



# YAIY BEACON

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**Famine of the Word?**

**All Things**

**Lessons From Judas**

**Sweet Surrender**

**Is the United States Found in Prophecy?**

**Yahweh's Commandments or Man's Traditions?**

## INTRODUCTION

Churchianity in general has not been faithful in following the Bible. Surprisingly, many of today's popular teachings and customs are not based in Scripture. We strive to return to the old paths of truth that have largely been ignored, and obediently follow in the footsteps of the Redeemer of Israel, Jude 3.

We observe the weekly Sabbath (on the seventh day) known as Saturday, just as did the Savior, Luke 4:16, as well as Paul and the Apostles, Acts 13:42-46; 17:2; 18:4.

We also call our Heavenly Father by His revealed, personal Name Yahweh, which He says is His memorial Name forever, Exodus 3:15. Most pastors, Bible scholars, and seminary students will acknowledge that Yahweh is the correct Name of the Heavenly Father. The short form of His Name, Yah, can be seen in many words, including the most popular hallelujah ("halleluYAH," meaning, "praise you Yah"). It is also found in the suffix of Biblical names like IsaYAH, (Isaiah), JeremYAH (Jeremiah), NehemYAH (Nehemiah), and ObadYAH (Obadiah).

Our membership comes from nearly all denominations and all walks of life. Most began searching for deeper truth when they learned that their former affiliation was teaching another Evangel from what they found in Scripture. We continue to search the Bible for deeper understanding. We believe that the Bible teaches a way of life through the commandments in the Old Testament and from the same example of obedience given us by our Savior in the New Testament.

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### MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua, the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvational truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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# Famine of the Word?

It has been noted that there haven't been that many being baptized lately. This is especially true when we think of 3000 being baptized in one day. We read of this when the Apostle Peter spoke to those during Pentecost when the Spirit was being first offered.

*And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" So then, those who had received His word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer, Acts 2:40–42. (New American Standard Version used throughout unless noted otherwise.)*

There is certainly a lack of enthusiasm today among most people, but we trust this will change in the end. We find that once the last saint is sealed in Yahweh and Yahshua's Name (Rev 14:1) the tribulation will begin in earnest:

*After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living Elohim; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our Elohim on their foreheads," Rev.7:1–3.*

Scripture, however, informs us that there will be a famine of the Word before the tribulation.

*Behold, the days come, saith the Yahweh Elohim, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Yahweh, Amos 8:11.*

It could be asked, "Aren't we teaching sound doctrine?" The problem is not that the teachings are not available, but rather most people today do not seek the true teachings of Yahweh as they should. So many distortions now occur with all of the false religious outlets that it is truly confusing even for someone searching for truth.

## Taken Away

People today are bombarded with "information overload." Those who have lived for 80 or 90 years can see that one of the most astounding things is the technological advances that promote knowledge. From the radio to television and the recent invention of computers and the internet, for example, allow information of just about any kind to be accessed. Knowledge is rapidly increasing. This, too, was prophesied:

*But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase, Daniel 12:4.*

Certainly, all will agree that there has been an increase in knowledge. This has also caused a problem, however. The problem, inherited with the increased avenues of knowledge, is that many are taken in different directions. Many don't find time to study an old book like the Bible, leaving it behind.

Mega-churches bring in millions of dollars annually, but the congregations aren't challenged to study. There are Bible study programs that make it easy to dig into the Bible, but many are pulled away from doing such studying. "After all," many will say, "that's the minister's job."

Bible programs sit on the shelf, so to speak, while the internet is surfed or the television is turned on for some entertainment. It's a serious problem, one that will only get worse before it gets better.

### **A Wake-Up Call**

Many who believe they will be "raptured" when tribulation comes will find themselves alarmed when they aren't raised up out of harm's way. It will be a time of confusion, but it will also be a time when people can wake up. There will, though, be those who will not repent even under such circumstances:

*And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of Elohim, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give Him glory, Revelation 16:9, **KJV 1900.***

The good news is there will also be those who will be awakened out of their slumber and come to an understanding and repentance:

*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our Elohim which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped Elohim, Saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our Elohim for ever and ever. Amen." And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" And I said unto him, "Sir, thou knowest." And he said to me, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Revelation 7:9-14, **KJV 1900.***

### **Time Is Short**

As we see the "signs of the times," we are to draw even closer to Yahweh through His Son Yahshua in prayer and in the study of His Word. We must follow the Spirit as did the Messiah, so we may enter into eternal life.

In Matthew 24:4, Yahshua, in answering the disciples about what would be the sign of His return and the end of the age, starts out saying, "...Take heed that no man deceive you..." The **NASB** says, "...See to it that no one misleads you..." The **NVC** says, "...Be careful that no one fools you..."

The point is, watch out! Watch that you're not

taken in by men who deceive, mislead, and try to fool you with their cunning and crooked ways. Remember, this is prophesied to happen.

Take time to read Matthew 24 and put it next to what is said about the "Four Horsemen" of Revelation. False Messiahs, war, famine, and death can be seen in Matthew chapter 24 and Revelation chapter 6.

### **The Work Must Go On**

The work that Yahweh has given us to do will most likely change during the tribulation. Collectively, as an Assembly, we teach via the internet, magazines, booklets, mini-studies, etc. We reply to questions by mail and telephone.

During the tribulation, however, many of these things probably won't be available. Internet service, which so many have become accustomed to, will most likely be non-existent once the tribulation takes hold worldwide.

The one thing that will not be stopped is Yahweh's people being moved by Yahweh's Spirit. His people will teach what they have studied and come to know as truth. The latter rain, or outpouring of Yahweh's Spirit, will certainly help. Yet, consider the trouble ahead of us with the anti-messiah's influence:

*He (the anti-messiah) will flatter those who have violated the covenant and win them over to his side. But the people who know their Elohim will be strong and will resist him. Those who are wise will give instruction to many. But for a time many of these teachers will die by fire and sword, or they will be jailed and robbed. While all these persecutions are going on, a little help will arrive, though many who join them will not be sincere. And some who are wise will fall victim to persecution. In this way, they will be refined and cleansed and made pure until the time of the end, for the appointed time is still to come, Daniel 11:32-35, **NLT.***

As verse 35 tells us, "the appointed time is still to come." We do believe that Yahshua will return on a *moed*, such as the Feast of Trumpets.

Will we prepare now to learn what this and the rest of the Feasts teach? Will we be ready to step out on faith in the future to teach of the coming Kingdom of Yahweh and His Messiah? Will we submit to Him and His ways found in the laws written down for us? Will we do this now, and will we do it later? Let's pray that we do, for the famine of the True Words of Yahweh has already started, but with it, there is still the EliYah Spirit in today's wilderness crying out, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."  
-Elder David Brett



# ALL THINGS

There is a Scripture written by Paul which is so good that it is hard to believe it could really be true.

Romans 8:28, *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love Elohim - to those who are called according to His purpose. (The ISR Scriptures are used throughout.)*

Would Yahweh really set things up so even a situation that looks very bleak would come out as a great blessing for certain people?

## **Yes Indeed!**

If you have read the book of Genesis, you will remember the accounts of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were each abundantly blessed because they loved Yahweh. It works throughout the Bible.

The story of Joseph is especially striking. He was disrespected by his family; most of his brothers wanted to murder him; he was sold into slavery; accused of trying to rape the wife of one of the most powerful men in Egypt, and thrown into a high-security prison. But it all turned out for the best. He was able to save the lives of the entire population of Egypt and his own large family! Since that time, Yahweh has used this situation to bless you and me by the results of Joseph's work!

When Yahshua was executed, His disciples thought it was the worst thing ever. It looked to them like it was all over, and no good could ever come of that. (John 21:3) But now we know that all of that situation works together with other things that seemed bad sometimes, for good to those who love Elohim.

If you have been blessed to be in a congregation of Yahshua's followers, then you have enjoyed the blessings of this principle. In spite of the distortions of Yahshua's teachings, many millions have been blessed and many have been led to Yahweh's truth.

There are a few important details to keep in mind to get the most benefit from this principle.

## **Loving Elohim**

What does it mean to 'love Elohim'? A few Scriptures will help us understand the principle better:

*You do not bow down to them [idols] nor serve them. For I, Yahweh your Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the crookedness of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing kindness to thousands, to those who love Me AND GUARD MY COMMANDS, Exodus 20:5-6.*

*If you ask anything in My Name, I shall do it. If you love Me, you shall GUARD MY COMMANDS. And I shall ask the Father, and He shall give you another Helper, to stay with you forever – the Spirit of Truth, which the world is unable to receive, because it does not see it or know it. But you know it, for it stays with you and shall be in you. I shall not leave you orphans – I am coming to you, John 14:14-18.*

*He who POSSESSES MY COMMANDS AND GUARDS THEM, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I shall love him and manifest Myself to him." Yehudah – not the one from Qerioth [not Iscariot] – said to Him, "Master, what has come about that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Yahshua answered him, "If anyone loves Me, he shall GUARD MY WORD.*

*And My Father shall love him, and We shall come to him and make Our stay with him. He who does not love Me does not guard My Words. And the Word which you hear is not Mine but of the Father Who sent Me,”* John 14:21-24.

*By this we know that we love the children of Elohim, when we love Elohim, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of Elohim, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and His commandments are not grievous,* 1 John 5:2-3.

GUARDING THE COMMANDS OF THE FATHER AND YAHSHUA THE MESSIAH means to carefully obey ALL of them. Guarding is not a trivial responsibility. Guarding certainly includes not letting them be changed or diminished. They should also be protected from misuse or improper application. Their commands do not contradict one another. As Yahshua said, He spoke the Father’s words (John 17:8).

Yahshua also made it very clear that He did not come to teach anything different from what we see in the Old Testament. He said:

*Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete. (Note: The Law and the Prophets is a term used for the pre-Messianic Scriptures.) For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass from the Torah till all be done. Whoever, then, breaks one of the least of these commands, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the reign (kingdom) of the heavens; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the reign of the heavens,* Matthew 5:17-19

### **In Conclusion**

If you are reading this publication, then you are probably being called according to His purpose. You can decline to answer the call, but then you would not receive those great blessings:

*See to yourselves, that we do not lose what we worked for, but that we might receive a complete reward,* 2 John 1:8.

The amazing reward of Romans 8:28 is there for all of us who lovingly obey the commandments of Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Messiah.

*“For look, the day shall come, burning like a furnace, and all the proud, and every wrongdoer shall be stubble. And the day that shall come shall burn them up,”* said Yahweh of hosts, *“which leaves to them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My Name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise*

*with healing in His wings. And you shall go out and leap for joy like calves from the stall. And you shall trample the wrongdoers, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,”* said Yahweh of hosts. *“Remember the Torah of Mosheh, My servant, which I commanded him in Horēb for all Yisra’ēl – laws and right-rulings. See, I am sending you Ēliyāh the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of Yahweh. And He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction,”* Malachi 4:1-6.

Besides the great reward of Romans 8:28 for lovingly obeying the laws of Yahweh and Yahshua, we will automatically have a better life. That is because those laws were given to us by Yahweh’s super-intelligent super-love. They require us to do these things because they know that keeping these laws is the way to our best possible life. Having created the “laws of nature” and created mankind, Yahweh and Yahshua know exactly what is best for us. The scriptural laws are the owner’s manual guide to a happy and successful life:

*The Torah of Yahweh is perfect, bringing back the being; the witness of Yahweh is trustworthy, making wise the simple; the orders of Yahweh are straight, rejoicing the heart; the command of Yahweh is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of Yahweh is clean, standing forever; the right-rulings of Yahweh are true, they are righteous altogether, more desirable than gold, than much fine gold; and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Also, Your servant is warned by them, in guarding them there is great reward,* Psalm 19:7-11.

-Elder Tom Schattke



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# Lessons from Judas

In this article we will examine the events immediately preceding Yahshua's betrayal and concentrate on what we can learn from Judas Iscariot. You may be surprised just how much the plight of this man can speak volumes to the hearts of those who have been enlightened, tasted the heavenly Gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4).

## **A Passionate Jew and Man of Greed**

His full name in Hebrew is "*Yahudah ben Shimon*" (Judah, son of Simon, see John 6:71), or more familiarly, "*Ish Kerioth*" (man from Kerioth, an abbreviation of "*haIsh meKerioth*"). Kerioth was a city that belonged to the tribe of Judah (Josh. 15:25) and is likely distinct from another city, also called Kerioth, in modern day Jordan (Amos 2:2). (Jordanians today correspond to the ancient people of Ammon, Moab and Edom.) In fact, the capital city Amman is a reference to Ben-Ammi, the father of the Ammonites (Gen. 19:38).

From the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel, the Jews of the first century anticipated the Redeemer to come in their day (Luke 3:15). Along with the politico-religious Jewish sects of Pharisees and Sadducees, there were others: the Essenes, Zealots and even Nazarenes – a label attributed to early believers in Messiah. The Zealots, founded by Judah the Galilean (Acts 5:37) were radicalized, and resorted to violent measures to overthrow the Roman seat and expedite the coming of the prophesied Messianic Kingdom. In Hebrew, they were called "*Kannaim*" (Zealots), which sounds like "*Kana'anim*" (Canaanites), and confusing translators into erroneously calling one of Yahshua's disciples, "Simon the Canaanite" (Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:18) rather than "Simon the Zealot" (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). This disciple was NOT a Canaanite, however, but an Israelite who had previously been a member of the Zealot sect. (Judas Iscariot was probably not identified with this radical sect.)

In Matthew 21:9, the people cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David", citing Psalm 118:25, "*ana Yahweh hoshiahna*" and meaning, "please Yahweh, save us please." Roman oppression had forged among the Jewish people, the "Hosanna" appeal for a Messiah to rescue His people and re-establish the Davidic throne.

For example, in the second century there was a man by the name of Shimon bar Koseva who led the last of three major Jewish revolts against the Romans. Many believed he was the promised Messiah and so they gave him the Aramaic epithet "*Bar Kochva*" (son of the Star), a reference to Balaam's Messianic prophecy (Num. 24:17).

In the Jewish mindset, the notion of a suffering Messiah was incongruent with the anticipation of a military Commander, Who like Joshua and David would smash evil rulers with a rod of iron, stomp the blood of His enemies like one treading grapes, and march victoriously with blood-stained garments and a glittering sword in His hand (Deut. 32:41; Isa. 55:4, 63:1-6; Hab. 3:11; Psa. 2:9), thus saving Israel from oppression and establishing the covenant promises.

Hence, we can appreciate the two disciples walking to Emmaus with a "Mysterious" companion, being disappointed that He Whom they had trusted to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21) had instead, laid down His life for His friends (John 15:13). Later, the eleven would also query, "will You NOW restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

Perhaps Judas, too, upon receiving 30 coins of silver as recompense for his treachery (Matt. 27:3), may have thought Yahshua would just be apprehended and that He might afterward escape without hurt, while he also ‘checked-in’ some cash. (How true the Word, “the love of money is the root of all evil,” 1 Tim. 6:10). We may never know what factors contributed to Judas’ cunning, but the Gospels present at least one trigger that prompted Judas to betray his Master.

### **The Event That Led to the Betrayal**

In some Middle Eastern cultures, hospitality was customarily shown to visitors by greeting them with a kiss, providing water with which to wash their feet, and anointing their head with olive oil (Gen. 18:4, 19:2, 24:32, 43:24; Judg. 19:21; Luke 7:44-46). In the Gospel narratives, we find two occasions on which women surpassed cultural norms in this service and devotion by anointing the Master:

- An unnamed woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50); and,
- Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus in the house of one called Simon the leper at Bethany, but days before the Master’s last and fateful Passover (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-9; John 12:1-8).

In the second account, we read that Judas (John 12:4-5) was provoked when Mary anointed Yahshua’s feet with costly oil of spikenard, saying, “Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” Yahshua replied with this rebuke: “Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always” (Matt. 26:10-13; Mark 14:6-9; John 12:7-8).

Judas had had enough! “So, from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him” (Matt. 26:16).

### **Preparations for the Passover**

When Peter and John asked Yahshua where they should prepare the Passover, cognizant of Judas’ plot (John 13:11), He didn’t specify a location but responded obscurely with a sign, saying, “Go into the city, and there a man bearing a jar of water shall meet you, follow him ... His disciples went out and came into the city, and found it as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover” (Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13).

Let’s rephrase this verse for clarity: “Rather than you having to find the way, when you arrive in the city, a man will greet you and show you the way.” Given the Gospel accounts consistently mention

this event following Judas’ plot, we conclude Yahshua gave a sign, rather than a location, in order to preclude Judas from delivering Him before the time – “this is your hour, when darkness reigns” (Luke 22:53) – appointed for His deliverance.

So, Peter and John went and prepared the Passover according to the rites prescribed in Exodus, Chapter 12 – and not according to the New Testament symbols ... for that was not yet given.

The night before Passover, the Jews have a tradition of performing a ceremonial bath in hot water (called “*mikveh erev Pesah*”), which is confirmed in the Gospels (John 11:55, 18:28). But how did this tradition arise in the context of Passover?

In Exodus 12, where instructions for Passover observance are first recorded, there was no mention about physical cleansing. The only prerequisite was that the males in the household had to be circumcised (verses 43-50). Given the limited instructions, we find an extraordinary occurrence in the second year of the wilderness wandering. Certain men of Israel were defiled by touching a dead body and then were excluded by their fellows from participating in Passover (Num. 9:6-7). Since the instruction which rendered one who touched a corpse ceremonially unclean for seven days, only came later (Num. 19:11-22), on what basis were these men excluded from the Passover ceremony?

We may have a clue from an instruction provided at Mount Sinai. *And Yahweh said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day Yahweh will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people,* Exodus 19:10-11. The principle of washing and being clean when coming before Yahweh, was a fundamental concept to the Israelites (compare Exodus 29:4 and 2 Samuel 12:20). So, even though there was no such imposition of ceremonial cleanliness for Passover, the community understood this principle, and therefore prohibited the men who came near a dead body from observing the Memorial.

Another example is found in 2 Chronicles 30:17-20. There, the people were plagued for participating in the Passover without first being ceremonially clean. Therefore, we infer that according to Biblical precedence, we are confident that Yahshua and His disciples, performed a ceremonial washing. While in the first covenant there were frequent washings and sacrifices (Heb. 9:9-10), in the new covenant there is only ONE washing and ONE sacrifice, through



Whom we have the hope of everlasting life – a full body immersion into Yahshua’s Name (Eph. 4:5).

### **You are Clean, Though Not All of You**

Yahweh provides instructions on when, and how, to keep His sacred observances. And so, we are provided a specific time in which we are to observe Passover – at twilight on the 14th day of the first month (Exod. 12:6; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:2, 5, 11; Deut. 16:6). Therefore, the Gospel accounts inform us that Yahshua sat down with His disciples “when evening came” (Matt. 26:20; Mark 14:17) and more precisely, “when THE HOUR came” (Luke 22:14).

After eating the Passover meal – according to the command, a roasted lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs – Yahshua arose, and stooping down as a servant, He began to wash His disciples’ feet, including Judas’. Peter protested, “Master are You going to wash MY FEET?” Yahshua answered, “Unless I wash you, you have NO PART with Me.” Peter, not yet understanding His Master’s meaning, then agreed to do whatever was necessary to get a FULL PART with the Master, and implored Yahshua to also wash his hands and head. Yahshua replied, “Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet, and he will be completely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you” (John 13:10).

Yahshua was telling Peter, you have figuratively bathed already, so what remains is that your feet be washed and you will be clean. However, there is someone (Judas) here, who has not yet bathed, and he is the one that actually requires his head and hands to be washed! Just what did Yahshua mean by bathing, washing and being clean? Was He implying Judas had not performed the ceremonial cleansing? Maybe, but it is very likely that all the disciples would have done this. As we progress through the narrative, we see what sort of “bath” Judas had not yet undergone.

### **You Are Clean**

Then John records a change in dynamics and observes that Yahshua was “troubled in spirit” (John 13:21). Imagine, your Teacher, Counsellor, Friend and Master, in Whom you had confidence and trusted that He would soon rise to power as a conquering King, is now feeling weak, anxious and depressed! Warning of a traitor in their midst, they all became sorrowful and asked, “Master, surely not I?” With an awkward atmosphere, Peter then beckoned John to ask Yahshua whom He meant. Instead of inquiring as the rest, “Master, surely not I”, John, a faithful disciple and now, grieved

in heart, leaned on the Master and embraced Him saying, “Master, who is it?” (John 13:25). Yahshua responded to John, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish” (John 13:26).

Judas, who having received the bread from Yahshua’s hand, asked, “Master, surely not I?” to which Yahshua replied, “You have said it ... what you are about to do, do quickly” (Matt. 26:25; John 13:27). Judas, perceiving that Yahshua knew of his plot, immediately left to complete his treachery (John 13:30).

Previously, Yahshua had said to His disciples, “You are clean, though not all of you” (John 13:10) but now, with Judas’ departure, He was able to say, “you are clean” (John 15:3). Now, Yahshua could institute the new covenant Passover symbols, after he who was unworthy was dismissed from this privileged seat at the Master’s table (1 Cor. 11:27-32).

### **Did Judas Partake of the Passover?**

Now we must recognize some discrepancies in the Gospel accounts:

1. Luke references “the cup” before and after the bread (Luke 22:17-20), whereas Matthew and Mark only refer to the cup once (Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23).
2. Luke suggests Yahshua instituted the symbols and only afterwards, revealed a traitor in their midst (Luke 24:21). But this is at variance with Matthew and Mark’s recount (Matt. 26:21; Mark 14:18).

Some postulate the reference to “the cup” twice in Luke indicates adherence to a non-Biblical Jewish ‘tradition’ of four cups of wine at Passover (which, by the way, is naturally fermented without brewer’s yeast, and commercially labelled as “*Kosher for Passover*”). This is unlikely, because Yahshua often contradicted their ‘traditions’ (Matt. 15:9) and Luke refers to “the cup” consistently in the singular, rather than in the plural.

Perhaps Luke was emphasizing the cup, a symbol of Yahshua’s blood through which we have atonement from sin and the hope of salvation. And the brittle unleavened bread, symbolizes Yahshua’s broken body, as it says, “by His scourging we are healed” (Isa. 53:4-5). The apostle Paul also confirms that Yahshua distributed the bread, followed by the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-25), and does not refer to the cup but once. Clearly, Luke’s account presents some chronological challenges.

The second discrepancy has divided many Biblical commentators as to whether Judas received the new covenant Passover symbols. While we do not know for sure, it appears he was unwilling to remain longer than necessary, as his heart was elsewhere. Probably once the Passover had concluded, he, who had permitted Satan admittance into his heart, was ready to fulfill what was prophesied of him (Luke 22:3; John 13:27).

The account provided us by Matthew – whose authorship, incidentally, is disputed by some scholars – was nevertheless present at the Paschal feast, and agrees (Deut. 19:15) in chronology with Mark's. The variance of their narratives with Luke's, and whose report is not predicated upon having actually been present, suggests that his interest was more with presenting the Passover emblems without digression to foretelling the betrayal, the subsequent strife among the Apostles as to whom among them should be the greatest, and the Master's address to Peter concerning his forthcoming denial of their acquaintance (Luke 22:21-38). (These dynamics, occurring after their observance of the Passover, highlight their humanity which stands in marked contrast to their afterward being endowed with Power from on High, Luke 24:49).

With respect to the sequence of events attending that Passover, the following commentaries on Luke 22:21 concur:

- ***Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers;***  
“There is again a slight discrepancy in the order of facts, St. Luke placing the mention of the Betrayal after, St. Matthew and St. Mark before, the institution of the memorial.”
- ***Meyer's NT Commentary;***  
“Luke has this reference to the traitor in a wrong position, where it probably has been placed by way of transition to the following dispute about precedence. According to Matthew 26:21, Mark 14:18, it is to be placed at the beginning of the meal, and that in such a manner that the departure of Judas ensued before the institution of the Master's Supper.”

So, did Judas partake of the Passover? Certainly, he did, according to the instructions given in Exodus 12. But he likely left before Yahshua instituted the new covenant symbols.

### **Concluding the Evening**

Finally, after Yahshua gave words of encouragement and offered a prayer, they sang a hymn and went to the Mount of Olives. Psalms 113-118 are referred to as the “*Hallel*” (the Psalms of Ascent),

which were customarily sung on Passover as a reminder of Yahweh's redemption from Egypt, and culminate with a Messianic theme. Probably, the hymn Yahshua and the disciples sang was the concluding Hallel, Psalm 118.

21 *I will praise You, for You have answered me,  
and have become my Salvation.*

22 *The Stone which the builders rejected  
has become the Chief Cornerstone.*

25 *Save now Yahweh, I pray;  
Yahweh, I pray, send now prosperity.*

26 *Blessed is He who comes in the Name of Yahweh!  
We have blessed You from the house of Yahweh.*

The table on the next page attempts to summarize the sequence of events on the Passover night and might be used as a Bible study aid, in understanding how the Gospels can be harmonized.

### **Night of Vigil and Future Messianic Redemption**

In Exodus 12:42, the Passover night is called “*leil shimurim*” (night of guarding), in which the Israelites anxiously stayed awake, praying Yahweh would see the blood on the doorposts of their houses and pass over, forbidding the destroying angel from slaying the firstborn males. Not only were the Israelites on guard, but a careful reading shows that Yahweh, too, was standing on guard to defend His people. Hence, we find Yahshua telling His disciples to “watch and pray” even for an hour into the night (Matt. 26:40-41), and this further explains why so many people were awake until the rooster crowing at sunrise (Matt. 26:69-75).

Even to this day, many Jews continue this practice to refrain from sleep until the morning, as they anticipate the future coming of Messiah and redemption. It is very interesting when considering the breadth of Scripture, that the Day of Yahweh is described as a complex series of events lasting for a year (Isa. 34:8). Given the Exodus is the most repeated theme portraying the coming of Messiah (Isa. 10:26, 11:15, 27:12; Jer. 16:14-15, 23:1-8; Mic. 7:15; Zech. 10:11; Rev. 12), the Passover – even all the appointed times – serve a prophetic function.

Finally, it was there, in the garden of Gethsemane (meaning ‘oil press’), that Judas came to betray his Master with a kiss. With no reciprocating bitterness or resentment, Yahshua soberly entreated, “Friend, why have you come” (Matt. 26:50). Imagine the weight of this one word, and potentially, its impact on Judas – “FRIEND” – My companion, comrade, brother.

Events during the Passover	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Yahshua eats the Passover meal	26:20	14:17	22:14-16	13:2
Yahshua washes the disciples' feet				13:3-5
Peter refuses and finally agrees				13:6-10
Yahshua warns Peter of a traitor				13:10
First group warning of a traitor				13:18
Second group warning of a traitor	26:21	14:18	22:21	13:21
The disciples ask who it is	26:22	14:19	22:23	13:22
Yahshua's reply	26:23-24	14:20-21	22:22	
Peter prompts John to ask privately				13:23-25
Yahshua tells John privately				13:26
Judas asks, "Is it I Rabbi?"	26:25			
Yahshua tells Judas he is the traitor	26:25			13:26-29
Judas immediately leaves ashamed				13:30
New symbol #1 - unleavened bread	26:26	14:22	22:18	
New symbol #2 - fruit of the vine	26:27-29	14:23-25	22:17-18, 20	
Yahshua's final encouragement			22:24-28	14:16
Yahshua's prayer				17
They sing a hymn (Psalm 118?)	26:30	14:26		
They leave to Mount of Olives	26:30	14:26	22:39	18:1

### Purifying our Hearts with the Words of Everlasting Life

So, what did Yahshua mean, when He said, "Whoever has already bathed needs only to wash his feet, and he will be completely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you?" (John 13:10). In John 15:3, after Judas had departed, Yahshua said, "You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you." Unlike Judas, Peter had already "bathed" – immersed, into the Saviour's words confessing, "Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of everlasting life" (John 6:68). Similarly, we are told Yahshua sanctifies His people, "with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26) and "through the washing of regeneration" (Titus 3:5). Simply put, one can be physically washed (parallels to immersion) and could even have their feet washed by Yahshua Himself, and still be unclean, if his HEART is not washed and circumcised to perform Yahweh's will (Ezek. 44:9).

In preparation for the Passover and Days of

Unleavened Bread, not only must we clean our properties from physical leaven (Exod. 13:7), we need to sweep and wipe our hearts clean from spiritual leaven. Only then, are we found worthy to sit at the Master's table.

### Reviewing the Key Learnings

To summarize, we explored three reasons Judas betrayed the Master.

- First, he doubted whether Yahshua was the prophesied Messiah;
- Second, his love of money manifested the root of evil in his heart; and,
- Third, his rejecting discipline generated hostility.

We learned from Scripture there was a ceremonial cleansing as preparatory for observing Passover, and examined the chronology of events of Yahshua's last Passover which suggests Judas was not present for the Master's institution of the

new covenant symbols. Though outwardly clean, Yahshua said Judas was not clean, because he did not allow Yahshua's words to purge him of sin.

The lesson for us? Immersion into Yahshua's Name and having our feet washed at Passover ALONE is not enough. Though both are necessary, we need to daily wash our hearts clean by carefully following Yahshua's words, especially His loving discipline which is intended to rescue us from sin, and prevent us from erring in the way of Judas.

-Deacon Rohan John (Australia)

Contact us to find out more about *Passover* and *The Days of Unleavened Bread* or visit us online at [yaiy.org](http://yaiy.org)



**Everything is much simpler now...  
since I've given up.**

## **Sweet Surrender**

I noticed a Bumper sticker once that shook me for a second or two, then made me smile when I put a different meaning to it. “Everything is much simpler now – since I’ve given up.” At first, I focused on the words, “given up,” and remembered what it is like to give up out of frustration, powerlessness, hopelessness, anxiety and depression. But, there was something positive in the first phrase, “Everything is much simpler now,” a phrase which brings a sense of relief. Then, I realized that the author of this rear-bumper advertisement was trying to convey that, “relief is gained by giving up a burden.” I thought of the Savior’s words in:

### **My Burden is Light**

*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in HEART (in thoughts and feelings) and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light, Matthew 11:28-30. (NASU used throughout unless otherwise noted)*

He was repeating the message He gave to Jeremiah, as recorded in Jeremiah:

*Thus says YAHWEH, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ANCIENT paths, Where the GOOD way is, and WALK in it; And you will find REST for your SOULS.” But they said, “We will NOT walk in it.” And I set watchmen over you, saying, “Listen [for] the sound of the trumpet!” But they said, “We will not listen.” Therefore hear, O NATIONS, And know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth: behold, I am bringing disaster on this people, the fruit of THEIR plans, Because they have not listened to My words, And as for My LAW, they have rejected it also, Jeremiah 6:16-19.*

What is Yahweh of Hosts, Yahshua the Messiah, saying here? He is pointing to the Law as He gave it to Israel, and as he is giving it to us, spiritual Israel, the Sect of Nazarenes, the People of the Way, Yahweh’s Assembly in Yahshua, today. He is calling us out of Babylon to follow the WAY of LIFE, which was given ONCE for ALL.

*“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, ‘until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished’. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven,” Matthew 5:17-20.*

In what WAY is Yahshua asking us to surpass the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? In this same teaching, beginning at Matthew 5:14-15, He says:

*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on THE LAMPSTAND, and it gives light to all who are in the house (as in the House of Elohim or the House of Yahweh, Beit Elohim or Beit Yahweh). Let your light (the Light of the Menorah) shine before men in such a way that they may see your ... (What? Your belief? Your heart? Your faith? No! He says) that they may see your GOOD WORKS, and glorify your Father who is in heaven, Matthew 5:15-16.*

What light? *And Elohim said, “Let there be LIGHT:” and there was LIGHT. And Elohim saw the LIGHT, that [it was] GOOD: and Elohim divided the light from the darkness, Genesis 1:3-4, KJV.*

The word “lampstand” in the King James’ English is “candlestick”, which it uses in both the Old Testament and New. The Hebrews did not use candlesticks in Biblical times, to the best of my knowledge, they used olive oil lamps. In the Old Testament of the King James Version, the Hebrew word for “candlestick” is “Menorah” – and I have no problem using that word in the New Testament. For me, the light of the Menorah is the light of the truth of the Word of Yahweh, and the light of His Law.

### **I Know Your Works**

Don’t tell me that works are not important, or even that we cannot “work our way into the Kingdom of Heaven.” The Creator EXPECTS us to do works. It is a lie from the mind of Satan that Keeping the Law is no longer required. We are in a covenant with the Almighty, Yahweh. He has paved the Way for us to walk. He paved it with His Son, Yahshua, who was tortured for our sins, and killed as a blood sacrifice that we might be forgiven of our sins – our transgressions against His Law. The Ten Commandments. Our part of the covenant is to obey Yahshua’s Word, the entire Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, from the Aleph to the Tau. Our “works” are comprised of obedience to the Law, to Love the Father and to Love one another. Both are to be equally fulfilled by us.

*To the angel of the Assembly in Ephesus write: “These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in his right hand (the seven assemblies as noted in Revelation 1:20) and walks among the SEVEN GOLDEN LAMPSTANDS (presumably, the Menorahs which are set in each of the seven assemblies Yahshua is speaking to): I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance (in the KJV, your works, your labor and your patience). I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for My Name (whose name is that? And, in whose name did He come? Yahweh! HalleluYah!) and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your FIRST LOVE” (John 14:15: “If you LOVE Me, keep My commandments”). Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your (Menorah) from its place Revelation 2:1-5, NIV.*

He will remove His LIGHT from your house, from your temple, from your life – if you do not

keep His commandments.

*When asked by one of the teachers of the law, Of all the commandments which is the most important? “The most important one,” answered Yahshua, “is this: ‘Hear, O’ Israel, Yahweh our Elohim, Yahweh is one. Love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Deut. 6:4-9) There is no commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:28-34.*

When this teacher of the Law agreed with Yahshua and added that these are more important than all “burnt offerings and sacrifices,” Yahshua told him that he was “not far from the Kingdom of Elohim.”

### **Forgiveness of Sins**

To many in churchianity, this “surrender” – ALL your heart, soul and mind – means to give up trying to obey the Law of Yahweh. They’ve said, “The Law is dead, it was nailed to the tree; and our sins – past, present and future – have been forgiven.” Really?

*Him hath Elohim exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and FORGIVENESS OF SINS, Acts 5:31, KJV.*

*Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, Acts 13:38, KJV.*

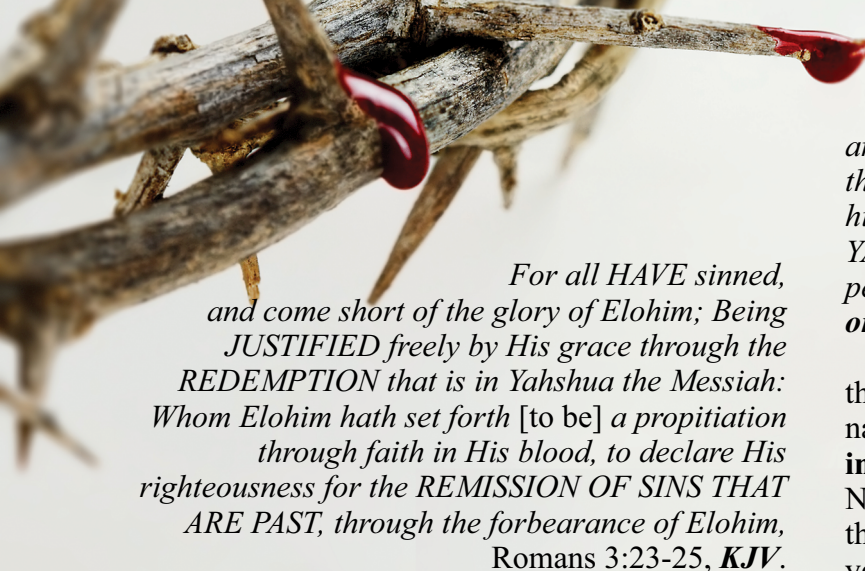
*To open their eyes, and to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto Elohim, that they may receive FORGIVENESS OF SINS, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me, Acts 26:18, KJV.*

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, according to the riches of his grace, Ephesians 1:7, KJV.*

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, Colossians 1:14.*

Nowhere have I found the words, “forgiveness of SINFULNESS.” We are not saved by “grace alone.” That phrase does not exist in Scripture. That which is being forgiven is, “Sins,” PLURAL, meaning “instances of LAWLESSNESS”; not SIN, singular, the “quality of SINFULNESS.” According to these verses, we are NOT being forgiven of our sinful nature,

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Yahweh forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Romans 6:1-2, KJV.*



*For all HAVE sinned, and come short of the glory of Elohim; Being JUSTIFIED freely by His grace through the REDEMPTION that is in Yahshua the Messiah: Whom Elohim hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, through the forbearance of Elohim, Romans 3:23-25, **KJV**.*

### **Salvation, Justification and Redemption**

We are Justified by Yahshua's blood sacrifice. Yet, are we REDEEMED?

*And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH, Luke 21:27-28, **KJV**.*

*Which is the earnest of our inheritance UNTIL THE REDEMPTION of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory, Ephesians 1:14, **KJV**.*

*And grieve not the holy Spirit of Yahweh, whereby ye are sealed unto the DAY OF REDEMPTION. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, (along) with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as Elohim for the Messiah's sake hath forgiven you, Ephesians 4:30-32, **KJV**.*

What does the writer of Hebrews mean when he writes in:

*If a man sins willfully, after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for SINS, Hebrews 10:26.*

We can lose our salvation. We can come to a point where we are no longer justified by the blood shed by Yahshua for our past sins. The phrase, "Only Believe" is a lie. Simply believing in the Savior does not guarantee that, "Once saved, always saved." This is a fundamental law of Yahweh: there is NO forgiveness for INTENTIONAL sins.

*The priest shall make atonement before YAHWEH for the person who goes astray when he sins **unintentionally**, making atonement for him that **he may be forgiven**. You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. But the person who does anything **defiantly**, whether he is native or*

*an alien, **that one is blaspheming YAHWEH**; and that person shall be cut off (killed) from among his people. Because he has despised the word of YAHWEH and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; **his guilt will be on him**, Numbers 15:28-31*

And, why in the world would Yahshua turn away those who have performed mighty works in His name, with the rebuke, "Depart, you who commit **iniquity**?" Iniquity is sin; and sin is lawlessness. No. To surrender does not mean to stop abiding in that Law of which Yahshua said, "If you love Me, you will obey My Commandments." We are NOT to surrender the Law of Yahweh, but to surrender the "law of sin" that Paul talks about in Romans 7:22-23:

*For I delight in the law of Yahweh after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the LAW OF SIN which is in my members, **KJV**.*

He is speaking of the law of the flesh, of moral frailty, that fights AGAINST the Law of Yahweh. To SURRENDER means to STOP FIGHTING the Law, it means to surrender TO the Law, to GIVE UP the battle against Yahweh's Law, to ADMIT DEFEAT, to lay down our arms, to sign a truce (an armistice) with Yahweh, to SUBMIT to His will, to YIELD to His strength, to CAPITULATE to His judgments, to LET GO of our desires, to RELINQUISH our power, to HAND OVER our will to Yahweh, to PART WITH the comforts of material pleasure and SACRIFICE to those in need, to CONCEDE (the "game is over"), to FORFEIT (because we don't qualify), to RESIGN (or, to reSIGN the contract), to throw in the towel (point, game and match), to GRANT the Deed to our Heart to Yahshua, to DISCLAIM what is wrong, and finally, to ADMIT that "I am wrong" and place ourselves at the Mercy of Yahweh. THAT'S what surrender means.

I must conclude that salvation has been held in reserve, or promised, to me, but I have NOT yet been redeemed. I await that Day, and I pray to stay in the heart, mind and will of my Heavenly Father, Almighty Yahweh, that I might hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21).

May it be so. And, may we stand together on that Day, when all of our trials, tribulations, challenges and personal defeats will have only strengthened our hearts to remain His Children. HalleluYah!

-Elder John Fisher (deceased)



## Is the United States Found in Prophecy?

How would your life change if you knew the exact date of a worldwide cataclysmic event, and the date was only a few years away? Let's say you had received information from a reliable source, that a giant comet will be on a collision course with earth, and that on July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of the founding of our nation – despite all attempts to destroy it or change its course – it would crash into the earth.

If you knew life would end for YOU on July 4, 2026, what would YOU do? Fortunately, or perhaps unfortunately, we don't know the day, neither the hour, but even if we did, many of us would defer to the last possible moment an effort to change its occurrence.

### Will History Repeat Itself?

*The thing that has been, it [is that] which shall be; and that which is done, [is] that which shall be done; and [there is] no new [thing] under the sun, Ecclesiastes 1:9. (King James Version, used throughout.)*

Throughout history, nations or empires have fallen, owing to their failure to observe Yahweh's commandments and repenting from their sinful ways. Sadly, the American people, too, have followed that same course and for whom also, it is written: *And it shall be, if thou do at all forget Yahweh thy Elohim, and walk after other mighty ones, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. Deuteronomy 8:19.*

Bible prophecy reveals a lot about the end-of-times, with specific mention of peoples of Eurasia. And America is conspicuously absent from the geo-political picture foretold by the prophets, maybe because the Bible's narrative concentrates upon middle-eastern events with particular focus upon Israel.

We understand from the historical record provided us by Scripture, that the ten northern tribes that were carried away into exile by the Assyrian regime, were assimilated among other people groups who had likewise been taken away from the lands of their nativity and resettled in geographical areas far removed from their familiar places.

Migrations owing to famine, pestilence, war and conquest, pushed populations toward the horizons in every direction but particularly, in the Middle Ages toward the western hemisphere. During this time, maritime nations rivaled with one another as they crossed the Atlantic in search of wealth and commercial and economic prominence.

Nevertheless, we should not miss subtle allusions to America in Bible prophecy. To the merchant-cities of that time, Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish, the prophet Ezekiel asks, "Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (Ezek. 38:13).

And what about these verses? *And there came one of the seven angels which had seven bowls, and talked with me, saying unto me, "Come hither; I will show unto you the judgment of the great whore that sits upon many waters" ... And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is falling and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean and hateful bird, For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies,"* Revelation 17:1, 18:1-3.

*Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in Yahweh's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad,* Jeremiah 51:7.

Babylon – a word meaning “confusion” – may be thought here, as a figure for America. Actually, the greatest empires that have passed might be entitled to that name, Babylon. Many, like Rome, were the reigning “super powers” in their times, but neither their military prowess nor their commercial strength was sufficient to preserve them from sliding into decadent immorality – the pattern for the fall of all the world’s great empires and nations of people.

And so, now we come to the precipice of perilous times (2 Tim. 3:1). Yahweh has not appointed His people to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9). Perhaps then, in watching and praying always that we might be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass (Luke 21:36), the following words from Psalm 91:1-12 might be applicable to us as well:

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of Yahweh, "[He is] my refuge and my fortress: my El; in Him will I trust." Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth [shall be thy] shield and buckler. 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. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because*

*thou hast made Yahweh, [which is] my refuge, [even] the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."*

### **Bible Prophecy and Current Events**

While history has produced countless false, doomsday prophets, current events prompt us to conclude that we are standing at the precipice of the darkest hour in the history of mankind. In May 1948, following more than two millennia of being scattered all over the world, the nation of Israel was born and Jewish people from all over, returned to their homeland and made it to become the economic and military power it is today. Ezekiel prophesied, saying,

*The hand of Yahweh was on me, and carried me out in the spirit of Yahweh, and set me down in the midst of a valley which [was] full of bones ... Then He said unto me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we were cut off for our parts.'" Therefore prophesy and say unto them, "Thus saith the Sovereign Yahweh, 'Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land Israel. And ye shall know that I [am] Yahweh, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I Yahweh have spoken [it], and performed [it,]"* saith Yahweh. ... *And say unto them, "Thus says my Sovereign Yahweh; 'Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, where they have gone, and I will gather them on every side, and bring them unto their land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all,'"* Ezekiel 37:1, 11-14, 21-22.

The past several years, since 2011, have witnessed more prophecy fulfilled – the Iraqi-Syrian War – that has pit Syria and Russia, its ally to the north since 2015, against the United States, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The prophets speak thusly,

*The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from [being] a city, and it shall be a*





ruinous heap, Isaiah 17:1.

*“How is the city of praise (Jerusalem) not left, the city of my joy. Therefore her young men shall fall in the streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day,” saith Yahweh of hosts. “I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad,”* Jeremiah 49:25-27.

(The palaces of Benhadad may be a reference to Bashar al Assad whose surname, incidentally, is translated, “the Beast.”)

Russia’s entry into the war, positioned its troops proximate to Israel’s border.

*And the word of Yahweh came unto me, saying, “Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, ‘Thus saith the Sovereign Yahweh; Behold, I [am] against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts [of armour, even] a great company [with] bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: [and] many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land [that is] brought back from the sword, [and is] gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Sovereign Yahweh; It shall also come to pass, [that] at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to*

*take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places [that are now] inhabited, and upon the people [that are] gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?’ Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, ‘Thus saith the Sovereign Yahweh; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against My land, that the heathen may know Me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.’ Thus saith the Sovereign Yahweh; [Art] thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by My servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days [many] years that I would bring thee against them?’ And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Sovereign Yahweh, [that] ‘My fury shall come up in My face. For in My jealousy [and] in the fire of My wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that [are] upon the face of the earth, shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all My mountains,’ saith the Sovereign Yahweh: every man’s sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that [are] with him, an overflowing rain,*

and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify Myself, and sanctify Myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I [am] Yahweh,” Ezekiel 38:1-23.

These are the verses which bring Russia to Israel’s border. These are the prophetic verses that foretell Russia and her allies fighting to keep Bashar al Assad in power, although Israel stands in the way. We are watching Biblical prophecy unfold before our eyes.

Nevertheless, the things concerning Bashar al Assad have an end. Isaiah writes about the end of Syria’s dictator:

*“The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria: they shall be as the glory of Israel,” says Yahweh of hosts. ... The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but [Yahweh] shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind. And behold at eveningtide trouble; [and] before the morning he [is] not. This [is] the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us, (Isa. 17:3,13-14)*

### **Will America be Around to Defend Israel?**

Russia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Egypt, identified respectively in Scripture as Magog, Persia, Babylon, Put, Kush, were major players during the prophets’ times and figured prominently in their visions. But America, as a nation, was not. Nevertheless, the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, and John in the Book of Revelation made mention of another end-of-times people – Mystery Babylon (America).

Ancient Babylon was a city that became great because of the migration of peoples from other lands and the commerce that accompanied them. But Mystery Babylon (America) is described by the ancient writers, thusly:

“O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures ...” (Jer. 51:13). Mystery Babylon (America) has plentiful access to waters rich in resources – America is situated between two oceans – most of Iraq is a desert and has only a narrow strip of coast line. And the Revelator continues, saying, “... and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (Rev. 18:3).

Proud and arrogant, Mystery Babylon (America) has exalted herself, boasting itself, perhaps as much so, in the words of the seers:

“I will exalt my throne above the stars of Elohim

... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will like the most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14).

“How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously ...” (Rev. 18:7).

Mystery Babylon (America) is a leader among nations in sin of every description – murder-in-the-womb (approximately 70,000,000 in the past fifty years); pornography (producing nearly two-thirds of the pornographic media (labeled adult entertainment) to the world; homosexuality and “gender fluidity;” chemical and substance abuse; domestic violence; feminism; drunkenness; devilish music; adultery; witchcraft; idolatry.

Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is still a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34).

Alex de Tocqueville, a French statesman and historian, in 1820-1821 toured America, and when visiting its churches, concluded, “America is great because America is good. But if ever America ceases to be good, it will cease to be great.” And historian Will Durant observed, this once great nation will not be destroyed from the outside until it has first collapsed on the inside – and not at all, unlike every civilization of the past.

Well, Mystery Babylon (America) has abandoned its moral compass and become more secular, eliminating Yahweh and the Bible from its institutions, and from its education system and instead, added instruction in evolution and Islamic culture to its curriculum and taught “gender fluidity,” even to its elementary school pupils. Its courts, too, have given place to the spirit of the age, defining law in terms of cultural relevance. Little wonder, Mystery Babylon (America) has begun to reap the inevitable results of its sins. Because Mystery Babylon (America) has sown corruption to its flesh, it is of its flesh reaping corruption (Gal. 6:8).

But the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned (Isa. 14:20). ““Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from Me shall spoilers come unto her,’ saith Yahweh. ... and destroyed out of her the great voice ... for Yahweh the Elohim of recompences shall surely requite” (Jer. 51:53, 55, 56).

The prophets have much more to say about this end-times-nation. “And thou saidst, ‘I shall be a lady for ever:’ so that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart ... Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, ‘I *am* and none beside me: I

shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children' ... for she saith in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow." (Isa. 47:7, 8; Rev. 18:7).

According to Scripture, Babylon reigned over the kings of the earth. Since the end of World War II, Mystery Babylon (America) has emerged militarily as a super power – "the hammer of the whole earth" (Jer. 50:23) ... (the United States has military bases all over the world) – and presently, holds title as the world's greatest economy. This Mystery Babylon (America), is a place of great riches and idolatry. American Exceptionalism has emerged as a strong belief ingrained within the people, that America is different from other nations, better than other nations.

The scriptures often refer to Babylon as a woman. According to the Revelator John, she sits on top of water.

*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven bowls, and talked with me, saying unto me, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." ... And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead [was] a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH ... And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth, Revelation 17:1, 4-5, 18.*

The Statue of Liberty, a well-known landmark in America and situated on Liberty Island in New York City – a replication of Ishtar, the Babylonian goddess of fertility, love, and sex and mother of prostitution ... "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" – is also the seat of the United Nations, and thought theoretically to reign over the kings of the earth.

But the prophets clearly state that something will happen ... on that great and notable day of judgment, Mystery Babylon (America) shall no more be called, the lady of kingdoms (Isa. 47:5).

"... for out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate ... (Jer. 50:3).

*They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even Yahweh and the weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land, Isaiah 13:5.*

*Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and*

*her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her; Jeremiah 51:47.*

*And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more, Revelation 18:11.*

And so, in answer to the question, "Will America be around to defend Israel?" the answer perhaps, lies in its response to Yahweh's entreaty, that if America would humble itself, and pray, and turn from its wicked ways, then Yahweh would hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land (2 Chron. 7:14). But, it's a big IF ...

### **In One Hour ...**

Remember which country the prophets said would come from the north? The same country Ezekiel said will lead a great alliance of nations to the borders of Israel. But the Russian alliance knows it can't destroy Israel as long as the United States is its closest ally.

Recently, the news reported a "worm virus" had crept into ten of the more than five hundred electrical grids across America. An electro-magnetic pulse (EMP) attack, like a nuclear explosion at a high altitude above the continental United States ... the most imminent, and perhaps damaging, of threats posed by this country's enemies and initiated by Russian perpetrators with the intention of taking out Mystery Babylon's (America) electrical infrastructure, impacting its commercial interests crippling its ability to militarily respond to such an assault and irreparably compromising its defense alliance with Israel.

Though Mystery Babylon (America) should have fortified the height of her strength, its broad walls shall utterly be broken; her high gates, burned with fire; her foundations, fallen; every one of her bows, broken (Jer. 51:53, 58, 56).

Isaiah, Jeremiah, John – all three prophets tell of the fall of Babylon ... Mystery Babylon (America), if you will, the destruction of the United States of America. Meanwhile, steeped in its pride and arrogance, the United States takes for granted its superiority in military prowess, thus its want of diligence and vigilance in preparing for a cataclysmic future.

Yahweh summons, through the pen of the seer, saying,

*Come against her from the utmost border; open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left, Jeremiah 50:26.*

And the Revelator, likewise,

*For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried within they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What [city is] like unto this great city!" And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate" ... And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise any more, Revelation 18:17-19, 11*

*But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of thine enchantments, Isaiah 47:9.*

*Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Sovereign Elohim who judgeth her, Revelation 18:8.*

No hospitals or pharmacies; no infrastructure of running water or electricity, for these will have been damaged by an EMP; diseases will run rampant; store shelves will be empty; desperate, lawless people will become looters, and there will be food riots. The streets will run with blood because of the incapacity of police to enforce the law. Chaos, confusion, collapse will rule the day.

“And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, [that] thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink ... a drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up ... and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her ... for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols ... her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces’ ... Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (Jer. 51: 63-64, 50:38).

### **The Beginning of Sorrows**

*For thus saith Yahweh of Hosts, the Eloha of Israel: "The daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshing floor, [it is] time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come, Jeremiah 51:33.*

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall, Matthew 24:21.*

“Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom

against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven ... men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ... And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh ... and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:10, 11, 26, 20, 24).

### **Conclusion: But the End is not Yet**

Yet, the prophets reveal there is still hope,

*Alas! For that day [is] great, so that none [is] like it: it [is] even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it, Jeremiah 30:7.*

*When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, [even] in the latter days, if thou turn to Yahweh thy Elohim, and shalt be obedient unto His voice, (for Yahweh [is] a merciful El) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them, Deuteronomy 4:30-31.*

*And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake these days shall be shortened, Matthew 21:22.*

Even Yahshua exhorted us to vigilance and diligence, urging us to watch and pray lest we enter into the temptation and snare that will drown us, too, in perdition and destruction. But much more than our own vigilance and diligence, we need to pray for those in authority that they might come to repentance and an acknowledging of Him that is True ... that we might lead lives in righteousness and keep the faith-integrity of our hearts, in the day of trouble.

In Ezekiel 22:30, Yahweh declares, *And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.* May we not be the *none* whom He found not!

There is a way to escape this coming holocaust if you have a readiness to will and a willing mind – not merely to believe in Yahweh and His Son, the Messiah Yahshua, but to obey what Yahweh commands – to come out from, and be separated from, Mystery Babylon (2 Cor. 6:17): its ideas and practices, devoting yourself instead to earnestly contending for the faith delivered you (Jude 1:3) and living by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh (Deut. 8:3).

-Brother Bob Covey  
in collaboration with Elder John W. Reece



# Yahweh's Commandments or Man's Traditions?

propitiation for our sins, it is our sins – specifically, those committed prior to our immersion in water – that are taken out of the way, blotted out, and nailed to His stake. The Law has not been wiped out! Yahshua has justified our entrance into the Kingdom by wiping out the penalty for our sins, not the Law which identifies sin. As a matter of fact, according to Holy Writ, the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the impious and sinners, for the unholy and profane (1 Tim. 1:9).

In 1 Corinthians 5:8, Paul is talking about the “old corruption” of the Pharisees who leavened or, corrupted the Law of Yahweh through the imposition of *their* laws, judgments and traditions. Paul could speak with authority here, because he used to abide in those traditions until Yahshua demonstrated that He was the Son of Yahweh by physically blinding him while on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:3-9). Indeed, Paul understood what Yahshua meant when He asked the Pharisees, “Why do you transgress the commandment of Yahweh for the sake of your tradition?” (Matt. 15:3). (**English Standard Version**, used throughout unless otherwise noted.)

And so, the notion some advance that Paul was set against the “old” Law of Yahweh, is absurd. Indeed, he kept the Law. It was he, incidentally, who penned, *Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law*, Romans 3:31. In this, he was in agreement with his Master who affirmed, *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them*, Matthew 5:17.

Ministers of the Word do well then, to consider the consequence of teaching for doctrine and commandment, traditions come of having corrupted (2 Cor. 2:17), in craftiness and cunningly, deceitfully handled (2 Cor. 4:2), and made private interpretation of the Scripture (2 Pet. 1:20). Ministers of the Word do well, to consider those whom they are shepherding to the broad way that leads to destruction. Their blood will be on them (Ezek. 33:2, 6). Ministers of the Word, do well to consider the weeping of the One who suffered in His flesh for their sins.

I made a wonderful discovery having to do with leavened and unleavened bread! You may have already understood what I’m going to share with you, but I hadn’t realized it until I studied it.

*Therefore let us keep the feast* (referring to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, even though Scripture simply writes, “Passover”), *not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth*, 1 Corinthians 5:8.

In the Greek, from which this verse is rendered, “bread” in the phrase “unleavened bread,” has been supplied by the translator. *Azumos* is the Greek word that is given for “unleavened” ... and figuratively, *azumos* means “uncorrupted” and is used exclusively to mean either “the Feast of Unleavened Bread” or the concept of “uncorrupted,” or purity. *Zumos*, with the letter “a” removed, means “corrupted.” With this understanding, we might read this verse, *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old corruption (zumos), neither with the corruption (zumos) of malice and wickedness; but with uncorrupted (azumos) sincerity and truth.*

However, this is not the discovery of which I was speaking. And before I move on to that discovery, I must clarify another word in this verse – “old,” as in “old corruption.” The Apostle Paul is not talking about the Law of Yahweh when he uses the phrase, “old corruption.” Some – not having their understanding exercised to discern Truth from error – postulate the Law is dead, having been “nailed to the stake” (Col. 2:14).

Contrarily, since Yahshua sacrificed His life as a

### Malice and Wickedness, or Sincerity and Truth?

Now, back to my “discovery.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance**, H.4682, *matzah* (*mats-tsaw*) defines “unleavened” as “*greedily* devouring for sweetness;” properly, “*sweetness*;” concretely, “sweet” that is, “not soured or bittered with yeast.” The primitive root of the word H.4680, *matzah* (*maw-tsaw*) means to *suck out*,” by implication, to “*drain*,” to “*squeeze out*” – as in, “draining” or “squeezing” out the property of leaven, that is, yeast. This is my discovery.

Two thousand years after Paul’s words were written, we have leavened bread made of cultured yeast that adds a sweet flavor to our breads. Then, leavened bread was made from soured dough. Back then, they left their “starter dough” (or the “new lump”) out in the open for natural yeast to settle into the dough and begin reproducing, emitting gas into the mixture.

So, if we can understand the nature of **leavened, sour** bread in Paul’s day, we can understand how he could describe “**malice**” and “**wickedness**” as being sour bread, that is, “leavened” and how he could define unleavened, sweet bread, as “sincerity” and “truth.” Finally, to those who say that “leaven does not represent sin, but represents the Holy Spirit,” I suggest that whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master in an unworthy manner – “unworthy manner” ... could that be partaking of the **leavened, soured** bread of “**malice and wickedness?**” – eats and drinks death to himself, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29, 31:

*Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Master in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Master. Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ... But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.*

Let us be ever diligent, sincere and truthful in our praise and worship of Almighty Yahweh and walk in the ways of His Son, Yahshua. Incidentally, this idea of “malice and wickedness” and “sincerity and truth” are not New Testament concepts. As Israel was preparing to make conquest of, and settle in, the Promised Land of Canaan, Joshua (pronounced, Yahshua) exhorted the people, saying, *Now therefore fear Yahweh and serve **Him in sincerity and in faithfulness**. Put away the elohim that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh*, Joshua 24:14. And we read further

in the narrative, the people’s acclamation: *And the people said to Joshua, “Yahweh our Elohim we will serve, and His voice we will obey,”* Joshua 24:14.

So, Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in the Book of the Law. And taking a large stone, he set it up there under the oak near the Tent of Testimony and declared to them, *Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of Yahweh that He spoke to us. Therefore it shall be a witness against you, lest you deal falsely with your Elohim*, Joshua 14:28.

It seems more than coincidental that Joshua and the Apostle Paul should speak so directly about “sincerity and truth.” With respect to the latter, a Pharisee of Pharisees – that sect whom Yahshua in one place called “blind guides (Matt. 23:24) – the blindness of tradition prevented him, and them, from appreciating that Covenant Promises are come by the Law.

Today, we have the New Covenant to verify the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant. And they who have not abandoned the Law can see the New Testament in the Old, and the Old Testament in the New.



## **Of Corrupting, Deceitfully Handling, and Making of Private Interpretations**

We who have the stewardship of the Truth have a responsibility of going out into the world and teaching and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of Yahweh. His giftings are as diverse as His callings. I was called to the Truth by Yahweh's Spirit which said to me, "Honor My Sabbath."

However, not all men will have this faith (2 Thess. 3:2). Satan has laid his hand on some who would change the words of Yahshua and His apostles, and corrupt the Word of Yahweh through the *pantheocratic* worship of false deities, observance of national customs, and the traditions and vain philosophies of man (Col. 2:8).

For example: Yahweh has set apart one day above every other by virtue of His will, and quite without regard to our personal preference. It is written, *And on the seventh day Elohim finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done*, Genesis 2:2.

And then, He codified what He had done on the seventh day, into an ordinance, saying,

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Yahweh your Elohim. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy*, Exodus 20:8-11.

*If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of Yahweh honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken*, Isaiah 58:13-14.

Yet, are there some who teach contrary to the Scripture. One example comes from a site called Catholic.com. It asserts that in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, in the phrase, "on the first day of the week ..." indicates that in New Testament times, the Sabbath was no longer binding and that Christians should instead assemble for worship on Sunday, the L-rd's day, a singular reference found in Revelation 1:10.

But let's look at these verses. In Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2, The word, "first" is the Greek, *mia* (*mee'-ah*), G.3391, meaning "one" or "first." The word, "week," is the Greek, *sabbaton* (*sab'-bat-on*), G.4521, a transliteration of the Hebrew word, *shabbat* which means the weekly Sabbath. So, the phrase. "On the first day of the week" should read, "On one of the Sabbaths." Truly, the "lying pen of the scribes" (Jer. 8:8) has twisted the meaning of this phrase.

With respect to Revelation 1:10, *I was in the Spirit on the L-rd's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*, this is a phrase equivalent to "the day of the L-RD," found 370 times in the Scriptures. The correct translation should read "the Day of Yahweh," hardly a Sunday. In fact, the Day of Yahweh is understood as apocalyptic, the day of destruction.

Then, in an effort to discredit the Sabbath, apostasy proceeds to twist the meaning of Colossians 2:16-17 – *Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Messiah*.

These shadows – the Appointed Times of Yahweh – are BEACONS to those who are the children of Yahweh, and point to that "some better thing" (Heb. 11:40) prepared for us. Like Abraham, we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, confessing and declaring ourselves seeking a heavenly country, and looking for a city which has foundations whose Builder and Maker is Yahweh (Heb. 11:10-16). We are by adoption, children of the Covenants of promise, and so we eagerly celebrate that which has for us, been ordained of Yahweh.

## **Contemporary Cousins of Pharisee and Scribe**

*Then Pharisees and scribes came to Yahshua from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of Yahweh for the sake of your tradition? For Yahweh commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to Yahweh," he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of Yahweh. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: "This*

*people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men,”* Matthew 15:1-9.

Further into Matthew’s text, the Master declares that these were blind leaders of blind and that if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14). The Apostle Peter, wanting further explanation, asked the meaning of the Master’s teaching. We pick up Yahshua’s reply from the parallel account supplied in Mark 7:18-23:

*And He said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.*

Now, talk about traditions replacing the word of Yahweh, or making His Word of none effect by adding thereto. This parenthetical, (“**Thus He declared all foods clean**”) accentuated further by three other popular translations, the *New King James Version*, “**Thus purifying all foods**” and the *New International Version*, “**In saying this, J-sus declare all foods ‘clean’**” and the *New Living Translation*, “**By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable**” are good examples of tradition making the Word of Yahweh (Leviticus, Chapter 11 and Deuteronomy 14, Yahweh’s Food Laws) of none effect.

This added phrase adds tradition to the Word of Yahweh in order to justify and accommodate those who wish to continue in pagan lifestyle. And perhaps right here, might be a good place to insert what the Word says about *adding* to and *diminishing* from the Word of Yahweh:

*Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it,* Deuteronomy 12:32.

*And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, Yahweh will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book,* Revelation 22:19.

*Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them. And all the people shall say, “Amen,”* Deuteronomy 27:26.

## **Tradition Shuts the Door to the Kingdom**

Who could imagine Yahshua or any of the apostles breaking the Law of Yahweh by consuming unclean “foods.” What is given by the phrase (“**Thus He declared all foods clean**”) has twisted the literal meaning of *goes out into the latrine*. It does not mean that “all food is now clean.” The *KJV* and the *Darby Bible* in verse 19 use the words, “It goes [or, goeth] out into the draught, purging all meats.” The Greek word for “draught” is *aphedron* and means “a place of sitting apart,” that is, a private place ... a privy!

Nevertheless, in the light of this understanding, *apostasy* will still insist that Peter’s vision in Acts 10:11-16 – seeing Heaven opened and a great sheet knit at the four corners descending to earth wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air, and hearing a Voice urging him to kill and eat, and his protesting that he had never eaten anything common or unclean, followed with the Retort that what Yahweh had cleansed, he should not call common – supports this lie.

But what then, are we to do with Scriptures that declare, “For I am Yahweh, I change not ...” (Mal. 3:6); and, “Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast ...” (Heb. 6:19); and, “Yahshua the Messiah the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8); and, “... with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 2:17)? (All references from the *King James Version*)

Of Pharisee and scribe, the Master said in another place (Matthew 23):

*For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. ... Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of Gehenna as yourselves,* Matthew 23:13, 15.

And now, we come to the Apostle Paul’s corroboration in Colossians 2:8:

*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Messiah – hollow and deceptive, and depending on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on the Messiah by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside,*



*nailing it to the stake, Colossians 2:14.*

“The record of debt,” is, in other translations, rendered: “The written code” or, “The handwriting of ordinances” expressed in the Greek G.5498, *cheirographon*, (*khi-rog'-raf-on*), a handwritten legal document or bond; not written by Yahweh, but by the hand of man. Ordinances or code is G.1378 *dogma* (*dog'-mah*), a civil, ceremonial or ecclesiastical decree or ordinance. In our society, this “civil ordinance written against us” is called a “warrant for our arrest.”

We've managed to acquire charges against us for breaking the Law, but Yahshua has taken our punishment for sin. (He paid a debt He did not owe because we had a debt we could not pay.) And, what was the punishment He received? Mortal death as an exchange for our eternal death. In standing in for us, no charges remain against us. He is the Judge of all matters and as such, He forgave us our sins.

This is not to say, He forgave our sinful nature! Make no mistake, we can still sin and quench the Spirit and hence, lose our salvation (Heb 10:26). But He hopes that in having become a propitiation for our sins, He should kill our interest in this world and open to us, mercy and His righteousness.

Some have said, “I'm saved, and once saved, always saved.” But should a person who renounces his baptism by returning to sin, really expect admittance into the Kingdom of Yahweh? Let us not trample the Spirit of Grace given to us through Yahshua and make of His sacrifice an open shame.

*For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of Yahweh and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of Yahweh to their own harm and holding him up to contempt, Hebrews 6:4-6.*

And so, might we rightly conclude He did not abolish the Law of Yahweh! For if it should be possible that He could abolish the Law of Yahweh, then He would simultaneously have done away with sin itself, making all human beings perfect in the Father's sight, and making His sacrifice and death a trivial thing. He took our “arrest warrant” away, nailing it to His torture stake and He took our sins away – the sins we had committed up to the point at which we honored His sacrifice by dying with Him through immersion in His name. Baptism is the witness to accepting His payment for our sins.

And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the torture stake (Col. 2:15).

### **On Self-Made Religion and Ascetism**

*Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Messiah. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from Yahweh. If with Messiah you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations – “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh, Colossians 2:16-23.*

Verses 20 through 23 are used by some to destroy the Word of Yahweh and establish false traditions. For they interpret these verses to imply that Paul is encouraging believers to ignore the Word of Yahweh.

But he is not encouraging believers to ignore the Word of Yahweh. He is chastising them who follow “human precepts and teachings.” He is chastising Pharisaical laws that prevent believers from obeying the Law of Yahweh and the *apostate* contemporary Pharisees of today who would teach the precepts of man that are contrary to the Law of Yahweh; who bewitch their followers with damnable heresies (2 Pet. 2:1), doctrines of demons, and lies in hypocrisy (1 Tim. 4:1, 2); who deny the Sovereign One Who bought them with the price of His innocent blood by “promoting self-made religion and ascetism” in an effort to maintain their status, and their pulpits. But for sure, if they speak not according to His Word, it will be because there is no Light in them (Isa. 8:20)..

For Yahweh will be worshipped, His way – in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24). “Self-made religion” – or in other renderings, “will-worship” G.1479, *ethelothreskeia* (*eth-el-oth-race-ki'-ah*) and defined as, *voluntary* (*arbitrary* and *unwarranted*) signifies a mode of worship which a man chooses for himself,

independent of the revelation which Yahweh has given ... a worship founded in the will or caprices of man, and not in the wisdom or will of the Sovereign One. Yahweh will be served in His own way. It is right that He should prescribe to man the Truths which He is to believe, and the ordinances which He is to use. To refuse to receive His teaching in order to prefer his own fancies, is to light a farthing candle as a substitute for the noonday sun.

### Conclusion

From the beginning of the world, the Creator has prescribed worship best pleasing to Himself, and never left it a matter to the whim of man. They

to whom is wanting a revelation of what Yahweh has given, show by their diversity of worship, superstition, absurdity, and in many cases cruelty, what the state of the whole would have been, had not He, in His infinite mercy, blessed mankind with a revelation of His will. *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Messiah,* Colossians 2:8.

-A collaborative work of  
Elders John Fisher (deceased) and John W. Reece



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q** In Exodus 9:6 it states that “and all the cattle of Egypt died” having died from “a very grievous murrain or plague by the hand of Yahweh. In Exodus 9:9 it states that when the ashes were sprinkled toward heaven by Moses, “it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast.” I thought all “beasts” (cattle, horses, asses, camels, flocks and herds) were killed in Exodus 9:6 by the plague. Where did Pharaoh get chariot horses to chase down the Israelites? “But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses [and] chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon.” (Ex 14:9 *AV*)

**A** Note what is said in Exodus 9:3, *Behold, the hand of YAHWEH is upon thy cattle which [is] in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: [there shall be] a very grievous murrain.*

It is Yahweh’s hand that is controlling this plague. Moses does not have to do anything at first. Another point is that the animals that were in the field were the victims of His wrath. Animals protected in a cave, shed or barn will not be affected. Verse 6 says YAHWEH took action against the animals (that were in the field is understood). The Egyptians



worshipped animals like the Apis, their bull deity. (Later Israel reverted to the pagan ways of Egypt, shown by making and worshipping a golden calf, Exodus 32.)

The murrain (infectious disease) fell upon not only humans but on those animals that previously had been protected. Some scholars allege the Pharaoh whose chariots later chased after Israel had his army horses quartered in caves or barns of some kind, and these were protected from the soot and ashes.

**Q** Is it true we don’t need to remove leavening unless it’s combined with grains, like in bread or mixed in dough?

**A** Leavened dough was kept on hand, anciently, to quickly leaven other fresh breads. It was the leavening of the time, unlike today, in which, we have canisters of yeast (and other leavening agents) to perform the very same thing. That is, to leaven

bread, cakes, donuts, etc.

Everything can be taken to an extreme. Our recommendation is that everyone do the best they can, given the evidence of what leavening does to food items. Whether a lump of dough, to take pieces of and leaven other items, or, alternatively, a canister of yeast or other specific leavening agents, such as baking soda, which can leaven food items in the exact same way.

**Q** I appreciate so much your reasoned, balanced discussion regarding the contents of the cup at the Last Supper. Today's digital exploration has led me to wonder if it wasn't Pomegranate Juice. Pomegranate juice is kosher for Passover right "out the gate" with no special rabbinical oversight required. Also, both the tabernacle and the Temple were graced with hundreds of pomegranates; and the high priest wore them on the hem of his robe.

**A** The "fruit of the vine" appears to be a phrase specific to grapes when in reference to Passover. Pomegranates are grown on vines, but grapes are associated with blood (Gen. 49:10; Duet 32:14) and with a cup (Gen. 40:11). Some sources indicate, at least in the Middle East, that pomegranates represent fertility and long life. When speaking of the blood of the covenant (Exod. 28:33), it appears that grapes are more fitting with the Messiah fulfilling the requirement of a cutting of a New Covenant (Gen. 15; Heb. 9:7-17). Of interest, it appears that the Covenant was cut on the 14th of Abib which is also the timing of Yahshua's death. The Israelites were also released (told to get out of Egypt) on the 14th.

**Q** If Moses was forbidden to cross Jordan into the Promised Land because of striking the rock instead of speaking to it at the waters of Meribah-Kodesh, how can we expect to get there? Through Yahshua? That's why we need the Savior?

**A** We cannot by our own reason or strength come to Yahweh, but only through the Savior: *Yahshua saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me, John 14:6 ASV.*

Yahweh wants our undivided attention to His program and to accept Yahshua as the Sovereign and Ruler in our life. Yahshua will also be our Judge (2 Cor 5:10).

Moses' sin was done in front of all of Israel, and it was evidently seen as open rebellion, which added to his judgement at that time.

**Q** In Deuteronomy 12:22 it states one could eat something considered unclean, if the blood was eliminated from it. Then in Chapter 14 it states "You shall not eat any abominable thing."

**A** Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 delineate the clean and unclean. Notice that swine and jackals, dogs, vultures are not to be eaten, and we note they are an example of the garbage eaters of the world as are shellfish. Carnivores such as the cat family, raptors, are unclean. The animals and fowl that eat grasses and grain are suitable fare. But we also are to avoid eating the blood even of clean animals. (Request our booklet called *Yahweh's Food Laws*) There is a curse placed on those consuming unclean swine food at the end of the age:

*They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one [tree] in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith Yahweh, Isaiah 66:17 ASV.*

Therefore, the proper way to look at Deuteronomy 12:22 is to see it is talking about men being either ceremonially clean or unclean. They are able to eat clean foods.



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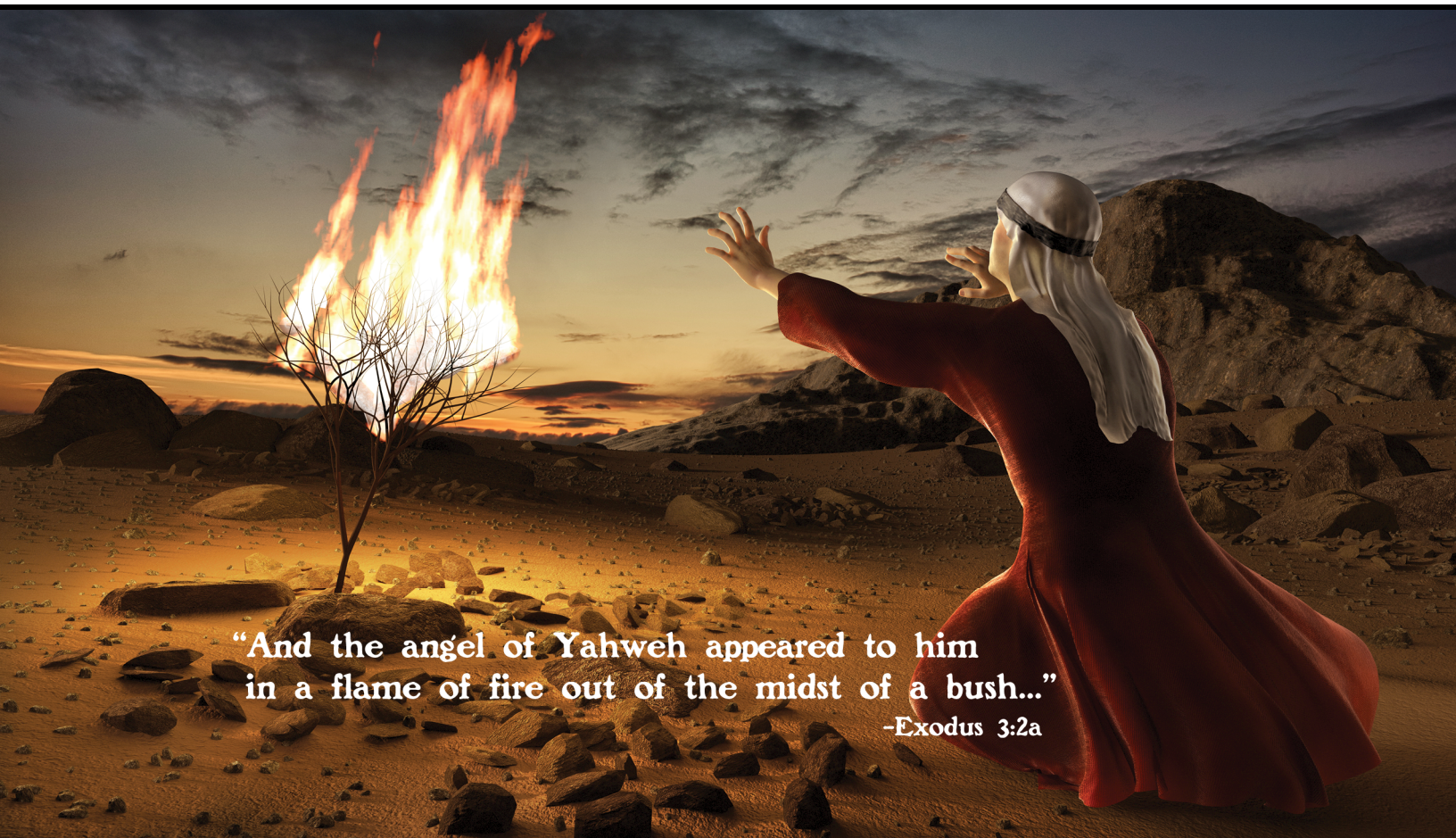
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**“And the angel of Yahweh appeared to him  
in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush...”**

**-Exodus 3:2a**