

YAIY



Beacon



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**What is wrong
with this picture?
Read Jeremiah 10:1-4
to find out.**

YAIY **Beacon**



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MISSION

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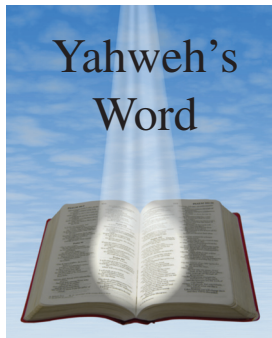
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Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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Don't Do It

"T'was the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." Most everyone knows the rest of this story. But, what about the day after Christmas? Those that celebrate this holiday know that cleanup time is at hand because all those wrappings and boxes have to be disposed of. What about those ornaments and lights that are used to decorate the tree? And, then, one must get rid of the tree that cost a lot of money and vacuum the dry needles off the floor. Then, perhaps, the hardest part is to pay for all those gifts. Do these thoughts ring a bell? If they do, then read on to find out why one should not celebrate this day.

Retail Bonanza

At this time of year, when one is shopping at a busy retail store, one might hear a parent telling their young child, "If you don't behave, you won't get anything from Santa for Christmas this year!" Through learned behavior the child will probably settle down, if only for a short time, because they don't want to miss out on a gift from Santa! Some people will say that Christmas and Santa Claus are for their children. Some children believe so strongly that Santa exists that their parents will have them stand in a long line in order to sit on Santa's lap, tell him a story and then be told to behave and they will have a good Christmas. What Ebenezer Scrooge says, "Bah! Humbug," is altogether true.

Be Truthful

The existence of Santa Claus is an untruth. When a child finds out the truth of the matter, he might become quite disillusioned. "My parents lied to me!!!" Why doesn't a parent just say, "Guess what, son, I am going to lie to you."

Now, when the child grows up, gets married and has children of his own, the story will be repeated, and the lie will be perpetuated. Somehow, this continuum has to be stopped. The only way to do this is to do a lot of studying and reading from Scriptures and resources that are available.

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it, Prov. 22:6 NIV.

Parents are responsible to teach their children how to live their lives. Sometimes it takes some discipline to help the child learn the ways of Yahweh.

Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him, Prov. 22:15 NIV.

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die, Prov. 23:13 NIV.

The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother, Prov. 29:15 NIV.

The words of Yahweh found in the Scriptures will not change, for Yahweh tells us in Mal. 3:6 that He "changes not."

Don't Deceive

By telling a child that Santa exists and later the child finds out he doesn't, a parent is deceiving their own child. Is it wise for a parent to deceive a fellow worker? No, it isn't because that parent might lose his job if the deception is found out. So, why does a parent lie to their child about Santa? What are the promises for all liars?

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brim-

stone: which is the second death, Rev. 21:8.

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev. 21:27.

But, what does Santa Claus have to do with Christmas?

Santa Claus

Of all the stories concerning the origins of Santa Claus, most of them center on a person by the name of Nicholas, who was born around 245 AD in Patara, in present day Turkey. One story is about an angel who appeared to a cardinal appointing a new bishop for the Turkish town of Mira (now Kale). The angel told the cardinal to ordain the 30-year old Nicholas. Throughout his priesthood, Nicholas was recognized for his generosity to all those in trouble, and he became known for the granting of wishes. It has been said that St. Nicholas climbed on the roof of a house and dropped a bag of gold down the chimney where it landed in a stocking hung to dry, giving us a reason to hang up Xmas stockings today.

It is held by some scholars that the legends of Nicholas as gift-giving drew in part from pagan, pre-Christian sources. For example, The Teutonic god of the air, Odin, would ride through the air on a gray horse (named leipnir) each autumn – so did Nicholas; Odin had a long white beard – so did Nicholas; a sheaf of grain was left in the field for Odin's horse – children left a wisp of straw in their shoes for Nicholas. Some attribute the characteristics of the German god Thor to Nicholas, as Thor was supposedly elderly and heavy with a long white beard; he rode through the air in a chariot drawn by two white goats (called Cracher and Gnasher); he dressed in red; his palace was in the "northland;"

he was friendly and cheerful; he would come down the chimney into his element, the fire.

Once the story of his deeds spread, he became known for helping those in trouble. He became known as the patron saint of children. Many churches and cathedrals were named after him, and next to the Messiah and the Virgin Mary, Nicholas was the next most popular figure in Christianity. His popularity spread to the Laplands – to the people of the reindeer sleds.

In a French village during the 12th century, local nuns honored their patron on December 6, which became St. Nicholas Day. The nuns delivered candy to all the children who'd been good, leaving it for them in their shoes, and leaving switches in the shoes of the naughtier children. Because they seemed to cover so much territory, some began to say it was St. Nicholas

himself who delivered the gifts.

On the eve of the feast of St. Nicholas, the bishop, himself, was said to come and visit children in their homes, giving gifts to those who had been good.

By medieval times Nicholas had become the most beloved patron saint of Europe, and through the Middle Ages, the story of Christmas in Europe developed to combine religious and pagan myths. An interesting observation, if one abbreviates St. Nicholas one gets Saint Nick.

It was Dutch sailors who came to the New World and would not give up St. Nicholas as their patron; when they settled, particularly around the New York area, their nickname Santer Klause (Sinter Klaas) became the name we know as Santa Claus. St. Nicholas is the national saint of Russia and Greece.

When Luther created the Protestant church, he realized it would be necessary to wean German children off of St. Nick, so he created Krist Kindle, a winged cherub, who also flew and brought gifts to good children – but which instead focused the celebration around the Messiah. He came on Christmas Eve, which more closely coincides with the Winter Solstice, around which pagan religion celebrated the return of the sun's light.

In the Protestant areas of central and northern Germany, St. Nicholas later became known as der Weihnachtsmann. In England, he came to be called Father Christmas. In France, Pere Noel. Italy had Bafana, out looking for the child, left gifts in her wake for other kids. The gnome Tompten was Sweden's figure, and in the U. S., Martin Luther's Krist Kindle became Kris Kringle.

After the reformation, German Protestants encouraged veneration of the Christkindl as the gift giver on his own feast day, December 25. Because the Nicholas tradi-



Detail from *First Celebration of the Festival of St. Nicholas by The New-York Historical Society*, Broadside by Alexander Anderson, December 6, 1810, commissioned by John Pintard, SY 1864-21, negative number 28883.

tion prevailed, it became attached to Christmas itself.

After the American Revolution, New Yorkers remembered with pride the colony's nearly forgotten Dutch roots. John Pintard, influential patriot and antiquarian, who founded the New York Historical Society in 1804, promoted St. Nicholas as patron saint of both society and city.

The American author Washington Irving gave America their first detailed information about the Dutch version of Saint Nicholas. In his *History of New York*, published in 1809 under the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker, Irving described the arrival of the saint on horseback each eve of Saint Nicholas (December 6). This Dutch-American Saint Nick achieved his fully Americanized form in 1823 in the poem *A Visit From Saint Nicholas* (better known as *The Night Before Christmas* by writer Clement Clarke Moore). This poem gave a big boost to the jolly elf image.

The New York Historical Society held its first St. Nicholas anniversary dinner on December 6, 1810. John Pintard commissioned artist Alexander Anderson to create the first American image of Nicholas for the occasion. Nicholas was shown in a gift giving role with children's treats in stockings hanging at a fireplace.

In 1863, political cartoonist Thomas Nast began a series of annual drawings in *Harper's Weekly* which were based on the descriptions found in the poem and Washington Irving's work. These drawings established a rotund Santa with flowing beard, fur garments, and an omnipresent clay pipe. As Nast drew Santa until 1886, his work had considerable influence in forming the American Santa Claus.

Dozens of artists portrayed Santa in a wide range of styles, sizes, and colors, including Norman Rockwell on Saturday Evening Post covers.

But it was in the 1930s that the now familiar American Santa image solidified. Haddon Sundblom began thirty-five years of Coca-Cola Santa advertisements which finally established Santa as an icon of contemporary commercial culture. This Santa was life-sized, jolly, and wearing the now familiar red suit. He appeared in magazines, on billboards, and shop counters encouraging Americans to see Coke as the solution to "a thirst for all seasons."

In the book titled *Fossilized Customs*, the author, Lew White, states the following:

"In the late 1800's, a pharmacist put some cocaine in a sweetened, bubbling cola beverage, and named it Coca-Cola. By the 1930's, it was a major business, and had its own advertising department, strategists, and artists. One of the artists, Rosenblum, decided to attempt something new. The Dutch/Irish character called 'Santa Claus' was beginning to get a lot of attention, so he set his mind on aligning the Coca-Cola product with

him. In Rosenblum's time, Santy Clause didn't look like he does now. The original character was an Irish transplant, coming from people who had based their beliefs on Druid magic, and elves. The 9th century poem, *The Night Before Christmas*, had catapulted our Christ Elf into the spotlight because the character was so appealing. Rosenblum used his artistic imagination to change Santy Clause into what we think he looks like today. Before, Santa was no more than 2 feet tall, skinny, and wore green. He had a long white beard, and for all practical purposes, he was a leprechaun/elf character with magical powers to grant wishes, watch you without being seen, and so on. The alignment with the hearth is other pagan syncretism, right down to the stocking hung by the chimney with care. To make this night visitor charming and more human, Rosenblum made him a full-sized man, jolly and plump, to better assume the distinctive shape of the Coke bottle. He also used the appealing red and white product to clothe Santa in. The drooping wizard hat was a must."

The Christmas Tree and Decorations

In the Middle Ages, the Germans and Scandinavians placed evergreen trees inside their homes or just outside their doors to show their hope for the forthcoming spring. The modern Christmas tree evolved from these evergreen trees that were regarded as a symbol of life.

The star that is usually placed at the top of the evergreen tree is said to symbolize the star which appeared in the sky to guide the wise men to the place of the Messiah's birth.

The gifts that are usually placed beneath the evergreen tree are representative of the gifts the three wise men brought and gave to the



Messiah, not to another person.

The white color of a candy cane is said to symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of the Messiah. The hardness of the cane is to represent the solid rock. The “J” shape of the cane is to represent the name of “J-sus.” The three red stripes are said to represent the trinity and the blood shed by the Messiah. These last two associations can not be found anywhere in Scriptures.

The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe descends from the customs of several different cultures. For example, it was a tradition of Greek festivals and marital ceremonies to exchange kisses under the mistletoe. In Scandinavia, mistletoe was considered a plant of peace, under which enemies could declare a truce or warring spouses kiss and make-up. In Europe, branches of mistletoe were hung from ceilings to ward off evil spirits.

Although the mistletoe is considered to be the seed of love, the common name of the plant is derived from the ancient belief that the mistletoe grew from bird droppings. In ancient times, people observed that mistletoe appeared on



a branch or twig where birds had left droppings. “Mistle” is the Anglo-Saxon word for “dung,” and “tan” is the word for “twig.” So, mistletoe actually means “dung-on-a-twig.” What a strange meaning for a plant that is supposed to bring love and happiness!

Compton’s Encyclopedia, under the article Tree and Decorations tells the following:

“The Christmas tree was introduced into England early in the 19th century and was popularized by Prince Albert, the German husband of Queen Victoria. The trees were decorated with candles, candies, paper chains, and fancy cakes that were hung from the branches with ribbons.

“German settlers brought the Christmas tree to the American colonies in the 17th century. By the 19th century its use was quite widespread. Trees were also popular in Austria, Switzerland, Poland, and Holland. In China and Japan, Christmas trees were introduced by Christian missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. There they were decorated with intricate paper designs.

“The use of evergreens for wreaths and other decorations arose in northern Europe. Italy,

Spain, and some other nations use flowers instead. Holly, with its prickly leaves and red berries, came into holiday use because it reminded people of the crown of thorns worn by [Yahshua] on the way to His execution and the berries symbolized droplets of blood.”

Nimrod

In the book *The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop shows that the yule log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as the sun god, but cut down by his enemies. And the Christmas tree represents the slain deity come to life again. Yahweh warns us against erecting Christmas trees in Jeremiah 10:2-5:

Thus saith YAHWEH, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be



borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

Winter Solstice

In the northern hemisphere, the winter solstice occurs when the sun reaches the southernmost point in the celestial point in the sky. After this time when the sun appears to be rising higher in the sky idolatrous worshippers would be celebrating the sun being born again.

According to The World Book Encyclopedia, in 354 CE the December 25th date was selected by Liberius, a bishop of Rome, "because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the Sun."

In Central Europe, a feast was held at the time of the winter solstice. A large wooden wheel was covered with straw so that no wood was visible. It was then dragged to the top of a steep mountain. Here a feast of merrymaking, games, and dancing was carried out all day. At the time of vespers, this symbol of the sun was set on fire and allowed to roll down the mountain.

This act was to represent the sun running from the sky. According to the idolatry of pagan Germans, the sun was a large fire wheel rolling through space. This, then, represented the celebration of the sun's birth.

Under the article *Christmas*, by Cardinal McClosky, we read in the Catholic Dictionary:

"St. Chrysostom, in a Christmas sermon delivered at Antioch in the year 386, says, 'it is not ten years since this day (Christmas day on December 25) was clearly known to us.'"

By this source it is evident that prior to 377 CE that December 25 was not mentioned or used as the birth date of our Messiah Yahshua.

Other sources show that this day was also known as Saturnalia,



a festival of much revelry, dancing, merriment, and feasting held in honor of the sun deity Mithras. A king was appointed over the revels. Slaves were freed. Foes became friends. Friends feasted together. Evergreens decorated the houses. Songs were sung in honor of Saturnalia. Gifts were exchanged between friends. This festival was adopted by the church, which turned it into what was called "Christ's Mass." All of this began 2,000 years before the birth of the Messiah!

Why December 25?

A book called *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World* (page 99) reveals how closely this Mithras figure was to the Savior Yahshua. Mithras was "the creator and orderer of the universe, hence a manifestation of the creative Logos or Word. Seeing mankind afflicted by Ahri-man, the cosmic power of darkness, he incarnated on earth. Shepherds reported His birth on December 25. After many deeds, he held a last supper with his disciples and returned to heaven. At the end of the world he will come again to judge resurrected mankind, and after the last battle, victorious over evil, he will lead the chosen ones through a river of fire to a blessed immortality."

Among the pagans, Mithras was the sun deity. His birthday on December 25 came at the winter solstice, when the sun returned once again and warmed the dying

earth. Their new year began with this phenomenon, which is why our new year starts in the dead of winter. The true Scriptural new year begins in the spring in the month of Abib (meaning "green ear month," Deut. 16:1), when all things begin to green up.

The Roman government helped the church make a conscious effort to combine elements of this pagan worship into their own worship. In the fourth century, the church desired to bring the pagan Germans and Romans into its fold. December 25 was adopted as the birth date of our Savior Who was born in a manger. They incorporated many heathen rites like the yule log and the fir tree, where the yule log, representing Mithras, was burned in a fire and from it an evergreen tree was to have sprung forth.

Bible scholars know full well that the Messiah was not born anywhere near December 25. Yet, when this is pointed out to people, the answer quite often given is that they really don't care when He was born, just so long as a day is kept in memory of His birth. Yet, why should anyone celebrate a day that has its roots in paganism?

Historical facts reveal that shepherds did not feed their flocks by night from late October or early November until around late April or early May because of the severity of the winter cold and rains.

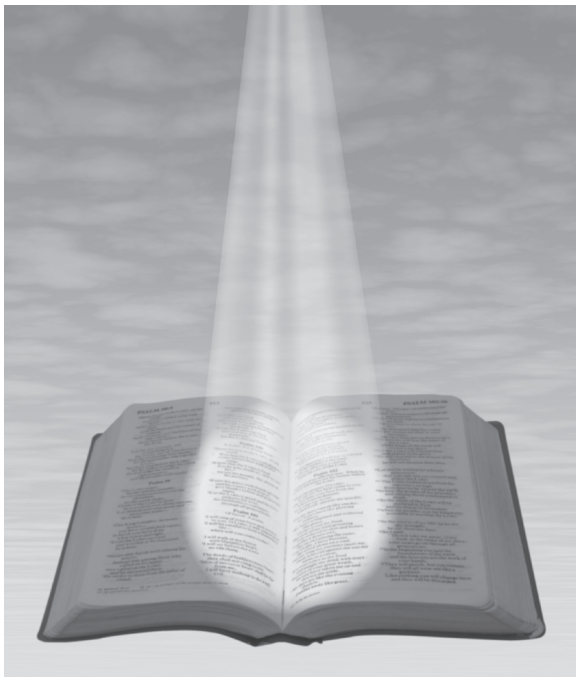
Yahshua's Time of Birth

Using Scripture, it is easy to get an approximation of when Yahshua was born.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease... Dan. 9:27.

Not only does this show that Yahshua died in the middle of the week on Wednesday, but also that Yahshua's work of confirming the covenant lasted for 3 and one-half

<see **Don't** page 14>



The Gift of Truth

At times, we feel the urge to give others gifts as a way of “documenting” our love, care and friendship. However, as we draw closer to Yahweh through Yahshua, we become aware of traditions in our culture that run against the teachings of Yahweh through His Messiah, Yahshua. What does Scripture have to say about gifts? Below, is an extensive, though not exhaustive by any means, review of gifts in Scripture.

Gifts - a Bribe

You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no gift, for a gift [bribe] blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous, Exodus 23:6-8.

In verse 8 the word *gift* is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's #4979) *hashochad*, whose root word **שָׂחַד***, *shachad*, means a bribe.

He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house, but he who hates gifts [more accurately translated “bribes”] will live, Proverbs 15:27.

The Hebrew word translation as *gifts* here is again Strong's #4979 meaning a bribe.

Gifts - a Sacrificial Offering

You shall also make a plate of pure gold and en-



לִיהוָה:	קֹדֶשׁ
TO THE LORD.	HOLINESS
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LA-YAHWEH	QODESH

grave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO YAHWEH, [or, in Hebrew, QODESH LA-YAHWEH] and you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before YAHWEH, Exodus 28:36-38.

In verse 38, the word *gifts* is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's #4979) **מַתּוֹת**, *matnot*, meaning a present; specifically (in a good sense), a sacrificial offering, (in a bad sense) a bribe. In context, the use is as a sacrificial offering.

These are the feasts of Yahweh which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day: besides the Sabbaths of Yahweh, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to Yahweh, Leviticus 23:37-38.

The phrase *your gifts* is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's #4979) **מַתּוֹתֵיכֶם**, *matnowteeykem*, meaning, in context, sacrificial offerings.

Then I said to them, “What is this high place to which you go?” So its name is called Bamah to this day.” Therefore say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Almighty Yahweh: ‘You are defiling yourselves in

the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations. For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live,' says the Almighty Yahweh, 'I will not be inquired of by you,'" Eze-kiel 20:29-32a.

Strong's #4979, מַתְּנוּתֵיכֶם, *matnowteeykem*, is translated as *gifts* in verse 31, meaning a sacrificial offering.

Gifts - a Tribute

Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And Yahweh preserved David whithersoever he went, 2 Samuel 8:6.

Here, the word *gifts* is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's #4503) מִנְחָה, *minchah*, meaning to apportion, i.e. bestow; a donation; euphemistically, tribute; specifically a sacrificial offering (usually bloodless and voluntary). In context the type of gift here is a tribute.

Gifts - a Present

As the days wherein the Yahudim rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor, Esther 9:22.

The word *gifts* is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's # 4979) מַתְּנוּת, *matnot*, meaning a present.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him [that is, Yahweh], Psalms 72:10-11.

The word *gifts* in this verse is the translation of the Hebrew (Strong's

#914) אֶשְׁכָּר, *'eshkar*, meaning a gratuity or a present.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, Matt 2:11.

The word *gifts* here is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1435) δῶρον, *doron*, meaning a gift or a present.

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets, Matthew 7:11-12.

As in the previous Scripture the word *gifts* is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1435) δῶρον, *doron*, meaning a gift or a present.

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for Yahweh, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had," Luke 21:1-4

Gifts is a translation as in the previous Scripture.

For the gifts and the calling of Yahweh are irrevocable, Romans 11:29.

Here the word *gifts* is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #5486) χάρισμα, *charisma*, meaning a divine (free) gratuity or gift.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality;

he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness, Romans 12:6-8.

Gifts is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #5486) χάρισμα, *charisma*, meaning a divine (free) gratuity or gift.

But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Messiah's gift, Eph 4:7.

Gift, here, is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1431) δωρεα, *dorea*, meaning a gratuity or gift.

Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men," Eph. 4:8. (See also Psa. 68.18)

The word *gifts* in this verse is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1390) δόματα, *dómata*, meaning a present.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Master, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, Yahweh also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? (Hebrews 2:3-4)

Here the word *gifts* is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #3311) μερισμοῖς, *merismois*, meaning a separation or distribution.

By faith Abel offered to Yahweh a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, Yahweh testifying of his gifts, Hebrews 11:4.

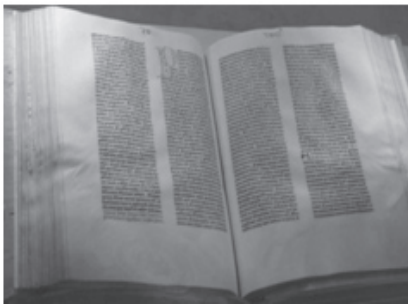
The word *gifts* here is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1435) δῶροις, *doórois*, meaning a gift or a present.

And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth, Revelation 11:10.

As in the previous scriptural reference *gifts* is the translation of the Greek (Strong's #1435) δῶρα, *doóra*, meaning a gift or a present.

Gifts - in General

We see that in the Torah, Prophets and Writings that the emphasis on gifts focused on offerings to Yahweh, gifts to kings, donations to the poor, offerings to false deities, and gifts for the purposes of bribery. In the New Testament [the Brit Chadasha], examples of gift-giving include gifts to Yahshua as King of Israel, gifts to one's children, gifts of money put into the treasury of the temple; however, by far the most emphasis in the New Testament is upon gifts granted by Yahweh and Yahshua through the Holy Spirit.



I have struggled, and you may have also, with the idea of giving friends or colleagues a gift that would, in some way, honor Yahweh. It struck me that the best "gift" that one could give would be the knowledge that is contained in Scripture; and I thought of giving a Bible, but not just a Bible, but a Bible that pointed the way to understanding. I thought, "Why not give people a Bible, highlighted with marginal notations, beginning at Genesis 1, with instructions about where to look next ... a kind of a "Guide to the Truths of Scripture ... with commentary." So, the following is perhaps a preview of some of the verses that I would mark in such a Bible.

In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 1:1.

I would write a note in the margin explaining that the title G-o-d is the English translation of the original Hebrew title Elohim, meaning "Mighty Ones" or "Almighty," which explains why the Scripture says, in

Genesis 1:26, *Then Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."*

In the margin, I would note: "Whom is the Scripture referring to, when it says, 'Our image according to Our likeness'?" I would then direct the reader to Proverbs 30:4,

Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name? Surely you know! RSV

The commentary here would read, "**So, what IS the name of the Father?**" The reader would be directed to Exodus 3:13-15,

Moses said to Elohim, "Suppose I go to the Israelites [back in Egypt] and say to them, 'The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what shall I tell them?" Elohim said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" Elohim also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers – the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob – has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. NIV

The commentary here would read, "The Angel of Yahweh [see verse 2], speaking as Elohim, told Moses that His Name is "I AM." In Hebrew, "I Am" is the word h'Yah. It is interesting that the English translators chose to *define* His name here, instead of *transliterating* it, like every other name in Scripture. In the Hebrew text and to the Hebrew ear, there is no definition here. To someone fluent in Hebrew, it says, "Say to the Israelites that h'Yah has sent you."

In verse 15, the Angel of Yahweh says, "*This is My Name ... forever.*" This Messenger comes

to Moses "in the name of Yah." Notice that "Elohim," the Messenger, is speaking to Moses and uses the full name of The Creator, Yahweh. He tells Moses, "*Say to the Israelites, 'Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers – the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac and the Elohim of Jacob – has sent me to you.'*"

The Name of Yahweh

Here is written the full name of Yahweh, comprised of two Hebrew words, *hayah* and *haweh*. *Hayah* (#1961) means to exist, to be, to become, to come or bring to pass; and *haweh* (#1933) means to breathe or to be (in the sense of existence). Considering this, the name of the Creator, Yahweh, carries with it the meaning, "He who **breathes existence into being.**" Our existence as human *beings* is ONLY by the will of our Heavenly Father, whose name is Yahweh, as it says in Genesis 2:4:

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh [He who "breathes existence into being"] Elohim made the earth and the heavens.

Here is another verse that is amazing in this context:

*And Yahweh Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living** soul, Genesis 2:4.*

Isn't it awe-inspiring to understand the meaning of Hebrew names? Think about this: What if the translators **defined every** name in the Bible instead of **transliterating** them? Would you recognize the following verse?

"It came to pass in those days that the Salvation of Yahweh came from the Guarded One of the Path and was entirely covered by the Mercy of Yahweh against the Judgment Coming Down From Heaven."

Do you recognize that verse? Probably not; but tell me, Who is

the “Salvation of Yahweh”? Who is the “Guarded One”? What is “the Path”? Who is the “Mercy of Yahweh”? And, where is the “Judgment Coming Down From Heaven?” Below is the verse in question, and notice how easy it would be to simply read it and move on, missing the lesson contained in the meaning of the names.

It came to pass in those days that Yahshua came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan, Mark 1:9 (also in Matthew 3:13).

Defining the names in the Bible brings a deeper understanding of the text, doesn't it? Still, we honor Yahweh by calling upon His name, especially knowing the meaning of His name.

Honoring the Name of Yahweh

Let me ask you a question. Aside from the simple meaning of His name, how important is it to honor the Name of Yahweh?

“If you will not hear, and if you will not take it to heart, to give glory to My name,” says Yahweh Sabaoth (Yahweh of hosts), “I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, because you do not take it to heart, Malachi 2:2.

Any questions about how important it is to use His name? Lest anyone think that “giving glory to Yahweh” means “not speaking His name,” I submit to you the following verses, Isaiah 42:8-12, for your consideration:

I am Yahweh, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing to Yahweh a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness

and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. [Kedar is the second son of Ishmael and it refers to Arab nomads; so, Isaiah is calling out to the Gentiles to Praise Yahweh with a united voice!]. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to Yahweh, and declare His praise in the coastlands.

Who are we to praise? Yahweh, our Heavenly Father! Is it not clear that we are to call out His name in praise? In fact, every time we, and the Scripture, say, “HalleluYah,” we are literally saying “Praise Yahweh.” The liturgy in both Judaism and Christianity use the word, HalleluYah. Brothers and sisters, there is absolutely no justification for denying the name of Yahweh. Think about it. What does it MEAN if someone tells us not to use the name of Yah – and then they praise His name by shouting “HalleluYah!”? What does that make them, whether they understand this or not?

These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever, Jude 12-13.

The “fear of Yahweh” is not just an expression of awe. It occurs 30 times in Scripture, one of which is as follows:

The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever, Psalm 111:10.

The Name of Yahweh's Son

Next in this tour of Scriptural Truth would be to answer the question, “What is the name of Yah-

weh's Son?” The reader would be directed to Luke 1:27-33:

And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, Yahweh is with you; blessed are you among women!” But when she saw him [that is, the angel Gabriel, an archangel whose name means “the Strength of El” – so, we know by his name that this was not some puny messenger], she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Miriam, for you have found favor with Elohim. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name YAHSHUA. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and Yahweh Almighty will give Him the throne of His father [meaning ancestor] David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

The commentary here might read, “The name of the Messiah, given in the English translations, is J-e-s-u-s, though the Greek is I-e-s-o-u-s, pronounced ‘Yehshu,’ an attempt to transliterate His Hebrew name.” The name, *lesous* (#2424) is of Hebrew origin (#3091). The Hebrew name is pronounced Yahshua and is the same name as the man given authority by Moses to lead the Israelites into the promised land, Yahshua (Joshua) of Nunn. The name, *Yahshua*, is combined and abbreviated from the two Hebrew names, Yahweh (#3068) and Hoshea (#3467); which when combined means, “The Salvation of Yahweh.”

“The Messiah Is Now Bringing Salvation!”

I would then direct the reader to Matthew 21:9,

Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of Yahweh! Ho-

sanna in the highest!"

In the phrase "Hosanna to the Son of David," the word "Hosanna" is a combination of the Hebrew words "Hoshea" [meaning salvation] and "na" [meaning "now"] – "Hoshea na"! The phrase "to the" is one word in Greek, the article "the"; so the multitude were literally shouting "Salvation now! The Son of David!" The phrase, "Son of David," is another title for the awaited-for Messiah. So, when we read about the inhabitants of Jerusalem shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they are really shouting, "The Messiah is now bringing salvation!" "The Messiah is now bringing salvation!" "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "The Messiah is now bringing salvation!" How true!

Yahshua came down from Heaven to earth in the name of Yahweh. Literally, His name bears the name of Yahweh, and He comes to us in the mind, the will, the power and the presence of Almighty Yahweh. So, I say, "HalleluYah; we praise you, Yahweh; Thank you, Father, for sending your Son, Yahshua, to demonstrate and teach us Your ways."

In the Beginning

Returning, briefly, to Genesis 1:26, where we earlier asked the question, "Whom is the Scripture referring to, when it says, 'Let us make man in Our image according to Our likeness?'" We understand that the word "Elohim," as used in the 1st verse of Genesis, "In the beginning *Elohim* created the heavens and the earth," refers to the Father and the Son.

I would direct the reader to the evidence of this is found in John 1:1-5:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Yahweh, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Yahweh. All things were made through Him [that is, all things were made through the WORD, the subject of

these verses, namely, Yahshua the Messiah], and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. NKJV

Now, why did I distinguish the name of Yahweh from the title of Elohim in the first two verses of the Book of John? After all, the English text doesn't distinguish between them, writing "God" for all three.

When a noun, in Greek, is preceded by the word "the," it magnifies the importance of that noun. For example, I could say of someone that he was president. How different if I were to describe him as THE president! You can see in the verse above that I've chosen to use the name Yahweh when the deity title is preceded by the article, "ton."

Revisiting John 1:1-2 again we have, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with ton Theon, and the Word was theos. The same was in the beginning with ton Theon."

Restating John 1:1-2 we have, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Yahweh, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Yahweh."

When John used the words "In the beginning," twice – for emphasis – he was referencing the Book of Genesis that uses the same words. And, in reference to the plural form of the Creator, being the word "Elohim," John was saying that the "Word" was the other component of the Creator, His Son, Yahshua, and that He was with the Father, in the beginning.

The Light of Life

Here's another question, "What did Elohim create on the first day?"

Then Elohim said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And Elohim saw the light, that it was

good; and Elohim divided the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day, Genesis 1:3-5.

Yahweh's Son, Yahshua, said, in John 8:12,

I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (The ENLIGHTENMENT of life.)

The Hebrew word for "light" is owr, meaning literal light as in lightning, or figuratively as in the concept of enlightenment.

Signs and Seasons

Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years," Genesis 1:14.

The Hebrew word for "sign" is oth – in the sense of appearing; a signal (literally or figuratively), as a flag, beacon, mark, miracle, token, monument, omen or evidence.

The Hebrew word for "seasons" is mowed, meaning a "set appointment," a Feast, a yearly assembly of the congregation; and a "signal" appointed beforehand.

What are "Appointed Feasts"? Go to Leviticus 23:1-2 NIV:

Yahweh said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are My Appointed Feasts, the Appointed Feasts of Yahweh, which you are to proclaim as sacred [or holy] assemblies.'"

Notice that Yahweh is not saying that these are Holy Feasts of the Jews, or of the Israelites; these are *His* Holy, Set-apart, Clean, Consecrated and Proclaimed Appointments. In four places, Yahweh has declared that these Appointed Times are forever. (See verses 14, 21, 31 and 41).

The Sabbath of Yahweh

And, what is the first Appointed

Time that Yahweh has set to meet with us?

In response to this question, one might wonder how all of this applies to “us,” the “Gentiles,” when Yahweh clearly gives His Appointed Times to the “Israelites.” This is an excellent question, and the answer is found in the words of Yahshua, who commissioned His disciples to “Go only to the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel.” Simply put, if you understand the difference between the House of Judah and the House of Israel, you will realize that “Judah” only represents one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Where are the others? Well, WE are scattered to the four winds. But, Scripture tells us, through virtually all of the Prophets, that the House of Israel (now “Lost”) will be united by Yahweh at the end, on the Day of Yahweh. The entire Nation of Israel will then be restored, made up of all those who choose to worship Yahweh according to His word, according to the times and seasons He gave to us as Appointed Times, Holy Convocations and Feasts.

So, back to the question, “What is the first Appointed Time that Yahweh has set to meet with us?” Here it is:

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings, Leviticus 23:3.

I hope you understand that the Sabbath is not a day given just to Jews or Israelites; the seventh day Sabbath belongs to Yahweh. Now, Yahshua proclaims that He is the Sovereign, the Master of what day? The Sabbath! Yahshua is the Master of the Sabbath Day. He says this of Himself in Matthew 12:8:

For the Son of Man [another Hebrew title for the Messiah] is Master even of the Sabbath.

Webster’s Dictionary defines “Saturday” as “the seventh day of the week.” The day has not

changed since Yahweh created it. Today, the day over which Yahshua remains the sovereign is the day we call Saturday. It is the day that Yahweh has made an appointment to meet with us. When do all days begin and end?

Genesis 1:5 – So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis 1:8 – So the evening and the morning were the second day.

Genesis 1:13 – So the evening and the morning were the third day.

Genesis 1:19 – So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Genesis 1:23 – So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Genesis 1:31 – So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

The pattern here is that evening is the beginning of each day. Every day begins, as Elohim designed it, at the time of sunset. Although the verses pertaining to the seventh day are in Genesis chapter 2, we can see that the pattern is set:

*Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then Elohim **blessed the seventh day and sanctified it**, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made, Genesis 2:1-3.*

How important is it to honor Yahweh’s Sabbath?

Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: “Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that

soul shall be cut off from among his people,” Exodus 31:13-14.

I am Yahweh your Elohim: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am Yahweh your Elohim, Ezekiel 20:19-20.

The seventh day Sabbath and the Annual Sabbaths of Yahweh are a sign, a **signature**, of the covenant between Him and us. And by keeping them we are showing Him that we are His children. Willfully rejecting, or not keeping of the Sabbaths of Yahweh, is tantamount to breaking off our relationship with Him.

Applying the Understanding of Sabbath to Scripture

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre, Matthew 28:1.

In this verse, we have the picture of two women, both named Miriam, going to the sepulchre in which Yahshua had been laid, having died three days earlier. It was at the end of Sabbath, at **sundown**, that they ventured there. Remember, when the sun goes down, a new day begins. The word “dawn” used in the King James means “light,” literally, but remember, and this holds true for the Greek word *epiphosko*, “light” is rooted in the concept of “enlightenment,” to “draw on” or “become known,” according to Strong’s Concordance. Here, the word “dawn” does not refer to the sun coming up, it refers to the sun going down, as the first day of the week, known to us today as Sunday, becomes “known.” At the sepulchre, an angel appeared to the women, who apparently were afraid:

But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Yahshua

whom was impaled on a stake. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Sovereign lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you," Matthew 28:5-7 NKJV.

Now, wait a minute. How could the Messiah have risen at sunrise on Sunday, as is commonly believed, if the two women went to the sepulchre BEFORE sundown on Saturday – on the Sabbath!

Here, as a part of this "gift bible," I would direct the reader to the Scripture in which Yahshua is confronted by Scribes who asked Him to prove that He is, indeed, the long-awaited-for Messiah. We would cover the "Three Days and Three Nights" sign and prophecy of Jonah that Yahshua gave them. This prophecy says that He would lay three days and three nights in the earth before being resurrected.

Next, I would direct the reader to the Scripture verse:

Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain [hanging] on the tree on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away, John 19:31.

The day AFTER Yahshua's execution was NOT a weekly Sabbath, it was a HIGH SABBATH – the High Sabbath, or Holy Convocation of the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As a note, most Scripture follows the Jewish tradition of referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread as "Passover." It is NOT a seven-day "Feast of Passover," for Passover is a single day, the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day that Yahshua fulfilled in spilling His blood and sacrificing His life for us – He is the Lamb of Yahweh. He is also the Ram, caught in the thicket that Abraham sacrificed in place of his only son, Isaac (Gen

22:2). (Wait, didn't Abraham have a first son, Ishmael? Yes, but that's another study).

The reader would then be directed back to Leviticus 23, where the "High Sabbath," the Appointed Times of Yahweh could be explored. The unfolding of the meanings ascribed to each of the Feasts would provide a continuing adventure throughout the Scripture, examining the meaning of the New Covenant, as described in Jeremiah 31:31; the House of Judah and the House of Israel, the Law and the Spirit, the prophecies waiting to be fulfilled, and on and on until the Scriptures are referenced and demonstrated to be one continuous teaching of Yahweh and His Son, Yahshua.

I praise Yahweh for this vision. Father, give us more of Your truth, more of Your wisdom, more of Your strength, and more of Your patience. You bless us, Father, and we kneel at Your feet, in the name of Yahshua Ha Mashiach. HalleluYah!

Elder John Fisher

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years.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Yahshua also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased. And Yahshua Himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, Luke 3:21-23.

Here we see that Yahshua was about thirty years of age when He began His ministering.

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even

forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise, Num. 14:34.

And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year, Ezek. 4:6.

We know that Yahshua died on Passover which occurred at the end of March or the beginning of April. Tracing back three and one-half years would end up occurring at the end of September or the first part of October. This is certainly not December 25. Also, the end of September or the beginning of October places the time during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Therefore, we can conclude that Yahshua was born about the same time in the year that He was baptized by John the Baptist - very near, if not during, the Feast of Tabernacles.

Satan's Substitute

The Feast of Tabernacles is a seven day festival, the first day being a High Day. This feast is immediately followed by the Last Great Day, another High Day. The total number of days involved is eight. What Satan has done is take a seven day period of time starting with December 25, celebrated as a holiday, and followed that seven day period of time with January 1, another holiday celebrated by churchianity. This eight day period of time is what Satan has substituted for the Feast of Tabernacles followed by the Last Great Day.

With many of the world today believing that our Savior was born on December 25, how perfect an imitation Satan has made to make the masses replace a season holy unto Yahweh with a pagan substitution. So, whom should you follow, man or Yahweh? Each of us has that choice to make. As Deut. 30:19 says, "Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

Elder Roger G. Meyer



Religious Pied Pipers

When Israel left Egypt, Yahweh sent an angel ahead of the people to guide them along the way. He warned them not to rebel against the angel because He said, "My Name is in Him."

When the Tabernacle was set up in the wilderness, a cloud appeared above it and stayed over the tent night and day. This phenomenon looked like a cloud in the day and a pillar of fire at night. When the cloud lifted and moved, Israel packed up and moved with it. When the cloud stopped, Israel stopped and set up camp.

The people remained in the camp as long as the cloud stayed in place, whether it was for a day or weeks. They moved only when the cloud moved and they followed wherever it led them, Exodus 23:20-21 and Numbers 9:15-23.

Talk about supernatural guidance! This marvel was real! A visible, physical presence that led Israel to the Promised Land, Deuteronomy 31:14-15 and Psalm 78:52-54. After the temple was built the cloud filled the temple with Yahweh's glory and no longer traveled, 1 Kings 8:10-11.

Traditions Took Over

Although the cloud no longer moved, Yahweh promised to guide Israel to the end, Psalm 48:14. The guidance, however, was no longer a visible, physical presence. It became an invisible Spiritual influence contained in the instructions for righteous living and preserved in the writings of Moses and the prophets.

After the remnant of Judah returned from the Babylonian captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah were appalled by the Jews' ignorance of the Torah and Yahweh's requirements for righteous living. Schools were established in the synagogues to teach people to read

the Torah and understand the commandments.

Men learned how to read the Torah and those who also learned how to write, became scribes. The scribes were required to copy the Torah and to teach the law. Teachers were called rabbis and the sages and scholars among them wrote commentaries on the Torah.

These commentaries, called Mishnah and Talmud, are attempts to adapt the writings of Moses and the prophets to the changing lifestyle of the people rather than attempts to adapt the people to Yahweh's requirements for righteous living.

The rabbinical interpretations and additions to the law contained in the Mishnah and Talmud became traditional with the Jews. They formed the basis for many religious beliefs and practices in Judaism that were more influential in Jewish life than the writings of Moses and the prophets.

Paul tells us that the very words of Yahweh were entrusted to the Jews, Romans 3:2. Peter wrote, "*If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of Yahweh,*" 1 Peter 4:11.

This was not how the rabbis taught Yahweh's Word! They quenched the Spirit by their traditions and additions to the Word. Obeying the law became a burden. By Yahshua's time, most rabbis were Pharisees and Yahshua called them hypocrites.

How then could He tell the crowd that the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat and they should do what the Pharisees told them to do? The explanation must be that the Pharisees paid only lip service to Yahweh's law and the people were to do only what the Pharisees paid lip service to and ignore the "false" doctrines taught by the rabbis.

Yahshua's followers are promised that the Spirit will guide them into all truth, John 16:13. All truth is contained in the Bible, but neither Testament by itself

contains all truth. Therefore, people who have trouble understanding something in the New Testament should do what Yahshua told the crowd to do. Go to Moses and the prophets!

Yahshua and the apostles often quoted from the Old Testament to explain a spiritual truth. Sometimes there is no other way a New Testament Scripture can be rightly understood.

In spite of this fact, most Gentile religious leaders ignored Moses and the prophets for centuries. It was taught that Yahshua and the Apostles had established an entirely new religion.

Preachers, teachers, writers, and priests of the new religion did what the rabbis of Judaism had done. Rather than converting repentant people to Yahweh's way, they adapted to the people's way by teaching false doctrines based on misunderstandings that made Scriptures seem to support their religious practices. All they had to do was change the names of their deities and embrace heathen worship days.

A New Religion Devised

The result was indeed a new religion. It is even referred to in history books as a new religion, but it was really only a Christos-coated paganism that enabled the religion to survive persecutions, the fall of the Roman Empire, and to grow in prestige and power.

To this day, the martyrs of the Roman persecutions are looked upon as the price paid for survival. The sad truth is, the martyrs died because they refused to compromise with the pagans. They wouldn't recognize the religion that survived. It was not Yahweh's way of Spirit and Truth.

Nearly everything the religion believes, teaches, and practices is supposedly founded upon Yahweh's Word, yet there is not one translation of the Bible that upholds changing the seventh day Sabbath

to Sunday. Nowhere are we told to observe pagan days like Christmas and Easter as days of worship, or to teach such false doctrines as a secret rapture, predestination, and justification by faith alone.

People of this religion claim to have a Judeo-Christian heritage and think Yahshua and the apostles founded the religion. This is not true! Nothing in the Scriptures hints that Yahshua or the apostles even thought of creating a new religion.

After Christianity became the state religion of Rome, those who refused to turn from obedience to Yahweh's Word as taught by Yahshua and the apostles were driven out. By doing so the new religion wouldn't even have the appearance of anything in common with Judaism.

Reformers Try a Few Changes

After the printing press made the Bible available to everyone, many people soon realized how far from the truth they had been led. The growing unrest that had plagued the Roman Church for several generations erupted in a massive revolt that led to the establishment of Protestant churches.

Leaders of the revolt were determined to lead people back to the way of Spirit and Truth, but they and the people who followed them had no inkling of how continued rejection of Moses and the prophets and retention of false doctrines and pagan days of worship over the true days had distorted their understanding of Scriptures!

The Reformers understood Revelation 1:6 to mean that all followers of the Messiah are priests, and, therefore, are ministers of the Word as well as witnesses. The thinking was that each believer was to read, interpret, and apply the Word for himself.

It wasn't long before the leaders woke up to the fact that people could not come to a mutual agreement about the correct meaning of

many Scriptures. Different groups ended up following a leader they believed was teaching truth.

The divisions that survived are now known as mainline Protestant denominations. These denominations continued to splinter and fracture as later generations came to a different understanding of some Scriptures.

If the leaders and congregation could not be convinced that a new insight was more correct than the traditional belief or practice in question, the people who advocated a change either left the church voluntarily or were forced out by those who rejected the new teaching.

Most Protestant leaders, even those of a later generation, were sincere, fervent, zealous truth seekers who would probably have rather died than knowingly deceive people into believing lies. If they rejected a teaching, it was because they sincerely believed it was not true.

They believed Yahshua's words were spirit and life and would never pass away, John 6:63 and Luke 21:32. They believed Yahshua and the Father are one and that the Father would answer Yahshua's prayer to protect those who obey the Word, John 10:30; 11:22; 17:6. Where is the evidence of divine guidance of the people who believe they are the people for whom Yahshua prayed?

There have been some, maybe even many, charlatans among Protestant leaders who knowingly preached lies for personal reasons, but generally, most were sincere. A preacher who advocated a change in doctrine or practice put the congregation in a situation where it was either believe or not believe the preacher's proposal.

Unless the question was resolved it resulted in a schism in the congregation. The situation becomes a case in which both those who advocate change and those who refuse to change could be following the father of lies. Only one

faction could be following the Spirit of Truth.

This is the method by which the father of lies has deceived people into resisting the Spirit of Truth and believing lies in man's doctrines. It also explains how one Scripture can say, "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way" and another say that Yahweh sends people a powerful delusion that makes them believe lies, 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 11.

The delusion sent is allowing Satan to deceive people who resist following the Spirit of Truth into believing lies that make Yahweh's Word appear to condone conformity to the world. Satan's success must be due to the fact that most people, even some sincere truth seekers, are impelled by fear.

Perfect love casts out fear, because fear has to do with punishment, 1 John 4:18. Deep in their hearts, people know Yahshua has not rescinded Yahweh's decree that the soul who sins will die. Compare Ezekiel 18:4 and 20 with 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Yahweh has made it easier to avoid death by belief in His Son and promised individual spiritual guidance to believers. So, let's take a look at how people are deceived into believing that Satan's spirit of disobedience that they follow is Yahweh's Spirit of Truth.

When the Reformation began, it was taught that the Bible was not the exclusive property of an ecclesiastical priesthood and that all believers should read, interpret, and apply the Bible for themselves. This sounds like a great idea, but it didn't work out as expected.

Could it be because 2 Peter 1:20 indicates that no Scripture or prophecy is open to private interpretation? Private interpretation results when the guidance of Yahweh's Spirit is rejected and a person allows emotions and fear to govern what is believed or not believed.

When emotions and fear control people they will believe what deep

in their hearts they want to believe. They twist the meaning of Scriptures to make them appear to support their beliefs.

Creeds Are Simply Error Carried Over from the Past

It wasn't long before there were divisions among the reformers and later even divisions of the divisions among them. The outcome of the confusion resulting from private interpretation of Scriptures was creeds.

Different groups following different leaders adopted a standard of orthodoxy that a person must agree to abide by before being accepted into the group. In effect, a creed said, if you expect to fellowship with us, you must agree with our interpretation of the Bible. Creeds quenched the lead of Yahweh's Holy Spirit!

Most who turned away from the Roman Church because of false doctrines and unscriptural religious practices used their freedom from restrictions of the church to indulge in gratifications of their carnal minds without feelings of guilt. Of course, most people did not realize they were doing this and were deluded by their creeds into thinking they were standing firm in Bible truths.

Creeds actually did nothing more than freeze the spiritual insights of a leader into traditional beliefs and practices that included whatever errors and even lies that had been carried over from the past.

By writing scholarly Bible commentaries, Bible handbooks and theological studies, theologians and Bible scholars are repeating the error of the rabbis in attempting to adapt Yahweh's Word to changing times. And, as it was in Yahshua's day, the scholarly works produced by early Protestant leaders, theologians, and Bible scholars have a greater influence over people's thinking than the Bible itself.

Yahweh's Spirit does not overwhelm a person with a blinding flash of pure spiritual light. The mind of a truth seeker is not opened to more truth than can be comprehended and accepted at the time.

Even with the most sincere and pious person, growing in knowledge and grace (divine influence of the Holy Spirit) is a progressive and often slow process that begins with repentance from past sins and proceeds only with turning away from continuing in sin. Isaiah says truth comes "here a little and there a little," Isaiah 28:10. In Luke 8:18 Yahshua says,

Therefore consider carefully how you listen, Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.

This goes along with the parable in Matthew 25:19-23 about the servants who have been given a few talents and to whom the master said,

You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.

Doctrine Preceded Scripture

There were a few among the earliest Protestants who saw the fallacy in such doctrines as justification by faith without works and who deplored the idolization of Scriptures. They saw idolization as making the Bible a paper pope. They foresaw that interpretations and understandings that upheld doctrines considered orthodox—whether true or false—would become the absolute rule and unchangeable religious authority.

Note this! It is interpretations and understandings that become unchangeable, not translations of Scriptures.

These early Protestants were working with translations. In a few years it became necessary to invoke the concept of the plenary (absolute) inerrancy of Scriptures. They would use the concept to

make any questioning of doctrine appear to be a questioning of Yahweh's Word rather than people's interpretation and understanding of Scriptures.

Yahshua never said He would start a new religion. He said He would build His assembly on a rock, Matthew 16:18.

The rock must symbolize solid, spiritual truth. Yahshua is the only way to Spirit and Truth and people who wish to live by the Spirit and Truth must believe Yahshua is the Son of Yahweh, the Savior, and not conform to the ways of the world, John 14:6 and Romans 12:2.

Can a religion that from its beginning has succumbed to the demands of secular societies and cultures be built upon the solid rock of truth?

The debate among 20th century Bible scholars and theologians has shifted from the idea of inerrancy of Scriptures to the interpretation of Scriptures. They have come to the conclusion that Scriptures were not given to convey dogmas and fixed doctrines, but to change people's hearts and minds so that they would live by the truth. If people are to live by the truth, they must do what it says, James 1:22, but they can't do what it says if they don't understand what it says.

Advances in the knowledge of ancient languages have revealed that most translators of the past lacked the depth of knowledge of languages required to make an absolutely errorless translation. Comparison with ancient Biblical manuscripts, such as those in the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient secular writings found in long-buried libraries, and the oldest Biblical manuscripts available to the earliest translators confirm the mistranslation of many words in our present translations.

Because nothing but translations are available to us, and even though present-day scholars are

more knowledgeable than those of the past, they are nevertheless uninspired and often preconditioned by belief in traditional lies. They often do not even see an error that should be corrected.

An example of an error that is seen, but which remains uncorrected in all but very few translations, is the mistranslation of the sacred Names. Even though translators know the Names, they continue the mistranslation that became traditional through the KJV. How can we know we are not being deceived if we can't believe that the Bible we read is without errors? Fear enters here. A fear of being deceived blinds people to the fact that Satan has already deceived them. Fear makes people want to believe lies that soothe the conscience and suppress guilt feelings.

Satan's spirit of disobedience began tampering with Yahweh's Word long before the New Testament was written. Translators were often motivated to insert a word or words to make a lie that people believed appear to be scripturally sound doctrine. But Yahweh has not allowed Satan to actually insert lies into the Bible. It generally doesn't take an earnest truth-seeker long to uncover contradictions resulting from belief in a false doctrine.

A person studying only to prove a lie will ignore contradictions and believe misunderstandings of Scriptures. A Bible student who follows the spirit of disobedience is a person who is ever learning, but never able to acknowledge the truth, 2 Timothy 3:7. He is deceived into believing he is following the Spirit of Truth.

Is it love of truth or fear of learning that they are deceived that makes people reject all translations of the Bible except for the King James Version?

Is it love of truth or fear that claims that only manuscripts used by KJV translators are accurate in every word, and different manuscripts used by other translators

are the product of men who hated the truth? Are all modern translators propounding the lies of the ancients because they are totally deceived or are they themselves deliberate liars?

Paul says, "Yahweh's Word is not chained," 2 Timothy 2:9. It wasn't bound to Yahshua's stake and neither is it tied into a book! People may not be worshiping a book, if they claim it is the only book that contains Yahweh's Truth, but they have succumbed to idolizing the Book while ignoring the mistranslations and men's additions to it.

When the sincere Bible student seeks to understand why modern worship has wandered so far from the teaching and truths of the Scriptures, he can start with the Bible translation he is holding.

Many errors we see today originated with translators who either lacked the complete understanding of ancient languages or who let their own doctrinal beliefs influence their work.

Many Protestant Translations

The King James Version was the most famous and widely used translation of the Bible with English-speaking Protestants for about 250 years. The KJV, however, was not the Bible used by the founders of the Protestant churches nor was the KJV ever used by all Protestants.

German Lutherans used Martin Luther's German language translation of both the Old and New testaments. Luther's Bible had a more profound effect upon Germans than the KJV ever had upon English-speaking Protestants.

The German Bible was used by German-speaking Lutheran churches in America until well into the 20th century. Luther published his Bible about 89 years before the first KJV appeared and was definitely not a German language version of the English Bible.

The Anglican Church of England

used the so-called Great Bible and a later revision of that Bible called the Bishop's Bible published in 1548. Geneva, Switzerland, became the center of the Protestant Reformation in Europe outside Germany. From Geneva, John Calvin dominated the Reformation and was the most influential leader of the movement.

Calvin wrote a book that presented his understanding of what Christianity should be. The book became the foundation for almost all Protestant Church doctrines and practices.

K.S. Latourette said in *A History of Christianity* that Calvin "had more to do with giving the Reformed Churches their distinctive characteristics than did any other individual." The four volumes of the book Calvin first wrote in Latin and then rewrote in French were titled *The Institution of the Christian Religion*.

The work shows that Calvin prized Scriptures, but it also shows that he espoused the Trinitarian doctrine, the doctrine of predestination and propounded the concept of election in the sense that some are chosen to be saved (the elect) and some to be lost.

During John Calvin's leadership Geneva became a city of refuge for English Protestants forced to flee from the Catholic Queen Mary. Known as "Bloody Mary," she had about 300 persons called Catholic heretics burned at the stake.

In 1560 the scholars among the English Protestants in Geneva published an English language Bible known as the Geneva Bible that became very popular with the common people of England and was brought to the New World by the Pilgrims in 1620.

No Reform of Reformation

These Bibles are not named with the intent to indicate that they were the only Bibles published during the first century of the Protestant

Reformation. Rather, to point out that they were widely used by the founders of the Protestant churches long before the KJV appeared.

Leaders of the Reformation were not unopposed by others who had also left the Roman Church at the same time and for the same reason. One such Protestant who was a contemporary of Martin Luther was Thomas Muntzer.

Muntzer was a dynamic preacher and a very religious man who had only scorn for Luther's doctrine of justification by faith without works. He referred to Luther as a "white pope" who was leading Christianity into accommodation with the cultured, propertied classes and who taught "Spiritless Father Tread-softly" doctrines. He referred to the division and doctrinal differences among Protestants as "Bible babble."

Muntzer's major disagreement with Luther, however, was with the need for social reform rather than conformity and accommodations with society. He regarded rulers and the wealthy as tyrants and merciless sources of misery for the poor. His sympathy for the poor and his understanding of Scriptures would not allow him to remain indifferent to their plight.

To Muntzer, the need for social reform was a matter of divine justice. His fervent preaching on the subject caused Luther and his followers to label Muntzer a heretic.

Muntzer eventually became obsessed with the idea that the end of the age was at hand and the "sword of Gideon" had been given to him to lead the peasants against the tyrants in "the L-rd's battle."

He led about 8,000 peasants in a revolt against a well-equipped army of knights who cut them down without mercy and captured Muntzer. Later, Luther said Muntzer died an obstinate heretic who refused to recant in spite of being tortured on the rack.

Is the attitude of Luther and his Protestant followers excusable be-

cause Muntzer's fiery preaching against social injustice incited a revolt against the rulers that threatened their survival? Wasn't the Protestant's attitude exactly the same as the attitude the Catholic hierarchy has always had toward people they label a heretic?

Trinity Doctrine Opposed

John Calvin was not without opposition in Geneva. There were some Protestants who opposed him on the grounds that his theocratic (i.e. church) government was a dictatorial regime.

Another opponent was a Spaniard, Michael Servetus. He had been a zealous Catholic in his youth, but became a Protestant after studying the Bible and reading the writings of Reformers. He fled from Spain in fear of the Inquisition and never returned.

A very religious man who earnestly desired to restore Christianity to the truth, Servetus preached that Protestants should reject the dogmas taught by the church from its beginning and look only to the Bible for truth. He rejected Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity as a satanic delusion to which most of the evils of Christianity could be traced.

While in Vienna, Servetus was arrested by the Catholic Inquisition but managed to escape and flee to Geneva, where Protestants could expect safety from the Inquisition. He was recognized by Calvin's Protestants who arrested him and put him on trial for heresy. The charge: denial of the Trinity.

The trial was very one-sided. Protestants who opposed Calvin's idea of how the church should be governed did not support Servetus. They merely used his trial as a pretext to further their attacks on Calvin. Servetus was convicted and burned at the stake.

In a letter written after Servetus began preaching against the doctrine of the Trinity, but before he came to Geneva, Calvin wrote: "If

he (Servetus) comes here I will not let him depart alive, if I have any say in the affair." After the trial had begun Calvin wrote in another letter: "I hope the verdict will call for the death penalty."

Really now, which man was a heretic—the man who denied a doctrine or the man who made such statements? What translation of the Bible, ancient or modern, supports such inexcusable statements?

In his position of dominance it would be very unlikely that Calvin did not have a say in the affair and influence the verdict reached. The trial set a precedent for future Protestant heresy trials, but in details it was no different from a heresy trial conducted by the Inquisition—even to the manner of death upon conviction.

Were the actions of Calvin and the Protestants motivated by love or fear? The King James Bible is not the only translation of Scripture that tells us we are to love our enemies and that all judgment has been given to the Son (Luke 6:27 and John 22).

Michael Servetus merely opposed a doctrine and was no physical threat to them. What scriptural right did the Protestants have to kill him rather than try to discredit him by proving he was wrong and they were right?

As another Protestant heretic influenced by Martin Luther in Germany said, "How does it help us to know that the Pope is a scoundrel, if we do not wish to change for the better ourselves?"

Today the question is: What good would it do us to have what could be proved to be original writings of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, if we will not follow the Spirit of truth and live by what the translations we have shown is true? The historical record shows very clearly that the actions and the doctrines of the Protestants were not without errors and those of the so-called heretics were not entirely

without truth.

Many Revisions in KJV

About one-third of all Americans who use the Bible still prefer the King James Version. Many of them may argue that what happened before it was published occurred because people did not have a totally inerrant translation of Scriptures to guide them into all truth. So, let's give some thought to the King James Version.

In 1604, the English King James I appointed 54 scholars and clerics from both the Anglican and Puritan denominations to make a translation of the whole Bible. He decreed that their translation should be as "consonant" with the original Hebrew and Greek as possible.

Even with the decree, the modern reader has a problem with the king's English. By "consonant" did the king mean "agree in sound" as the word means in the 20th century or did he mean "be as accurate"? The king must have meant "be as accurate as possible" because the king would have understood it would be impossible to make English sound like Hebrew and Greek.

What did "uncomely" mean in 1611? The dictionary defines "comely" as 1) pleasing in appearance as in "a comely face" and 2) "proper," as in "comely behavior."

Hence, "uncomely" means displeasing or improper.

In the King James Version of 1 Corinthians 7:36 "uncomely" is translated from *aschemoneo* (Strong's Concordance Greek Dictionary No. 807). *Aschemoneo* means "to be, i.e., to act unbecomingly." Can this mean anything other than to act improperly? All that modern translations like the Revised Standard Version and the New International Version have done is clarify Paul's meaning for today's reader.

Did "uncomely" also mean "unpresentable" to the King James translators? They translated *askemon* (Strong's No. 809) as "un-

comely" in 1 Corinthians 12:23. Greek-English lexicons say that *askemon* means shapeless, deformed or indecent, inelegant. "Unpresentable" is probably not a literally accurate translation of *askemon*, but it seems to present a clearer understanding of Paul's meaning to today's reader than "uncomely" does.

Many word changes in modern English translations are the result of a modernization of the vocabulary. Two examples of such word changes are:

- John 15:4—abide (KJV); remain (NIV); abide (RSV); remain (NEB)

- Matthew 8:1—charity (KJV); love (NIV); love (RSV); love (NEB)

Scholars appointed by King James I to translate the Bible worked seven years on the translation and used all previously published English translations, the best Hebrew and Greek texts available to them and even the Catholic Douay Bible, which was an English translation of the Latin Vulgate.

The reference used most to determine the best English translation of a Greek word was William Tyndale's English translation of medieval Greek New Testament manuscripts published about 1525. Tyndale's whole Bible, an English translation of both the Old and New Testaments, completed by John Rogers and Miles Coverdale, was published in 1537.

The King James translators so admired Tyndale's work that they adopted about one-third of it to their translation without a change.

Twelve years after its publication the KJV was revised and republished in 1623. The revision contained at least 300 changes from the 1611 version. Another revision and revisions of revisions were published in 1629, 1638, 1653, 1675, 1762, and 1769.

Work on the New King James Version was begun in 1975 and the New King James translation of the New Testament was published

in 1979 and the Old Testament in 1982. It has been estimated that there are about 75,000 differences between the KJV used today and the KJV published in 1611. Today's KJV is obviously not the same as was published in 1611.

This brief background of the KJV is given to show that the KJV is as much the product of men as any version. The men who produced it and revised it were dedicated to making an accurate translation of the Bible in a language intelligible to the people who would be using it. So are today's translators.

The Bible is Yahweh's Word! His Word is truth! That truth is still hidden in translations of the Bible produced by men who are really dedicated to turning out a translation that is as accurate as humanly possible.

The truth may be a little more concealed and harder to uncover than the original writers hid it. But, Yahweh's guiding Spirit can and will reveal deep hidden truths to earnest truth seekers who will follow His Spirit and live by revealed truth, Daniel 2:21-22.

Yahweh's Name Removed

Yahshua accused the lawyers of having taken away the key to knowledge, Luke 11:52. This is, of course, a figure of speech. What was literally taken away was Yahweh's Name. Without Yahweh's Name many Scriptures, especially New Testament Scriptures, cannot be understood.

Jewish superstition and the lies of false prophets caused people to forget Yahweh's Name, Jeremiah 23:25-27. Scholars, both secular and Biblical, may still argue over the exactly correct pronunciation of the Hebrew tetragram YHWH, but all agree that it is not "the LORD" as in the KJV.

Many modern translators acknowledge this fact in the preface or in footnotes of their Bibles, but continue with the KJV's prece-

dence of the "LORD" because it is so traditional and widely used.

Modern translators are knowingly withholding the key to knowledge that the KJV translators inadvertently withheld because of ignorance.

In spite of the fact that modern translators are unwittingly abetting the devilish scheme to hide Yahweh's Name, Yahweh says My people will know My Name, Isaiah 52:6. Yahweh's people are those who are called by His Name, Daniel 9:19.

The message in Isaiah 52:5 is clear in either the KJV or the NIV. Rulers (religious leaders) cause people to howl and blaspheme Yahweh's Name all day long. (The NIV translation "mock" for *yahal* doesn't appear to be correct.)

Could people blaspheme the Name if they don't know it? These rulers and the people who follow them are not called by Yahweh's Name because they don't call on the Name: they blaspheme the Name.

How do they do this? They mock and belittle the use of it and teach names of the Baals and false doctrines that deceive people who will not follow the Spirit of truth. They blaspheme because they believe worshiping in the names of the Baals is not vain worship.

The translation of 1 Timothy 6:3-4 in the NIV is expressed in more modern words than in the KJV, but the warning to Timothy is unmistakable in either version. Paul says that people who engage in mean-spirited disputes about words and teach false doctrines don't understand anything. What can he mean except that they don't understand Scriptures?

Proof of this is in the often heated controversy over the word "virgin" and the fact that some reject all translations except the KJV because many modern English translations do not translate the Hebrew word *almah* (Strong's No. 5959) as "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14. The NIV

translates *almah* as virgin in Isaiah 7:14 but the New Jerusalem Bible translates *almah* as "maiden," while the RSV, NEB, and the Jewish Publication Society of America Bible translate *almah* as "young woman."

It doesn't take a complicated word study to learn the correct translation and the fact that the King James translators were not consistent in the use of the word *almah*. Also, that the NIV translators must have been as preconditioned by the New Testament to mistranslate Isaiah's statement as the KJV translators were.

Looking into both Strong's Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary and Gesenius' Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon, we find that according to Strong, *almah* means a lass (as veiled or private) and accordingly Gesenius says *almah* means a girl of marriageable age.

Gesenius also says *almah* does not convey the idea of unspotted virginity, but it does convey the idea of a nubile girl. (Nubile meaning a young woman mature enough to be suitable for marriage.) The idea of a pure, spotless, untouched virgin is conveyed by the Hebrew word *bethulah* (Strong's No. 1330).

Compare the KJV of *almah* in Genesis 24:43 with the NIV translation. The same word is translated "virgin" in the KJV and "maiden" in the NIV. Now, compare the translations of Genesis 24:16. In this verse the word "virgin" is translated from *bethulah*.

Why did the King James translators give two Hebrew words with different meanings the same meaning and the NIV translators give two meanings to one Hebrew word with only one meaning? One explanation is that both the KJV and the NIV translators were conditioned by their understanding of New Testament Scriptures which the Old Testament writers did not have.

Does the fact that Isaiah was inspired to write maiden rather than

virgin shall conceive and bear a son explain why the Jews still look for a man of natural birth to become the messiah?

People who reject all modern translations of the Bible because the word *almah* is not translated "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14 are resisting the guidance of the Spirit of truth by refusing to examine the truth and understand why there is a difference and which is correct.

On the other hand, people who insist that Yahshua the Messiah was merely human are not just resisting the Spirit's guidance; they are rejecting truth and calling Matthew, Luke, and John liars.

Turning to the New Testament we find that the word "virgin" in Matthew 1:23 and Luke 1:27 is translated from the Greek word *parthenos* in both the KJV and the NIV. *Parthenos* is Strong's Greek word No. 3933 and he says *parthenos* means "maiden" and by implication "an unmarried daughter."

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says *parthenos* means virgin because it is the Greek word found in the Septuagint in place of the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 and Genesis 24:43. It would take a linguistic scholar to determine for certain whether Strong says *parthenos* means maiden because the Hebrew word it replaces means maiden, or Thayer says it means virgin because the King James translators say it does.

People who accept without question the statements about Yahshua's birth in Matthew, Luke, and John never seem to understand that there is a legitimate reason for not translating *almah* as "virgin." Their attitude and emotional, unthinking arguments, coupled with Christos-coated pagan doctrines and religious practices, give the appearance of credibility to the skeptic's arguments that the Bible is filled with religious myths and fables and is nothing more than the product of men.

The testimony of these Bible writers settles the question about Yahshua's birth for a person guided by the Spirit of truth. There is really no need to fear learning that Isaiah wrote *almah* (maiden) rather than *bethuwlah* (virgin) in 7:14. The wording and grammatical structure of recent translations may differ from that of the KJV, but none of the versions mentioned above alters the meaning of the Greek Scriptures that tell of Yahshua's birth any more than the KJV does.

In Luke 1:34, Mary asked the angel how she could conceive since she has not known a man. The angel's answer was that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and she would be overshadowed by the power of the Most High, verse 35. Even before conception the angel calls Yahshua a "holy one." Unless Luke is lying, Yahshua's human body of flesh was miraculously conceived and Mary was an *almah* (maiden of marriageable age) and also a *bethuwlah* (an untouched virgin.)

Matthew confirms Luke's statements in Matthew 1:18-19. Matthew says Mary was found to be with child before she and Joseph had come together and because of this fact, Joseph was going to quietly refuse to marry her. The English translation of the Greek in these verses is a bit confusing in all versions. If Mary was only pledged to marry Joseph, can Joseph be her husband before marriage?

A quick check of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance reveals that the word "husband" in verse 19 is translated from the Greek word *aner* (Strong's No. 435), which means "man" in the sense of an adult male and "husband" only by extension. *Aner* means husband only when referring to a man to whom a woman is married.

Strong indicates that the word "man" in verse 19 isn't even in the Greek. It seems that modern translators were influenced by the KJV

translators and traditional understanding of Matthew 1:19.

A bit of word study indicates that the verse would have been more accurately translated if it read: "Then Joseph, being an upright man and not willing to publically expose her, decided to privately release her from the pledge to marry him. Before he could act on this decision, the angel appeared to him and told him that the child she bore had been conceived by Yahweh's Holy Spirit." This is confirmed in Luke 1:35.

John doesn't give us an account of a miraculous conception, but he does tell us that Yahshua was with the Heavenly Father before the world was made and that He came from the Father when He became flesh and dwelt among us, John 1:1-4.

People who reject Yahshua's divine nature and preexistence are disregarding John and rejecting spiritual guidance. People who argue heatedly over the meaning of words and reject translations because changes in words or grammar cast doubt upon dogmas or doctrines believed are resisting the Spirit's guidance if not actually rejecting it.

The Spirit of truth will have trouble opening people's minds to truth if they must have an infallible book to sustain their faith. After all, we have only translations of translations and there isn't any version of the Bible that is an infallibly correct, word perfect translation of the original writings of the Bible any more than the Roman pope is an infallible teacher of truth.

It is incumbent upon all Bible believers to get back to the original Scriptures as closely as possible. The original Scriptures when given were without error. Only man has perverted Yahweh's words through ignorance or tradition.

Elder Ralph Henrie (deceased)



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Sundays, 4:30 pm; Mondays, 2:30 pm;
Wednesdays, 9:30 am; Thursdays, 5:00 pm;
Saturdays (Sabbath), 10:00 am

HOLY BIBLE


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