

YAIY BEACON

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What is the Day of Atonement?
Yahshua Fulfilling Atonement
Should We Vote?
His Grace, His Payment
Why the World is in Trouble
Truth or Consequence
Simon Peter: A Case Study

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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WHAT IS THE DAY OF ATONEMENT?



There are a number of avenues we could take in looking at the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). It is certainly a day of reflection. Many read the book of Jonah to get a perspective of redemptive grace. We could look at this day in the context of the other seven annual Holy Days. We could also consider this day as one on which we resolve to forsake pride and become humble.

We can read Isaiah 58:1–12 and consider the different reasons for fasting, as the Day of Atonement is marked with the commandment to “afflict our beings.”

We can even break down the English word Atonement to read At-one-ment. We might meditate on how this Day is purposed to bring us into a closer relationship with Yahweh, being one with Him, and with His Son (see John 17:21–23).

We’ll consider some of these aspects in this article. But the question we really want to ask is, “What is the Day of Atonement?”

Among the hills of the Judean Wilderness, east of Jerusalem, is Mount Azazel – *Azazel* understood as meaning *banishment or removal* – near the Dead Sea. It’s one of the highest mountains in that area.

According to Jewish tradition, it’s where the scapegoat was not only released (Lev. 16), but it is said they pushed it off the mountain to its death.



Where the Rubber Meets the Road

It is important to understand that Atonement is the reconciliation of mankind to Yahweh. Today, we observe the Day of Atonement to Yahweh through the sacrificial blood of Yahshua Messiah, and not of animals. But in the grand picture, the Day of Atonement is much more the expression of the great love the Father has for His people – a love we have difficulty understanding. Even King David marveled,

What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Psalm 8:4. (*New American Standard Bible* used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

This is especially true, in light of what’s written in Ecclesiastes 7:20:

Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who [continually] does good and who never sins.

From Adam and Eve to the present time, disobedience to Yahweh’s instructions – sin, by any other name – has been the problem.

A Chosen Fast

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of Elohim, Romans 3:23.

For this reason, Yahshua was, and is, needed not only as a Passover Sacrificial Victim to remit sin, but also as a Covering for us on the Day of Atonement.

And just as Passover has a very particular day (and time) on which it is observed – on the 14th day of the first Biblical month – so also is the Day of Atonement observed on a very specific day:

On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of Atonement; it shall be a Holy Convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to Yahweh. ... It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath, Leviticus 23:27, 32.

It is a Sabbath rest, but particularly marked as the one Day on which we afflict or humble our souls, that is our “being.” This is understood to be a physical fast of both food and water for a full Biblical day, from sunset on the 9th day to sunset on the 10th day. And we know from other Scriptures, the terms “humbling” or “afflicting” one’s self is fasting (abstaining from intake of food and fluids).

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom, Psalm 35:13.

Possibly, this was written by the Psalmist upon reflecting of his ministering to Saul upon the harp when the king had been afflicted with a troublesome, evil spirit or, in remembering his retirement in the cave of Adullam when Saul sought his life.

Why have we fasted and You do not see? [Why] have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice? “Behold, on the day of your fast you find [your] desire, and drive hard all your workers,” Isaiah 58:3.

It has been suggested this is talking about the Day of Atonement. Because it was the one day everyone was commanded to fast. A read of subsequent verses, however, defines “the fast which I choose” (verse 6–7) as having to do with the conduct of life throughout the entire year, and not just reserved for one particular day. It is noted, however, that this Day was a Sabbath (just like Atonement), inasmuch as Yahweh reproved the people for driving hard all their workers (verse 3) which was a transgression of the 4th Commandment that forbade servile work for son or daughter, male and female servant, ox or donkey, or any sojourner who dwelt in their home (Exod. 20:10; Deut. 5:14).

A Humbling Fast

We find in the following, another mention of fasting for a purpose.

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our Elohim to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions, Ezra 8:21.

Ezra, a priest and scribe, called for the people to humble their souls as an entreaty to Yahweh to grant them safety as they traveled to resettle Judea and rebuild the waste places of Jerusalem.

The importance of keeping the Day of Atonement cannot be overstated, even when looking at other areas of fasting and the purpose for them. The Torah decreed that any person who will not “humble” himself on this Day or who performs work on this Day, that person Yahweh would be cut off and destroyed from among his people (Lev. 23:29–30).

Trumpet Blasts

In another article, we had said the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*) heralds Yahshua’s return:

For the Master Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of Elohim, and the dead in Messiah will rise first, 1 Thessalonians 4:16 (emphasis, ours; see also 1 Cor. 15:52).

But the Day of Trumpets is not the only day of the blowing of a trumpet.

On the Day of Atonement, in a Jubilee year, the trumpet is blown as a declaration of the year of release.

You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven Sabbaths of years, [namely], forty-nine years. You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family, Leviticus 25:8–10.

The Jubilee year (the 50th year) begins and ends on the Day of Atonement. It’s an agricultural year, which is different than a prophetic or regular Biblical year. The Jubilee year is called the year of release. Could it be that Yahshua will come back during a Jubilee year?

Following Yahshua’s return from His 40-day fasting in the wilderness to Nazareth, Luke 4:17–21

records the Master on a Sabbath, standing in the synagogue there, reading a prophecy from Isaiah 61.

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "THE SPIRIT OF YAHWEH IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE EVANGEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF YAHWEH." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

The "favorable year of Yahweh" is likely a term for the year of Jubilee.

Given that we don't know with certainty, either the day or the hour of Yahshua's return, it might be He would return on the Day of Trumpets and then confirm the Day of Atonement as the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom Rule. With that said, we will leave the timetable to the Father.

Levitical Details of Atonement

He shall take the two goats and present them before Yahweh at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for the scapegoat. Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for Yahweh fell, and make it a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before Yahweh, to make atonement upon it (by it), to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat, Leviticus 16:7–10.

The high priest selected two goats, and presented them before Yahweh – one for a sin offering for the people, and one as a scapegoat to be sent away alone. Controversy arises concerning what each goat represents.

Some infer that each represents Yahshua, one slain for a sin offering and the other, the scapegoat H.5799 **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**, Azazel (*az-aw-zale'*) goat of departure as an atonement, rendered from the Hebrew *kaphar* (*kaw-far'*) H.3722 to cover, fig. to expiate, cancel.

Others assign Satan to the scapegoat Azazel, which, as we said earlier, was, according to Jewish tradition, not only released but pushed off the mount to its death.

Scripturally, there is evidence for both sides of the argument, though the stronger seems to favor Yahshua as the sin offering, and Satan as *banished* which, in the end, actually happens.

Yahshua, we believe is clearly related in the first blood offering.

*He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to **all** their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for **all** the assembly of Israel. Then he shall go out to the altar that is before Yahweh and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it, Leviticus 16:16–19 (emphasis ours).*

Application of blood, "for all their sins ... for all the assembly" – For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement, Leviticus 17:11.

Our High Priest

Elohim demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath [of Elohim] through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to Elohim through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in Elohim through our Master Yahshua Messiah, through whom we have now received the reconciliation, Romans 5:8–11.

"Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). We each have an individual covering, Messiah Yahshua, an atonement for our sins through His blood.

The high priest made atonement once, every year on a particular day, for all of Israel, and we observe the Day, appreciating its significance for what it was, is, and shall be.

During the millennial rule, the Day of Atonement – like Passover, occurring once a year – will serve as a

covering for the sins of all the physical people.

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by Elohim as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Hebrews 5:7–10.

“Designated by Elohim as a High Priest,” Yahshua intervenes on our behalf – “at the right hand of Elohim ... who always lives to make intercession” (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) – came to serve and not be served (Matt. 20:28).

Conclusion

In conclusion, what is Atonement really all about? It's being covered to have a right relationship with Yahweh, Yahshua, and especially the brethren.

Through example, we should have the right attitude and spirit toward family, neighbors, friends, co-workers, maybe even helping snatch some of them from the fire (Jude 1:23).

For us, the process of salvation occurred through our repentance from dead works, faith toward Elohim, through water immersion (Heb. 6:1–2) and accepting Yahshua's sacrificial blood as a covering

for us. (Read our mini-study, *Why Be Baptized Into the Name of Yahshua?*)

Yahweh and Yahshua are still working with us, encouraging us, moving us, empowering us to endure to the end. For we are destined to become a kingdom of priests to His Elohim and Father (Rev. 1:6), in serving mankind in the millennial rule.

If it will be our office then, that is, serving mankind, what should we be doing now? The answer to that question will lead us to understand what love is. It's also the key to understanding why Yahweh has a set apart Day, such as Atonement, in place.

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Yahshua, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a Great Priest over the house of Elohim, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near; Hebrews 10:19–25.

-Elder David Brett



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“...On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to Yahweh.” Leviticus 23:34

Yahshua, Fulfilling Atonement ... Expiation ... Propitiation

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to Yahweh. And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your Elohim. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath," Leviticus 23:26-32. (**English Standard Version** used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the Covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. By this the Holy Spirit indicates that The Way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. But when the Messiah appeared as a High Priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) He entered once for all into the Holy Places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to Yahweh, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim. Therefore He is the Mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the Torah had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the Book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that Yahweh commanded for you." And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the Torah almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins, Hebrews 9:11-12.

Atonement ... Expiation ... Propitiation

These two passages, the first from the Torah, and the second a reiteration in the Renewed Covenant through Yahshua, our Atonement, Expiation, Propitiation – For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator... *And almost all things are by the Torah purged with blood: and without shedding of blood there is no remission,* Hebrews 9:16, 22, KJV – inextricably associate Passover (*Pesach*) with the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) and purport to presenting language common to both observances.

Atonement ... Expiation ... Propitiation – words, defined by *Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of the English Language*, as follows:

- Atonement: Agreement; concord; reconciliation after enmity or controversy;
- Expiation: Satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which is received in satisfaction for an offense or injury;
- Propitiation: The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person.

Atonement ... Expiation ... Propitiation – Yahshua our Messiah (*haMaschiach*) satisfies *Webster's*

definitions of all three words. His sacrifice assuaged Yahweh's wrath and indignation and rendered His Dear Son, propitious to sinners. Yahshua the Messiah is, therefore, become the atonement, expiation, and propitiation for the sins of men, as it is written: *And He (Yahshua) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for [the sins] of the whole world, KJV.*

Of both Passover and the Day of Atonement, we have received statutory ordinance from Yahweh that these two days were to be observed with holy convocation (*miqra kodesh*, Lev. 23:4). (And with respect to the former observance, Yahshua at that time when He took Passover with His Apostles (*shelachim*) commanded them concerning this annual memorial, "Do this in remembrance of Me," Luke 22:19. And likewise, had the Apostle Paul (*Sha'ul*) so instructed the Assembly at Corinth, writing, *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Master's death until He comes*, 1 Corinthians 11:26.)

Affliction Secures Redemption

Now, Passover and the Day of Atonement share another property, peculiar to their observances. While, the weekly Sabbath (another commanded holy convocation) is referenced by the Prophet Isaiah (*YeshuYah*) as a delight, the set apart of Yahweh, honorable (Isa. 58:13), the other annual Sabbaths observed in their appointed times (*moedim*) – the Days of Unleavened Bread (*chag matzot*), the Feast of Weeks (*shavuot*), the Day of Trumpets (*yom teruah*), and the Feast of Tabernacles (*sukkot*) – are marked with thanksgiving and festivity for the agricultural harvests in their seasons, Passover and the Day of Atonement are regarded as memorials of passing from darkness to Light (1 Pet. 2:9) and from death to Life John 5:24). And while their occasions should seem to excite a celebratory mood, consideration of the Price paid (1 Cor. 6:20) – the betrayal of Innocent Blood (Matt. 27:4) – to secure our redemption, salvation, and deliverance should rather, evoke a contemplative mood ... hardly thought consonant with festivity and the merriment that are commanded by Yahweh to characterize the other Holy Days.

And particularly in this vein, is the Day of Atonement – And Yahweh spoke to Moses (Moshe), saying, "*Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves and present a food offering to Yahweh. And you shall not do any work on that very day,*

for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before Yahweh your Elohim. For whoever is not afflicted on that very day shall be cut off from his people. And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath," Leviticus 23:26-32, (**emphasis** ours).

Of interest to our present discussion, is this word **afflict**. The Hebrew word here is (H.6031, **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**) a-nah' pronounced, *aw-naw'* and rendered, to depress literally or figuratively, transitive or intransitive, and in various applications as follows: abase self, afflict, chasten self, deal hard with, humble (the self) and perhaps by extension, the desire, the lust, the pleasure and hardly, thought consonant with festivity and merriment but more in agreement with commemorating death, and particularly, the redemption-death of Yahshua our Messiah!

For sure, abasing, afflicting, chastening one's self; dealing hard with, and humbling one's self ... his appetite, desire, lust; and ceasing to do his own pleasure on this Day is both Good and Acceptable in bringing his body and his spirit into obedience to Yahweh's Commandments and therewith, fulfilling whole duty and reasonable service. Well might we conclude therefore, The Day of Atonement is most closely related to, and identified with, suffering in the flesh whereby one can become instructed in learning obedience (Heb. 5:8) and ceasing from continuing in sin (1 Pet. 4:1).

Nevertheless, **afflicting** one's self through denying the flesh its desire – and represented by depriving the olfactory, palate and stomach their appetite – is but a token of what constitutes "If you would be perfect" – a reply given by the Master to a certain one who had professed himself having kept the Commandments from his youth (Matt. 19:20-21).

The Chosen Fast

And yet, is there a Chosen Fast that is far more pleasing to the Giver of the Ordinance than to **afflict one's self** through denying the olfactory, palate and the stomach their appetite. For ancient Israel to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Torah, and the service of Eloha, and the promises (Rom. 9:4) and who ought therefore, to have been advantaged in every

way, seeing the Oracles had been committed to their trust (Rom. 3:1-2), had neither apprehended nor attained to obeying the Law of Righteousness (Rom. 9:30).

For though they **afflicted** their souls, they had not gotten to themselves the favor of Him Who had given the Commandment.

Indeed, for though a man might,

- make his voice to be heard on high;
- bow down his head as a bulrush, spreading sackcloth and ashes under him (Isa. 58:4-5);
- disfigure his face and present with sad countenance (Matt. 6:16);
- omit the weightier matters of loosening, undoing, and breaking from himself the straps and bonds and yokes of wickedness;
- setting the oppressed free;
- taking away the putting forth of the finger and speaking vanity;
- turning not his foot away from the Sabbath,
- showing piety at home by providing for his own;
- sharing his bread with the hungry, his drink with the thirsty;
- preparing a lodging for the stranger, clothing the naked;
- visiting the infirmed and imprisoned, and distributing to the necessity of those in need

... and all, without seeking the notice of men – yes, the doing of such things at variance with, at enmity against, and contrary to his fallen nature, denying his flesh its pleasure on but One Day will count for little of nothing in the great and notable day when he will stand before that Just Judge and give an accounting for what he knew to do, but did not (Isa. 58:6-7; 1 Tim. 5:4, 8; Matt. 25:35-36; Rom. 12:13).

Conclusion

Obedience to the Commandment is followed with His exceeding great and precious Promise:

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of Yahweh shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and Yahweh will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, "Here I am." ... then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And Yahweh will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. ... you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in. If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of Yahweh honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; then you shall take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken, Isaiah 58:8-14.

-Elder John W. Reece



When thinking about if we should vote, we're not talking about parent and teacher meetings at a school or board meetings at a corporation. Specifically, we're asking, should we vote for prospective government leaders in our country? Should we look to promote a person for president or try to have a particular person put into a senate seat?

Right now, we see all sorts of debates and interviews among candidates for different house or senate positions and they are all proclaiming what they believe they can do to help this nation and the people in it. But, not one of them is acknowledging that it is Yahweh who places kings and leaders in their positions.

*It is He who changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding, Daniel 2:2. The **New American Standard** is used throughout, unless otherwise noted.*

Kings, Prime Ministers, and the like who the world sees as having wisdom and understanding are said to be given that wisdom and understanding by Yahweh Himself.

Do kings always do the right things? No. Do Prime Ministers get into trouble, yes. But their ability to lead with wisdom and understanding is something Yahweh provides. Just as He provides us with the ability to work.

But you shall remember Yahweh your Elohim, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day, Deuteronomy 8:18.

Yahweh has not just given all peoples everywhere the ability to work. Though, it is true that there are some with disabilities which can hinder some from doing any work that they want. And of course, not everyone has the abilities to lead as some do in government.

In all of this, we must realize that Yahweh allows certain leaders to come to power. Even knowing that it will bring hardship for the people, even Yahweh's people.

And they (elders of Israel) said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to Yahweh. Yahweh said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them," 1 Samuel 8:5-7.

The people got their way. They got the change they wanted, but was it really worth it? They were told beforehand what their new king would end up doing.

Continuing in 1 Samuel 8:11-18, He said, *"This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and*

use them for his work. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but Yahweh will not answer you in that day."

The President we have in this country was demanded by the people, by process of a fair election. Though some may argue the details, the majority rule was in effect and he was placed in office by the people.

We realize that not all is well in this country nor in the rest of the world. But, it's all in Yahweh's hands and He is working out His plan. Our job is to focus on Him and to get in step with His ways, because He has the power and authority to exalt and debase individuals and nations for His purpose.

Elohim is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another, Psalm 75:7.

Whomever Yahweh puts in place; we are to be subject to them. Within the Biblical guidelines we are given.

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from Yahweh, and those which exist are established by Yahweh. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of Yahweh; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of Elohim to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of Elohim, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of Yahweh, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor, Romans 13:1-7.

The Apostle Paul instructs Titus in an abbreviated form to teach the same to others.

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men, Titus 3:1.

Tax Exemption Status

Every single person is to be subject to the government leaders. Sometimes we're accused of being too involved with the government. Our

501(c)(3), for example, which is given in this state, is a help to not-for-profit organizations.

The government sanctioned status allows us to enjoy benefits, such as tax breaks to further the work. We have yet, to be told, that we cannot teach Scriptural Truth.

However, if we are ever told that, then we will be given a choice, similar to what Peter and the other Apostles were given when approached by the religious leaders who were a form of government in Jerusalem.

When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey Elohim rather than men, Acts 5:28–29.

When push came to shove, they chose correctly. They chose to honor the King! And we are told to do the same, by the Apostle Peter:

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear Yahweh, honor the king, 1 Peter 2:17.

It's interesting he didn't say the religious governing body of the time, but does include both Yahweh and the king, showing he is speaking of a heavenly King and an earthly King.

Obey Yahweh

Certain things we should not do, such as worshipping falsely. There are other examples besides what the Apostles did. Daniel, for example, submitted to Yahweh rather than man just as they did.

All the commissioners of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the high officials and the governors have consulted together that the king should establish a statute and enforce an injunction that anyone who makes a petition to any elohim or man besides you, O king, for thirty days, shall be cast into the lions' den. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which may not be revoked. Therefore King Darius signed the document, that is, the injunction. Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his Elohim, as he had been doing previously, Daniel 6:7-10.

Notice that Daniel didn't protest, he didn't hit

the streets with a sign saying the King's ruling was unfair and was religious discrimination. He didn't call for a petition to have a vote for an amendment. He simply did what was right in Yahweh's sight. Which he had been doing all along.

There is also Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego who refused to worship an idol Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they were protected from the fire they were thrown into because of their obedience to Yahweh.

They also did not go out and gather people to protest or call for the King's resignation. They simply told the King that they would obey Yahweh rather than commit false worship.

Yahshua's Teaching

In Scripture we know that Yahshua did not vote for government leaders. The question is, "WHY?" Shouldn't we have the same understanding as He had?

Yahshua answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm," John 18:36.

Yahshua's Kingdom is not of this world. Guess what, neither is ours. Yahshua was speaking to the Roman Governor, a high ranking government leader. Yahshua was respectful, but spoke the truth.

If we are ever brought before government leaders we are also to be respectful, but we are also to speak the truth.

The Kingdom Yahshua spoke of is coming, it is what we are also to be looking forward to. Yahshua's example prayer, gives us guidance and focus:

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,'" Matthew 6:9–10.

Kingdom Life Now

We are sojourners and pilgrims in this land, we are, so to speak, to occupy until the Kingdom is established by Yahshua when He returns.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better

country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore Yahweh is not ashamed to be called their Elohim; for He has prepared a city for them, Hebrews 11:13–16.

Even, anciently, there was an understanding that Yahweh's Kingdom would be established in the future. Where Yahweh's ways would be the rule of day. Just as Yahshua prayed, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we are to be living The Way (The Kingdom Life) even now.

When will Yahweh's kingdom be established? We don't know, but we are to live as if it were to be established tomorrow. In a sense, the Kingdom lifestyle and way of living is being established through the body of Messiah right now in our time.

Paul says that our citizenship is in heaven, in Philippians 3:20, he says, *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Master Yahshua Messiah.*

Those in Messiah, will be changed at His return into Spiritual beings, and be as He is. Immortal. Sitting with Him on His throne, teaching and helping to serve the physical people brought into the Millennial Kingdom Rule on earth. A remnant of Israel.

We are ambassadors for Messiah who is in heaven seated at the right hand of Yahweh.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though Yahweh were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Messiah, be reconciled to Yahweh, 2 Corinthians 5:20.

If we consider ourselves as ambassadors for the coming King, should we be voting for kings on this earth now? Should we be politically involved trying to change government now? Do we have the time to be politically involved if we are spending time doing what we've been told to do? That is, proclaiming the good news to the world of the Messiah and the coming Kingdom?

Let's read the last verse again, but with a clearer translation. It says, in 2 Corinthians 5:20, *NLT, So*

we are Messiah's ambassadors; Yahweh is making his appeal through us. We speak for Messiah when we plead, "Come back to Yahweh!"

With that said, our job is to teach of Salvation through Yahshua and of His coming rulership in the Kingdom of Yahweh. We need to prepare for that government rule now by submitting to its' authority and being ambassadors for it, not only in word, but by the way we live.

No End in Sight

Yahshua's reign will have no end. *For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His Name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty El, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will accomplish this, Isaiah 9:6–7.*

Who is going to accomplish this? We're reminded of Zechariah 4:6, which says, "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says Yahweh of hosts."

In Conclusion

If you think about voting in any upcoming presidential race or trying to promote a particular candidate for this current world's governments, think again about what our priorities are supposed to be.

Spend time and effort rather making sure Yahweh's Word in Messiah is shared with others; That true repentance, salvation and righteousness is preached in and through the Name of Yahshua; That the coming Kingdom of Yahweh is proclaimed, and that people are to seek that Kingdom right now and not another which will be passing away.

-Elder David Brett



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His Grace, His Payment

What I do you know not now; but you shall know hereafter, Yahshua the Messiah.

“Then took they Him, and led Him, and brought Him into the high priest’s house. And Peter followed afar off. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, ‘Of a truth this fellow also was with Him: for he is a Galilean.’ And Peter said, ‘Man, I know not what you say.’ And immediately, while he yet spoke, the cock crew. And the Master turned, and looked on Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Master, how He had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows, you shall deny Me thrice’. And Peter went out and wept bitterly” (Matt. 22:54-62).

A Memorable Fish Fry

Fast forward now, several days later and to John’s narrative in chapter 21. Perhaps then, when memory of the Master’s death and of the eleven sequestered together behind locked doors for fear, having dimmed with the passing of time, Peter with six others felt it safe to venture out and to take up their previous trade.

Little might they, having once trusted that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel (Luke 24:21), have thought He should appear before them this third time (John 21:14) to initiate the purpose of settling a score with Peter.

Now, at dawn, having toiled all night fishing and drawing into their nets nothing of a catch, they heard the voice of One on the shore bidding them to cast their nets on the right side of the ship and, lo, the seine nearly rent for the catch (John 21:6).

A miracle? Oh, yes, the like of which could only be assigned to That One on the shore Who just now, was preparing bread and fish with which to satisfy their appetite. Elated? Yes, but one among them, having proved the sea (John 21:7), whether it should conceal his shame, cowered from this most inopportune of meetings. For Peter had never been reconciled to This One Whose acquaintance he had denied before witnesses, a thrice-denial that had controverted his pledge to This One, that though all men should be offended of Him, never he (Matt. 26:33). Oh, no, not he! Why, he’d first die with Him before he’d deny Him (Matt. 26:35).

Nevertheless, the point of reckoning, until this moment deferred – or perhaps, even forgotten – shame would give place to His invitation, “Come and dine” (John 21:12). And maybe, He Who had, in the more than three years of their friendship, never blushed to disturb the comfortable, might make an exception now among His friends whom He had just served. No, Peter, musing with himself it should be better to remain close to his six companions, for surely This One would not take this occasion to opportune “squaring things.”

But, alas! Chit-chat had run its course and, now, in a time accepted, Peter was about to behold the day of his redemption; the day of his salvation; the day of his deliverance (2 Cor. 6:2).

From among this fishing party, the Master had just singled him out with whom He might commiserate over some unfinished business.

From Fisherman to Fisher of Men

Perhaps before them all, with only the intent to show “what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” (Eph. 3:18) of the fulness of Grace, He asked Peter, “Do you love Me more than these?” Not once; not twice; but thrice, He queried.

“Yea, Master, You know that I love You,” were the other’s replies to the first two interrogatives. But not until the third time, did the gravity of the moment register with this disciple who had always presented among the others, first among equals!

This one, The Other had prayed for ... reserving him to a few more days, when he should again be sequestered together with about 119 others in an upper room for ten days, waiting for That Promise Which said He, should come when **he and the others would be endued with Power from On High and then would Peter know what He had done, at dawn, one morning at the Sea of Tiberias** – how that He had looked upon one who had once wept bitterly when faced with his breach of promise, and therewith provided three opportunities to square (cancel) three denials with three affirmations.

Conclusion

And what is it that we might appreciate from this narrative of reconciliation? Just this: **His Grace is His Payment of a debt He did not owe for a people who owe a debt they cannot pay!**

-Elder John W. Reece



Why the World is in Trouble

It's easy for those who have been called out, to see things are not right in the world. We are, in fact, like Abram who was called out so many years ago from a city in northern Mesopotamia called Haran – a name thought derived from the Akkadian word *harranu*, meaning a path or road.

We ourselves are on a path, a road that leads into a promised land of eternal life through our Savior and Master, Yahshua the Messiah. We are sojourners and are occupying until He returns. And, speaking of returning, we are like sheep who went astray, but have now returned to Yahweh (Isa. 53:6; Hos. 14:1; Zech. 1:3) through our Savior.

We understand why the world is in trouble, but the majority of people don't since they reject the authority of Yahweh's Word. Scriptural history is considered by some theologians as allegorical and fanciful, just stories passed down. But we know there are consequences for people's unbelief and rejection of His Word.

For the wrath of Elohim is revealed from heaven against all wickedness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about Elohim is evident within them; for Elohim made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew Elohim, they did not honor Him as Elohim or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools! Romans 1:18–22. (The ***New American Standard Bible*** is used throughout unless otherwise noted.)

From the Beginning

In the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, we read of Satan deceiving.

Here, for those who are new to the faith, we start our history lesson, that they might know the reason for what is occurring in the world – sin, blamed for all sorrow:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has Elohim said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, Elohim has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die,'" Genesis 3:1–3.

The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For Elohim knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one

wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings, Genesis 3:4–7.

Because of this, we find thorns and thistles, pain and death in the world. It's important to know that Satan is the god of this world, and his spirit is still active today.

And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him, Revelation 12:9.

He deceives the whole world. The Apostle Paul explains we were in that deception ourselves:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, Ephesians 2:1–2.

Noah's Flood

From the time of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3), Cain and Abel (Gen. 4) the people of the world corrupted themselves by submitting to the influence of Satan and their own flesh, but one stood out from the rest. A man named Noah.

Then Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Yahweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Yahweh said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh, Genesis 6:5–8.

The Hebrew word for favor in H.2580 *hen*, is the same word for grace. So, here we have grace expressed by Yahweh on an individual in the Old Testament. But, why?

Proceeding to verse 9, we read, *These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with Elohim, Genesis 6:9.*

Walking with Elohim, is being righteous and blameless. It is being obedient to what Yahweh tells us to do. When we do this, Yahweh provides mercy.

Thus Noah did; according to all that Elohim had commanded him, so he did, Genesis 6:22 (See also Gen. 7:5).

Our Savior likewise tells us to do all that is commanded.

For his obedience, Noah and his family together with species of all Yahweh's creation were spared from the worldwide deluge by the ark Noah was directed to build. And a rainbow was given afterward as a sign of Yahweh's promise He would never flood the earth to that extent again.

Table of Nations

Next, we come to Genesis, chapter 10, and the table of seventy nations that proceeded from the sons of Noah: 26 from Shem; 30 from Ham; and 14 from Japheth. Over time, most of their descendants also fell to Satan's influence, rejecting Yahweh, a fall not without consequences.

In the next chapter, we see that the people wanted to make a name for themselves rather than lift up Yahweh's Name.

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth," Genesis 11:1–4.

That didn't please Yahweh and so their one language – most likely the Hebrew language – morphed into many languages in an instant among the people who were gathered together. As quick as it was to confuse the language, it will be just as quick



to undo in the future. And, it will be for a purpose.

For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon The Name of Yahweh and serve Him with one accord. Zephaniah 3:9, *ESV*.

This is unity that Yahweh desires and will bring about for mankind. For us, it has already begun as we call upon His Name and walk with Him according to His Word.

It may be that we are able to do this because of the Semitic language surviving through the most conservative part of Shem's line who didn't gather in rebellion at the Tower of Babel – the construction of which was purposed to reach up into heaven – and where the language was confused, resulting in the dispersion of the people in fulfillment of Yahweh's will (see Genesis 1:28; Isa. 45:18).

A man named Eber is one of Shem's descendants. It has been suggested the word Hebrew is derived from his name. Similarly, the word Semitic is derived from Shem.

It took ten generations from Shem, and seven from Eber to produce Abram. This is determined from assimilating both the genealogies found in Genesis, chapter 11, and Luke, chapter 3, which provide the ancestry of Yahshua the Messiah.

The Call of Abram

In Genesis 12, Yahweh calls out Abram for His purpose.

Now Yahweh said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." So Abram went forth as Yahweh had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran, Genesis 12:1–4.

Can you imagine being 75 years old and being told, *"I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed?"*

Twenty-four years later, at 99 years of age, he was told he would father a son, named Isaac.

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. "I

will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Abram fell on his face, and Elohim talked with him, saying, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations," Genesis 17:1–5.

Now, some make a big deal that there was a Canaanite deity (idol) named "El" and because of that, we shouldn't use terms like El, Elohim or Eloah, etc., to describe Yahweh. Abram lived there in Canaan for ten years by this time (Gen. 16:3), so when Yahweh's first words to Abram were, "I am El Shaddai" after those ten years, do you think Abram understood?

In the Semitic language, El means Mighty One. Yahweh is saying, He is the Mighty One. It is His title.

Genesis 17:15–21 *Then Elohim said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to Elohim, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" But Elohim said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year."*

Descendants and Conflicts

Ishmael was born through the Egyptian servant Hagar, because they were trying to make Yahweh's promises come about by their own reasoning. They reasoned that Sarah would not have been able to have given birth at her age. And, that typically would be true, but with Yahweh all things are possible. Therefore, Sarah produced a male child to Abraham and they named him Isaac.

This is the first of two major family feuds that extend to our day. The other one is with Jacob and Esau, brothers born together through the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah, but with Esau coming out

first and Jacob grabbing onto his heel from the womb. Jacob took the birthright from Esau, and Esau wanted to kill him because of it. Esau (also known as Edom) eventually intermarried with the descendants of Ishmael and others, most notably with the daughters of Canaan (Gen. 36:2).

Jacob, on the other hand, ended up working for Laban, Rebekah's brother (Gen. 24:29) who had two daughters named Rachel and Leah. Jacob, as we recall, loved Rachel, but Laban manipulated the situation so that Leah was given to Jacob first, and afterwards Rachel was given to him in marriage, all of which cost Jacob 14-years of labor to Laban.

Jacob found himself wrestling one night with the Angel of Yahweh, Whom we understand is actually Yahshua in His pre-existent form as a representative for Yahweh.

Then Jacob was left alone, and a Man wrestled with him until daybreak. When he saw that he had not prevailed against Him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with Him. Then He said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But He said, "I will not let you go unless You bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And He said, "Jacob." He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with Elohim and with men and have prevailed," Genesis 32:24–28.

In all of this, we find that through the historical accounts given in Scripture that Jacob through Rachel, Leah, and their handmaidens, Bilhah and Zilpah, produced for Jacob 12 sons, who became the 12 tribes of Israel. By birth order, there is Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. Dinah was also their sister, Jacob's only daughter, born through Leah.

Israel was given the land today called Israel, but it is just a sliver of what was originally promised, and what will ultimately be in the coming Kingdom. Currently, the land of Israel is surrounded by descendants of both Ishmael and Esau.

From the family feuds going back between Isaac and Ishmael, and between Jacob and Esau, we see conflicts of religion and race today. There truly is a dividing line between the families. But this is just part of why the world is seeing trouble today.

Joseph's Dream

Jacob was in the land of Egypt (specifically, Goshen) for a time with his twelve sons, saved from a worldwide famine. As we know, Joseph, was sold to the Midianites and finally to a Egyptian master

after sharing his dream with his family of them bowing down to him, not exactly the thing you want to tell your family. His brothers had planned to kill him, but Yahweh had other plans.

Joseph spent some time imprisoned, after being falsely accused by the Egyptian master's wife of assaulting her. He was released from prison at the age of 30, summoned by Pharaoh to relate the interpretation of his dreams, that there should be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of severe famine. Pharaoh was so impressed, that he made Joseph viceroy over all of Egypt.

In all of this Joseph's character was blameless. He, first and foremost, was not willing to sin against Yahweh, even giving Him honor before Pharaoh. Joseph said that Elohim is the One who has told Pharaoh what is to take place. In addition, Joseph was unwilling to seek revenge against his brothers, but rather helped them to settle in the best of the land (Goshen).

Israel in Slavery

After a number of years, a new Pharaoh came into power and saw the Israelites as a threat as they were multiplying in the land. He put them into slavery, but Yahweh raised up Moses to free them. Eventually, they came out by the Mighty Hand of Yahweh through ten miraculous plagues which took place in Egypt. Afterward, Yahweh delivered Israel along with a mixed multitude of strangers, guiding their way by way of a cloud by day and fire by night. The people crossed upon the dry bed of the Sea of Reeds (often written as the Red Sea) in advance of the pursuing armies of Pharaoh which were swallowed up by the retiring walls of water.

Yahweh's Laws, first orally committed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, and the patriarchs which succeeded them, were later codified and written down by Moses.

People Have Forgotten

So, we return to the question: Why is the world in trouble? Because most people today have forgotten even that which is written down for our understanding and right way of living.

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Sacred Writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yahshua. All Scripture is inspired by Elohim and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

for training in righteousness; so that the man of Elohim may be adequate, equipped for every good work, 2 Timothy 3:14–17.

Timothy was instructed by Paul that the instructions of Yahweh are tied to the Messiah and reliance on His sacrifice to save us and that through purification (baptism) and a right way of living, we may produce good works.

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work, 2 Timothy 2:20–21.

Paul proclaimed the same to others, commending them to faith in the Master as that means of returning to Yahweh.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the assembly. And when they had come to him, he said to them, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Master with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward Elohim and faith in our Master Yahshua Messiah,” Acts 20:17–21

Lessons Not to Repeat

We shouldn't repeat mistakes of the past. For example, Adam and Eve rejected what Yahweh said and instead listened to one who created doubt, about outright lying that death would not be the consequence of their sin.

When Israel sinned with the golden calf that Aaron had made, what was the consequence? Death.

What happened to those who were of the age of accountability who tested Yahweh ten times in the wilderness with their rebellion and sin? Death.

When Moses sinned against Yahweh in front of all of Israel by striking the rock, instead of speaking to it, what was the consequence? He was forbidden to go into the promised land, but could only view it from afar. And, of course, he died a first death.

Instructions and Reminders

The people who were left went into the promised land, but not without first being instructed and reminded to honor Yahweh by doing what He said – living according to His laws, statutes, ordinances

and judgments. To that end, the people read the book of Deuteronomy (a type of constitution) every seven years during a Sabbatical at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. 31:11). Even their kings were required to write out the laws in the presence of priests (Deut. 17:18-20) and read them daily, so they would live by them and teach the same.

The lesson is clear. We are not to repeat failures of the past. We pay attention to Yahweh's Word, by living It and not being resistant or rebellious, saying, “We will not walk in it” (Jer. 6:16-19).

For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief, Hebrews 3:16–19.

So, why is the world in trouble? It's because the world's pride is set opposed to the Creator of the universe, refusing to call upon His Name and dishonoring Him by not doing His will.

Instead, many who claim to know Him have nailed the handwriting of His Ordinances to a tree, protesting Them contrary to, and blotted out by Yahshua's sacrifice. Because of this and the rejection of Yahweh's ways from Adam and Eve, the world has been in a downward spiral. But, Yahweh has made a way back to Himself and offers the solution for the world's ills that we currently see.

As already seen, repentance (a turning back to Yahweh, and doing His will) and accepting of His Son, as a perfect Sacrifice for us, is key.

A Right Attitude

The instructions the Father gives, is for the children's own good.

“Go near and hear all that Yahweh our Elohim says; then speak to us all that Yahweh our Elohim speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.” Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and Yahweh said to me, “I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!” Deuteronomy 5:27–29.

This is the right attitude of the people toward Yahweh. It is not rebellious, nor callous toward Him. It is the attitude He is currently looking for today, seeking those who will worship Him in spirit

and truth. He tests and tries those whom He calls, even today, as He did anciently.

All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which Yahweh swore to give to your forefathers. You shall remember all the way which Yahweh our Elohim has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that Yahweh our Elohim was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of Yahweh our Elohim, to walk in His ways and to fear Him, Deuteronomy 8:1–6.

Yahshua quoted Deuteronomy 8:3, in Matthew 4:4 and Luke 4:4 saying, *Man is to not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh.* Yahshua didn't need to quote all the passage from Deuteronomy 8, as verse 3 makes it clear that the rest is just as valid for mankind. The following verse is just as clear.

You shall therefore love Yahweh your Elohim, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments, Deuteronomy 11:1.

Another clear one from Deuteronomy:

You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up, Deuteronomy 6:5–7.

Does this sound like something else our Savior said? What was His response to the question of what shall one do to inherit eternal life? He went directly to Yahweh's Word.

"... Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR

AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, *"You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE,"* Luke 10:25–28.

None of this would indicate that the Son came to do away with His Father's instructions. In fact, it confirms, what's needed for life, and that more abundantly, and is not out of reach for one to obtain (Deut. 30:8, 11-16, 19). Yahweh Himself says to choose life, having set before mankind life and death, blessings and curses.

Warning Against False Worship

The warning against false worship is the same today as it was yesterday, and will be tomorrow.

When Yahweh your Elohim cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?" You shall not behave thus toward Yahweh your Elohim, for every abominable act which Yahweh hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it, Deuteronomy 12:29–32.

The call for mankind, or to be more specific, anyone claiming they serve the Heavenly Father, is to do what He says. Such a person would be considered blameless, like Noah or Joseph – even Job comes to mind – and certainly Yahshua, Who never sinned. We can't say we are without sin, but we can be above reproach and blameless (Acts 23:14-16, 25:8) as we overcome this world.

You shall be blameless before Yahweh your Elohim, Deuteronomy 18:13.

Yahweh is not telling us to do something we can't accomplish, but we must combine it with faith. Faith in His Son and faith in Him

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to Elohim must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him, Hebrews 11:6

Stop Sinning

To seek Him means to stop sinning. We read of the main definition of sin here, in 1 John 3:4, which says, *Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.*

James 4:17 says, *Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

And Romans 14:23b says, “whatever is not from faith is sin.”

The definitions of sin are directly tied to the idea that we are not to disobey our Father’s will for us. In context, if we do anything out of our own will, which would be contrary to the faith in Yahweh’s will for us, then it is sin for us. This is how faith in Yahshua can actually be defined conceptually as obedience to the Father, as He Himself taught repentance toward Yahweh immediately after He was baptized.

In Conclusion

From that time Yahshua began to preach and say, “*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,*” Matthew 4:17. Sin, in one word, is why the world is in trouble. The solution is to stop sinning.

If my people who are called by My Name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land, 2 Chronicles 7:14, **ESV**.

-Elder David Brett



Have you noticed, that when you buy produce in a grocery store, that the scale upon which you place your fresh vegetables (usually sold by the pound) has a dated sticker affirming it was inspected by the State Department of Agriculture, and that the balance of the scale is certified, a True measure of weight?

Even gasoline and diesel pumps are subject to the same strict inspection standards imposed by the State Department of Agriculture, and you’ll find a dated inspection sticker placed on these pumps as well, certifying the output of the pump agrees with the gallonage and its fractions read on the pump.

In American jurisprudence is Lady Justice ... blindfolded, holding a scale of balances in her right hand.

To that end, witnesses for both the prosecution and the defense are required to either swear an oath or affirm the testimony they will give, is the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, (and some courts of law still add, “so help me, God).

Some might regard this protocol as entrapment. But because of the base nature of humanity and in order to assure civility, penalties are attached to one’s perjuring himself or attempting to impeach the Truth. And if it be so in the courts established by man, how much more so, in Yahweh’s Court from Which there will be no appellate remedy?

Truth and Honesty Have Their Roots in Scripture

This representation of Truth and Honesty has its root in Scripture:

You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, a large and a small. A full and fair weight you shall have, a full and fair measure you shall have, that your days may be long in the land that the Yahweh your Elohim is giving you. For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are an abomination to Yahweh your Elohim, Deuteronomy 25:13-16. (**English Standard Version** used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

A false balance is an abomination to Yahweh, but a just weight is His delight, Proverbs 11:1.

Unequal weights and unequal measures are both alike an abomination to Yahweh, Proverbs 20:10.

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all, Romans 12:17.

For we aim at what is honorable not only in Yahweh’s sight but also in the sight of man, 2 Corinthians 8:21.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor; Exodus 20:16.

The theme of these verses is briefly comprehended in but two words; TRUTH and HONESTY.

A Case Study: Rahab and Jacob

A read of the second chapter of Joshua renders the account of two spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, preparatory to the people of Israel crossing the Jordan to take possession of Canaan. From that narrative, the first seven verses figure prominently in our consideration of the events occurring there.

And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. And it was told to the king of Jericho, "Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land." But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, "True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them." But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.

A second account comes to mind from Genesis 27:6-24, that tells of numerous falsehoods being perpetrated, under color of tendering the Almighty assistance in assuring that the Promise made to Abraham through Isaac might be facilitated through the son of Rebekah's choosing. We read that narrative in Genesis 27. Isaac is old, his eyesight compromised by reason of age but as we discover later in the Genesis chronicle, not so near death as he supposed.

Nevertheless, convinced in his own mind that he was at death's door, he summoned his elder son Esau that he might convey the blessing of patrimony upon him. For as the elder son, his was the right of primogeniture. Rebekah, however, privy to her husband's intention, enlisted their younger son Jacob – his name, incidentally, means, *supplanter* or *cheat* – as an accessory to her ruse.

While Esau was out in the field, exercising his prowess as a hunter, Jacob retired to the herd, fetching for his mother two young kids from among the goats, so that she could prepare savory meat such as his father loved and then, at the urging of his mother, surreptitiously represented the plate of

goat's meat as venison, and himself as Esau.

Even with much opportunity provided him by his father to confirm the Truth, Jacob persisted with his deception that, yes, he was Esau – surely, owing to Isaac's ocular disability, he would never know that the younger's hands and arms were covered with goat's hair. And, yes, he was able to find and prepare the "venison" so quickly because Yahweh, Isaac's Elohim – for He was certainly not Jacob's at that moment – had brought it to him. (And, incidentally, it is a fearful thing to make the Sovereign, Set Apart One complicit with one's deception.)

So, now, the first of several questions is proposed. If now there is no lie of the Truth, how is it that Rahab and Jacob should be permitted to figure in the genealogy of the Messiah Yahshua Who has received to Himself, the appellation of True and Faithful?

Well, upon Yahshua Who never sinned was imputed the sins of all men. And seeing there are none righteous, no, not one (Rom. 3:10); and there is none that does good, no, not one (Rom. 3:12); and there is not one who has not sinned (Rom. 5:12) – *for all have sinned and come short of the glory of Yahweh*, Romans 3:23, **KJV** – there could not, perhaps, have been found any better to have represented this fallen species called man.

Let's settle it now, outside the Sovereign's Court. Neither Rahab, nor Jacob, needed to provide things dishonest in the sight of men and Him before Whom all things are naked and opened. Quite, is Yahweh able to accomplish His purposes by His Word. Those two dispatched by Joshua might have stirred the Sovereign to make for them, a miraculous way of escape. And Rebekah and Jacob might instead, have trusted and acknowledged Yahweh instead of leaning to their own understanding and then, just maybe, He would have directed their way.

And to Rebekah and Jacob, who ought to have known better, proceeded this curse: In one day, that thing which Jacob had feared had come to pass (Gen. 27:12-13, 31:41). His treachery had gotten him the hatred of his elder brother, and Rebekah fearing for her favorite's life and wellness of being, dispatched him away.

Yes, in one day, both Jacob and his mother Rebekah incurred to themselves, a curse. Jacob became subject himself, to treacheries at the hand of his uncle Laban, compounded as a just recompense for the dishonor he had shown toward his father Isaac (137 years old at that time, but living another 43 years past his wife and son's trespass) and Rebekah,

the loss of both her sons – Esau in his bitterness, and Jacob in his exile.

Indeed, the compounding of one lie leads to another lie, and to another lie, and to another lie, until it is difficult, if not impossible, to get to the core of Truth.

And we'll make five observations here:

- if you always tell the Truth, you won't have to remember what you said;
- a half-truth is a whole lie;
- stretch the Truth (exaggerating) and It will snap back at you;
- without correcting an untruth, allowing someone to believe a lie is a lie; and,
- telling even a little white lie makes you to become color blind.

Visiting the Iniquity of a Father upon a Son

Returning to Abraham and his progeny, we notice a propensity in this family toward being less than completely Truthful and Honest.

In Genesis, Chapter 20, we read the account of Abraham dwelling in Gerar, and representing Sarah, his wife, as his sister to Abimelech (which means, my father king and more of a title, like Pharaoh, than a name).

But a lie, even if it is a half-truth (which, incidentally, is a whole lie), won't wash with Yahweh.

And notice how Abraham justified his misrepresentation:

Abraham said, "I did it because I thought, 'There is no fear of Yahweh at all in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife," Genesis 20:11-12.

Incidentally, it is fortunate Abraham's marriage to Sarah preceded the giving of the codified TORAH, as it is written:

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home, Leviticus 18:9.

Cursed be anyone who lies with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, "Amen," Deuteronomy 27:22.

Six chapters later, in Chapter 26, we read that Isaac – perhaps involved with the same sovereign in Gerar – experiences the same circumstance with his wife whom also, he represented as his sister to those men of that place who had given notice of her.

Note well, that with both Abraham and his son

Isaac, there was one underlying reason for their deception, lest the men of the place should kill me because she was attractive in appearance (Gen. 26:7) – FEAR, the underlying rationale for the lie Rahab, Abraham, and Isaac told.

FEAR, an Underlying Rationale for a Lie

The spirit of fear is antithetical to the sobriety of mind that proceeds from Yahweh (1 Tim. 1:7). And so, we don't need to wonder who the author of FEAR is!

It is he, by the way, about whom the Master said, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

In the New Testament, we have a classic example of FEAR motivating one to sin:

Simon Peter, found out now, as a Galilean and a disciple of This Man about to be condemned to death, replied to one's query, "I do not know Him ... I neither know nor understand what you mean" (Luke 22:57; Mark 14:68).

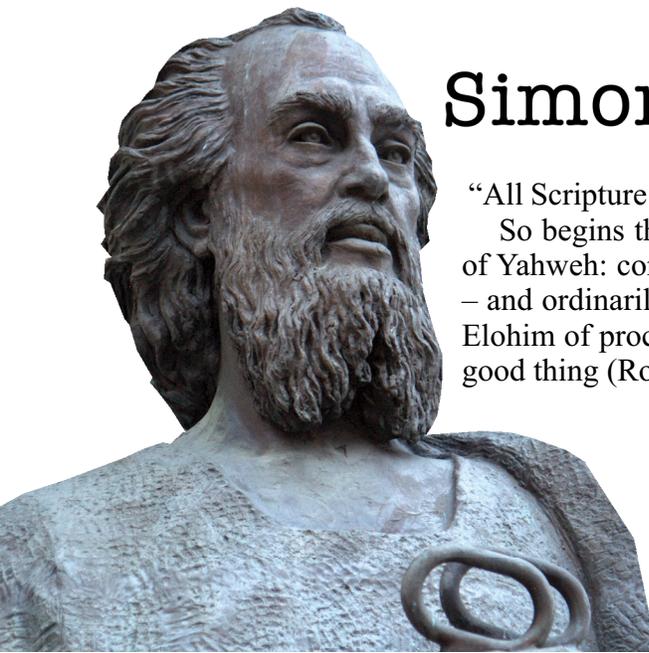
But we have only to look at Yahshua, to see how He handled Himself in such matters. But first of all, let us review something He said to His disciples, and as well, to us:

"... Take no thought how or what ye shall speak ... settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer ... for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak ... For I will give you a mouth and wisdom ..." (Matt. 10:19; Luke 21:14; Matt. 10:19; Luke 21:15-16, KJV).

Much more than an answer to the tribunals of men, we can appropriate these words as a guide toward Truth and Honesty. Because to a particular end Yahshua had been born, and for a cause had He come into the world, there was no need for Him to stand in His own defense, when He was interrogated by those who sat in judgment of Him. And so, He, at times, answered nothing or took the tact of neither confirming nor denying their charges, saying instead, "You say that I am" (Luke 22:70; John 18:37). Not every thing spoken requires reply, and especially if what should be replied would constitute a lie.

Whatever the character of our reply – whether a half-truth, an exaggeration, or an outright lie – we give, is motivated by FEAR of being found out, though one may be sure, his sin will find him out anyway (Num. 32:23).

-Elder John W. Reece



Simon Peter: A Case Study

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of Elohim, and is profitable.” (2 Tim. 3:16).

So begins the Apostle’s consideration of the five administrations of the Word of Yahweh: correction, instruction in righteousness, reproof, rebuke, exhortation – and ordinarily provided an Assembly in that order, too. Because Yahweh is an Elohim of process and order, and knows what is in man – that is, in his flesh, no good thing (Rom. 7:18) – he must be,

- corrected of his error;
- instructed in righteousness;
- permitted space to be (re)proved, lest he should have returned to the vomit and mire of what was assumed remitted him by grace; rebuked if he should continue therein; and,
- exhorted to continue steadfastly in that which he has received.

Of course, because the pull of strongholds of rebellion are intense and set at variance with, at enmity against, and contrary to what is good, acceptable, and perfect, some will not much advance beyond correction and, therefore, what is set apart must be withheld that man, lest the Message be subject to violence and the messenger to torment.

But the accounts given us in Scripture is “profitable” toward promoting another purpose, too.

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Romans 15:4.

Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition ... 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Simon Peter: Beneath the Bluster, Some Good

We have considered one certain personality; one to whom the Master had said, *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren,* Luke 22:31-32.

Simon is introduced to us at once proud, impetuous and outspoken and often perhaps, afterward wishing he had instead exercised demurrals, keeping quiet and not had the embarrassment of the Master’s rebuke in the presence of his peers. Nevertheless, beneath the bluster, was a contrite, penitent spirit ... one worthy of our emulation.

His introduction to the Master apparently, occurred by way of his brother Andrew, formerly a disciple of the Immerser who had identified Yahshua as the Lamb of Elohim (John 1:36), who after having given audience to Him sought Him

out, where He lodged and spent that day with this Man from Galilee, presumably hearing further, the Good News (John 1:35-39). Afterward, he found his brother Simon, and excitedly announced that he had found the Messiah (John 1:41-42)..

We are not told here, that Simon so appreciated his encounter with the Lamb that he forsook his fishing enterprise. This was to occur later, when an opportunity presented itself to the Master as the people urged Him on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, to speak to them the Word (Luke 5:1). Accordingly, Yahshua, finding Simon and his partners (his brother Andrew, and John and James, the sons of Zebedee) washing their nets required Simon to launch out from the shore where, from sitting in the craft, he addressed the people (Luke 5:2-3).

Following His discourse to the people, He charged Simon to let down his net for a catch ... a catch that had eluded this experienced fishermen who had toiled the night before so that now, with the net about to rend and the boat about to capsize, the marvel of it all moved this rugged mariner to fall down at the Sovereign’s knees and confess, saying, “Depart from me: for I am a sinful man, Master” (Luke 5:3-8). (See also the parallel account in Matthew 4:18-22.)

Simon was at once a man of strange contradictions: naturally impulsive, but tender-hearted and affectionate; at times presumptuous, then timid and cowardly; self-sacrificing, yet inclined to be self-seeking; gifted with Spiritual insight, but slow to comprehend and apprehend Truth; made two great confessions of his faith on Yahshua, then cancelled the two by three denials.

Among them whose ears had heard, whose eyes had seen, and whose hands had handled, Simon

often assumed more than he could handle. At one time, following the feeding of 5,000 beside women and children (Matt. 15:13-21), the Master directed His disciples leave as He sent the multitudes away. On a tempest-tossed sea, and in the dark of an early morning, Yahshua advanced toward their craft and Simon, willing to test the apparition, made request that he be permitted to walk upon the water (Matt. 15:24-28). It was a test, Simon would fail (Matt. 15:30) – a test, we often fail... in thinking ourselves to be stronger than what we appear before Him to be.

Before Honor ...?

Among the first after Nathanael to confess Yahshua as ha Maschiah, Ben Elohim (the Messiah, the Son of Elohim), he couldn't yet handle too much commendation among his apostle-peers. For when their Master – elated that one among them should so acknowledge Him – began to relate to them the sufferings and death awaiting Him at Jerusalem by the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and scribes of the people, it was Simon who incurred the displeasure and rebuke of the Sovereign One for daring to challenge the Latter's purpose for having been born, and the cause for which He had come into the world (Matt. 16:13-24).

Then, we have his second affirmation of his Master Yahshua in the account of John, Chapter 6. Yahshua was concluding His discourse on Himself being that Bread of Life come down from Heaven and had just asserted that except a man should eat His flesh, and drink His blood, he had no life in him (John 6:48-53). The narrative concludes with many of His disciples judging His Word too hard, and offended, they left Him (John 6:60). Turning Himself to the twelve, the Master asked them, "Will you also go away?" to which Simon replied, "Master, to Whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that you are the Messiah, the Son of the living Elohim" (John 6:67-69).

Then on the eve of His passion in Gethsemane's garden in the mount of Olives ... when Yahshua's hour had drawn near to fulfill the Promise of the ages, He foretells their behavior, saying, "All you shall be offended because of Me this night" (Matt. 26:31). But, oh, not Simon. For though all men should be offended in Him, he would not so. Indeed, he should die with Him and so let on, all the rest (Matt. 26:33, 35). But Gethsemane's nightfall prompted sleep that should yield later, to temptation that might have been thwarted if they which were there, had instead deferred to diligence and vigilance.

And though later, with the advance of the mob led by Judas, that familiar friend now turned traitor, and emboldened to strike with the blade, he would, like the others – just as the Master had foretold – turn tail, and fled (Matt. 26:47-56). Perhaps curious, he found himself in the courtyard of Caiaphas' palace where assembled was a tribunal of the scribes and the elders of the people to try Yahshua on charges that He had consistently violated the Sabbath through the administration of corporal works of mercy and that He had, through the affirmation of His teaching and His miracles, made Himself the Son of Elohim (Matt. 26:58).

There, Simon's earlier pronouncement of loyalty would be tested, as he might have hoped to have remained incognito among others with whom he was sharing a place at fireside (for it was cold) but whose persistence challenged his acquaintance with this Man from Galilee (Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:25-27).

Which Sorrow? Of the World, or Penitent?

Convicted? Contrite? Penitent? The cock crowing upon his third denial, and his seeing his Master as the Latter was being transferred to the hearing before Pilate, brought to his remembrance words spoken unadvisedly, but hours before (Luke 22:61-62). What amends might now he make, as he should be denied opportunity to become reconciled to His Master? Perhaps now, the best he could hope for was to remain sequestered with the ten (John 20:19) ... albeit, though it should be for fear of the Jews who would be anxious also, to implicate all who had been in complicity with Him Whom they had given a new title, "that deceiver" (Matt. 27:63).

But Yahshua's prayers for Simon – He is, after all not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance – was, as we shall learn, to prove both effectual and according to His Father's will.

And very early in the morning the first of the week, they (Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome) they came to the sepulcher at the rising of the sun. ... And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and the were affrighted. And he said to them, "Be not affrighted: You seek Yahshua of Nazareth, which was impaled: He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee: there shall you see Him, as He said to you, Mark 16:2, 5-7.

One might wonder, “tell His disciples and Peter?” Why should Peter receive the Master’s singular acknowledgment?

In John, Chapter 21, and some little time after Yahshua had appeared to the ten – for Thomas was not among them – breathed upon them the Holy Spirit, and committed to them the authority to remit confessed and repented sin and to retain what had not been made subject to contrition and confession (John 20:22-23), Simon Peter announced to Thomas, Nathanael, and the two sons of Zebedee, and two others, “I go a fishing” (John 21:2).

As the narrative unfolds, it appears that Simon had not yet brought resolution to his “misdeed” following Yahshua’s arrest, though he might have had opportunity following the Master’s resurrection and subsequent apparitions to those whom He had loved. Often, however, when time is permitted to lapse from the moment of transgression without resolving the grievance of the soul, one can become past feeling, his conscience seared with a hot iron ... until perhaps, reckoning is unavoidable.

That the Master would select this occasion that Simon might opportune to bring closure to what he had permitted to defer, is noteworthy.

Likened to another experience to which Simon could relate (Luke 5:5), these experienced fishermen had toiled all the night without success (John 21:5). As dawn came, they heard One calling from the shore of the Sea of Galilee, “Children, have you any meat?” (John 21:5). Their reply, “No,” was answered with instruction to cast their net on the right side of the boat, whereupon they gathered a multitude of fish that placed their nets and their vessel in jeopardy (John 21:6).

John’s identifying the Voice upon the shore as Yahshua’s moved Simon to retreat to the sea (John 21:7, “for he was naked”) ... in want of suitable apparel but more so, “naked” before Him to Whom all judgment was committed (John 5:22) and before Whom, all things are naked and opened to Him with Whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13).

And then, we read of a most gracious gesture inaugurated by Him Whose love extended beyond the stake, to one who, because Yahshua had prayed for him, could afterward declare his own unworthiness to have obtained mercy, be counted faithful, and appointed to ministry.

Yes, by a simple question, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love you Me?” (John 21:15-17) ... asked three times, the debt of Simon’s thrice-denial was cancelled.

However, though this profound gesture of the Master extending forgiveness for the expression of a heart’s frailty, agitated our subject (John 21:17) and overshadowed his sensibilities that he should require the estate of a peer (John 21:21).

But, no matter. For Yahshua Who knows the end of a matter even before its inception, anticipated that when once Simon and the others would become endued with Power from on High, that the course of His intercession – “when you are converted, strengthen your brethren,” Luke 22:32 – would yield Spiritual fruit, as occurred when on a notable Pentecost, and following ten days of tarrying for that Promise of enduement, Peter and the eleven stood and rehearsed such saying of old time and now, their fulfillment. So moved were assemblage, that they complimented his discourse with a query of their own: “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). And then, this Apostle who had opened his mouth for the first time and spoken as an Oracle, embraced the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven and opened the Way, the Truth, and the Life to about three thousand, declaring, “Repent and be immersed every one of you in the Name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Conclusion: Finally, Bearing Fruit to Perfection

And what more needs to be said, but that this man Simon who together with his companion John had been but judged unlearned and ignorant (Acts 4:12), stood before, and withstood more learned men than he, without fear challenged them of religion, resolved he could speak nothing but what he had seen and heard (Acts 4:20) and that it was far better to obey Yahweh than men (Acts 5:29).

This one, we say, to whom the First Assembly looked for direction. This one, to whom was accorded the first miracle of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 3). This one, who gave witness to the Power of the Holy Spirit to reveal what was in the hearts of men; by whose word of knowledge and discernment of spirit, some would fall; and by whose mere shadow, many with diverse afflictions were healed (Acts 5). This one, who together with his Apostolic peers met the indignation of Sadducee and Pharisee alike, not with excellency of speech or wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power declared the testimony of Yahweh (Acts 4 and 5). This one, before whom neither one sick of the palsy, nor another who had taken her bed in death, proved to be too great a challenge to make whole and return to life (Acts 9). This one, through

whom it was Yahweh's good pleasure to reveal that He could make of two – Circumcised and Uncircumcised ... clean and unclean – but *echad*, one new man (Acts 10). This one, who could stand unapologetically before his company in Jerusalem, for the defense and confirmation of Truth (Acts 11). This one, prominent among the chosen and ordained in Jerusalem to whom the elders accorded respect and honor, as was fitting to a father (Acts 15).

What more needs to be said than this about that man once proud, impetuous, outspoken ... and later judged ignorant and unlearned by them which professed themselves to have letters having learned – yes, who had afterward become a Servant transformed, renewed in the spirit of his mind (Rom.

12:2); not striving; gentle unto all men; apt to teach; patient (2 Tim. 2:25); and through the medium of his pen, and with the Keys, opened the Kingdom to strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Pet. 1:1) and who left us this legacy: that we should show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light (1 Pet. 2:9) and therewith, given us an exceeding great and precious promise, that in having escaped the corruption that is in the world, we might become partakers of His nature (2 Pet. 1:5) and receive to ourselves, inheritance of a Kingdom undefiled and incorruptible (1 Pet.1:4).

-Elder John W. Reece



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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

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

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

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

Q I have a question about the Feast of Atonement. What can a nursing mother do to keep Atonement or a pregnant mother? Is there any other way of fasting apart from not eating?

A This reminds us of some who are diabetic, who could go into a diabetic coma if they don't have a Graham Cracker or something with sugar. A doctor may advise not missing medication for some patients and therefore they may need to drink some water to swallow them. Women who are in their third trimester can suffer from hypoglycemia and need to eat something to prevent them from passing out. Some mothers suffering from malnutrition in certain countries may need to drink some water to maintain enough milk for a newborn. We tell people to do the best they can, given the circumstances they are in.

As another example, there can be reasons why an entire family could not travel to the sojourning Feasts, but the male (head of house) was still obligated (Exod. 34:23). Whether because of tending livestock or a mother being close to giving birth, reasons existed which could cause some to stay home. This, even though certain days are holy convocations with expected attendance. With that said, circumstances can also be complicated by health issues, even for the heads of households. We would then reiterate, that we do the best we can, given certain situations.





Can women wear trousers?



It comes down to if the woman is trying to be a man. There are pants made for women, but it becomes evident when a woman is trying to be a masculine lesbian and alternatively a man is trying to be like a woman.

Deuteronomy 22:5 “The law on transvestism (22:5) is brief and enigmatic. Some scholars have noted that here the term רבג-יילכ, “things pertaining to a man,” could just as well be translated as the “gear of a warrior.” As K. M. Beyse has noted (*TDOT* 7:173), the term ילכ in reference to clothing occurs only in legal texts, but the sole text he cites without qualification to demonstrate its use in this manner is Deut 22:5, and then only on the basis of the fact that the verse includes a parallel line that forbids men to wear female clothing (השע תלמש). The use of the word in 1:41 in the phrase ותמהלמ ילכ, “his weapons of war,” is illustrative, for the word רבג always “contains the element of strength, especially in a general sense” (H. Kosmala, *TDOT* 2:377),” by *World Biblical Commentary* (quoting: *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, i.e., *TDOT*)

1 Corinthians 6:9–10, *NASB*, says, *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of Elohim.*

It’s not in a woman’s DNA to be like a man, and nor is it in a man’s DNA to be like a woman. However, styles of dress code change over time and there are various styles of dress for both men and women. As long as both stay with modest apparel, not trying to accentuate attractiveness with seductively tight and revealing clothing, then one would be conservatively dressed appropriately. Neither are we to dress overly rich, as some do. Riches within a good character are of much greater value.

And I want women to be modest in their appearance. They should wear decent and appropriate clothing and not draw attention to themselves by the way they fix their hair or by wearing gold or pearls or expensive clothes. For women who claim to be devoted to Elohim should make themselves attractive by the good things they do, 1 Timothy 2:9–10, *NLT*.

Do not let your adorning be external — the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear — but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable

beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in Elohim’s sight is very precious, 1 Peter 3:3–4, *ESV*.



Isaiah 5:8 says, “Woe to those who join house to house and field to field.” Does this mean, it’s referring to apartment complexes and modern-day developers?



Many times, we have areas of Scripture that point to things of the past and present. In the past, there were developers in cities that would have houses close to one another and fields without any property in between.

Usually, this act is due to greed:

They covet fields and then seize them, and houses, and take them away. They rob a man and his house, a man and his inheritance, Micah 2:2.

The heart of man has not changed over time, except for those who recognize they are to change according to Yahweh’s Word:

You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor, Exodus 20:17.

Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it, Proverbs 23:4.

For us today, in Messiah, we are blessed to have a wealth of spiritual riches. We do not need to be focused on gaining physical wealth:

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,” Hebrews 13:5.

More Questions and Answers are available for viewing online @ yaiy.org. Feel free to contact us if you have Biblical questions of your own.

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-Proverbs 17:22(a)