yah’s plan unfolding, awaiting death in order to have full Victory over sin. There has been, in recent years, far too much emphasis placed upon literal Israel, and not enough in understanding the real spiritual significance of the Messiah’s purpose for His true children. The conflict in earthly Israel is unfortunate, that is true, but it is not an indication of anything, except for the fact that **any** nation, chosen or not, that denies Christ will be thrown into turmoil. “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: *see that ye be not troubled*: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.” (Mat 24:6)

We can go through this in three parts – each one examining one of the errors in doctrine described above, and perhaps through the course of the discussion, you will begin to see the truth of Yah’s plan for all the earth. We are His people, who have accepted Christ, and no other people have that distinction.

The first time the word *Israel* appears in the New Testament is in Matthew 2:6, “And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” Has Christ assumed the role of King of the Jews? Certainly His accusation on the cross seemed to indicate that, (Mat 27:37, Mark 15:26, Luk3 23:38, John 19:19) but remember His words to Pilate. “Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.’” (John 18:36)

“My kingdom is NOT from hence,” declared Christ. Yah’s kingdom is not, nor will it ever be, founded upon literal, earthly Israel. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?” (Rom 3:1) There is no advantage to being either born into Judaism or being “grafted in,” (Rom 11:17) except that the Jews had the “oracles” and prophets (Rom 3:2) and had the *first* opportunity for salvation, as stated in the next quotation. “But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For **there is no respect of persons with God.**” (Rom 2:10, 11)

Now, I want you to see how this error led to a belief in the removal of the Church from the time of trouble predicted by John the Revelator. Truly, the word “church” does not describe the people of Yah in the vision, but “Israel” does. They say, “Christians who accepted Christ will be spared the trouble, but the Jews, who once rejected, will have to catch up at the last minute.” Not at all. In Revelation 12, way after it is said the Church would be removed, we find this verse, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (Rev 12:1) Who is this woman? Is she literal Israel? Consider the place from which John drew his analogy:

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Yah said to Satan, after the temptation in Eden, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen 3:15) Now turn again to Revelation and read the last verse of chapter 12 (verse 17), “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Was Eve the mother of the Jews only? Genesis 3:20 reads, “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of *all* living.” Consider also that John, the very one who wrote these prophecies, referred to the Church of Yahshua (Christians) as the woman, or “elect lady.” (2 John 1:1)

I recently heard one preacher say, “God is not a God who will break covenants! How can it be that some Christians teach that the Jews are cast off? How can they be so foolish as to say that the Father cut His chosen people off? This anti-Semitism is rampant in Christendom today, and must be stopped!” This is a paraphrase, but I believe I captured his meaning. Let me address the first of the misconceptions in that statement at once: “God is not a God who will break covenants.” Assuredly, no, He will not. But **humans** may break the covenant. Yah said, “Now therefore, **if** ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” (Exodus 19:5) Behold, IF ye keep my covenant THEN ye shall be Yah’s people.

Yah warned against breaking the agreement, and of the people who did this, Yah declares to a people who had been unfaithful: “And I took My staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break My covenant which I had made with all the people.” (Zec 11:10) The writer of the letter to the Hebrews quotes the Almighty, “For finding fault with them, He saith, ‘Behold, the days come,’ saith Yahweh, ‘when I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.’” (Heb 8:8)

A new covenant is made to replace the old one, not broken by Yahweh at His instigation, but no longer honored by Him when it was broken by those who had been called to faith.

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.” (Deu 31:16)

Because of His love for Humanity, Yahweh makes a new covenant with the repentant, and with their descendants, to replace the broken one: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, And to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Heb 12:24) Christ Yahshua is the Initiator of new covenant, a new *Testament*, (Mat 26:28) and by His blood are all men redeemed, Jew and Gentile. But now, the Jewish *system* is passed away, (Dan 9:27 – if read rightly) and “neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name [than Christ Yahshua] under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (1 Cor 12:13)

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Now here is where the deception gets subtle, and where the pre-tribulation rapture believers believe they have the answer to this: In Revelation 12:17 and 14:12, the “saints” are declared to both keep the commandments of Yah AND have the testimony of His Son. “Now then,” they declare, “it is plain – the Jews (who have the commandments – particularly the Sabbath) will, after the Christians have vanished away, accept Christ and be saved. They, and those Gentiles that never heard the Gospel, will be those who pass through the time of ‘Jacob’s trouble’ and be martyred before the *third* appearance of Christ on earth.”

I’ve already gone into some detail about this in my articles about the Rapture (Pathogen, Contagion & Antigen)*, so I won’t belabor those points again. Suffice it for now to point out that the “New Covenant” with Christ does in fact encompass the commandments of God, including the Sabbath, which was not made for Jews, but “for man” (Mark 2:27). The prophet Isaiah declares that when the Gospel goes to the Gentiles: “the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve Him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be His servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”(Isa 56:6,7) The focus here is simply to show that those who are “sealed” in Revelation 7, and those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth,” (Rev 14:4) are those faithful *Christians* who are exhorted to be faithful all through the New Testament writings – they/we are the true Church of Yah.

I’ve already shown that the NT considers that there is no difference (in regards to salvation) between Jew and Gentile (or “Greek” in Rom 10:12) in the religion of Yahshua, so for anyone to say, “Yes, there IS a difference between the Church and Judaism, but both are part of the plan,” is to call Paul’s words false. Of course there is a difference between Christianity and Judaism, one has accepted Christ as remission for sins, and one has not. But does Yah have a purpose for those who have not yet accepted? To not accept Christ is death: “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (1 John 5:12), AND Yah desires that ALL men be saved (1 Tim 2:4) Of Literal Israel, Paul says, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” (Rom 10:1)

You may protest and say, “Of course God doesn’t WANT earthly Israel to be lost, but since they rejected Him, He still has a place for them in the plan, although many may be lost along the way.” A nice thought, and perhaps true in a sense, but will the glory ever return to the *system*? That is the question. The individuals of course will be saved if they accept Christ (for those who would accuse of anti-Semitism), just like any other human being on the planet, but of Judaism, Christ Himself answered this question. With tones of sorrow the Messiah mourned, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Yahweh.’” (Luke 13:34, 35)

What did Daniel say after the Messiah would be cut off, causing the sacrifices to cease? “Unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” (Dan 9:26) Let us not make a hasty error here – the

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house of literal, earthly Judah is left desolate until the “end of the war,” not until Judaism accepts Christ, as some would have us read that verse.

Now, WE are Israel, WE are the “spiritual Jews” who worship “in spirit and in truth,” and unto us is the inheritance of the 12 tribes of Jacob passed. It is indeed an everlasting covenant, and there IS an inheritance, a goodly land, but just as in the parable of the man who gave a feast – those first invited would not come, and those on the highways and byways (both “bad and good” – Gentile and Jewish individuals) were brought to the table to eat their fill. (Mat 22:2-14)

The true Christian has the testimony of Christ AND keeps the commandments! We are they in Revelation who will be faithful to the end, not necessarily slain (for the beast declares that we *should* be killed, not that we *will* be [Rev 13:15]), and we have the strength to do so by both our faith in the Father and Son, and in the “works” of obedience that this true faith will lead to. (James 2:9-18) In James 2:11, the writer happily contrasts two adjacent articles of the Law, “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” (Exo 2:13:14) just so that we know exactly which “Royal Law of Scripture” will lead to us loving Yah and loving our neighbor as ourselves. (James 2:8)

Paul writes to a Church declaring boldly, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Gal 3:1) Men are not justified by the Law, yet obedience to it is the result of the true faith. “Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” Paul asks, and that question may well be asked of any modern Christian who believes that faith which does not lead to obedience to the very Law given to reveal sin that we may seek grace (Rom 7:7) saves.

Paul also makes distinctions between natural, earthly Jews and natural Gentiles “after the flesh” (Gal 2:15, Phil 3:4,5, 1 Cor 10:18) In Romans, however, he writes of a *true* Jew, saying, “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom 2:28,29) Consider also Yahshua Himself, who spoke these words to a **church** in Asia Minor: “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” (Rev 2:9 and a similar verse in Rev 3:9) This verse can be read in two different ways – and BOTH are devastating to the “Church is not Israel” argument.

Either 1) Those in the church who don’t have true faith are being called “those who say they are Jews but are not,” meaning that church members considered themselves spiritual Israel; or 2) there were some natural, circumcised Jews in the congregation that Christ is addressing, however, because of their infidelity to the truth, they are not considered to be Jewish anymore. If the condition of being in Israel is dependent upon obedience to Christ and membership in the church – both these readings of that verse make the truth of this matter abundantly clear.

This has already covered the first two sections: There will be spiritual Jews (the true Church) on earth during the tribulation (Rev 12:12) unto the very end, (Rev 20:4 – those who were martyred AND those who would not take the mark of the beast, not necessarily the same people). The first time the word translated “tribulation” is mentioned in Scripture is in Deuteronomy, and it reads

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thus, “When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to Yahweh thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For Yahweh thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them.” (Deu 4:30,31) It is not that Yah would not save those not sealed already when the tribulations begin, but that they WILL not repent (Rev 9:20,21, Rev 16:9,11) – even during the very last plagues.

What of the final result of saying the church is not Israel? How does that link to victory over sin? Well, as stated in the Rapture articles, the church expects that since they are NOT the Israel mentioned in Revelation, they will be gone before the trouble starts – that is to say, any day now. But we know the covenant we have made with our Father. We know He expects us to be holy, and blameless: the “firstfruits” to be presented before the Throne by the Son. “How,” you ask, “How is it possible to overcome all our sinful nature?” “There are giants in the land,” say the 10 false witnesses of Numbers 13. “They [our sin tendencies] are so big, we are as grasshoppers in their sight!” But this is not what the Gospel teaches. This is not the true Gospel. The true Gospel says, “I can do all things through Christ.” The true Gospel says, “I put ALL things beneath your feet.” Christ Yahshua declares to His people, “You **are**, not *will be*, clean. Go and sin no more.” Did He say it? Yes. Should we do it? Yes. DO we do it?

The majority of Christians say no. They say it is impossible. But the Word of Yahweh is Lord, and Master, and makes those with faith in the Father and Son capable of the very works of omnipotence. To those who doubt, the invitation is given, “Come and see.”

“O taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.” (Psalm 34:8) Try it, and see if it will not be a blessing; see that the Father will pour out all His spirit when you keep His Law in spirit and in truth. Make a decision today to be different from the woman riding a many-headed beast, so drunk she thinks she is heading for paradise. (Rev 17:3-6) Reject false teachers and blind guides. Have true faith in Christ, yes, for that will justify you; and let it also do a good work in you, to lead you naturally into faithful, fulfilling observance of the commandments of the Father. Then will your name be Overcomer, then will your name be Israel.

Christians speak of the Law as if it were a mistake that Yah made, or a requirement now useless, that we have “outgrown” or evolved past as human beings. “It leads to death,” they say. Paul says that also (1 Cor 15:56), but he also says, “Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” (Rom 7:12) *Yes* the Law leads to death – and that is **exactly** what it takes to be a true Christian, to die to self! Only the proud, and fearful and unbelieving will resist the death to self which is life in Christ, and these are they which meet their end in Revelation 21:8. *Yes* the Law leads to death, but when it does, we see that it was a “schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we may be justified by faith,” (Gal 3:24) and then, after we are dead, we declare with Paul, “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom **the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**” (Gal 6:14)

When a Christian tells me, “We cannot follow the Law, the Law is death.” I reply to them, “You say that as if it were a bad thing.” Yahshua put it even more clearly, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Mat 16:25) Try it and

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see – see if you don't find the Victory over sin well within your grasp, if you will hearken to the voice of the Spirit, which writes these things on your heart. We are Israel, who overcome the world through faith and “sing the song of Moses the servant of God [the Law], and the song of the Lamb [grace and justification by faith],” (Rev 15:3) and who will receive the inheritance of Yah's chosen people – eternal life.

Here is the conclusion of the matter: I will try and end it so clearly that there are not even lingering doubts left. There are two passages in Scripture which sum up all I have been saying concerning the Church and Israel quite clearly. The truly thirsty will read these verses, and consider them. Then, they may read the verses before them, and those after them, to see if I have taken either out of context. I invite all to do so. Are you thirsty? You will be filled.

“For **we are the circumcision**, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and **have no confidence in the flesh.**” (Phil 3:3) Paul then goes on to say, “If any think I have no claims to righteousness, consider that I have ALSO the marks of an earthly Jew in my flesh. However, those of the true circumcision, the spiritual Israel, these are they which worship Yah, and have accepted and rejoice in His Son.”

The second is even more clear: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. (Eph 2:11-14)

Those who were Gentiles in the flesh before accepting Christ were what? Aliens from the commonwealth of what? *Israel*. Those who assert otherwise “do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” (Mat 22:29) Israel has always been the name of Yah's people, ever since the time of Jacob. The Gentiles were grafted in, and those specific Jews which rejected the Messiah were “broken off” and their system destroyed. (Rom 11:16-27) The tree itself, True Israel, did not wither and die, and will wholly saved, (verse 26) for the Holy Root is, was and always will be Yahshua the Christ. (verse 16) Let us also, the “firstfruits,” be likewise holy. This is our inheritance, and this is life everlasting. This article is the first in a series of four called, “**Claiming The Inheritance**,” and I invite you to continue with me, for there is much, much more to say.

* Web addresses for articles on the Rapture:

- Pathogen: <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/erapt1.html>
- Contagion: <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/erapt2.html>
- Antigen: <http://faithofjesus.to/Binary/essays/erapt3.html>

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