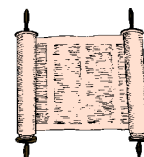


Sept.—Oct. 2004

YAHSHUA'S WITNESS MAGAZINE

Declaring a new and living way. (Heb. 10:20)

A publication of Yahweh's Evangelical Assembly

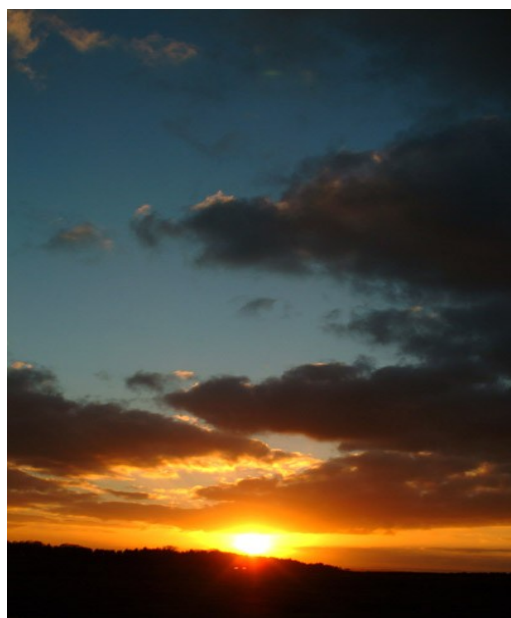


Yahshua's Witness Magazine

is dedicated to His bride. Yahshua will be returning soon to receive His own unto Himself (Jn. 14:3). His bride must make herself ready (Rev. 19:7). A person who is called out of this world by the Father, who repents of his/her sins, is baptized in the name of Yahshua the Messiah (Acts 2:38), the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12), and receives the Holy Spirit must come to know Him as the Scriptures declare and witness of Him (Jn. 5:39-47). Peter encouraged, "But grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Sovereign and Saviour Yahshua the Messiah," 2 Pet. 3:18. We will, with Yahweh's help and the Spirit of Truth, seek to reveal a most wondrous Savior and Redeemer, a Savior and Redeemer that much of the world has spoken of, dreamed of, hoped for, but truly never known. While much of the world looks to a savior, the savior of whom they have been taught has become corrupted. Another has been substituted in the true Savior's place. Those who are called out of this world and given to Him are likened unto virgins. But in accordance with His own parable of those virgins, only five are wise while the other five are foolish. The five wise are able to enter into the planned marriage with the Messiah, but the five foolish have the door closed to them (Mt. 25:1-13). Let's be wise, remember our betrothal to the Messiah and the virginity to which He has restored us (2 Cor. 11:1-2), resist the wiles of the devil and look to and prepare for a joyous and glorious marriage that will endure for all eternity. HalleluYah!!!!

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OUR COVER: Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist was inspired to declare, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of Yahweh to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our Elohim; whereby the **dayspring** from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace," Lk. 1:76-79.

The Greek word for "dayspring" is "anatole" which is defined as "a rising of light." During the darkness of night, men are unable to see clearly, but when the sun, the light of this world arises, men are able to clearly see and distinguish their surroundings.

Yahshua is the "dayspring" from on high. He is the rising of light for those who sit in spiritual darkness for both Israel and the Gentiles (non-Hebrew) as is also declared, He is, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel," Lk. 2:32. May this issue of "Yahshua's Witness Magazine" shine His glorious light into all recesses of your heart.

For comments or inquiries please write to YEA, P. O. Box 31, Atlanta, TX 75551.

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Or members.cox.net/thomasahobbs/yea_0.htm

WHY ANOTHER MAGAZINE?

By Jerry Healan

We know that this will be the first question asked, and that is a good question. With the virtual explosion of knowledge in these last days, as prophesied by the prophet Daniel, there is simply too much to read, too much to learn. It simply isn't possible for us to read everything in print. Neither is it possible for us to absorb it all. The libraries are choked full of books and more and more books are being written each day. There are newspapers, magazines, text books and then there is the internet. The internet alone, has more than one can read in thousands of lifetimes. This, of course, certainly isn't necessarily new. Solomon stated, "...of making of many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh," Eccl. 12:12. Can you imagine that? Even in Solomon's day, there were too many books to read and too much studying and reading certainly does cause one to become weary. So why don't we take the hint and just forget about the production of another magazine. Don't the people have enough to read already?

We certainly know how that is here at Yahweh's Evangelical Assembly because we do have a tendency to receive magazines that never get read and also to purchase books which are only partially read at this point, but with all of the knowledge made available to us today there still lacks a magazine or publication (other than the Bible, of course) that focuses principally on the One Who should be most important to us and that is Yahshua the Messiah, the Son of the Heavenly Father Yahweh. It seems that we get to focusing on the importance of Yahweh's Name, or the Torah (which is important), or our own ability to fulfill the Torah, etc., but we neglect something that is extremely important and that is Yahshua and His fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Yahshua told the people of His day, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life," Jn. 5:39-40. Is it possible that we are making the same mistake? You know, history does repeat itself, time and time and time again. Why? Because man has a tendency to forget. Man has a tendency to forsake history. Yahshua gave the parable of the 10 virgins in Mat. 25 who all slumbered and slept. Half of them were foolish because they took no oil in their lamps and when the cry came to awake from sleep and come meet the returning Messiah Who is also to be their husband, the Bridegroom, they weren't prepared for it.

Yahshua also told His disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, **that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.**' Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, '**Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things,**' Lk. 24:44-48.

We find that so many are neglecting to teach how Yahshua fulfilled the Scriptures. Rather, many are going about seeking how to establish their own righteousness, a mistake that Israel made, according to the Apostle Paul, and surely a mistake that the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees made. Many have been led to question the New Testament Scriptures altogether, but the New Testament is not only a witness of the New Covenant that Yahweh promised to make, but it is a witness concerning how Yahshua fulfilled the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.

It is the purpose of this magazine to utilize both Old and New Testament Scriptures in order to reveal how Yahshua is spoken of and how He has fulfilled them. We also understand that He also has other Scriptures to fulfill in the future. These also must be pointed out.

We certainly solicit your prayers on our behalf as we embark on this journey, intent and goal to feed the flock of Yahshua with the True Bread from heaven, remind you of Yahshua's fulfillment of the Scriptures and seek to aid the bride in preparing herself for the wondrous marriage that will take place at His second appearing.

Elder/Evangelist Jerry Healan

HOW NAMES DESCRIBE SCRIPTURAL FULFILLMENT

At the end of each Gregorian Calendar year, the world celebrates a holiday in honor of the Savior's birth. Pageants, programs and scenes depict three wise men at a manger scene with a great shining star, a mother and father with a child in a manger. Sadly, what the world has been led to do is to lump the accounts of Matthew, chapters 1 and 2 with Luke chapters 1 through 3 which has a tendency to mislead and confuse rather than portray the truth. The timing of this observance also has a tendency to mislead and confuse because it can be proven that the Savior was not born at this time of the year. Some who understand that Mat. 1-2 and Lk. 1-3 are not contemporary have been led to deny that Matthew chapters 1 and 2 are even a viable part of Scripture, but were added at a later date in order to lead believers into the idolatry of Mithras worship.

It is not the purpose of this article to address the Christmas scene nor to specifically address the situation of those who deny Mat. 1-2. That will be done in other articles. The purpose of this article is to show you that the very names utilized in Luke and Matthew tell a story in and of themselves. Hopefully it will be a tremendous eye-opener for the readers.

ANNOUNCING JOHN'S BIRTH

Luke is inspired to begin his evangel account with a priest named Zechariah (Lk. 1:5). He is of the course of Abia and the lot had fallen on him to burn incense, "And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before Elohim in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of Yahweh. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense," vv. 8-10. The angel Gabriel appeared to him announcing that his wife, who had been barren, was to conceive and bear a son whom they were to name John (vv. 11-20). Zechariah found this announcement

rather hard to believe since both he and his wife were well stricken in years (v. 18), so he was stricken with dumbness for his unbelief until the day that his son would be born (v. 20).

When Zechariah's wife delivered their neighbors and relatives called him Zechariah after his father, but the mother would have none of it, she said that his name would be called John (vv. 57-69). They turned to Zechariah seeking his help in solving the dispute. He asked for a writing table and wrote that his name would be John (vv. 62-63). Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and he began to speak praising Elohim (v. 64).

The interesting thing concerning the name

*Zechariah means
"Yah's remembrance",
Yah's memorial," Yah
has remembered," etc.*

Zechariah is that it is a combination of two Hebrew words zakar and Yah or Yahu. Zakar means to mark, remember or mention. Yah or Yahu comes from the first two or three letters contained in Yahweh's name. Thus, Zechariah means "Yah's remembrance", "Yah's memorial", "Yah has remembered", etc. What did Zechariah say? "Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and **to remember his holy covenant**," Lk. 1:69-72.

Is there a coincidence here or has Yahweh

deliberately utilized a man whose name means "Yah has remembered" in order to announce the beginning of the fulfillment of the new covenant? Yahweh does things in an ordered way and at an ordered time. The time had come for Yahweh to bring His covenant of remembrance to fulfillment.

ELIZABETH

Zechariah's wife was named Elizabeth (Lk. 1:5). Elizabeth is a combination of two Hebrew words "Eli" and "shebet." "Eli" means "My El." "Shebet" is related to two Hebrew words that are very closely interrelated. Those words are "shaba" and "sheba." They are numbers 7650 and 7651 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. #7650, "shaba" is defined as; a primitive root; properly to *be complete*, but used only as a denominative from 7651; to *seven* oneself, i.e. *swear* (as if by repeating a declaration seven times) #7651 "sheba" is defined as; from 7650; a primitive cardinal number; *seven* (as the sacred *full* one); also (adverbially) seven times; by implication, a *week*; by extension, an *indefinite* number.

If we hearken back to Genesis chapter 21, we find that Abimelech, and Phichol asked Abraham to "swear" (shaba, #7650) that he wouldn't deal falsely with them because they knew that Elohim was with him (vv. 22-24). They entered into a covenant agreement whereupon Abraham introduced seven (sheba, #7651) ewe lambs as a testimony that he had dug the well. "Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they swore both of them." Being named "Beer-sheba" meant that the well would not only carry the distinction of the "well of seven" but also the "well of oath."

Isaac had a similar confrontation with the people of the land as recorded in Gen. 26. Abimelech and Phichol also came to him desiring to make a covenant between them for they recognized that Yahweh was also with Isaac. After the ceremony

of the covenant and the departure of Abimelech's entourage, Isaac's servants dug a well which Isaac called "Sheba." The city that eventually was built around this well was named "Beer-sheba" or "Well of the oath."

Elizabeth's name corresponds with these principles. Her name has to do with the El of seven or the Oath of El.

THE MEMORIALS

Another interesting thing about the word "zakar" is that the word "memorial" (zikrown) stems from it. There were three most important memorials given in the Torah. They were (1) the Memorial Name Yahweh (Ex. 3:15), (2) the Passover Memorial (Ex. 12) and (3) the Sabbath day (Ex. 16, 20:8-11). Zechariah means Yahweh's Memorial or Yahweh's Remembrance. Elizabeth means the oath of El or the El of seven.

In Ex. 2:24 we read, "And Elohim heard their groaning, and Elohim remembered (zakar) His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."

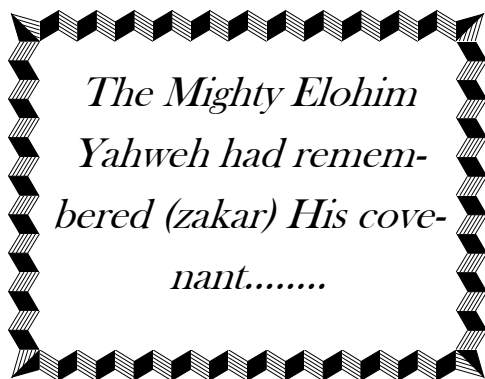
Isaiah is inspired to write, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am El, and there is none else. I have sworn (shaba) by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear (shaba). 'Surely,' shall one say, 'in Yahweh have I righteousness and strength:' EVEN TO Him shall men come: and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In Yahweh shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isa. 45:22-25.

Who is He speaking to? ALL ENDS OF THE EARTH as well as ISRAEL! This wasn't possible under the first covenant. Yahweh, in the book of Luke and other New Testament Scriptures was declaring the beginning of the New Covenant that He had promised to Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith Yahweh: but this shalt be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith Yahweh, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their

Elohim, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh:' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. 31:31-34.

The mighty Elohim Yahweh had remembered (zakar) His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to bring their descendants into the land of Canaan. He gave Moses His Memorial (zakar) Name. He gave Israel the Passover Memorial (zakar) which delivered them out of slavery. He then confirmed His oath (shaba) by giving them manna, bread from heaven, in order to lead them to His seventh day Sabbath. Note that the number seven (sheba) is involved here. Of course, they were to gather the manna for six days and rest on the Sabbath. The Sabbath memorial (zakar) was a day of rest wherein no man could work. In other words, the Sabbath belonged to Yahweh. It was His signature and oath that meant that their ultimate deliverance would rest on His shoulders not on their promises.

In utilizing Zechariah (Yahweh's Memo-



rial) and Elizabeth (El of the oath), Yahweh is beginning to announce that He has remembered His promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, Judah and the rest of the world in order to begin to lay the foundation for their deliverance which He swore by Himself or His own great name.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah that his wife was going to bear a son and that he was to name him "John." The original Hebrew name for John is "Yehowchanan." Yehowchanan is a combination of two Hebrew words, "Yehow" and "chanan." "Yehow" is another form for the name "Yahweh." "Chanan" is defined as; a primitive root (compare 2583);

properly, to *bend* or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to *favor*, *bestow*; causatively to *implore* (i.e. move to favor by petition). "Chanan" is the primitive root word from whence the Hebrew word for "grace" (chen) is derived. Thus, the name John was an announcement that Yahweh, the Superior One, was going to bend, or stoop in kindness to an inferior.

It is interesting that when John the Baptist was told to begin his ministry that he came into all the country about Jordan preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It is interesting because when Yahweh remembered His promise under the first covenant, He called Moses to be instrumental in delivering the children of Israel. Moses means "drawing out (of the water), i.e. rescued." John was drawing the people out in order to immerse them in water because of their sins. This was in preparation for them to receive the True Messiah Yahshua when He would begin His ministry.

Now we can expand the meaning of the names Zechariah, Elizabeth and John for the fullness of clarification. The El Yahweh has remembered the oath that He swore by Himself to have mercy, grace, favor on His people.

MARY/MIRIAM

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, the Angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin Miriam in order to announce to her that she was to conceive in her womb and bring forth a male child named Yahshua. "Miriam" is a combination of two Hebrew words. The first is "meriy" which is defined as; from 4784; bitterness, i.e. (figuratively) rebellion; concretely, bitter, or rebellious. The last letter of Miriam's name "m" comes from the Hebrew letter "mem" and has to do with water or spirit. Miriam's name has to do with the condition of the children of Israel at the time of John's and Yahshua's entrance into the world. The people had rebelled against Yahweh and His covenant and were suffering under the subjection, harshness and oppression of the fourth world ruling kingdom prophesied by the Prophet Daniel in chapter 2 which also was the fourth beast kingdom of Daniel 7.

Rome was a city which had expanded into a city state, and then a conquering republic, but under the hand of Julius Caesar, Rome had undergone a change in nature from republic to dictatorship.

Julius Caesar's life was cut short, but His

nephew Octavian took his place declaring that a comet that appeared in the heavens at that time was the resurrected Julius Caesar ascending into the heavens as a god. Octavian declared himself to be the adopted son of Julius Caesar and therefore was the son of god. His name was changed to Augustus which means to venerate, reverence or worship.

Augustus had placed his cousin Herod the great as king over Judaea. Herod means "heroic" or "a hero." His descent was from a combination of Esau and Ishmael. He was not a true king of Israel from the lineage of David.

While Herod supposedly practiced the faith of the Jews, he built the city of Caesarea wherein was a shrine dedicated to the worship of Caesar. Thus, his faith was feigned.

While he embarked on many great works and even restored the temple of Yahweh, the fact of the matter is that he was a very harsh, oppressive ruler. This caused the people to cry out in bitterness and oppression.

Miriam's name had to do with the situation of bitterness that the people found themselves in because of their rebellion.

JOSEPH

Miriam was espoused (engaged) to a carpenter named Joseph. The name Joseph means "Yahweh shall add" (Gen. 30:24).

Joseph was the namesake of a son of Jacob by his wife Rachel. He was sold into slavery by his brothers, but ended up as a savior and deliverer of the family because of his rise to power in Egypt. Jacob/Israel adopted or added Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim as his own making the number of sons thirteen. Thus, it was through Joseph that salvation or deliverance was added to Israel as well as additional sons or children.

Joseph, the espoused of Miriam, was a carpenter. A carpenter is a builder. Yahshua became known as the carpenter's son (Mat. 13:55). Yahshua, as the carpenter's son, came to rebuild the temple (Jn. 2:19, Mk. 14:58, Acts 7:48, 2 Cor. 5:1, Heb. 9:11, 4).

The name Joseph testifies to the fact that Yahweh was going to add salvation to the children of Israel as He had promised in spite of their rebellion against Him. He would also provide a new body which would no longer be subject to sin, corruption and death.

YAHSHUA

The name Yahshua means "The Salvation of Yahweh," "Yahweh's salvation," or "Yahweh the Savior."

It is through Yahshua that grace is able to be administered for the purpose of salvation of the children of Israel, Judah and the Gentiles as John wrote, "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace (inexhaustible grace). For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Yahshua the Messiah," Jn. 1:16-17.

This grace was spoken of by the Prophet Zechariah (Yahweh's Memorial/Yahweh's Remembrance), "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain: and **he shall bring forth the headstone** thereof with shoutings crying, 'Grace, grace unto it,' Zech. 4:7.

Yahshua is the stone spoken of here. Yahshua is the precious corner stone or head stone that Yahweh was bringing forth in order to bring forth that wondrous grace, "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a

Miriam's name had to do with the situation of bitterness that the people found themselves in because of their rebellion.

chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.' Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto then which be disobedient, the Stone Which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed," 1 Pet. 2:6-8.

Thus, we find that through the names Miriam, Joseph and Yahshua, Yahweh was going to add His salvation to the people who were in bitterness because of their rebellion.

BETHLEHEM

Yahshua was born in Bethlehem Judah. Bethlehem is a combination of two Hebrew words "bayith" and "lechem." "Bayith" simply means house or temple. "Lechem" is the Hebrew word for bread. Therefore, Bethlehem means "house or temple of bread."

This is a fitting name for the birthplace of Yahshua because He declared that He was the true bread from heaven, "Then said they unto Him, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of Elohim?' Yahshua answered and said unto them, 'This is the work of Elohim, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent.' They said therefore unto Him, 'What sign shewest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; and as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Then Yahshua said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven. For **the bread of Elohim is He Which cometh down from heaven** and giveth life unto the world,'" Jn. 6:26-33.

Remember the meaning of the name John? Doesn't it have to do with a Superior One who stoops or bends down to an inferior? This is the point that Yahweh was making through the name of John. It was the point that Yahshua is making here and it is also the point that Paul was making in Phil. 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you which was also in the Messiah Yahshua: Who being in the form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be equal with Elohim: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Returning to John 6, Yahshua told the people that He was the true bread from heaven and that He came down from heaven (vv. 35-38). He told them that He is the bread of life (v. 48) and the living bread that came down from heaven (v. 51). He went on to tell them that if anyone is to have eternal life he must eat His flesh and drink His blood (vv. 53-58).

It is important to point out that Yahshua, the true bread from heaven, having been born in Bethlehem, the house or temple of bread, was placed in a manger (Lk. 2:7). A manger is a crib for fodder.

Yahweh's people understand that they are

His sheep (Psa. 79:13). His people are called His sheep in Ez. 34:6, 11, 12, etc. Yahshua calls those who hear and follow Him His sheep (Jn. 10). Yahshua, the true bread from heaven, was born in Bethlehem, the house or temple of bread, and was placed in a manger or crib which holds fodder or food for sheep and other domesticated animals.

Isn't it amazing how Yahweh has utilized names in order to substantiate His word and plan?

NAZARETH

Joseph and Miriam dwelt in Nazareth and after Yahshua was born, that is where they went to live. While they did have to flee to Egypt until the death of Herod, when they were called back into the land, they returned to Nazareth (Mt. 2:22-23). Nazareth was Yahshua's abode when He was called to begin His ministry.

Nazareth is a combination of two Hebrew words "na" and "zarach." "Na" means to entreat, ask, pray. When the priest Zechariah was burning the incense on the altar, the people were outside praying. Of course, the prayers would have been for many things, but one of the prayers had to have been for the salvation of Israel.

"Zarach" means to irradiate, shoot forth beams, to rise (as the sun), to appear (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, Hebrew Lexicon, #2224).

When John was born, his father Zechariah declared, "Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His People, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be **saved** from our enemies, and the hand of all that hate us; to perform the **mercy promised** to our fathers, and to **remember** His holy covenant; the **oath** which He **swore** to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of Yahweh to prepare His ways; and to give knowledge of **salvation** unto His People by the remission of their sins, through the tender **mercy** of our Elohim; whereby the **dayspring** from on high hath visited us, to **give light** to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to

guide our feet into the way of peace," Lk. 1:68-79.

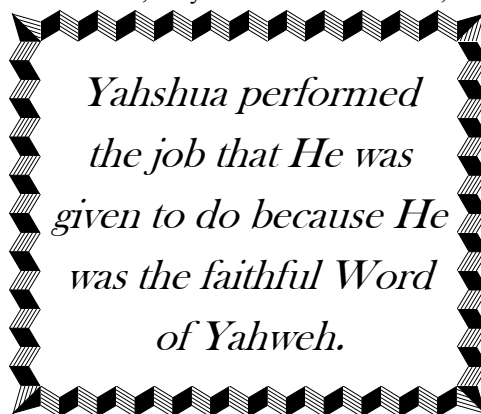
Notice that most of the highlighted words are words associated with the names that we have been discussing. Notice also that the word "dayspring" is employed. "Dayspring" is translated from the Greek word "anatole" which means "a rising of light."

The light is Yahshua. Yahshua is living in Nazareth which means to rise as the sun. John's ministry had to precede Yahshua's by a time designated by Yahweh. John's ministry was established to prepare the way for Yahshua's. The earliest beams of the true dawn, the true light were beginning to irradiate forth. Nazareth has to do with asking, praying, entreating for the rising of that light.

When Joseph and Miriam brought Yahshua to the temple to present Him to Yahweh, a man named

GALILEE

Luke 2:39 records, "And when they had performed all things according to the law of Yahweh, they returned into **Galilee**, to



their own city Nazareth."

Also, Matthew records that after the visit of the wise men from the east, Joseph and Miriam had to flee into Egypt until the death of Herod. When they returned from Egypt they returned to Nazareth of **Galilee** (Mat. Chapter 2).

"Galilee" comes from the Hebrew word "Galiyl" which is defined as; a circle, a valve of a folding door (as turning); also a ring (as round).

The name Galilee speaks of several things. We usually say, What goes around, comes around. Or we can speak of things coming back "full circle"

Yahweh's plan in Yahshua is to ransom or redeem His people Israel and Judah and also the Gentiles. Therefore, we read such statements in Scriptures as, "And the ran-

somed of **Yahweh shall return**, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," Isa. 35:10.

"Remember these O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant: I have formed thee; thou art My servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of Me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: **return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee**," Isa. 44:21-22.

"Therefore **the redeemed of Yahweh shall return**, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away," Isa. 51:11.

Time and time again Scripture speaks of Israel's and Judah's dispersal because of their evil works, their iniquitous and sinful ways, but Yahweh also promises that He is their Redeemer and will ransom them from their ways of evil so that they can return to Him and He will bring them back to the land. This is the message of Galilee.

Another **SOLID PROMISE** from Yahweh is found in Isa. 55:11, "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: **it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**"

The Apostle John reveals that Yahshua is Yahweh's Word! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Elohim. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men....And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth," Jn. 1:1-4, 14.

Yahshua, came from heaven. He came from the Father. He was His Word. The Father sent the Word forth to accomplish His task and to return. Yahshua performed the job that He was given to do because He was the faithful Word of Yahweh. When He had accomplished His task, He had made the way possible for Yahweh's children to be able to return to Him and He returned to the Father having accomplished as prophesied! The circle (galyil) was in the process of being completed.

THE DOOR

Another meaning for the word Galilee is a valve of a folding door as turning. If the valve is turning, then the door is moving which means that it is either opening or closing. In this case, the door of eternal grace and salvation had been shut, but in Yahshua, the door was opening.

Yahshua proclaimed that He was the door of the sheep and entrance to the sheepfold was only by and through Him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. (This parable spake Yahshua unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them.) Then said Yahshua unto them again, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep,' Jn. 10:1-7.

The question that should be on everyone's mind is, Am I a sheep of Yahshua? Am I a sheep of the true Shepherd, or have I been kidnapped by the thieves and robbers? There is only one door and Yahshua is that door. The ransom has been paid by Him and the door opened so that you can return to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of your soul, if you will only hear His voice.

THE DOORS OF HEAVEN

John 10 is a parable which can only be revealed in Yahshua. Psalm 78 is also a similar parable, "Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old," vv. 1-2. It is a parable of Israel's sins and disbelief even though Yahweh performed great miracles to provide for and sustain them.

We read, "Though He had commanded the clouds from above, and **opened the doors of heaven**, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the grain of heaven. Man did eat the bread of the mighty: He sent them meat to the full, (vv. 23-25).

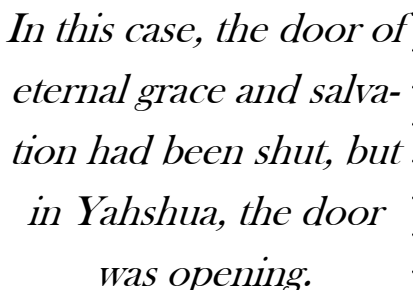
Yahweh opened the doors of heaven in order to rain manna down upon the people! The manna was the grain of heaven, the bread of the Mighty!

But that manna, that bread from heaven was only a type of Yahshua Who is the true bread from heaven! We have already addressed this concept, but the fact of the matter is that if the doors of heaven were opened (the valves turned/galiyl) to rain down the manna, then the doors of heaven were opened in a much more powerful manner when Yahshua came down from heaven! (As He said and the Scriptures verify.)

This is what the name and word "Galilee" is declaring to those who will listen, to those who will hear and believe!

CAPERNAUM

When Yahshua was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove. The interesting thing here is that Yahshua was conceived in Miriam's womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, therefore, He already had the Holy Spirit as a possession, but now the Father



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was pouring an unlimited amount of the Holy Spirit upon Him. It was given to Him without measure, "He That cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He That cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth; and no man receiveth His testimony. He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that Elohim is true. For He Whom Elohim hath sent speaketh the words of Elohim: for **Elohim giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him,**" Jn. 3:31-34.

After Yahshua had been given this immeasurable power of the Holy Spirit, He was led into the wilderness in order to confront the great rebel, prince of the power of the air and god of this world,

Satan the devil. Having overcome him in the greatest battle of all wars and also hearing of John's death, Yahshua returned to Nazareth (a rising of light), "And He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of Yahweh is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the evangel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set a liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of Yahweh.' And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,'" Lk. 4:16-21.

Matthew reveals, "And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in **Capernaum**, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness say great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.' From that time Yahshua began to preach, and say, 'Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,'" Mat. 4:13-17.

"Capernaum" is another combination of two Hebrew words "kaphar" and "nahum." "Kaphar" means **to cover** (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to **expiate** or condone, to placate or **cancel**.

Kaphar has to do with covering, or atoning, an atonement.

"Nahum" is defined as, a primitive root; properly, to sigh, i.e. breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e. (in a favorable sense) to pity, console or (reflexively) rue; or (unfavorably) to avenge (oneself).

In one sense it has to do with repentance. In another sense it has to do with comfort or comforting.

Yahshua told His disciples, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you

(Continued on page 23)

WHY WE SHOULD OBSERVE THE FEASTS OF YAHWEH

Are Yahweh's feast days important to be observed in this day and age or were they simply Old Testament and done away?

By Jerry Healan

The overall majority of the world observes the Roman calendar devised by Julius and Augustus Caesar with some renovations by the Roman Catholic popes, especially Pope Gregory.

The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan recently wrote an article stating that the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar was no longer considered to be primarily the calendar of the Western Christian world, but that it is being adopted by almost all nations of the world.

Of course, the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar focuses on Sunday, the first day of the week, being the religious rest day. Its primary annual feasts are Jan. 1 (New Year), a floating holiday called Easter Sunday (the supposed resurrection of the Savior) and Dec. 25th (the supposed birth of the Savior).

Even though these holidays are considered to be religious observances, there is no command in Yahweh's word, the Holy Bible, to do such. Yahweh's word sanctifies the seventh day Sabbath as the true rest day (order our free articles "Should A New Testament Believer Observe The Sabbath Day?" and "Just Who Was It That Sanctified Sunday Worship?"), and annual festivals predicated on observance of the new moon. Yahweh's new year's day was to occur on the new moon day closest to the vernal equinox.

Yahweh's commands were to observe the weekly Sabbath and annual Holy days which were called, singular, a moed and plural, moedim in Hebrew.

The Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar is broken down into days, weeks, months, etc. Yahweh's calendar is also broken down into days, weeks, months, etc.

The Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar has a seven day week. Yahweh's holy calendar has a seven day week. As stated, the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar sets aside the first day of the week for rest and religious congregating. Yahweh's holy calendar sets aside the seventh day of the week for rest and religious congregating.

The Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar is also broken down into periods

of time called months. Yahweh's calendar is also broken down into periods of time called months. But where does this word month, English, Hebrew, or otherwise, come from? A quick look at *Webster's New World Dictionary* reveals that the word month is etymologically derived from the word moon!

One of the definitions given for month is: the period of a complete revolution of the moon with reference to some fixed point (in full, lunar month); esp. the period from one new moon to the next (in full, synodic month); equivalent to 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 2.7 + seconds.

A quick look at *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* reveals that the same Hebrew word for moon is also used for month.

Since *Webster's* gives the definition of the word month as a period of revolution for the moon, which is Yahweh's

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commanded way of determining a month, why is it that our months are not predicated on such? Shouldn't this alert us that something is drastically wrong with the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar?

In the beginning, Yahweh created the sun, moon and stars to be for signs (Heb. = Owth) and seasons (moedim) and for days and years (Gen. 1:14). Yahweh gave the sun to rule the day (Psa. 136:8) and the moon and stars to rule the night (Psa. 136:9).

Furthermore, Psa. 104:19 says, "He appointed the moon for seasons (moedim): the sun knoweth his going down."

It is the lunar revolutions and phases which determine the time to observe

Yahweh's feasts days, but the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar overthrows this knowledge.

The Psalmist cries out, "Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their **ensigns for signs**. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by *casting down* the dwelling place of thy name to the ground. They said in their hearts, 'Let us destroy them together:' they have burned up all the **synagogues** of Elohim in the land. We see not our **signs**: *there is* no more any prophet: *neither is there* among us any that knoweth how long," Psa. 74:4-9.

This Psalm is significant because it speaks of the enemy coming into the land, overthrowing the temple where Yahweh's great name dwelt and then setting up their own signs. The final peoples to do such a thing were the Romans! They cast down the dwelling place of Yahweh's name to the earth. They then began to introduce their own signs in place of Yahweh's.

The interesting thing about the word signs is that it comes from the Hebrew word owth (אוֹת). Remember that in Gen. 1:14 we read that Yahweh put the sun, moon and stars to be for signs (owth/אוֹת) and seasons (moedim). In Ex. 31:13 Yahweh stated that we are to keep His sabbaths because it is a sign (owth/אוֹת) between Him and His people. His sabbaths, of course, not only refer to the seventh day sabbath, but also the annual appointments (moedim) or feast days which are determined by the very items that He put in the heavens, to wit, the sun, moon and stars.

Thus, we can easily begin to see that the Romans with their Cesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar are the real enemies of Yahweh.

Again, when Psa. 74 states that they have burned up all the **synagogues** in the land, the word "synagogue" is translated from the Hebrew word moedim (appointments, feasts, meeting place, assembly, etc., etc.).

The Romans did more than destroy the synagogues. They destroyed the meeting times (also called moedim) along with

everything else. Here is the psalmist lamenting that these things are no longer being observed because of the introduction of the meeting places and times of the enemy. It is our purpose to restore as much of that which has been overthrown as we possibly can. We are seeking to return to the things that Yahweh commanded.

But there is even more reason to observe Yahweh's sabbath and holy days. In Lev. 23 Yahweh commands, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *Concerning the feasts* (moedim) of Yahweh, which ye shall proclaim *to be holy convocations* (miqra-qodesh), *even these are my feasts* (moedim). Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an **holy convocation** (miqra-qodesh); ye shall do no work *therein*: it is the sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings. These *are the feasts* (moedim) of Yahweh, *even holy convocations* (miqra-qodesh), which ye shall proclaim in their seasons (the rest of the annual feast (moedim) days are given in verses 5-38)," Lev. 23:2-4.

There is a greater significance to the words feasts (moedim) and holy convocation (miqra-qodesh) than is actually realized by most.

Yahweh's feasts, which include the weekly Sabbath and the annual holy days, are called holy convocations (miqra-qodesh). The Hebrew word "miqra" is defined as something *called* out, i.e. a public *meeting* (the act, the persons, or the place); also a *rehearsal*. (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*)

Notice that the word has to do with the act, the **persons**, or the place. In the New Testament, the assembly is called the "ekklesia." The word "ekklesia" is defined as from a comp. of 1537 and a der. Of 2564; a *calling out*, i.e. (concr.) a popular *meeting*, espec. A religious *congregation* (Jewish *synagogue*, or Chr. Community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both). [*IBID*]

The words miqra and ekklesia are both speaking of the same thing. They have to do with being called out specifically for a holy purpose. The Hebrew word "qodesh" simply means "holy."

The Apostle Paul writes, "Who hath saved us, and **called** us with an **holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in the Messiah Yahshua before the world began," 2 Tim. 1:9.

The Greek word for "called" is the Greek word "kaleo." It is #2564 of *Strong's* and is defined as "to call." Notice that ekklesia is a derivative of this word. The word "calling" in the above Scripture is #2821 in the Greek Lexicon of *Strong's*. It is the Greek word "klesis" and is defined as from a shorter form of 2564; an *invitation* (fig.).

The Hebrew word "miqra" comes from the Hebrew word "qara" which means to call. Thus Paul's writing could be interpreted as, "Who hath saved us, and **called** (qara) us with an **holy calling** (miqra qodesh).

With these definitions, we can determine that the Sabbaths and annual feasts are holy callings (miqra-qodesh), but called to what? Let's explore the meaning of the word feasts (moed/moedim) just to see what they are for.

The Hebrew word for feast is moed. Moed is #4150 in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* and is defined as from 3259; prop. an *appointment*, i.e. a fixed *time* or *season*; spec. a *festival*; conventionally a *year*; by implication, an

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TO COME!*

assembly (as convened for a definite purpose); technically the *congregation*; by extension, the *place of meeting*; also a *signal* (as appointed beforehand).

We can already see how important this word is by its definition. By putting this word with the previous words (miqra-qodesh), we can see that they all are even more important and that the Sabbaths and annual holy days that they apply to are certainly very important.

But now, let's look at this root word #3259 from whence moed (#4150) is derived. It is the Hebrew word "ya'ad" which is defined as a prim. root; to *fix* upon (by agreement or appointment); by impl. to *meet* (at a stated time), to *summon* (to trial), to *direct* (in a certain quarter or position), to **engage** (for **marriage**).

Notice it closely! To ENGAGE FOR

MARRIAGE!!! Remember that one of the meanings for "miqra" is A REHEARSAL! Therefore, the Sabbaths and annual holy days are a calling out, or appointments made beforehand for us by Yahweh so that we may rehearse for the wedding since we are engaged to Yahshua.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Would to Elohim ye could bear with me a little in *my folly*: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with pious jealousy: for **I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to the Messiah,**" 2 Cor. 11:1-2.

When we are called out of this world, repent, baptized and receive the Holy Spirit of promise, we are then set aside as a chaste virgin to be married to the Messiah. Yahweh has given us certain specific **times** to **rehearse** for the wedding! Those times are revealed in the Scriptures to be the weekly Sabbaths and annual holy days.

In Mat. 22 Yahshua gives a parable concerning a king who made a marriage for his son and invited guests to the wedding. The King, of course, is the heavenly Father Yahweh, the Son is Yahshua.

In the parable, the invited (called) guests were too busy to come to the wedding and made light of the invitation. They also treated the servants that were sent shamefully and slew some of them. Those who were invited (called) revealed that they were not worthy. The parable reveals that the King sent his armies and destroyed the invited guests.

In Mat. 25 there is the parable of the 10 virgins. Five were wise and took oil in and with their lamps, but five were foolish and did not prepare by taking oil in their lamps.

The Greek word for "foolish" is "moros." Besides meaning "foolish," it also means to be "dull, stupid, HEEDLESS, blockhead and absurd.

Notice it! It means to be "heedless." To be heedless means to NOT pay close attention to, to NOT take careful notice of, to be unmindful and even FORGETFUL.

In Col. 2:16-17 we find that the Sabbath and Holy Days are shadows of THINGS TO COME! They remind us of Yahweh's coming kingdom. They remind us of His plan in bringing that plan about. When we observe them, we are not only reminded, but we are practicing, rehearsing for the

(Continued on page 23)

ATONEMENT

A DAY OF COVERING

On the tenth day of the seventh month on the sacred calendar is the day of atonement. It is a day we are commanded to afflict ourselves by fasting from evening to evening. It is a Holy Day and a day of sacred assembly. You can read about it in LEV.23:26-32 You will find all of the rituals surrounding this day of Atonement in LEV.16:1-34 This is telling about the selection of the two goats, one for sacrifice and one for carrying the sins of the people into the wilderness. You can read more about this in HEB.9:1-10 There have been many sermons and articles done on these aspects of the day of Atonement. In this study we will cover this very Holy time from a different viewpoint. We will investigate and come to understand what true fasting is and how it applies to us as Yahweh's people. We will also see another important aspect of this day that may not be evident at first. This is a most Holy day that only superficially involves food. Don't misunderstand me. We are to abstain from food on this day as Yahweh said and afflict ourselves but that is only a very small part of what the day of Atonement represents.

We are told in JOHN 4:24 that Elohim is Spirit and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. At repentance and immersion into the name of Yahshua, Yahweh gives us His gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth JOHN 16:13; JOHN 14:17, and to enable us to think on the spiritual plane so He can teach us the deep things of His word. We should begin this and all studies with prayer to Yahweh for understanding and enlightenment. Knowledge comes from study, understanding comes from Yahweh through the Holy Spirit.

There is something very special about the day of Atonement that goes unnoticed by many of the Sabbath and Holy day keeping groups. Yahweh begins the year on the first day of the month Abib in the

spring of the year. EX.12:2 However there are two exceptions to this rule. The seventh year land Sabbath and the year of Jubilee. These years both begin on the tenth day of the seventh month, Tishri, LEV.25:1-11 Atonement. This day and these years are very special to Yahweh and He wants them have special meaning for us. One must never take lightly or just observe the times that Yahweh says are special and Holy. All things Yahweh does are to teach us a very valuable lesson.

*I had made light of a
day Yahweh calls
Holy and He had
humbled me.*

Atonement is no exception.

HUMILIATION

As an aside here, I would like to relate to you something that happened to me on the day of Atonement many years ago when I was new to the faith that impressed on my mind, never to take lightly what Yahweh says. I was baptized in August, a couple of months before this fast day. As it approached and some of us were discussing it I mentioned that it would be a breeze to fast for twenty four hours as I never ate breakfast and seldom ate lunch. I usually had one big meal a day in the evening. Looking back, I can see that I was actually saying this would be no affliction at all.

When Atonement arrived I was not the least bit concerned. Services were at two o'clock but as noon approached I began to get a terrible headache like I had never

experienced. By the time we arrived at services I was very nauseous, dizzy and weak. I could hardly function because my headache was so severe. The minister asked me if I was a coffee drinker and I said I was, 8-10 cups a day. He said I had a caffeine withdrawal headache and it would be okay if I went home and laid down until sunset. By the time I arrived home I could barely function. I went to my room and knelt down to ask Yahweh to take away the headache. When I bowed my head the pain seemed not quite so bad. I thought that I had received the answer to my prayer. I thanked Yahweh but when I arose from my knees my head began to pound again so I knelt back down beside my bed and bowed my head onto my hands once again and the pain subsided to just a dull ache. I decided to stay there where it didn't hurt. Since I was on my knees anyway I decided it would be a good time to talk over many things with Yahweh in prayer. I remained on my knees with my head bowed for the remaining three hours of the day of Atonement.

When sundown came I got up and went to the kitchen to get a cup of coffee. Before I had finished my coffee my headache was gone. It amazed me that a couple of sips of coffee could work so fast. Being new to the faith, it didn't dawn on me for a few days what had really happened.

A few days later as I was studying, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I had made light of a day Yahweh calls Holy and He had humbled me. He not only made me kneel before Him, He made me bow before Him for three hours. I was more ashamed and embarrassed than I have ever been. Scriptures came to my mind and two really hit hard ISA. 45:23; ROM. 14:11. I had learned a lesson that I will never forget. It also started me on a very deep study of

this very Holy day of Atonement so that I would be assured never to make common, a time that Yahweh calls Holy. It is this study that I share with you in this article.

The first thing to understand is that abstaining from food is only a very small part of this day. As mentioned before, the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year both begin on this day. There is a very good reason that Yahweh has made these times all interconnect. They are all concerning the same subject. Oppression, lack of forgiveness and greed. Once one understands why the Sabbatical year and year of Jubilee were necessary for the people of Israel then we will begin to understand what true fasting is.

In another study concerning the Sabbatical and Jubilee we discovered that these were both years of release and restoration. Release of slaves, release of debts, and restoration of property to its rightful owner. We saw that these times both connected to Yahshua and the release and restoration that came to us through his sacrifice on our behalf. This day of Atonement also connects to Yahshua and what He expects of us as his followers.

RELEASE NECESSARY

The land Sabbath was necessary because people were enslaving other people less fortunate than themselves. They were doing this because of debts owed and taken out in forced human labour. Why was this allowed By Yahweh? We will see before this study is done that Yahweh does not condone slavery. Why then was this allowed? For the same reason that Moses allowed divorce. The hardness of the people's hearts and the lack of forgiveness they were willing to exhibit. This brings us to poverty. There have always been poor people in all lands including Israel. Has Yahweh failed to provide for the poor? I was told once, that very thing. To help us to understand, let us turn to a parable of Yahshua and statement that He made to a rich man. LUKE 12:16-20 This man had a great harvest with enough to last for many years. He decided to store it up, live off the proceeds and take a long vacation. Elohim called him a fool because his life would be required of him that night and then who would possess his wealth.

In MATT.19:16-20 Yahshua tells this rich man to obey the commandments if he wishes to enter into life. This man had kept these from his youth but Yahshua

told him he still lacked something. He was to give his wealth to the poor and follow Yahshua. He left sad because his wealth was more important than obeying Yahshua. On the surface he was doing the right things. Under scrutiny, the hardness of his heart was revealed.

What does this tell us? Yahweh has provided for the poor through their fellow man. To some He gives an excess and He expects them to share this excess with those who don't have enough. Yahweh talks about this in the books of the law and also in the writings of the new testament. We are told not to close our hand to the poor. A better rendering is, don't close your heart to the poor.

The following all tell us how Yahweh has provided for the poor:

DEUT.24:19-21; LEV.19:9-10; DEUT. 15:7-9; PROV.21:13; JAS.2:15-16; 1 JOHN 3:17; LUKE 6:34-36.

This is the way Yahweh wants it but because of the hardness of people's hearts, the year of release and the leveling of

*We will see before
this study is done that
Yahweh does not con-
done slavery.*

society is needed.

There is an old saying; "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer." This is not the case when Yahweh's law is properly administered. How did land come into the hands of those who don't own it making the year of Jubilee necessary? For the same reason. The hardness of people's hearts. Their unwillingness to share with those less fortunate than they are. Some had to sell because of poverty. Some of those that bought did so from greed. Yahweh allotted to each tribe of Israel certain portions of the promised land. Within each portion, land was allotted to each family. This was their heritage forever, as promised to Abraham. Some lost this heritage due to poverty and others perhaps because of poor management. Some lost their heritage to pay debts. The year of Jubilee was a year of restoration of this heritage, and freedom from the bondage of debts.

In Yahweh's perfect society all would care for each other. This of course is not

yet Yahweh's perfect society, administered by Yahshua and those in the first fruits harvest so these times of restoration and release are necessary.

So far we have briefly covered the rituals surrounding the day of Atonement. We have covered the connection between Atonement and the Sabbath of land rest and Jubilee year. Let us now cover another aspect of the day of Atonement and complete the connection of all of these very Holy times so that you will never fall into the trap that I did many years ago and lightly esteem one of Yahweh's special times.

A DAY ACCEPTABLE TO YAHWEH

Have you ever wondered why we are commanded to fast on this day? I have heard sermons and read articles stating that as we fast our thinking becomes clearer and it is easier to meditate and pray so we come closer to Yahweh. They also state that it is good for our bodies as it gets rid of toxins in our systems. This is all true and as one's head becomes clearer during the day one can pray much better, but it goes much deeper than physical deprivation of our bodies.

Is Yahweh concerned only with our physical abstention from food on this day or does He wish us to learn something spiritual from our fasting? We will come to understand that this is the case and just what true fasting is.

Turn to ISA.58:1-11 and read this very carefully along with, LUKE 4:16-20. Take note of what Yahshua came to proclaim. He not only came to declare it. He came to do it. We will examine these two scriptures in detail shortly. First, let's read, 1 JOHN 2:6. We are told that if we say we abide in Yahshua we should walk as He walked. He set the example for us and as His ambassadors (2 COR.5:20) we are to represent Him exactly as He is. We are to be growing to be exactly as He is. (EPH.4:13)

Let us return to LUKE 4:16-20. Yahshua said He was anointed to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, and to set free those that are oppressed. He was also to proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh. His message was one of freedom and renewal. In a previous study we saw that Yahshua began His ministry at the beginning of a Sabbatical year and continued through the year of Jubilee. Both of these times represent His message

of freedom and renewal. These times both begin on the day of Atonement. The day of atonement also represents this message of release and renewal.

Let us now turn back to, ISA. 58:1-9. Note verse 1. Yahweh says, "lift up your voice like a trumpet." (LEV.25:9; NUMBERS 10:10)

Trumpets were to announce special, Holy times. A trumpet or rams horn is very clear and loud in its sounding. It gets the attention of its hearers. Yahweh wants us to give special attention to what He is telling us through Isaiah. He is talking about fasting. Yahweh commanded a fast on the day of Atonement but what kind of fasting is acceptable to Him? In verses 3 to 5 He tells us the kind of fast that He takes no pleasure in. His people thought that they were doing right but they had totally missed the point of the day. We must not fall prey to this improper kind of fasting, just abstaining from food and enduring the day. It is not a day to be endured. It is a day to be delighted in as are all of the Holy Days and Sabbaths. (ISA. 58:13) What the people are doing in verse 5 seems to be right, on the surface. Humbling oneself, and bowing the head. However, what seems right to us may not be. (PROV.14:12)

In verse 6 to 10 Yahweh tells us the fast that pleases Him. Read these verses very carefully. As you do you will discover that if everyone lived this way, there would be no need for the seventh year Sabbath of release and the fiftieth year of release and restoration of property.

I want you to meditate very carefully on these verses and you will see a definite parallel to the Sabbatical year, Jubilee, Atonement and Yahshua's reading in the synagogue. Verse 6; This is the fast that Yahweh chooses. To loose the bonds of wickedness, (Rashaw, Heb. sin) To undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, (Compare to Luke 4:18) and to break every yoke. This of course is the yoke of slavery in its many forms.

Verse 7; To share your bread with the hungry. (Remember, some have too much and some have not enough. Yahweh has let this happen to see if those He has given an excess to will be faithful administrators and share with those less fortunate.) And bring the homeless poor into your house. Notice, its not enough to just throw them a few cents or dollars, but we are to take them into our home. This is Yahweh's will.

Should we obey? Some might say, "In

this day and age of violence that could be very dangerous." If one does take a homeless one into ones home because of knowing Yahweh's word, do you not think that Yahweh could and would protect that one from harm? ISA. 50:2 Yahweh has the same power to deliver and protect that He has always had. The one you take into your home is not in control. Yahweh is.

When we see the naked, to cover him. The sense of the word "naked" is, in need of proper clothing and care, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh. (This last part is rather a poor translation of the Hebrew which means literally, "and do not hide your eyes from seeing his need.") HEB.13:12 Could Yahweh perhaps test one of us in this way?

Notice the end of verse 9. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, and the pointing of the finger, (literally, "Push away by accusation." Perhaps harmful gossip or rumour) and the speaking of wickedness. (evil, harmful talking) Verse 10 If you pour yourself out for the hungry

*Is this fasting that is
acceptable to Yahweh
to take place only one
day a year?*

and satisfy the desire of the afflicted. (the sense of the word "afflicted" is downtrodden and unhappy or lonely. Perhaps the elderly who are alone and also the terminally ill who have no hope for the future.) [Wouldn't it be wonderful to assure them they do have a future through Yahshua the Messiah] This is what Yahweh calls fasting that is acceptable to Him.

Notice now verses 8, 9, the last part of 10 and 11. These are the blessings that will be automatically applied by Yahweh when He is pleased with our fast. Take special note of verse 10. Yahweh says that our light will rise in the darkness and our darkness will be as the noonday sun.

Yahshua said He was the light of the world. JOHN 8:12; JOHN 9:5. He also said we are the light of the world. MATT. 5:14 Yahshua is the exact representation of the Father and reflects His glory. HEB.1:3 Yahweh is light. 1 JOHN 1:5 Yahshua reflects this light and we reflect that light to the world through the Holy Spirit which He has given us. This is not a

harsh blinding light, but a soft warm glow. That same appealing glow that attracted us to this way of life.

We reflect this light through the fruit of the Spirit which grows within us. GAL.5:22-23 Notice that one of the components of this fruit is gentleness or kindness (Greek, chrestotes). Another is love. 1 COR. 13 It is this kind of love that Yahweh and Yahshua show us. This love grows in us through the fruit of the spirit and this is the love we are to show others. This love inspires true fasting that is acceptable to Yahweh.

A LIFE OF FASTING

Is this fasting that is acceptable to Yahweh to take place only one day a year? Are we to grant release, which is actually forgiveness, kindness, thoughtfulness, and generosity once every seven and fifty years? I know you will answer no to all of the above. This is what Yahweh is trying to teach us through the Sabbatical year, Jubilee year and the day of Atonement. Our life in Yahweh is a continual fast. Not a fast from food and water, but a fast from evil, oppression of others, and the keeping of records of evils others commit against us.

Our fast begins on the day we answer the call to follow Yahshua. We can no longer feast on the evils that those of the world do. These lead to dissatisfaction, disappointment and in the end, death. Our fasting in Yahweh leads to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness, and self control, and in the end, eternal life. This is our true food and against these there is no law. GAL.5:22-23

As we approach the day of Atonement and the beginning of the Sabbatical year, let us meditate on these things and keep a fast that is truly acceptable to Yahweh.

May Yahweh bless your studies. HalleluYah!!! Elder Dave Ganton

SHOULD A NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER BE

CIRCUMCISED?

A controversy is raging in and out of the assemblies. It is an age old controversy that was dealt with among the early believers. However, there are still many who seek to trouble the believers bringing them in bondage to the law of Moses. That controversy is the question of circumcision. What is the truth concerning circumcision? We must search the Scriptures in order to come to the true understanding.

By Jerry Healan

Should a New Testament believer be circumcised? This question plagued the assembly fairly early on with the entrance of Gentile (non-Jewish) converts into the ranks of the assembly.

At first, the newly founded congregation consisted only of Jewish (circumcised) converts. These early believers had the concept that the promise of the kingdom and salvation belonged only to the descendants of Israel. This concept is evidenced by the situation between Peter and Cornelius.

Cornelius was a centurion of the Italians (Acts 10). He was a devout man, fearing Yahweh with all of His house, giving many alms to the people and praying to Elohim always (v. 2).

He witnessed a vision while he was praying at about the ninth hour of the day when an angel of Yahweh appeared to him (v. 3). The angel told him that his prayers had been heard and that he should send to Joppa for Simon Peter who was lodging with one Simon a Tanner by the seaside (vv. 4-6).

Cornelius obediently did as commanded sending two of his household servants and a devout soldier to fetch Peter (v. 7-8).

The next day, Peter went up on the housetop to pray and while there became very hungry and would have gone to eat, but before he could do so, he fell into a trance (v. 9-10).

Heaven was opened to him and he saw what looked like a great sheet knit at the four corners which was being let down to the earth. The sheet contained all kinds of beasts, wild beasts and creeping things. Then a voice came which said, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter refused saying that he had never eaten any thing common or unclean. However, the vision was persistent. It was done three times and then received back into heaven (vv. 11-16).

While Peter was wondering what was going on concerning this vision, the **three men** arrived from Cornelius. The vision had occurred three times, one time for each man that had been sent. The Spirit

informed Peter of their arrival and he was told to go down and to go with them doubting nothing for they had been sent by Yahweh (vv. 17-20).

The men informed Peter concerning Cornelius and the visit by the angel who had told him to send for Peter. Peter and six other brethren accompanied the men back to Joppa (vv. 23-24).

Peter reminded them that it was unlawful for a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation, but Yahweh had shown him that he should no longer call any man common or unclean (v. 28).

Peter asked why Cornelius had sent for him and Cornelius recounted the visit by the angel (vv. 29-33).

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said,

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being circumcised!***

'Of a truth I perceive that Yahweh is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. The word which Yahweh sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Yahshua the Messiah: (He is Sovereign of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how Yahweh anointed Yahshua of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for Yahweh was with Him. And we

are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; Whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him Yahweh raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly; not to all the People, but unto witnesses chosen before of Yahweh, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the People, and to testify that it is He Which was ordained of Yahweh to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins," (vv. 34-43).

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN

"While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." (vv. 34-45).

Notice it again. **They of the circumcision were astonished because the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles** (uncircumcised non-Jews).

Then Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" And He commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Sovereign. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days," vv. 47-48.

Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of the Savior. He said nothing about them being circumcised!

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of Yahweh. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "**Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised**, and didst eat with them.' But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, 'I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A

certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, 'Rise, Peter; slay and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Master: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.' But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What Yahweh hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.' And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house: and he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Master, how that he said, 'John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Forasmuch then as Yahweh gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Master Yahshua the Messiah; **what was I, that I could withstand Yahweh?**' Acts. 11:1-17.

Notice it again, very carefully. The brethren at Jerusalem contended with Peter because he ate with the uncircumcised. Cornelius and his band were uncircumcised when Peter received the vision. Yahweh had already considered them clean even in their uncircumcision in the flesh. He also poured His Holy Spirit upon them even in their uncircumcision. Peter did not command that they then be circumcised, but he commanded that they be baptized.

Notice what the brethren in Jerusalem did when they heard these things, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified Yahweh, saying, 'Then hath Yahweh also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,'" Acts 11:18.

ENTER THE PHARISEES

Sometime later, after Paul and Barnabas had been called and set aside as apostles,

certain men of Judæa came to Antioch teaching that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved." Paul and Barnabas had no small disputation with these men insomuch that it was determined that they should go up to Jerusalem and present the matter to the apostles and elders there (Acts 15:1-2).

On the way to Jerusalem, they were declaring the conversion of the Gentiles with great joy, but upon their arrival there rose up certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, who were saying that they needed to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses (vv. 3-5).

When the apostles and elders came together to discuss the matter there was a great deal of disputing (vv. 6-7). But Peter rose up and said unto them, "Men and brethren, ye know how that **a good while ago** Yahweh made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the evangel, and believe. And Yahweh, Which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; **and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.** Now therefore why

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tempt ye Yahweh, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?** But we believe that through the grace of the Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah we shall be saved, even as then," Acts 15:7-11.

Here is the apostle Peter telling the truth of the matter. It is not through physical fleshly circumcision that we shall be saved, but it is through the faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

After Paul and Barnabas told everyone about the wonders and miracles that were being worked by them among the Gen-

tiles, everyone kept silence (v. 12).

Then James declared, "Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how Yahweh at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 'After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after Yahweh, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called,' saith Yahweh, 'Who doeth all these things.' Known unto Yahweh are all His works from the beginning of the world.

Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to Yahweh: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. **For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.'** Then pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole assembly, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren; and they wrote letters by them after this manner; 'The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: **forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, 'Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:' to whom we gave no such commandment:** it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." Acts 15:13-29.

Herein is the ruling of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Why is it that many of those who call themselves believers today, and also call upon the true names of the Father and Son cannot accept this

judgment?

Notice also that Moses had been read from old time on every Sabbath day! Since Moses demanded physical, fleshly circumcision, then why the controversy?

CIRCUMCISION CAN BE UNCIRCUMCISION

The apostle Paul writes, **“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.** Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter;** whose praise is not of men, but of Yahweh,” Ro. 2:25-29.

Truly, if men could keep the law then circumcision would be profitable according to Paul in verse 25. However, in chapter 3 of this same book Paul writes that Jews and Gentiles are both under sin (v. 9) and that all have sinned (transgressed the law) and come short of the glory of Yahweh (v. 23). Therefore, what good will circumcision of the flesh do in achieving salvation? The only One Who was able to be circumcised and keep the law perfectly **in all points** was Yahshua the Messiah.

Paul continues to point out in Ro. 4 that Abraham became the father of the faithful even while he was yet uncircumcised. He received circumcision as a seal of his righteousness of faith (v. 10-11), but he says that Abraham is the father of all them that believe even though they are not circumcised in order that righteousness might also be imputed to them (v. 11).

Paul also writes, “Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. **Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh,**” 1 Cor. 7:18-19.

THE COMMANDMENTS

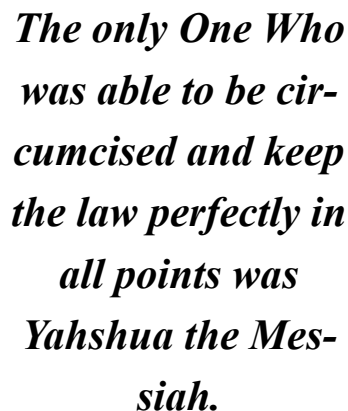
Notice again what Paul is saying here,

“...circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of Yahweh.”

Yahshua was asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, Elohim: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He saith unto Him, ‘Which?’ Mt. 19:16-18.

This young man was a Jew. He knew that there were commandments, statutes, judgments and ordinances. As a matter of fact, the Jews proclaim that there are 613 commandments in the Torah and that they should all be kept. The Pharisees had also laden the people with heavy burdens to bear. So the young man wanted to know which of these to observe.

Yahshua answered, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ The Young man



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saith unto Him, ‘All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?’ Yahshua said unto him, ‘If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions,” vv. 18-22.

What had Yahshua focused on? A portion of the 10 commandments. What portion did He leave off? Thou shalt not covet was one of them. The rich young man coveted the great wealth that he had. But Yahshua also left off (1) Thou shalt have no other elohim before Me. (2) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven im-

age, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh thy Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments. (3) Thou shalt not take the name of Yahweh thy Elohim in vain; for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. (4) Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And Thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all your heart, mind and soul.

Here was a young man who certainly was Jewish and circumcised in the flesh. Yet he went away sorrowful because he wasn’t willing to give up his riches in order to apprehend the Messiah. Yahshua understood that he was breaking the commandment of covetousness, including the commandments which have to do with loving Yahweh (commandments 1-3 specifically). The young man was making an elohim and idol out of his riches. Thus, what good did his circumcision do him? As the Apostle Paul states, his circumcision had become uncircumcision.

Another thing to point out is that Yahshua never proclaimed the 613 commandments, which **the Jews admit that over half of them are impossible to keep!**

THE PROBLEM AT GALATIA

It is obvious that the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Galatians because the same situation was occurring there which occurred at Antioch. Some (probably Pharisees) were coming in and teaching the people that they should be circumcised. Again, Paul deals with the problem in a powerful way. He proclaims that the evangel of uncircumcision was committed to him as was the evangel of circumcision was to Peter (Gal. 2:7).

He states that when he, Barnabas and Titus journeyed to Jerusalem that Titus, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised (Gal. 2:1-3).

In chapter 6 he writes, “As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of the Messiah. For **neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law;** but desire to have you circum-

cised, that they may glory in your flesh. But Yahweh forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For **in the Messiah neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,**" (vv. 12-15).

Again, Paul warns the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith the Messiah hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that **if ye be circumcised, The Messiah shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. The Messiah is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.** For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For **in Yahshua the Messiah neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision;** but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion *cometh* not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Sovereign, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, **if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution?** then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," Gal. 5:1-15.

Again, Paul says a mouthful. He warns that if a man consents to circumcision (for religious purposes) then he is indebted to do the whole law. The Messiah and His grace is no longer in effect for that person.

What Paul is saying here is that if a man is circumcised according to the command in the Torah, then he has taken it upon himself to fulfill the whole law under his own strength. He has brought himself under the same covenant that Israel made with Yahweh when they promised, "All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do...All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient," Ex. 24:3, 7.

When confronted with the "circumcision controversy," the Apostle Peter put the whole thing in perspective with his statement, "Now therefore why tempt ye Elohim, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**" Act. 15:10-11.

Israel couldn't bear the yoke of obedience to the Torah! That is why they eventually had to be removed from the land of promise! The Prophet Hosea proclaimed, "They like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against Me," 6:7. (NOTE: The KJV says, "They like *men*...", but the Hebrew Scriptures reveal that the name Adam should be utilized here rather than the word men. It was Adam who transgressed the original covenant with Yahweh and had to be cast out of the garden of Eden. Israel, like Adam, transgressed Yahweh's covenant and had to be cast out of the land.)

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TRUE CIRCUMCISION

The Apostle Paul reveals that there is a circumcision which is so much better than the physical fleshly circumcision made by the hands of man. He writes, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Sovereign. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For **we are the circumcision which worship Yahweh in spirit, and rejoice in the Messiah Yahshua, and have no confidence in the flesh,**" Phil. 3:1-3.

We worship Yahweh in spirit through Yahshua the Messiah and not through the

physical fleshly things that we can do with our own hands! In His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, Yahshua told her, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when **the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth:** for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Yahweh is Spirit: and **they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth,**" Jn. 4:21-24.

The Spirit is the Holy Spirit which was poured out on the apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) raising up the New Testament Assembly. Yahshua is the truth, "**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me,**" Jn. 14:6.

It is through baptism in Yahshua's name that we receive the Holy Spirit and the true circumcision which is now a spiritual circumcision as Paul writes, "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and *for* them at Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of Elohim, and of the Father, and of the Messiah; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in the Messiah. As ye have therefore received the Messiah Yahshua the Sovereign, *so* walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after the Messiah. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of Elohim physically. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: **In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of the Messiah:** buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of Elohim, who hath raised him from the

dead. **And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh,** hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *and* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it," Col. 2:1-15.

Herein is the true circumcision of the New Covenant. It is the circumcision made without the hands of man. Our faith in the Messiah Yahshua is what circumcises away the foreskin of the heart. Therefore, we must warn all to beware those who proclaim that you must be circumcised in the flesh. They are seeking to rejoice in an outward show in the flesh and not in the spirit.

ISRAEL'S COVENANT

When Yahweh delivered Israel out of the land of Egypt, He brought them into the wilderness of Sinai where He proposed a covenant to them, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto Elohim, and Yahweh called unto him out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel,'" Ex. 19:1-6.

The first one to hear of the proposal were the elders of Israel, "And Moses came and called for the elders of the People, and laid before their faces all these words which Yahweh commanded him. And all the People answered together, and said, '**All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do.**' And Moses returned the words of the People unto Yahweh," vv. 7-8.

Yahweh told Moses to prepare to meet Him on the third day giving them bounds

through which they were not to pass. Moses prepared the people and on the third day Yahweh descended upon Mount Hor proclaiming His commandments, statutes, judgments and ordinances. When Yahweh finished speaking, "...Moses came and told the People all the words of Yahweh, and all the judgments: and all the People answered with one voice, and said, '**All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do.**' And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the People: and they said, '**All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient.**' And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the People, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh

The children of Israel promised three times that they would do and be obedient to Yahweh's words.

hath made with you concerning all these words,'" Ex. 24:3-8.

Notice it carefully. The children of Israel promised three times that they would do and be obedient to Yahweh's words. This is the covenant that Yahweh made with Israel. It was a covenant based on promises made between Yahweh and Israel. Yahweh promised that if they would obey His laws, statutes, judgments and ordinances then they would be a very happy, prosperous and blessed people. However, there were consequences and curses if the people did not obey. The problem is that the people DID NOT OBEY! I will refer again to Acts 15:10 wherein it was declared, "Now therefore why tempt ye

Yahweh, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which **neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**" Also, look at the statement made in Heb. 8:7-8, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. **For finding fault with them,** He saith, 'Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah'."

Israel came under the curse of the law because they trusted in themselves that they could fulfill the covenant, but they failed miserably and had to bear the judgment and curse of Yahweh by being destroyed and cast out of the land of promise.

THE NEW COVENANT

When Yahweh made His covenant with Israel He already knew that the first covenant would end in disaster for it is admitted, "**O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always,** that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" Dt. 5:29.

Moses told Israel, "These are the words of the covenant, which Yahweh commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which He made with them in Horeb. And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, 'Ye have seen all that Yahweh did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: **yet Yahweh hath not given you an heart to perceive,** and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day,'" Dt. 29:1-4.

Yahweh looks on the heart, on the inside and not on the exterior. The apostle Peter admits, "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, 'Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago Yahweh made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the evangel, and believe. And Yahweh, WHICH KNOWETH THE HEARTS, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH,'" Acts. 15:6-9.

In Dt. 32 we find a prophecy given by

Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moses was inspired to proclaim that Israel would fall away to other elohim, practice abominations, sacrifice to devils, etc. Furthermore, he said, "Of the Rock That begat thee thou are unmindful, and hast forgotten El That formed thee. And when Yahweh saw it, He abhorred them, because of the provoking of His son, and His daughters. And He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children IN WHOM IS NO FAITH';" Dt. 32:18-20.

Isn't it amazing! Yahweh already knew that Israel would be unfaithful! When the New Covenant was instituted and sealed with the Holy Spirit, Yahweh began to look on the heart of non-Israelite, non-Jewish, non-Hebrew people. He didn't look at the flesh, but on the heart. Circumcision of the flesh didn't matter, it was what was on the heart!

Yahweh knew Israel's condition even when He called them out of Egypt. Yahweh gave Israel a tabernacle and its appurtenances made by the hands of man. He gave them an earthly priesthood. He gave them animal sacrifices to be performed by the hands of man. He gave them physical fleshly circumcision performed by the hands of man. He gave them phylacteries and fringes to remind them to keep His covenant. These all failed because they were administered by the hands of men who had circumcised flesh, but uncircumcised hearts!

The New Covenant is a covenant which is based on a tabernacle made by the hands of Yahweh and not the hands of man. It is based on a heavenly spiritual priesthood and not an earthly priesthood exercised by men with uncircumcised hearts. It is based on a better sacrifice than that of animals, for it is based on the sacrifice of the Son of Elohim, Yahshua the Messiah. It is based on a better promise for it is based on Yahweh's promise and not the promise of men. It is based on a better circumcision for it is based on the circumcision of the foreskin of the heart made without hands. It is based on a better faith, for it is based on faith in Yahweh, Who never fails, and not faith in man, who always fails.

The covenant of old was based on judgment. If they obeyed, they would be blessed. If they disobeyed, they would suffer the curses. They disobeyed and came under the curses.

The New Covenant is based on the fa-

vor/grace and promises of Yahweh. He promises to open the graves of Israel, restore them to life (Ez. 37:1-13), put His Spirit in them (v. 14), cleanse them of their sins (v. 23) and make an everlasting covenant with them (v. 26-28).

The promise of the New Covenant is not only found here in Ezekiel, it is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34, "Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith Yahweh: but this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith Yahweh, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh:' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Yahweh: for I will

*Isn't it amazing!
Yahweh already
knew that Israel
would be unfaithful!*

forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

It is also found in Heb. 8:7-13. "For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith Yahweh. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Yahweh; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a Elohim, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach

every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. **In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."**

YAHWEH'S CIRCUMCISION

Yahweh encouraged Israel to circumcise their hearts in Dt. 10:16, but Israel continued with a stiff neck and uncircumcised heart. Yahweh allowed these things to happen for many purposes, but the final analysis is that Yahweh will circumcise Israel's hearts, "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither Yahweh thy Elohim hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Yahweh thy Elohim, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then Yahweh thy Elohim will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither Yahweh thy Elohim hath scattered thee. If *any* of thine be driven out unto the outmost *parts* of heaven, from thence will Yahweh thy Elohim gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And Yahweh thy Elohim will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And **Yahweh thy Elohim will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart,** and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And Yahweh thy Elohim will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of Yahweh, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And Yahweh thy Elohim will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for Yahweh will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this

book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off,” Dt. 30:1-11.

The clincher is found in verse 12, “It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?’.”

“Who shall go up for us to heaven” appears in the Hebrew as: **יֵלֶךְ לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם** **מִי**. The first letter of each word combines to make the Hebrew word **מִיֵּלֵךְ**. According to the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* and *A Dictionary Of The Targumim, The Talmud Babli And Yerushalmi, And The Midrashic Literature* by Marcus Jastrov, this Hebrew word means “circumcise” and or “circumcision.”

Taking the last Hebrew letter of each word in this statement we get **יהוה** (Yahweh)! Again, in this instance, the question is “Who shall go up for us to heaven?” The answer is, first and foremost, Yahweh, and secondly, those circumcised by Him.

FOREVER

One other thing that many have stumbled on is the use of the term “forever” in the English version of Scripture. This term is translated from the Hebrew word “olam” which is defined in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* as; from 5956; prop. *concealed*, i.e. the *vanishing* point; gen. time *out of mind* (past or fut.) i.e. (practically) *eternity*; freq. adv. (espec. with prep. pref.) *always* and is variously translated as; always (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-] ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+ with-outend).

Since Strong’s says that it is from 5956, let’s also take a look at that word. It is the Hebrew word “alam” which is defined as; a prim. root; to veil from sight, i.e. conceal (lit. or fig.).

Now let’s take a look at 2 Sam. 7:12-16 which utilizes this word *olam*, “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever (ad-olam). 14 I will be his father,

and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever (ad-olam) before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever (ad-olam).”

Solomon was of David’s seed. He built an house for Yahweh’s name and Yahweh established the kingdom through His dynasty. But how long did it last? The kingdom of Judah, ruled by the descendants, the dynasty of David and Solomon ended in 585 BCE when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon overthrew the dynasty and destroyed Jerusalem and the house that was built for Yahweh’s name. Olam had come.

Thus, in this instance, when dealing with

But there will be a generation that will come when the end of the age, olam occurs.

the flesh, *olam* has to do with an age, not for ever. Olam can seem like for ever to the physical fleshly person because the promise is made to a generation who perishes or dies without having seen the end of the matter. Other subsequent generations can also come and go before the end of a thing comes to pass. But there will be a generation that will come when the end of the age, *olam* occurs.

Of course, what Yahweh was talking about was the institution of the kingdom under the power of Yahshua which will continue for ever. However, he had to deal with the flesh first. Flesh is physical and temporary.

The principal pattern established by Scripture is that first there must be flesh, the physical, the natural and then comes the spirit. The flesh is temporary. It doesn’t continue for eternity because of the law of sin, corruption and death contained therein, which was introduced by our forefather Adam (Ro. 5:12-19; 7:13-25).

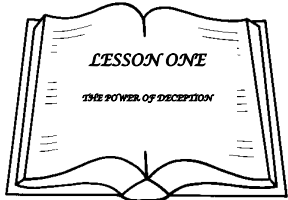
The end of the terms of the original

covenant made between Yahweh and Israel came with the destruction of both Israel and Judah and their removal from the land of promise. However, Yahweh promised that since they failed, He, through His enduring mercy of all ages, would make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This New Covenant would also include the non-Israelite, non-Jew. It is this New Covenant that will continue forever, until all eternity, because it is a covenant made by the power of the eternal Spirit. It is a covenant made by the Word of Yahweh, based on His promises and not man’s HALLELUYAH!!!! Praise Yahweh for all eternity all His creation!

CONCLUSION

Should a New Testament believer be circumcised? The answer is a resounding YES!!! However, not by his own hands nor by the hands of man in the flesh. We must be circumcised by Yahweh, through Yahshua the Messiah, a circumcision of the foreskin of the heart not made with hands. Remember that Paul said, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Elohim” (1 Cor. 15:50). A person must be called, chosen, repent of his sins, be baptized in the name of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of his sins and Yahweh, Himself, will circumcise his heart and give him the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the ministry. (Please request our booklet entitled *The Seven Steps to the Kingdom*.) This is the circumcision of the New Covenant. It is an everlasting circumcision made by Yahweh whose Word NEVER FAILS! HALLELUYAH!!!

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THE MESSIAH, TORAH, AND ME

Here is a refreshingly new look at the events surrounding the Apostolic Council in Acts 15 by a man who has stressed Torah observance for quite some time.

By Matthew Armstrong

A CLOSER LOOK AT ACTS 15

Eph. 2:19-20, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of Elohim; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yahoshua the Messiah himself being the chief corner stone.” [KJV]

The point of the above scripture is to point out the fact that, as gentiles brought into the household of Elohim, we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the Messiah being the chief corner stone. This is important because when we look at the question of whether or not we as believers in Messiah need to be seeking to follow and fulfill all the Torah in the sense of keeping the laws, statutes and judgments, we must turn to the apostles and their teaching on the matter as they are a crucial part of the foundation upon which we are to be built.

What better place to start with this question than with the apostles, as, I will hopefully demonstrate, they in fact encountered this very question, came together to consider it, and addressed it head on, leaving us with great insight.

By what authority do we believe what we believe? Since it was the apostles who walked, talked, and were taught by the Messiah himself, I strongly urge us to search out what the apostles (Paul included) had to say about this subject of whether or not Gentiles were to keep Torah. In general, the teaching of the apostles is so important, not only because it was the apostles who were given the “great commission,” but also because we have written history (book of Acts) as a witness and testimony as to the outworking and performance of this “great commission.” This brings us to one of the most recognized portions of scripture with regards to the law and the teaching of the apostles. Acts chapter 15.

INTRO TO ACTS 15

When the subject of law keeping comes up, much has been said about the Acts 15 controversy, and rightfully so. Why? What was the controversy? I believe, if we let the scripture speak for itself, we

will find that the controversy in Acts 15 was precisely about the issue of whether Gentiles who believe in the Messiah need to practice and “keep” Torah in the covenant sense. As someone who was taught that we **are** to keep the law, I am familiar with the argument that this controversy found in Acts 15 is not about keeping the law (circumcision included), rather, it’s about keeping the law *as a requirement for salvation*. What’s the difference? Is there a difference?

I believe that many very sincere people have been misled regarding this matter. I will attempt to show why my understand-

When the subject of law keeping comes up, much has been said about the Acts 15 controversy, and rightfully so.

ing is that, the issue the apostles were dealing with was, in fact, Torah observance for Gentiles *in general*. Now I know that statement may cause some to have a reflexive action towards me, leading one to think of me as a “nominal Christian,” bent on running from the authority of the Torah. But for truth’s sake, please hear me out. If I am wrong in my understanding I need to be corrected in love. Do remember, I used to believe that, as believers in Messiah, we are to keep Torah fully. If you have not read my testimony, please do so.

What we find in Acts 15 is some sort of dispute over some obviously controversial doctrinal issue. This controversy happened very early on in the “church” and seems to be linked to the recent admission of the Gentiles into the body of believers. The issue at hand being discussed by the apostles is clearly regarding (in some way) circumcision, Torah, and Gentile

converts. To what extent can we pin-point the “real” problem behind the controversy, and what will it mean in terms of *our* question? We will see, but first, I believe it is important that we understand *at least* a little bit of background of the time period in which the text of Acts 15 fits.

1ST CENTURY CONTEXT

The first thing that we must do before looking at the actual text of Acts chapter 15 is realize the historical context in which the circumstances fit. We will touch on this only briefly as time does not permit the space it deserves. Please study the historical context of 1st Century further in your own time as it is vital to our understanding of the New Testament Scriptures.

Most denominational Christians have been taught that 1st Century Judaism was a religion of works-based salvation, legalistic self-righteousness, void of grace and forgiveness. And until recently, this image of the historical backdrop on which the Messiah Yeshua fits, has gone unchallenged. However, recent scholarship, beginning around the 1900’s, has shown consistently that the Protestant view of 1st Century Judaism is mostly incorrect. The common scare of – “good works may lead to a works-based salvation” that is so prevalent in Christianity today, is largely due to the Reformers views in light of the Catholic Church and all their “works” that were “required for salvation.” The idea that the historical religious backdrop during the time of Yeshua consisted of a works salvation, no forgiveness, relationship with Elohim, is flat out wrong. The fact is, and scholarship has shown, the Jews believed heavily in Elohim’s grace and forgiveness. They never thought they could “earn” their way into “heaven.” They understood that it was by Yahweh’s grace that they were chosen to be His people.

They saw salvation as a covenant issue, not a works issue. Once you were in covenant with YHWH (saved) you were expected, as part of His covenant people, to follow the instruction, or Torah, that distinguished you as “His people.”

Once again, the Jews of the Second-Temple period did not believe you could be saved by works. They strongly depended upon Yah's grace and forgiveness as He made provision for them through the Temple sacrificial system. With that said, I would like to point out the fact that the problem within the context of 1st Century Judaism was not "works salvation," even though you were to "keep" the Torah as it was the covenant document. The bigger problem was "national righteousness." The Jews understood that they were Elohim's covenant people *by grace*, but what prevailed in their attitude was the fact that they were "Elohim's Chosen People!" Instead of being a light to the world in humility and love, Israel was puffed up by their man covenant "badges" that set them apart from the "unclean" Gentiles. As "Elohim's Chosen People," the Jews were very conscious of the need to retain their Israelite identity (outward signs), which acted as boundary-markers between them and the Evil Unclean Gentiles who were oppressing them (Judea was under Roman rule). Instead of loving the stranger, as Torah commanded, the Jews stayed socially divided from the stranger both physically and spiritually (note Gal. 2:11-13 where Paul writes of a situation regarding Peter). It was true that Yahweh had specifically chosen Israel, they really were His "Chosen People." It was also true that Yahweh chose them to be a light to the world. Instead of being that light they were found guilty of "nationalistic pride," all in the name of Torah. Though *much more* time is needed in dealing with this subject, this brief overview will have to suffice for now. It is important that we have some idea of the historical backdrop upon which the controversy of Acts 15 sits.

ACTS 15 CONTROVERSY

As we begin in Acts chapter 15, I would like to mention the general direction that I am taking. I believe, if we let the scripture speak for itself, we will find that the controversy in Acts 15 was precisely about the issue of whether Gentiles who believe in the Messiah need to practice and "keep" Torah in the covenant sense.

As someone who has taught that we are to keep the law (Torah), I am familiar with the argument that this controversy found in Acts 15 is not about keeping the law, rather, it's about keeping the law as *a requirement for salvation*. It is said that

the entire chapter has to be read in light of its context which is verse one. **15:1, "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."** Notice that they said "ye cannot be saved." It seems obvious that these "certain men" could be guilty of teaching circumcision as a requirement for salvation. However, is this what the apostles came together about? Was the "apostolic council" specifically about the issue of circumcision as a requirement for salvation? I believe that if we read the entire text of Acts chapter 15, we will see that, while the issue in verse 1 did play an integral part in bringing the apostles together, the context in which the "apostolic council" was formed is not over the issue of verse 1 but rather the "new" issue of verse 5.

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15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 and being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 and when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that Elohim had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them,

and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider this matter.

After Paul and Barnabas had debated with the "certain men" in verse 1 they determined to go up to Jerusalem and talk to the apostles and elders about this question. When they arrived in Jerusalem they were received of the assembly, and they declared all that Elohim had done with them among the gentiles. Then in verse 5 we see that "there rose up certain of the sect of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep he law of Moses." It is after **this verse** that we read...*And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.* What was the matter that the apostles and elders came together to consider? Was it the issue in verse 1 or that of verse 5?

This question of whether or not the gentiles must be circumcised was a hot topic as is clear by the many other times that Paul himself spoke on the matter. Was physical circumcision necessary for gentiles to enter into covenant and be saved (in light of Messiah)? In the opinion of many Jews of that time period, the answer was an emphatic **YES!** In **Gen. 17:10-14** it is clearly spelled out that, not only is circumcision the "token" or sign of the covenant, but for a male not to be circumcised was *the equivalent of breaking Yahweh's covenant*. You were to be **cut off** from His covenant people. Circumcision was one of the defining marks of who Yahweh's people were, as was the Torah in general. One who becomes circumcised is acknowledging that they agree to the terms of the covenant, they are expressing that which was expressed by the people of Israel in Exodus 24:7. It must be understood that these two, Torah and circumcision, are virtually inseparable as Paul makes clear in Galatians 5:3. This very misunderstood fact shall be further discussed a little later.

"...THIS MATTER"

It is important to see that there are two "matters" at hand in the text of Acts 15:1-6. The first matter, in verse 1, was about circumcision being necessary for the Gentiles to be saved. The second matter, found in verse 5, happened in a different location than that of verse 1 and is distinctly separate from the matter in verse 1. It is

this matter found in verse 5, that was the direct cause of the “apostolic council.” Here it is once again....

5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of *this* matter.

The “this matter” spoken of in verse 6 is that of the preceding verse, not that of verse 1. I will show why this **does and does not** make a difference in a moment

but first there is something else worth noting. This issue of Gentiles having to be circumcised and keep Torah was such a lively topic that before Paul and Barnabas could even voice their reason for coming to Jerusalem, certain Pharisees in Jerusalem quickly rose up and stated that it was needful for Gentiles to be circumcised and keep Torah. This is a witness to what kind of religious climate existed at this time. Also, notice that, because of verse 5-6, Paul’s overall reason for coming to the apostles was still being attended to in a broader sense, even though this matter,

that of verse 1, **was not the immediate cause of the apostles coming together.**

Though it was his matter in verse 1 that brought them to Jerusalem and led to the “new” situation found in verse 5, it was not the direct cause of the “apostolic council.”

To be Continued.....

(Continued from page 10)

ultimate fulfillment of those things to come. We are, in effect, putting oil in our lamps and also building reserves.

If we are unmindful of the Sabbaths and Holy Days, then we will have a tendency to forget about Yahweh’s kingdom and His plan. We will not be putting oil in our lamps, neither will we be practicing or rehearsing for the marriage of the Lamb.

If we are not practicing or rehearsing for the marriage, then we will be as the

foolish virgins. They were shut out from the wedding and told that Yahshua didn’t even know them.

We have an opportunity to accept the invitation and prepare for the wedding. We are called out for this purpose. Therefore, let us not only observe the weekly Sabbath days, but the annual festivals as well, and prepare for the wedding!!!

When we turn to the Caesaro-Romano-Gregorian calendar to observe those days,

we have a tendency to neglect and forget Yahweh’s commanded days and seasons. Actually, we must choose which we had rather observe.

Which will it be for you? Do you still desire to revel in the days and ways of this world and its pagan Roman calendar which have replaced Yahweh’s commanded days in most people’s lives? Or will you prepare for the opportunity to attend the wedding of the Lamb of Elohim?

(Continued from page 8)

another **Comforter**, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. **I will not leave you comfortless:** I will come to you....But the **Comforter, Which is the Holy Spirit**, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your **remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you,” Jn. 14:15-18, 26.

Yahshua, the LIGHT, had risen and begun His wondrous ministry. He had to leave Nazareth (a rising of light) because His work would now consist of preparing His people to receive the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and also through His shed blood, have their sins atoned for, covered. Capernaum, the city that carries the name of the Covering Spirit, the Atoning Spirit, is the name of the city that became the base of His operation.

It is the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, that brings Yahshua’s words back to remembrance (zakar)!

DELIVERANCE BEGUN

How magnificent is the mighty and powerful Word of Yahweh! He is able to util-

ize so many ways in which to declare His word, His truth, His plan, His purpose.

He even utilizes the name of people and places in order to provide a hidden message, which when discovered powerfully confirms His message! His message is written in the Scriptures openly and it is also hidden in the Scriptures for us to search out. It is written in the heavens and also in the earth if we have the Spirit and wisdom to be able to search it out, which also comes from Him so that no man can claim superiority.

When Yahweh turned His hand to deliver His people from Egypt, He called a man named Moses which means drawn from water. He began to utilize John the Baptist in order to draw people to Yahshua and His ministry through the waters of baptism.

He gave His Memorial name Yahweh to Moses so that the people would know Him. Yahshua came in His father’s name and has that name as a possession. “I am come in My Father’s name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive,” Jn. 5:43. He delivered the people from Egypt through the memorial of the Passover sacrifice. Yahshua is our Passover sacrificed for us, “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even the Messiah our

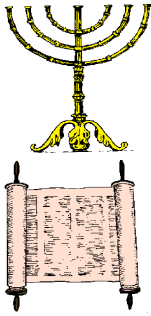
Passover is sacrificed for us,” 1 Cor. 5:7.

It was through the giving of the manna, bread from heaven, that the people were led to know when the seventh day Sabbath occurred. Yahshua is the true bread from heaven Who will lead us to the true rest which is the millennium. We know that Yahweh did His work of restoring, recreating the earth in six days, setting aside the seventh day of creation for rest. Peter declares that one day with Yahweh is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Pet. 3:8). It is Yahshua, the true bread from heaven, Who will bring that rest into reality.

Thus, the three primary memorials (zakar/zkrown/Zekariah = Yahweh’s memorial/remembrance) given to Israel were speaking of and directing us to Yahshua.

Do names have meaning? When Yahweh gives them and incorporates them into His word, emphatically YES!!!

It is the purpose of this work to declare the honor and majesty of our Savior Yahshua. We truly hope that the truths found in this article have helped to open your eyes to that honor and majesty. If you are able to read and understand it, HalleluYah!!! If not, please continue to read and pray for more understanding of His honor and majesty. May Yahweh bless you all as you behold the Father through His Son.



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Who is The Idol Shepherd?

COMING SOON!

Who Is EliYah the Prophet?