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Springtime

A time of refreshing

Passover or Easter

Which is Scriptural?

Earthly Life Isn't Everything

But spiritual life (our hope) is

David

Openly admitted his faults

YAIY Beacon



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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 salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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Passover or Easter

Which is Scriptural?



The time of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread can be viewed as the first of three harvest seasons. One of the major crops at this time of year was barley because it was used for a specific reason. It is also a time of year when we are commanded to gather together:

Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before Yahweh Elohim, Ex 23:14-17.

Passover-Feast of Unleavened Bread-8 Days

In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is Yahweh's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread unto Yahweh: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein, Lev 23:5-8.

Passover occurs on the fourteenth day of the first scriptural month, Abib, while the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the fifteenth day of Abib and lasts for seven days. The word "servile" is the translation of the Hebrew *abodah*, meaning work of any kind.

Some celebrate Passover on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but the Encyclopedia Judaica tells us: "The Feast of Passover consists of two parts: the Passover Ceremony and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Originally, both parts existed separately, but at the beginning of the exile they were combined" (vol. 13, "Passover," p. 169).

Passover-A Memorial Day

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahweh. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever, Ex 12:12-14.

The word "memorial" comes from the Hebrew (Strong's #OT:2146) *zikrown* (zik-rone'); from OT:2142; a memento (or memorable thing, day or writing); and is translated memorial or record in the King James Version of the Bible. The root word of *zikrown* is Strong's #2142, *zakar* (zaw-kar'). *Zakar* has numerous translations in the KJV, among them being "remember" or to make "to be remembered."

Does Christianity today celebrate, as a memorial, the day of Passover? The day in which Yahshua died? No, certainly not! Instead, they celebrate Christmas and Easter, the supposed days of His birth and His resurrection into heaven.

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth, Eccl. 7:1.

Passover – Its Meaning

Ex. 12:42 reads,

It [is] a night to be much observed unto Yahweh for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: this [is] that night of Yahweh to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

The Jewish Tanakh gives the following reading for this verse:

The word translated "observed" is Strong's #8107 (*shimmur*), from #8104 (*shamar*), meaning an observance. On #8104 Strong says "A primitive root; properly to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; gen. to protect, attend to, etc.: beware,

be circumspect, take heed, keep, mark, look narrowly, observe, preserve, regard, reserve, save, sure, wait, watch." Clearly the meaning is watchings.

The Greek word translated "watch" is Strong's #1453, *gregoreo*, and means to be vigilant and wide-awake; to be alert: be or stay awake, to keep awake, be alert, i.e., watch.

Can we fathom in our minds what the Israelites were feeling during the night of the Passover? It seems reasonable that they could not sleep because they knew that the destroying angel would be coming to kill all the firstborn. They were told to place the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts and lintels for protection from the avenging angel. They were warned to remain within the protection of their blood-marked houses the entire evening. Ps. 30:5 is referring to this:

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

The Israelites did leave Egypt by night – the night after Passover:

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto Yahweh thy Elohim: for in the month of Abib Yahweh thy Elohim brought thee forth out of Egypt by night, Deut. 16:1.

Some believe Deut. 16:1 says that the Israelites left the land of Egypt to start their trek to the Promised Land. However, the Israelites kept the Passover after the sun set beginning the 14th of Abib as recorded in the Scriptures.

During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship Yahweh as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!" So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoul-

ders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. Yahweh had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians, Ex. 12:31-36 NIV.

After the Israelites spent the entire night portion of Passover in their houses, they did as they were instructed to do by Moses, including spoiling the Egyptians:

And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: And Yahweh gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians, Ex 12:35-36.

The events of the day portion of Passover are relatively easy to reconstruct. On the morning of the 14th the remains of the sacrificial lamb were taken out, the people began gathering their families, flocks, and herds and assembled at Rameses, some 30 miles from Goshen.

And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians, Num. 33:3.

Passover is indeed a preparation day. It is a day when one is to prepare for the Days of Unleavened Bread by cleansing their houses of all leaven. The day following Passover is a High Sabbath. So the followers of Yahshua wanted to take His body down before the first day of Unleavened Bread began:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the [tree] on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might

be broken, and that they might be taken away, John 19:31.

Cleansing of Our House and Body

The first day and the last day of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread are two of Yahweh's seven annual Holy Days.

To properly keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread we must do so both physically and spiritually. During this period of time no leaven is to be found within the house nor is to be eaten. We are to remove all leaven products from our homes. Actually, these verses also state that one is to eat unleavened bread at this time.

Physically, leaven is that which produces fermentation in a mass of dough.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, Gal 5:9.

The word "leaveneth" is the translation of the Greek *zumoo* meaning to cause to ferment.

Leaven breaks down flour, causing decay in the dough.

On the other side, there are two verses, Lev. 7:13 and Lev. 23:17, which show that the showbread and a praise offering to Yahweh both contained leaven, which sweetened the bread.

Where leaven is the translation in the Old Testament of the King James Version, it refers to the physical usage (yeast).

Spiritually, we are to remove any and all things that may cause us to be led astray.

Where leaven is the translation in the New Testament of the King James Version it may refer to the physical usage at times, but it usually will have a spiritual meaning also.

Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees, Matt. 16:12.

And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of

the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod, Mark 8:15.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, in-somuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, Luke 12:1.

“Hypocrisy” is a translation of the Greek *hupokrisis* (Strong’s #5272), whose root word means to play a part, deceitful pretending.

The Significance of Leaving Egypt

Each Passover we celebrate the salvation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It was a time of joy as the slaves were given their freedom and loaded down with gifts from their former masters. They were starting on their way to the Promised Land. By accepting Yahshua’s shed blood for the remission of our sins, we are, likewise, freed from the bondage of sin.

Israel had the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night to guide them. We have Yahweh’s promise and His guidebook in the Old and the New Testaments to direct us and give us instruction for every facet of life. We are also given the promise by the Savior that He would never leave us nor forsake us, provided we abide in the Truth and keep His commandments. The Holy Spirit from Yahweh continues to guide and keep us in the narrow way. When we are immersed into the name of Yahshua Messiah and have hands laid on us by the eldership, Yahweh promises a token of His Spirit to indwell in us and help us along the straight and narrow way.

Easter – Satan’s Substitute

In Eccl. 7:1 Yahweh tells us that,

A good name is better than

precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth, Eccl. 7:1.

This scripture tells us that it is better to remember the day of one’s death (Yahshua’s death on Passover) than to remember the day of one’s birth (xmas). What Satan has managed to do is to have the world celebrate a day which supposedly commemorates the day when Yahshua was resurrected from the dead – the day which has been labeled Easter.

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are not celebrated by the Christian world today. Instead, they celebrate Easter, which has its pagan origins. Satan has managed to downplay the significance of Passover and to base the celebration of Easter on pagan worship traced back to the ancient days of British, Irish, Germanic, Greek, Persian, Mayan, Roman, Saxon, Iranian, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Indian civilizations. One needs only to google names like Ash-toreth, Astarte, Demeter, Hathor, Ishtar, Kali, Ostara, Attis, etc., to find out their origins.

One can also use the internet to find information on the origins of numerous Easter traditions:

“The *Easter Bunny* is not a modern invention. The symbol originated with the pagan festival of Eastre. The goddess, Eastre, was worshipped by the Anglo-Saxons through her earthly symbol, the rabbit. The Germans brought the symbol of the Easter rabbit to America. It was widely ignored by other Christians until shortly after the Civil War. In fact, Easter itself was not widely celebrated in America until after that time.

“As with the *Easter Bunny* and the holiday itself, the *Easter Egg* predates the Christian holiday of Easter. The exchange of eggs in the springtime is a custom that was centuries old when Easter was first celebrated by Christians. From the earliest times, the egg was a symbol of rebirth in most cultures. Eggs

were often wrapped in gold leaf or, if you were a peasant, colored brightly by boiling them with the leaves or petals of certain flowers. Today, children hunt colored eggs and place them in Easter baskets along with the modern version of real Easter eggs -- those made of plastic or chocolate candy.” (Copyright © 2003 by Jerry Wilson. Used with permission.)

“*Easter Rabbit and Eggs*: The symbols of the Norse Goddess Ostara were the hare and the egg. Both represented fertility. From these, we have inherited the customs and symbols of the Easter egg and Easter rabbit. Dyed eggs also formed part of the rituals of the Babylonian mystery religions. Eggs ‘were sacred to many ancient civilizations and formed an integral part of religious ceremonies in Egypt and the Orient. Dyed eggs were hung in Egyptian temples, and the egg was regarded as the emblem of regenerative life proceeding from the mouth of the great Egyptian god.’

“*Easter Lilies*: ‘The so-called “Easter lily” has long been revered by pagans of various lands as a holy symbol associated with the reproductive organs. It was considered a phallic symbol!’

“*Easter Sunrise Service*: This custom can be traced back to the ancient Pagan custom of welcoming the sun God at the vernal equinox - when daytime is about to exceed the length of the nighttime. It was a time to ‘celebrate the return of life and reproduction to animal and plant life as well.’ Worship of the Sun God at sunrise may be the religious ritual condemned by [Yahweh] as recorded in:

“Ezekiel 8:16-18: ‘...*behold, at the door of the temple of [Yahweh], between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of [Yahweh], and their faces toward the east; and they were worshipping the sun toward the east. Then He said unto me, Hast thou*

seen (this), O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in wrath; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.' (ASV)

"Easter Candles: These are sometimes lit in churches on the eve of Easter Sunday. Some commentators believe that these can be directly linked to the pagan customs of lighting bonfires at this time of year to welcome the re-birth/resurrection of the sun God." (Copyright 1999 to 2003 incl., by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance.)

"Easter's connection with spring and nature. Diana (the Ephesian goddess of sex, fertility, virginity and motherhood) was said to be the source of nature. Eostre (an Anglo-Saxon/Teutonic goddess) was the goddess of the sunrise and spring. Ostara (a Norse/Saxon goddess) was the maiden goddess of spring.

"Origins of Hares (Bunnies) and Eggs. According to Teutonic myth, the hare was once a bird whom Eostre changed into a four-footed creature. Thus, it can also lay eggs. The hare is also the sacred companion and sacrificial victim of Eostre. Astarte (a Phoenician/Syrian goddess), on the other hand, was believed to have been hatched from a huge egg which fell into the Euphrates.

"Origins of Good Friday. Did you ever wonder why Good Friday is recognized as the day [Yahshua] died and Sunday as the day he arose but yet had

trouble explaining how he could thus be buried for three days and three nights? (Matthew 12:40; Matthew 27:63; Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31; Mark 10:34.) The answer is simple: He didn't actually die on 'Good Friday.' The Chaldeans offered cakes to Ishtar on the equivalent of the day we know as Good Friday. When the established church wanted to appease the paganistic people in order to 'convert' them to Christianity, they moved the dates accordingly.

"Origins of Hot Cross Buns and Fires. Cakes bearing a cross-like symbol representing the pair of cow-horns on the moon goddess, Isis, were offered by ancient Egyptians. The cakes which Greeks offered to Astarte and other divinities were called bous or boun, from which the word 'bun' is derived. The Babylonians/Chaldeans offered similar cakes to the 'Queen of Heaven.' Fires were lit on top of mountains and had to be kindled from new fire, drawn from wood by friction. The fire was then used to bake cakes in sacrifice to Semiramis, the 'Queen of Heaven.' This practice, along with burning incense, was used in conjunction with baking the cakes and is mentioned specifically in the Bible (1 Kings 11:8; 2 Kings 17:7-16; 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Kings 23:4-15; Isaiah 17:8; Isaiah 27:9; Ezekiel 8:7-12; Jeremiah 7:16-19; Jeremiah 44:19, 25). In addition to the cross

imprinted on these cakes representing the horns of the goddess, it also sometimes represented the four seasons or four phases of the moon. Cakes were also offered to or eaten in honor of Apollo, Diana, Hecate, and the moon (also Diana's symbol).

"Origins of Lent. The word 'lent' is of Anglo-Saxon origin meaning 'spring.' Lent developed from the pagan celebration of weeping, fasting, and mourning for 40 days over the death of Tammuz (one day for each year of his life). Tammuz (the son/husband of the Babylonian idol Ishtar) was killed by a wild boar and then allegedly resurrected. This mourning of Tammuz is specifically prophesied by Ezekiel in the Bible and is characterized by [Yahweh] Himself as being detestable (Ezekiel 8:13-15).

"Origins of the use of the lily. Asherah (a Sidonian goddess) was frequently represented as a nude woman bestride a lion with a lily (symbolizing grace and sex appeal) in one hand and a serpent (symbolizing fecundity) in the other.

"Origins of wearing new clothing for Easter. The tradition of wearing new clothing for Easter comes from the superstition that a new garment worn at Easter means good luck throughout the year." (Copyright © 1998-2001 Timothy A. & Kimberly B. Southall.)

"Easter Bonfires: "In ancient Greece the deities of the sun were Helios and Apollo. The worship of Helios was widespread; temples were built in Corinth, Árgos, Troezen (no longer in existence), and many other cities, but the principal seat was on the island of Rhodes, in the Dodecanese, where four white horses were sac-



rificed annually to the god. A similar sacrifice was offered on the summit of Mount Hagios Elias, in the Taïy-etos Mountains, in Laconia. In time virtually all the functions of Helios were transferred to the god Apollo, in his identity as Phoebus. Sun worship persisted in Europe even after the introduction of Christianity, as is evidenced by its disguised survival in such traditional Christian practices as the Easter bonfire and the Yule log on Christmas." ("Sun Worship," Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2000.)

Yahshua Kept Passover

Yahshua kept the Passover at the right time and thus fulfilled all righteousness up to the time of His death. His disciples did not have any difficulty keeping Passover at the right time.

And He[Yahshua] sent Peter

and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of Yahweh, Luke 22:8-16.

Paul Kept Passover

Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee. He was an apostle to the Gentiles and he taught them to observe what some call the "Feasts of the Jews."

Corinth was a Hellenistic, metropolitan community and a crossroads of trade and commerce. In 1 Cor. 5:7-8, Paul tells the people of Corinth that Yahshua is the Passover Lamb sacrificed for us:

Purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you are unleavened. For even the Messiah our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast...

For Paul to write this it is quite evident that these days are not done away with by Yahshua's death. It is obvious that Passover and the feast days referred to are still obligatory.

Conclusion

Bible verses do confirm that the

Feasts will be observed in the Kingdom. Yahweh said that His Feasts would be kept by an ordinance forever.

In the New Covenant era we are to observe Passover as a memorial of the Savior's death - having given His life for the sins of the world. Passover is not a Feast day (Hebrew = *chag*, joyous, happy time), but along with the annual Feasts it will be observed again, but likely with a deeper and new meaning.

Now that you have read many ideas concerning the false and pagan background of celebrating Easter, are you willing to believe the Scriptures and to follow the truths given to us in those Scriptures? Study the Scriptures because what is contained in the Scriptures will set you free.

Elder Roger G. Meyer

To view this mini-study go to our web site at www.yaiy.org or phone 1-877-642-4101

Mini - Study



Why Passover is NOT a High Day

Perhaps because some Jews eventually and wrongfully combined the Passover with the first high day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, some believe that Passover on the fourteenth of Abib is also the high day, the first day of Unleavened Bread. But is it?

If these two observances don't stand on their own as distinct observances, why do they each have their own designation: "Passover" and "Feast of Unleavened Bread"? Similarly, the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles is separate from the last Great Day on the eighth, each having its own identification and meaning, even as one comes immediately after the other.

Overwhelming evidence in both Old and New Testaments shows that Passover was never considered a high day or kept as a Sabbath. The Passover was, however, a memorial of a certain event, and it was that particular event that was to be remembered in its own distinctive way separate from the Feast that follows.

Originally the Jews kept two separate observances, just as Yahweh had commanded in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23. But at the time of their exile to Babylon the Jews began to keep the two as a combined observance. It is this later, unscriptural practice that has contributed to much of the confusion, especially for New Testament readers who are forced to follow translators who allowed later Jewish practice to influence their translations.

Noteworthy, however, are the more Scriptural Karaite Jews and Samaritans who still observe Passover on the 14th and the Feast of Unleavened Bread beginning the 15th (see *Which Day Is the Passover?* by Phinehas Ben Zadock).

This is what the *Encyclopedia Judaica* says: "The feast of Passover consists of two parts: The Passover

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Mini - Study



The Passover Cup Should it Contain Wine or Grape Juice?

Many assume from their experience with "communion" that wine is the proper liquid to represent the memorial shedding of the Savior's blood.

But is it? Have you ever really investigated the meaning of the cup and its symbolic contents?

Blood Atones for Sin

A basic principle in the Bible is that the only possible atonement for the act of sin is a giving up of life. And the ONLY way we can be free of sin's death penalty, which we have all earned because of our sins, is through blood, which contains life, Leviticus 17:11.

Israel's sins were covered under an elaborate system of sacrifices in which animal blood was shed. That system gave way to a better sacrifice in the New Testament. Yahshua shed His blood on the torture stake as the perfect sacrifice. His blood paid the death penalty for our sins, just as the blood of animals was shed under the Old Covenant merely to cover Israel's sins (but not take them away, Heb. 9:13-15).

Contrary to what many believe, the principle of sacrifice remains, only now it is the sacrifice of the Savior and the shedding of His blood that we trust in.

What Represents Blood?

Our Savior instituted a new symbol at that New Covenant Passover—the cup. This symbol represented the blood of the perfect Lamb, which was Himself.

The question is, what was the liquid in that Passover cup which represented His pure, sinless life? Wine? Grape juice? Water? Is there any way we can know? Yes, there is! Does it really matter? It certainly does!



Earthly Life Isn't Everything

Aside from being the greatest of the kings of Israel, David was a visionary. King David had advanced knowledge of man's lifespan and quality of life prevailing in our time. Consider these words he wrote three millenniums ago:

The length of our days is seventy years or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away, Psalms 90:10.

Now in my late 70s, I no longer work to earn a living. This gives me ample time to reminisce and reflect on the true meaning and purpose of life. Just like David, who, in his later years, asked,

What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you care for him? (Psalms 8:4 NIV)

The existence of life in its varied forms is a phenomenon that has intrigued man more than anything else since ancient times. Questions about life, of humans in particular, about dying and leaving this world, and queries that demand credible answers, have been raised from ancient times to modern civilizations.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle sought to find the answers and came up with metaphysics. But Aristotle's treatise, merely speculative and inconclusive, raised more questions instead of coming up with answers. All the while, religions of all sorts emerged, voicing discordant beliefs, views and opinions. Thus mankind ended up with a plethora of religious persuasions. It is worthy of note, however, that despite the irreconcilable differences and disagreements, for millennia mankind generally believed that beyond the material or physical aspect of life, there exists a distinctly separate spiritual realm of existence.

Man vis-a-vis Animals

Human beings represent the highest form of life in this world. And all of mankind is homogeneous, i.e., genetically we all belong to the same human species. May the color of your skin be white, black, or brown like mine, that doesn't really matter. And even the most primitive tribes still living deep inside the earth's rainforests are humans. Regardless of what the racist or supremacist says or feels, the fact is we are all equal before Elohim. This is confirmed

by Peter.

And Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceived that Yahweh is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to Him," Acts 10:34-35.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Messiah Yahshua, Gal. 3:28.

Contrary to what eminent scientists tell us, man's existence on earth isn't without purpose. Man's role and preeminence over all other creatures is clear from the beginning. And even though science has shown that the chimp's genes closely resemble that of man, there is a great divide between man and ape regarding mental powers and ability. This is because the human brain is vastly superior as compared to that of the apes. Of all creatures on earth, only humans have a rational mind capable of distinguishing between right and wrong.

Regarding King David's question about what man is, let's turn again to his writings:

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas, Psalms 8:5-8 NIV.

Unlike the animals, man is a special creature - the crowning glory of all of Yahweh's creation!

Man's Errant Wisdom

Collectively, man does possess knowledge, understanding and wisdom not found among the inferior creatures, e.g., the apes, even though their genetic make-up nearly matches the human genome. This is because of the amazing power of the human brain - the most wonderful organ ever known as confirmed by medical science.

While it is true that many of the other creatures, like the apes, elephants, dolphins, etc., do have a measure of intelligence, they are deficient in knowledge, understanding and wisdom. Right after creation, Yahweh Elohim gave Adam a very important task to do. Now let's see what Yahweh required of him.

And Yahweh Elohim took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it, Gen. 2:15 TWOY.

The word "keep" is from the Hebrew *shamar* in Strong's #8104, i.e., to guard, protect, preserve, or take care of it. But look at what is now happening to the earth's environment. Man is slowly destroying the earth, and alarmed Al Gore and Greenpeace are busy warning, protesting and appealing to world leaders to act to stop the destructive activities within their borders.

What about social relations? Think of Adolf Hitler's "ethnic cleansing" in Europe during World War II, of Pol Pot's "social cleansing" in Cambodia and what the Serbian warlords did to their Bosnian neighbors in recent years - causing the death of millions of innocent victims. The Holy Scriptures are quite clear and specific.

Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself, Matthew 19:18 -19.

Nowadays, how do we rate man's acts and behavior? All over the world the crime index, along with terrorism, ethnic conflicts and violence, show that man is a dismal flunkout in social relations. It shows that the inferior creatures, like the apes, are more considerate towards their own kind. What happened with man's wisdom? The apostle Paul candidly tells us,

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in Elohim's sight. As it is written, He catches the wise in their craftiness, and again, Yahweh knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile. So then, no more boasting about men, 1 Cor. 3 :19-21.

Cares of This Life

A protestant minister turned politician decided to run for mayor. His candidacy was timely because the townspeople were clamoring for good government. As the "man of

the Bible," the pastor easily won.

Some years later, people were surprised to know that he is the owner of a Rural (Thrift) Bank with branches in some parts of the country. Then he put up a Pre-Need company dealing in trust funds (College Education and Pension Plans). He and his family moved to a mansion, and he drove expensive cars. Suddenly, pandemonium broke loose when depositors could not withdraw money from their bank accounts and policy owners of matured College Education and Pension Plans failed to collect. The pastor is now out of politics, in jail and confronted with multiple lawsuits. His company and bank are closed and the subject of litigation. Worst of all, he has cancer of the throat, lost his voice, and his wife and children are rumored to have abandoned him.

Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay is the man who gains riches by unjust means. When his life is half gone, they will desert him, and in the end he will prove to be a fool, Jer. 17:11 NIV.

Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven, Prov. 23:4-5.

I know of people who work or practice their trade from Monday to Sunday. I asked one man why he does not take a day off to rest and worship. He explained that he has a big family and needs to earn as much as he can. To sum it up, most people are too busy and occupied with the cares of this life.

But the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful, Mark 4:18-19.

We'd better take stock of our life and learn from man's Creator and Savior.

Someone in the crowd said to

Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Yahshua replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then He said to him, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions," Luke 12:13-15 NIV.

Troubles and Sorrow

Right after birth, a newborn baby bursts into frantic crying. Maybe this is premonitory feelings to upcoming troubles and sorrow we humans may have to pass through during our lifetime.

Man born of woman is of few days and full of troubles. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure, Job 14:1-2 NIV.

When tragedy strikes down a wicked man, it is easy for people to understand why and say, "He deserves it." But, if it happens to a decent man, it becomes a puzzle and people say, "Why him? He does not deserve it." Trying hard to live a decent or blameless life doesn't make anyone immune to trouble and sorrow. That is one of the ironies of this life.

Trouble and sorrow may come to anyone, anytime, regardless of social status, religion and nationality. Even King David, the man after Yahweh's heart, had his share of troubles and sorrow. The same is true of Paul and many of Yahweh's own people.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but Yahweh delivereth him out of them all, Psalms 34:19.

Someone said that "all things happen as Yahweh allows it to happen." So the question is: Why does Yahweh allow adversity and suffering to befall mankind? For the many, the heartrending loss of a loved one, home or livelihood is difficult to understand. We septuagenarians were witnesses to such happenings on a global scale during World War II, when an estimat-

ed 72 million military and innocent civilians perished. Actual losses in property and livelihood are anybody's guess, and thousands, if not millions, of shattered lives became relics of man's inhumanity to fellow man.

Aside from war, disease is another cause of suffering and anguish. In a Manila suburb there's a Chinese businessman who was proud of his Filipino wife and loved her so much. Theirs was a happy and contented family life for many years. Then one day the woman fell ill and was found to have a serious kidney disorder. Dialysis enabled her to live a few years more, and then she died. Grief-stricken, the man wept and between sobs uttered, "We don't deserve this. Why should it happen to you? There are many bad people in this world. Why not them?"

There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: righteous men who get what the wicked deserve, and wicked men who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless, Ecc. 8:14 NIV.

Ageing and Death

Animals, trees and plants are living matter. As such, all are subject to the irreversible law of ageing and eventually die. After death, the erstwhile living matter begins to decompose until it becomes part of the soil. What about man? Let us see what Yahweh Elohim told Adam.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you will return, Genesis 3:19.

Most humans have an inherent fear of death. In fact, medieval alchemists even tried to find the elixir of life. Nowadays, science has come up with cosmetics, creams, mudpacks, surgery, etc., and partially succeeds in temporarily keeping the good looks of a woman.

However, the ageing process goes on and science can do nothing more.

On the other hand, there are many, who, heavily burdened with guilt, shame, grief or hopelessness, overcome the fear of death and choose to extinguish their own lives. Adolf Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun committed suicide. Hitler's aide Joseph Goebbels and his wife first poisoned their six children and did likewise.

In times of war, considering the mass slaughter of both combatants and civilians alike, human life seems to be very cheap. Is human life of no more value than animal life? From the scientific point of view, when a man dies, it's just like when your dog or cat dies. Biologists say the end has come and

there's nothing more to expect. Is that true? We'd better let the Holy Scriptures enlighten us.

While Yahshua was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the Teacher anymore?" Ignoring what they said, Yahshua told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Yahshua saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep," Mark 5:35-39.

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David, 1 Kings 2:10.

Contrary to what the scientists tell us, Scriptures reveal that the dead are just asleep.

Earthly Life Isn't Complete

The Sadducees of Yahshua's time, and today's scientists, motivate people to live as if this present life were everything to be desired. And many, even supposedly upright men, are sometimes tempted to set aside time-honored moral or spiritual values in exchange for material possessions and convenience. Because of the desire to have more of this world's goods, many, if not the majority, tend to forget that life on earth is transitory.

As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more, Psalms 103:15-16 NIV.

Sadducee teachings and science's viewpoint on man's life refers only to the first part or stage of human existence. The Sadducees, and the "bright boys" of science, believe that life in this world is all that it takes for man and nothing

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Mini Study



A Matter of Death and Life

Do we really die when we pass away or does our soul live on in heavenly bliss while our loved ones mourn us down here on earth?

Most of my early life I had been bothered by a nagging question. If when we die our souls waft off to a joyful eternity in heaven, then why so much mourning at funerals?

If the popular teaching and belief is that man has an immortal soul, then why do ministers talk about "death" when administering last rites?

And if our soul lives on after we die, what's the point of a resurrection of the "dead," which the Bible speaks of?

We hear people say that good ol' Uncle Ben has died. Is Ben really dead? Or do we go to his funeral just to mourn his lifeless body, while our uncle lives on, rolling around heaven, playing his harp and testing the aerodynamics of his wings?

There he is, lounging serenely, propped up by one arm as he peeks over a cloud's edge and smiles down at those glumly carrying his corpse in a casket. Or at least that's what so many think. They want to believe that the dead aren't actually gone, we just can't see them anymore.

Let's face it. Most people don't like to talk about this subject. They're too into the present: too busy trying to get ahead, raising a family, getting a promotion, working for retirement — going for the gusto of life. The seriousness of the subject weighs heavily on the conscience, and we'd rather not be reminded of our own mortality.

The philosophy is, why worry about it? Just live a decent life, be an honest citizen, do your share, and it will all work out in the end. You'll get to heaven, they believe. But is that true?

more. This prompted Paul to remind the Corinthians.

If only for THIS LIFE we have hope in Messiah, we are to be pitied more than all men, 1 Cor. 15:19.

It behooves all who claim to know the truth, and profess to know Yahweh, to avoid trying to accumulate and hoard much of this world's wealth. King Solomon tried it, but in the end found it all in vain.

Here is Solomon's testimony:

I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired men and women singers, and a harem as well - the delights of the heart of man. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet, when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun, Ecc. 2:8-11.

Hope of Life Beyond

The Sadducees, as represented by Caiphas, the High Priest, flourished during the time of Yahshua until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. They accept only the writings of Moses and, unlike their rivals, the Pharisees, they don't believe in the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits. They belong to the wealthy class and, as such, were arrogant, conservative and better connected politically.

Their mindset is centered on materialism and on secular matters. They think only of physical Israel - nothing more. And their understanding of the Messiah's coming is to get rid of the hated Roman legions and restore the Kingdom of Israel to its former glory. So when Yahshua did nothing about it, they rejected Him as the Messiah and instead, executed Him.

Strangely, Sadducee doctrine is a conundrum of conflicting beliefs or ideas. Consider: The Sadducees insist on strict observance of the Torah, yet they reject the existence of angels and spirits. But, in the books of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers, Moses repeatedly wrote of the Angel of Yahweh. They say there is no such thing as a spirit, but profess to know the Elohim of Israel. Surely, they do not think of Yahweh Elohim as a mortal being.

The apostle Paul sternly admonished the Corinthians who were somewhat influenced by the teachings of the Sadducees.

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning, for there are some who are ignorant of Elohim - I say this to your shame. But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or something else. But Elohim gives it a body as He has determined, and to each kind of seed He gives it its own body... So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body, 1 Cor. 15:33-38, 42-44 NIV.

Conclusion

The Holy Writings (OT and NT) repeatedly tell us of a much better existence in the resurrection of the dead. Since ancient times, Yahweh's people knew that this present life is just a transient existence.

If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my CHANGE come, Job 14:14.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be CHANGED. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, 1 Cor.15:51-53.

The life of King Solomon is a most fitting example and proof that having everything in this life - power, wealth, worldly pleasures, etc.- still falls short of a really fulfilled life. Solomon says nothing, really, is gained under the sun. It means that all the things he got are temporal and sooner or later will be gone.

However, as it is written, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what Elohim has prepared for those who love Him," 1 Cor. 2:9 NIV.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal, 2 Cor. 4:18 NIV.

All things considered, the resurrection of Yahshua assures Yahweh's people of a much better existence beyond the grave. This was the assurance made by the Savior to Martha, the sister of Lazarus,

Yahshua said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," John 11:2..

Some 3500 years ago, Job knew that physical life is transitional - that after death there is another life in a higher dimension for the righteous. Believe and trust in Yahweh through FAITH in Yahshua, the true Messiah. And when your appointed years in this life come to an end, be rest assured that, indeed, Earthly Life Isn't Everything!

Elder A. S. Untalan, Sr.

David King of Israel



Shepherd and Leader

The Bible mentions more about David than any other man except for our Savior Yahshua and Moses. We always think of David as being very lovable and practically perfect. Yet, the Bible holds only Joseph and Daniel to be without real fault.

Even though Scripture reveals David's many shortcomings, his redeeming virtue is his immediate readiness to unashamedly admit his error. Whenever he is shown that he made a mistake and sinned, he freely admits his shortcoming and seeks forgiveness.

Many of us have been taught that with the exception of a few gross sins, such as his shameful affair with Bathsheba, which for the rest of his life tarnished his image, David is to be considered a virtuous man who was always fully obedient to Yahweh. Yet, David was human and made some major mistakes.

David was skilled on the harp and wrote the Psalms in which he captures the exact mood and expression of man's spiritual desire to serve Yahweh. His Psalms win our admiration.

David's greatest virtue was when confronted with his error, he openly and unhesitatingly admitted his fault:

"*I have sinned against Yahweh!*" blurted David to Nathan the prophet when confronted with his sin with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 12:13.

From David we hear no excuses, no attempts to justify his actions, no attempts to blame others, no argument, no attacks upon his accuser. Only a simple, "I have sinned!"

David's Alter Ego

But there is another side to David that is generally missed by most Bible readers. Errors in judgment

and clear examples of strong-willed determination in direct opposition to Yahweh are also a part of David's life.

He did not always follow Yahweh's wishes, but took it upon himself to do things his own way. Obviously, Yahweh allowed him to have his way even though He did not necessarily approve.

David's carnal actions reflect mankind's desire to be in the right. David is determined to do things his way, heedless of any caution by others and in defiance of Yahweh. At times Yahweh seemingly tolerates some things.

For example, it was Yahweh's plan that He would rule Israel through the priesthood. Israel was not to have their own king.

However, He knew that eventually this desire to follow their pagan neighbors would surface:

When thou art come unto the land which Yahweh thy Elohim giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom Yahweh thy Elohim shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother, Deuteronomy 17:14-15.

Sure enough, Israel soon rejected Yahweh and made Saul king.

The most glaring of King David's mistakes was his affair with Bathsheba. David already had six wives who had given him six sons, which he had brought from Hebron:

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of

Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; and his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron. And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul, 2 Sam 3:1-6.

Yet, David seemed tantalized by Uriah's wife.

This dark episode with Bathsheba and David's evil attempts to cover his sin are tragic, for David was but a weak shadow of his former self after this episode. His sons turned out to be an embarrassment, as Yahweh predicted. David lost much of his integrity and his character was obviously tarnished.

As we follow the events in the life of King David, we note that Yahweh still loves him in spite of his arrogant blunders. But the penalty he had to pay remains.

Bathsheba's baby died in spite of David's petitions that it might live. King David now seems subdued and reluctant to react as in former times, especially when the chastisement of his family is necessary, as we shall see.

David's Temple Blunder

King David apparently was obsessed with the idea that he should build a permanent dwelling place for Yahweh. This passion can be seen as he continues to collect the brass, silver, and gold that he later designates as being for the temple. As King David sits in his panelled house, he considers the Ark of the Covenant resting in a "house of curtains." The Ark had been properly carried by the Levites from the house of Obededom after its return from the Philistines and placed in the tent that David had prepared

for it.

And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of Yahweh, and pitched for it a tent, 1 Chron. 15:1.

So they brought the ark of Yahweh, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before Yahweh, 1 Chron. 16:1.

David reveals to Nathan his plan to build a permanent dwelling place for Yahweh.

David has been successful in his wars and rule of Israel, and Nathan reassures him to go ahead, for Yahweh is certainly with him.

And it came to pass that night, that the word of Yahweh came unto Nathan, saying, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus saith Yahweh, shalt thou build Me an house for Me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not Me an house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from

all thine enemies. Also Yahweh telleth thee that He will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy Seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for mM name, and I will stablish the throne of hHis kingdom for ever, 2 Sam. 7:4-13.

This same story is repeated for us in 1 Chron. 17:3-14.

Later, Nathan must reverse himself and commands David not to build Yahweh a house. Rather, Yahweh will build David a house.

This we are to understand is a promise of a family dynasty that Yahweh will bring about through David's progeny. After David dies, one of his Seed will build a house (more correctly a temple) for Yahweh to reside in.

This obviously is speaking of the coming Messiah, Who will be from the lineage of David and ho will build a spiritual house.

David has firmly fixed in his mind that a physical building, a temple, will be built by his son Solomon. He therefore makes preparation for Solomon to build that house. Notice in 1 Chronicles 17:4, however, that Yahweh specifically says, "You shall not build Me an house to dwell in!" This is surely an imperative, comparable to "You shall not kill; You shall not steal..."

Yahweh did not want a permanent house for Himself. He reminds David that He has never dwelt in a permanent house, but was in a movable tabernacle or tent ever since He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt,

For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another. Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye

not built Me an house of cedars? (1 Chron. 17:5-6)

Yahweh obviously foresaw the future destruction of that Temple in 70 C.E. He also knew of the coming captivity of the Israelites, and of the Jews shortly thereafter, leaving Judea trodden down by the gentiles for nearly 2,000 years.

The Temple Is Spiritual

Stephen recounted that Solomon did indeed build the temple for Yahweh in Acts 7:48-50,

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith Yahweh: or what is the place of My rest? Hath not My hand made all these things?

In the account he reviews the history of Israel and reminds us that Yahweh does not reside in man-made houses.

A building is not holy because it is called a "church" or because the people of the Book meet there. Yahweh does not dwell in a permanent building, but through His Spirit He lives in the human heart.

A building is only holy when Yahweh's people are assembled therein. When they depart, Yahweh's Spirit goes with His people and indwells them.

Paul wrote the brethren at Corinth,

Know you not that you are the Temple of Yahweh and that the Spirit of Yahweh dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 6:19.)

Paul reveals in 2 Corinthians 6:16 that believers together are a collective temple for Yahweh.

And what agreement hath the temple of Yahweh with idols? for ye are the temple of the living Yahweh; as Yahweh hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people.

In Ephesians 2:19-22, Paul maintains that believers are built upon

Yahshua the Messiah the chief cornerstone and grow in a holy Temple as a habitation for Yahweh through His Spirit:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of Yahweh; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yahshua Messiah Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in Yahweh: in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of Yahweh through the Spirit.

Yahshua Himself told the woman at the well that the time was at hand when the Father would not be worshiped in Mount Gerizim, neither in Jerusalem.

He continued in John 4:23-24,
But the hour comes and now is when true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. Yahweh is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

The New Testament is clear that True Worship is from the heart of the individual. "*The Holy Spirit is given to all that obey Him,*" we are told in Acts 5:32. It is the heart of the individual that Yahweh wants to see correctly constructed, not magnificent buildings with spires and steeples and stained-glass windows.

He does not want fancy brick and stone buildings with polished marble columns and ankle-deep carpeting. Neither does He desire animal sacrifices. Yahweh seeks an obedient and contrite heart within the human family.

The Greater Son, who was to build the house for Yahweh, is Yahshua the Messiah. He is the One who is building His Assembly today. The "Ekklesia," the "Called-out ones," is the group that is being prepared to rule and reign with the Messiah. The Temple is a spiritual

building made up of converted humans, the saints.

Against Yahweh's Wishes

David apparently did not fully grasp the spiritual basis upon which Yahweh made the promise.

This truth was not fully understood even by the religious leaders in Yahshua's time. Yahshua had said, "*Destroy this `Temple' and in three days I will raise it up,*" John 2:19. The Jews responded that the Temple (of Herod) had been under construction 46 years. But Yahshua spoke of the Temple of His body, verses 20-21,

Then said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the temple of His body.

David understood that his son Solomon was the one who would build the permanent temple in Jerusalem for Israel's worship. He was obsessed with building Yahweh a Temple that would be a grand representation and a memorial to David here on earth.

He took the direct rebuke of Yahweh, "*You shall not build Me an house to dwell in*" (1 Chron. 17:4), and added words of his own. Notice what David says, "*But the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, `You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars; you shall not build a house unto My name, because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight,' "* 1 Chronicles 22:8.

Although David alleges that Yahweh gave him this message, nowhere can it be found as a statement from Yahweh! Usually Nathan or Gad came to David and gave the messages from Yahweh.

Nowhere in 2 Samuel 7 nor in 1 Chronicles 17 do we find any statement coming from Yahweh saying that David's bloodletting in war precluded him from building the temple.

David turned the actual con-

struction of the temple over to his son, Solomon. And at the same time proceeded to accumulate much iron, brass, cedar, and other materials for the construction of the magnificent temple that Yahweh said He didn't want!

The "Solomon" Mistake

Another error in David's thinking appears in 1 Chronicles 22:9, where he supposedly quotes the exact words of Yahweh:

Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon [Hebrew, "rest, peace, peaceable"], and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

Notice that David had in his mind that his son was to be called Solomon. That is false. Yahweh had another name for Solomon. Yahweh told Nathan that David's son was to be called Jedidiah!

And David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and Yahweh loved him. And He [Yahweh] sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and He called his name Jedidiah [Hebrew, "beloved of Yah"] because of Yahweh, 2 Samuel 12:24-25.

The Hebrew Tanakh reads, "*And he was named Jedidiah at the instance of [Yahweh].*"

David had the audacity to say in 1 Chronicles 22:9, "*...for his name shall be Solomon!*"

David had been so blessed of Yahweh in gaining victory after victory over his enemies, that apparently he thought he could do no wrong, that whatever he did was blessed of Yahweh.

He even attributed words to Yahweh which are nowhere found in the Bible, and some are in direct opposition to the very words of Yahweh.

Collecting Horses, Wives

King David certainly was aware of the special warnings given to kings in Deuteronomy 17:16-20:

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as Yahweh hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear Yahweh his Elohim, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

Verse 16 warns the king not to multiply horses unto himself. Apparently, this was because horses were employed primarily for war and not agriculture.

Israel's kings were to depend upon Yahweh for their victories and not put their trust in fleshly strength and the might of the creature,

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of Yahweh our Elohim, Psalm 20:7.

In 1 Chronicles 18:4, King David hamstrung the enemy's horses, but reserved 100 for himself for the chariots he had captured:

And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them an hundred chariots.

Although a hundred horses

may not be as many as Solomon's thousands of horses, accumulating them against Yahweh's instructions shows that David was influenced to rely on the strength of horses in warfare instead of on Yahweh.

Deuteronomy 17:17 warns the king not to multiply wives to himself lest his heart be led away from Yahweh:

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

We learn in 2 Samuel 3:1-5 that David had six children born to him in Hebron, one from each of his six wives.

Samuel tells of David's taking more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem after he came from Hebron! In Jerusalem David sees the wife of Uriah the Hittite bathing and lusts after her, sends for her to come to his palace, and ends up in an adulterous affair.

Adultery is obviously more heinous than lesser sins, for David himself said, "*I have sinned against Yahweh,*" 2 Samuel 11:13. Joseph, when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him, said, "*How can I do this great wickedness and sin against Elohim?*" (Genesis 39:9)

The punishment for breaking the Seventh Commandment is also more severe, apparently because one has defiled his physical body, which is the very temple of Yahweh, 1 Corinthians 3:16.

David was headstrong and once he decided upon a thing, he ignored any outside cautionary advice.

In 1 Chronicles 21:1 David was provoked by Satan to number Israel. Joab resisted that order and questioned David's decision. The king's word prevailed, however, and Joab told David there were one and a half million soldiers. Joab had omitted Benjamin and Levi, the priests, for the order was "abominable to Joab," 1 Chronicles 21:4-6.

Apparently Joab was quite aware

of the proscription found in Exodus 30:12-16, which said that when Israel was numbered, a half shekel was to be paid as a ransom price to forestall a plague from befalling them. Yet, David insisted upon taking the census anyway.

And Yahweh was displeased with this thing; therefore He smote Israel, 1 Chron 21:7.

Notice that as soon as Yahweh smote Israel, David confessed,

And David said unto Yahweh, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech Thee, do away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly, 1 Chron 21:8.

Because he did something contrary to Yahweh's will, Yahweh sent Gad to David to tell him,

Yahweh said to Gad, David's seer, "Go and tell David, 'This is what Yahweh says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for Me to carry out against you.'" So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what Yahweh says: 'Take your choice: three years of famine, three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of Yahweh—days of plague in the land, with the angel of Yahweh ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the One Who sent me," 1 Chron 21:9-12 NIV.

From the choices given, David picks three days of destruction by Yahweh's angel in which 70,000 Israelites fall.

Just as the Angel of Yahweh was about to destroy Jerusalem, King David again admits that he was the one who sinned, and asks that the hand of Yahweh be upon him, and not the people, 1 Chronicles 21:15-17. David is then commanded to build an altar on the threshing floor of Oman the Jebusite, verse

18, which he does.

Temple Trouble

In the back of David's mind remains the desire to build a temple for Yahweh (which Yahweh doesn't want). When he sees the threshing floor he is inspired to make it the location for the Temple. He goes ahead and buys it from Oman.

In chapter 22:1, David boldly states,

This is the House of Yahweh Elohim, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

It makes no difference that Yahweh told David that he should not build a Temple for Him. David is determined that a Temple will be built.

In 1 Chronicles 22:2, David commands that the foreigners in the land be gathered together to work on the House he has planned. But were not the Israelites to drive out the seven nations of Canaan and utterly rid the land of these foreigners lest they remain and defile Israel?

When Yahweh thy Elohim shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when Yahweh thy Elohim shall

deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other idols: so will the anger of Yahweh be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire, Deut 7:1-5.

There were not even to be any foreigners in the land!

Now, David accepts the fact that foreigners were in the land and even has them engaged in the building of the very Temple!

Note this: when the Tabernacle of Yahweh was built in Exodus (31:1-6), we discover that it was constructed by Israelites who were moved by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh to do the specific work. But here David takes the foreigners, the slaves and the gentiles, and puts them to work building Yahweh's House!

The errors of false worship began when Israel allowed the heathen to get involved either directly or through influence.

When Ezra came back from the Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel saw to it that the construction of the Temple was done by Israelites, especially the Levites,

Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of Yahweh at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jeru-



Was David able to place the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Tables of the Covenant, Aaron's rod that budded and the golden censer containing manna (Heb. 9:4), into the temple he wanted to build?

salem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of Yahweh, Ezra 3:8.

Neither did Nehemiah allow Sanballat to help build or interfere with their building of the wall around Jerusalem, Nehemiah 6:1-5.

True Temple of Israelites

The lesson is clear. The true Temple of Yahweh is the Assembly of the called-out ones. They are the ones who have been given of Yahweh's Spirit to do His work.

The construction of His Temple continues even now and is done by those who have been called for this task. Peter reveals that Yahshua is the chief cornerstone, rejected by the men of the world, but chosen of Yahweh and precious,

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of Yahweh, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Yahweh by Yahshua Messiah. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed, 1 Peter 2:4-8.

We as living stones are being built a spiritual house, and an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to Yahweh.

Notice that we are not referred to as bricks which are all the same shape, same size, same color. But we are referred to as stones, each a different color, different shape, different size, different density, dif-

ferent texture.

Yet, we are all being fitted for that great Temple that Yahshua is building with His saints for the habitation of Yahweh.

The shaping, fitting, grinding, polishing and selection of these living stones continues even today. Yahweh has also chosen leaders who are through the guidance and power of His Spirit to perfect the saints, through His work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah,

And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Yahweh, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Messiah, Ephesians 4:11-13.

The work of the selecting and the shaping of the stones continues until the whole body, fitly joined together, grows into that holy Temple which will expand until it becomes a city,

Behold, the tabernacle of Yahweh is with men and He shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be His peoples and Yahweh Himself shall be with them and be their Elohim, Revelation 21:3 TSS.

With the above observation in mind, that the tabernacle built by Moses is really a physical representation of the spiritual assembly that Yahshua is now building with humans like you and me, we must look at David's activities. Notice in I Chronicles 22:2 that he commanded foreigners, strangers, to shape the stones that were to be used in the House he was building for Yahweh:

And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of Yahweh.

Stones Not to Be Shaped

In Exodus 20:25 Israel was strictly forbidden to shape and chisel stones to make an altar for worship!

And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

But David is having worldly men—unconverted, non-Israelites—working and shaping stones for Yahweh's house. It represents a human approach to Him.

This happens today when christianity selects for leaders and ministers those with charisma and good speaking voices; ones who have engaging personalities, who can quote selected Scriptures; ones who have singing voices, or are musically inclined. These are the shaped and polished attributes the world looks for.

Yahweh, however, looks on the heart. A deep abiding faith in His Word, and ready obedience to His law are among HIS requirements.

He can give His people the needed abilities to preach and teach His word just as he strengthened Moses, Amos, Paul, and a host of others.

Seeking men with charisma, a good appearance and great speaking ability is not the primary consideration with Yahweh.

The shaping and chiseling of stones done by worldly men simply makes these stones fit man's ideas and ways. It may not be what Yahweh wants at all. Just as the unconverted men shaped and polished stones to fit the plan of David's temple, so the men of the world want to groom certain men to fit their ideas of a religious leader.

It is Yahweh Who chips off the rough corners of His people so that they fit into the mold He wants them to fill.

Using men of the world may give the house of Yahweh the attraction and approval of the world, but Yahweh's ways are higher than man's

ways. He looks on the inner man of the heart as He chooses whom it is He calls to be a part of His dwelling place. Therefore, Yahweh did not allow man to chip and shape stones for His altar of worship.

(Yahweh did indeed inspire Israelites to engrave stones, Ex. 28, but these were for the priest on which to carry the names of the twelve tribes of Israel in the holy garments.)

David Pays Terrible Price

David told Nathan that a man who had done what he, himself, had done should die. But David was allowed to live and also continue as king of Israel because of his remorse and repentance. Yet, David had to pay a terrible price for his sins.

The punishment of David revolves around his family, 2 Samuel 12:9-12. The firstborn son from Bathsheba died despite David's fasting and mourning. David's eldest son, Amnon of Ahinoam, raped David's daughter Tamar, sister of Absalom. His act violated Leviticus 18:9-11.

When King David learned of this shameful behavior, he was upset, 2 Samuel 13:21, but did NOTHING. Significantly, the Septuagint adds, "But he did not vex the spirit of Amnon his son, because he loved him, because he was his firstborn."

David did not punish Amnon for his sexual misconduct. But, then, how could he chastise his son when he himself was guilty of a more vile act, even committing murder! Such is the result of our sins as well. They render us spiritually weak.

This incident that went unpunished is what infuriated Absalom, who two years later got Amnon drunk at his party and had him killed.

After two years Joab affects a reconciliation between David and Absalom, 2 Samuel 14:33.

There is no record of censure by King David for Absalom's killing of his brother. But then, how could

David punish his son when his own sin with Bathsheba led to taking a man's life?

Absalom then set upon a program to steal the hearts of the people that he might usurp the throne of his father David and become king. He openly goes unto the top of the house unto the concubines of his father David in the sight of all Israel, 2 Samuel 16:21-22.

Absalom then openly makes war with David his father who flees with Absalom in pursuit. David greatly loves his son Absalom in spite of the grief brought upon the family, and mourns the death of his son, 2 Samuel 18:33.

There is no record that David ever did reprimand Absalom for killing his brother Amnon.

In the closing years of his life, seventy-year-old David finds his fourth son Adoniyah plotting to make himself king. Being warned by Nathan and Bathsheba, David hurriedly has Solomon crowned king, 1 Kings 1:39-48. He charges Solomon with the task of erecting the permanent Temple at Jerusalem.

David's Redeeming Virtue

King David never rebuked his son Adoniyah who planned to steal the throne.

Sadly, David did not take any action against the wicked behavior of his own sons who plotted against him. His character, now flawed by his sin with Bathsheba, renders him unable to bring himself to mete out strict discipline. He is the victim of his own sins through his offspring, just as Nathan had prophesied,

Thus saith Yahweh, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun, 2 Samuel 12:11.

David's own family was a source of trouble and concern for the re-

mainder of his life. His redeeming virtue is that he always admitted his sin and turned to Yahweh in remorse.

David did not blame others for his shortcomings, and in turn did not accuse those calling attention to his sin. Neither did he try to assassinate the character of his accusers as seems to be a general practice today.

Perhaps that is why Yahweh said that David was a man after His own heart in Acts 13:22:

And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will.

The life of David is an account of a man who has shining attributes, but of a man who is very human and lapses into error just as does all mankind.

His love for Yahweh prevails through all his adversity. He quickly turns to Yahweh when made aware of his mistakes.

Undoubtedly the trials of his life prepared him to write the beautiful Psalms of encouragement which glorify Yahweh. We are commanded to sing and read the Psalms so that we might better joyfully praise our Heavenly Father and give thanks for His wonderful Son.

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to Yahweh, Eph 5:19.

Let the word of Messiah dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to Yahweh, Col 3:16.

His Psalms of praise give us a beautiful example to follow as we struggle to avoid falling by the wayside and learn from both David's good and bad examples.

Elder Donald R. Mansager

Obedience Is the True Test of Faith

Spiritual leaders, regardless of how great and highly esteemed, are as dependent upon pleasing Yahweh, and need His forgiveness of sin for salvation as much as the lowliest babe in the word.

The entry of Joshua and Caleb into the Promised Land while Moses and the rest of Israel were barred must have importance for understanding the New Covenant relationship with Yahweh. But what is it?

We are told that not one individual who had disobeyed Yahweh and put Him to the test during the wandering in the wilderness entered the Promised Land, but Caleb was permitted to enter because he had a different spirit and followed Yahweh wholeheartedly, Numbers 14:22-24.

The spirit that the people were yielding to must have been the spirit of disobedience Paul refers to in Ephesians 2:2. The Spirit that Caleb faithfully followed must have been Yahweh's Holy Spirit, which He gives only to those who obey Him, Acts 5:32.

We are told that Joshua was one of the seventy elders chosen to assist Moses and that he had served Moses since his youth, Numbers 11:24-28. Joshua's service was of faithful obedience as he was chosen to assume leadership after Moses died.

We are also told that Joshua fought the Amalekites and overcame them with the sword, Exodus 17:10-13. The Amalekites are a type of the powers of darkness and forces of evil that New Covenant servants of Yahshua the Messiah are to overcome with the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:12 and 17.

Hence, the significance of Joshua and Caleb's entry into the Promised Land must be that of all those who are released from bondage to sin by baptism in Yahshua's Name - only individuals who faithfully follow and obey the Holy Spirit and overcome the world will receive the promise of life that is in the Messiah Yahshua, 2 Timothy 1:1.

Therefore, since the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it, Hebrews 4:1.

This verse shows up the lie of the lawless doctrines that teach that once a person receives Yahweh's Holy Spirit and grace, that person is assured entry into eternal life.

How can a person fall short? By quenching Yahweh's Holy Spirit and turning to follow the spirit of disobedience! Paul warned in 1 Cor. 10:11-12 NIV:

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

Proof In Actions

People today ignore Paul's warning against idolatry and sexual immorality. They grumble and blame Yahweh for the adversities in life and they put Yahweh to the test because they lack understanding of His Word and don't really trust Him.

We are commanded to grow in knowledge and get understanding. The trouble is that people think they understand, but their actions show that they really don't.

They claim they believe and trust in Yahweh, but their actions show they don't know whom they believe and trust. They think they obey Yahweh and His Messiah, but their actions show they follow the spirit of disobedience.

True, Yahshua can forgive unwitting sin, but He says, "*Woe to you blind guides! You strain out the gnats but swallow a camel,*" Matthew 23:16 and 24. Today's blind guides nitpick and argue over little things that seem right to them, but are blind to committing idolatry and putting Yahweh to the test.

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside are full of greed and self-indulgence, Matthew 23:25.

Today, influential religious leaders teach lawless doctrines and make a show of what they believe is righteousness, but are blind to lusting after pleasures of the flesh and corruptible treasures of earth, Matthew 6:19-20. In doing so they sully the image of all who use the Bible in worship.

Today's blind guides and their blind followers do not understand that Yahshua is referring to them in Matthew 15:8 and 14. He says,

These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain: their teachings are but rules taught by men. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.

It is true! We do not earn eternal life by obedience to the law. But even a babe in the Word with a sincere desire to worship in spirit and truth can come to understand that disobedience of the law, especially willful disobedience, can cause a fall from grace just as can efforts to earn salvation without the influence of Yahweh's Holy Spirit—grace. We are saved by grace, Ephesians 2:5, and if we fall from grace we are alienated from the Messiah, Galatians 5:4, and fall short of meeting Him in the resurrection and receiving the promise of eternal life.

Joshua and Caleb verify the conclusion that only those who believe, have faith and do OBEY will par-

ticipate in the first resurrection.

True Repentance Necessary

Satan's efforts to cause people to fall from grace have deceived the whole world into idolatry and disobedience to Yahweh's laws. Malachi says the priest is the messenger of Yahweh and ought to preserve knowledge, but their teachings cause people to stumble at the "To-rah," translated "law" in the King James Version (Mal. 2:7-8).

Blind teachers and their followers pay only lip service to Paul's warning to flee from idolatry, 1 Corinthians 10:14, and John's warning to keep free from idols, 1 John 5:21.

If the teachers understood Yahweh's Word, they would understand how idolatrous and hypocritically lawless their teachings are!

Yahweh is merciful. Therefore, the blind sheep and even blind teachers, who are spiritually dead and followers of the spirit of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2), can open their eyes to see and their ears to hear, John 12:40. They can turn to be saved.

Those who are sincere in their repentance and turn away from continuing in sin (Rom. 6:1-2) will have their sins forgiven. They can be given Yahweh's grace, fed on pure spiritual milk, 1 Peter 2:2, and be shown the small gate and narrow way that leads to life, Matthew 7:14.

People who walk (live) in the narrow way of Spirit and Truth are not without hope if they stumble in their walk. Paul, in 1 Timothy 1:1 and 14, tells us Yahshua the Messiah is our hope. Paul says grace—the influence of Yahweh's Holy Spirit—is poured out abundantly along with faith and love in Messiah Yahshua.

It is Yahweh who keeps us from falling, Jude 24, and 2 Peter 1:4-7 tells us what we must do to participate in the divine nature and never fall. His Spirit fills us with wisdom

and understanding and strengthens us to bear fruit in every good work, Colossians 1:9-11. It is possible to stumble and not fall beyond recovery, Romans 11:11.

Yahweh's called-out ones who stumble in the way, are instructed to call upon the Master Yahshua with a pure heart, 2 Timothy 2:22. They must then resist the devil and humble themselves. Yahweh's promise is that if we do this, the Master will lift us up, James 4:7-10.

He has set His called-out ones as watchmen over the house of Israel, Ezekiel 3:17. He requires them to bear witness to the world (Acts 22:15) by living righteously (1 Pet. 2:24). He also gives them the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20.

Brethren are to love one another deeply, from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22. That means to be compassionately concerned about one another's welfare. If one is seen to be straying unwittingly from the narrow way, the person is to be warned about the error and gently turned back to the way of righteousness.

Brother to Brother

Yahweh's warning in Ezekiel 33 is as applicable in the New Covenant as in the Old:

When I say to the wicked, "O wicked man, you will surely die," and you do not speak out to dissuade him from his ways, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man to turn from his ways and he does not do so, he will die for his sins, but you will have saved yourself, verses 8-9.

The warning in verses 18 and 19 is also applicable in the New as in the Old Covenant:

If a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, he will die for it. And if a wicked man turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and right he will live by doing so.

A righteous person walking in the narrow way becomes a wicked person in Yahweh's eyes if the warning of a spiritual person is rebuffed and the person continues in lawlessness. We are to obey Yahweh rather than men.

To be righteous in His eyes requires study of His Word in order to rightly handle it. A person who turns away from the ways of the world must be able to discern whether or not warnings of error come from the Spirit of truth or spirit of disobedience.

Faith Plus Obedience

The spirit of disobedience often points to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and reminds us that Abraham and Moses died in faith not having received the promise; but Yahshua's sacrifice and their faith makes them whole and they will receive the promise in the resurrection.

This, they say, proves that all Yahweh requires in the New Covenant is that people believe and have faith in His Son.

What they say proves they don't understand the implication of being told that Abraham obeyed Yahweh's law, Genesis 26:5.

Nor do they understand the implication of being told that Moses did not enter the Promised Land because he disobeyed Yahweh. Moses was commanded to strike the rock with his rod once, Exodus 17:6, but instead he chastized the people and struck the rock twice, Numbers 20:8-12.

Neither Abraham nor Moses was perfect in obedience, but their acts of disobedience could not have been acts of deliberate defiance of Yahweh's will. If they had been, Yahshua's sacrifice would not cover their sins, Hebrews 10:26, and their faith, even in Yahweh, would have been in vain.

People who really love Yahweh will strive for perfect obedience not because they want to earn eter-

nal life, but because they desire to please Him and obey Him as a loving Father. They will not become fearful when they stumble because they believe in Yahshua and know the Spirit will not let them fall beyond recovery.

They will not waver when the spirit of disobedience puts their faith (trust) to the test because they believe Yahweh will not allow Satan to tempt them beyond their

ability to bear it and will provide a way of escape or to stand up to it, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

People who really love Yahweh from the heart will open their ears to hear what His Spirit says to them and their minds to understand what they hear. When they understand what is right to do they will do it because refusing to obey is deliberate sin that blasphemes the Spirit of grace and rejects Yahshua's

sacrifice for sin, James 4:17 and Hebrews 10:29.

People who really love Yahweh from the heart will open their eyes to see which way the Spirit of truth and grace is going and they will not need to be pushed, bribed or frightened into following wherever it leads.

Elder Ralph Henrie

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q Was receiving the Holy Spirit without baptism just for the initial period when the Holy Spirit was first given, or is it for now also?

A In the book of Acts, chapter two, we read of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the earth on the day of Pentecost. Jews from 16 nations had gathered together and heard of the wonderful works of Yahweh. Upon learning that their sins were responsible for the Savior's death, the question was asked, "Now what can we do?" Peter told them what to do—get baptized:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Yahshua Messiah for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38 AV.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls, Acts 2:41 AV.

About three thousand Jews and Israelites received the word and were baptized, and given the Holy Spirit. Note that it was Peter who was the spokesman for the Apostles. He was fulfilling the commission given him earlier by Yahshua:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My assembly; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be

loosed in heaven, Mt. 16:18-19 AV.

Following up on the promise that Peter would be given the "keys of the Kingdom," we note the unusual activity of the Holy Spirit being given on two separate occasions even before baptism to two different groups of people (not of Israel), but Samaritans and Gentiles. First came the Samaritans:

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of Yahweh, and the name of Yahshua Messiah, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of Yahweh, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (For as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Master Yahshua.), Acts 8:12-16 AV.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify Yahweh. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the [name of Yahshua]. Then prayed

they him to tarry certain days, Ac 10:44-48 AV.

Peter and the Apostles understood the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans and the Gentiles even before baptism was evidence from Yahweh that all races are acceptable candidates for baptism into the body of Messiah. All are expected to repent from worldly ways and walk in the way of Yahshua. Baptism is the key to the Kingdom (Mat. 16:19) and Yahshua is the door, (John 10:9). He is also the Judge in the first resurrection (2 Cor. 5:10, Rom. 14:10-12).

Note that baptisms are done by immersion into Yahshua's Name. We look upon all baptisms not in the Savior's true name as a type of John's baptism. That is, a baptism of repentance where one has done what he/she understood at the time. Baptism into "Yahshua" means the "Salvation of Yahweh," but "Jesus" has no meaning in any language, (Request our mini-studies on the deeper meaning of baptism).

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Q Are the Palestinians in Jerusalem today the Jebusites mentioned in Joshua 15:63 and Judges 1:21? Or rather, are the Palestinians of today the Philistines of old? In Exodus 23:32-33 Yahweh states not to make a covenant with the Philistines nor let them dwell in their land. Does this hold true today with the Palestinians?

A When Israel crossed the Jordan, they were told to kill off the seven vile nations in the land and let none survive, nor were they to marry or have any social contact with them. They were to destroy their idols and images, burn their altars and rid the land of paganism:

When Yahweh thy Elohim shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when Yahweh thy Elohim shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, [and] utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them. (Deut 7:1-2 AV.)

Israel never did cleanse the land of these seven heathen nations, for they are still a problem described in the book of Judges. The offspring of these nations may well be there even today and are the ones Yahshua fights with even before He attends the wedding supper, where His garments are stained with blood, Revelation 19:13.

He comes from Edom (Esau) Isaiah 63:1-7.

Q Did the rules to consecrate a priest in Ex. 28:4-5 extend to the New Covenant Assembly?

A Yahweh seeks a broken and contrite heart prepared to obey Him. Exodus 28 goes into much detail about the physical laws of the tabernacle and the robes and dress of the Levitical priesthood. We understand that we are now in the Melchizedek order .

We are told in Scripture, "*For many are called, but few [are] chosen.*" [Those chosen have been selected beforehand] "*According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Yahshua Messiah to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*" Mat. 22:14; Eph. 1:4-5 AV.

The Holy Spirit is given at baptism and each baptized believer is a child of Yahweh who is given a spiritual gift (Rom. 12 and 1 Cor.12), which Paul describes is to guide the assembly: "*And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Messiah,*" Eph. 4:11-12 AV.

It is up to the leaders of the Assembly to recognize the potential of those Yahshua has placed in the body, that we guide and mentor them for greater spiritually responsible positions in the Assembly.

Q In Leviticus 21, many rules are given for the high priest and other priests, i.e., whom they can marry, etc. Does that apply today?

A Even though we do not dress as did the Israelites, we can comprehend the message Yahweh gives us here. We are in training to be kings and priests (Rev. 5:10) and should seek the spiritual lessons that apply to us. Thus we are to live clean, think clean, talk clean and live a life above reproach and keep ourselves pure. We are not to wed a non-believer:

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Master. (1 Cor. 7:39 AV.)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Messiah with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (2 Cor. 6:14-15 AV.)



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