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# RESTORATION TIMES

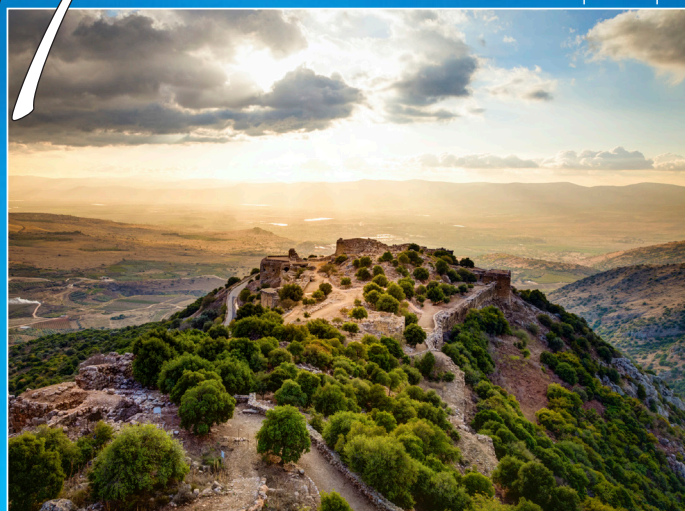


THE  
FINAL EMPIRE

# RESTORATION TIMES Magazine

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Restoration Times expounds the close ties between the Old and New Testaments. We teach the continuity and harmony that extend down through His present activity in Yahshua the Messiah. This was also the conviction of the early New Testament Assembly.

This publication is sent free of charge, made possible through the tithes and offerings of those who desire to see the truth of Scripture restored in our day.

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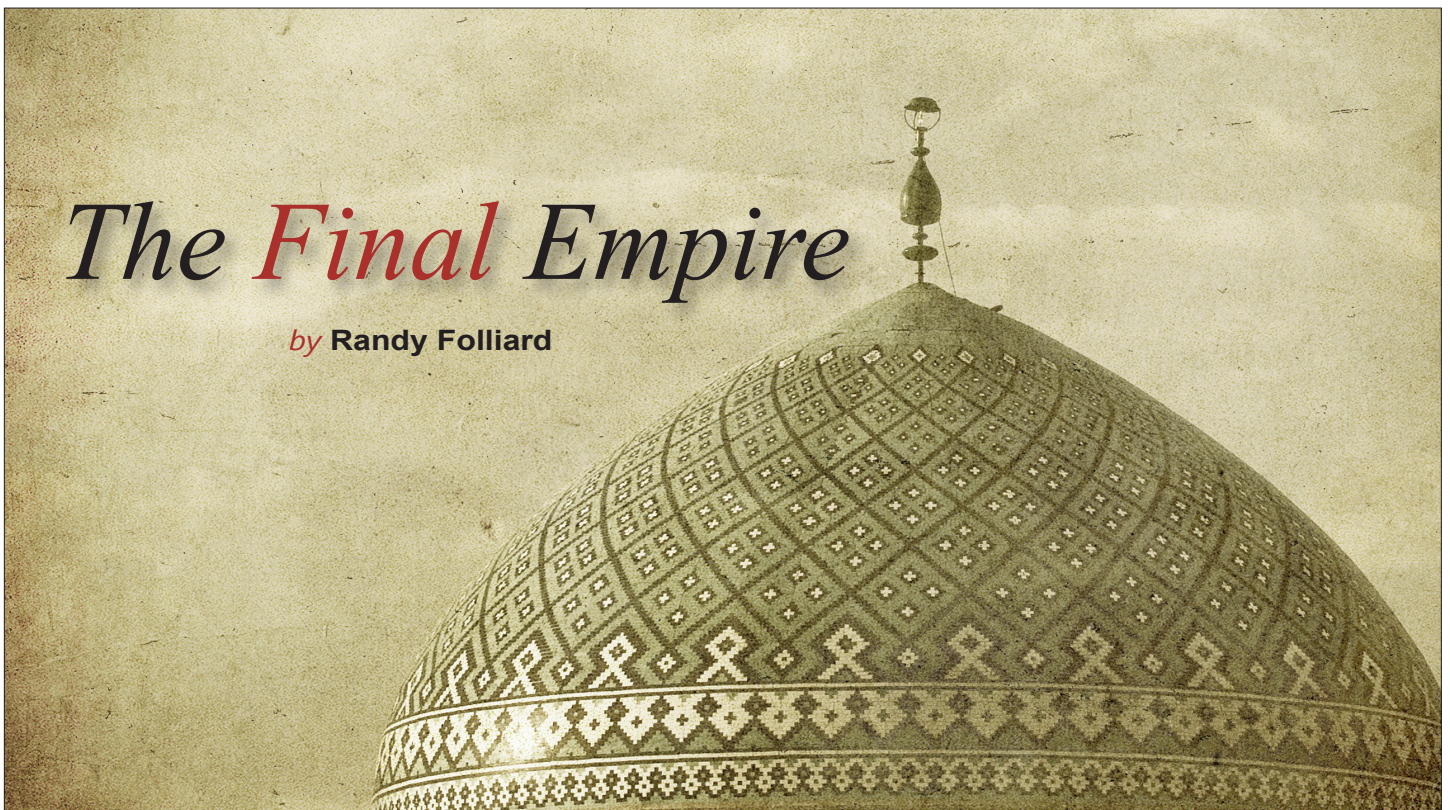
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**COVER:**  
Earth in a state of turmoil,  
a depiction of the end of  
the age.

# The *Final* Empire

by Randy Folliard



**O**n January 16, 2014, USA Today published an article entitled, “10 Greatest Threats Facing the World in 2014.” It documented the following threats:

- Fiscal crises in key economies
- Structurally high unemployment/underemployment
- Water crises
- Severe income disparity
- Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Greater incidence of extreme weather events
- Global governance failure
- Food crises
- Failure of a major financial mechanism/institution
- Profound political and social instability

While some of these threats pose real risks to this nation and world, one was not included – terrorism. In the last decade we have seen an astronomical rise in terrorism from radical, jihadist Islamic organizations. Not only does this present a clear and present danger to the entire world, but may also fulfill Bible prophecy.

We will now review the possible connection between Islam and the final empire that will be ruled by the Antimesiah. We will also consider a few

current events and additional signs from the Messiah’s Olivet Prophecy.

## Signs in the Heavens

The first of these prophecies is heavenly signs, revealed first in the second chapter of Joel and later by Peter in his famous sermon on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:20. He states, “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of Yahweh come.”

Prior to the Messiah’s return, the Bible prophesies that the moon will turn into blood. Many who study eschatology identify this with what’s called a blood moon, which is a lunar eclipse. This occurs when the earth is between the sun and moon and the sun’s rays stretch around the earth making the moon appear red or like blood.

While a single blood moon is not uncommon, four blood moons in a sequence, called a tetrad, are extremely rare.

So rare that in the last 500 years a tetrad has occurred three times. The first tetrad occurred in 1493 and 1494, right before the Spanish Inquisition when the Jews were expelled from Spain. The second happened in 1949 and 1950, right after the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948. And the third occurred between 1967 and 1968, during the time of the Six Day War, in which Israel was victorious over several Middle Eastern nations, including Egypt, Syria, Jordan,

and Iraq.

Some dismiss this as only a coincidence, but Scripture seems to show otherwise. When you consider how infrequently these tetrads occur and the fact that in the last 500 years they have all fallen around major events impacting the Jewish people, the thought of these being only happenstance is hard to imagine.

As many are aware, we’re presently in the middle of another tetrad. The dates are: April 15, 2014; October 8, 2014; April 4, 2015; and September 28, 2015. Three of these blood moons have already occurred and the last is to happen this fall, right before the Feast of Tabernacles. These latest blood moons occur right before or on a biblical Feast.

## The Coming Shemitah

In addition to the current tetrad this fall, the Sabbatical or Shemitah year will begin on the Day of Atonement. In addition to this time of forgiving all debt, allowing slaves to go free and the land being given rest, the Bible also confirms that the Sabbatical is likely prophetic. Isaiah 61:2 reads, “To proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh, and the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all that mourn.”

Many scholars point out that the phraseology in this passage is a reference to the Sabbatical or possible Jubilee. For

example, the *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* states, "...also from the 'liberty proclaimed' to all bond-servants on the year of jubilee." The *Adam Clarke's Commentary* agrees, "The proclaiming of perfect liberty to the bound, and the year of acceptance with YAHWEH is a manifest allusion to the proclaiming of the year of jubilee by sound of trumpet. ... This was a year of general release of debts and obligations, of bondmen and bondwomen, of lands and possessions which had been sold from the families and tribes to which they belonged. Our Saviour, by applying this text to himself, (Luke 4:18-19), a text so manifestly relating to the institution above mentioned, plainly declares the typical design of that institution."

When we consider not only the current blood moons, but also the coming Sabbatical, it should give us reason to pause and ask, could all this be part of end-time prophecy? Considering the evidence and the fact that these correspond with our Savior's Second Coming, at minimum we should be aware of what's occurring.

#### Yahshua's Olivet Prophecy

Let's now consider a few verses from Yahshua's Olivet Prophecy. In Matthew 24 He states that the time immediately before His coming will be marked by unparalleled hardship.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," verses 21-22.

The Great Tribulation, representing the last three and a half years before Yahshua's coming, is going to be the worst time this world has ever and will ever suffer. The earth will see worse atrocities than those committed in the Holocaust, when six million Jews were exterminated. If not for Yahweh's shortening the days, no flesh would survive.

Such trial is hard to fathom. This is one reason it's important that we work now on our faith and character. The reality is, what we're currently seeing

might possibly be the calm before the storm.

If this storm occurs in our lifetime, will we be ready? Will we have the faith, devotion, and tenacity necessary to withstand the trials and tribulation that we may encounter? The simple truth is, if we're not completely committed, we're not likely to remain true.

Over the years we've seen many lukewarm believers. Yahshua said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." If we're going to remain strong through this unthinkable level of tribulation, we will need faith and devotion second to none.

Another concern that Yahshua prophesied was deception. In Matthew 24:4-5 He said, "...Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Messiah; and shall deceive many."

This was Yahshua's first sign in His Olivet Prophecy. He told His disciples not to be deceived. He went on to say that many would come in His name, saying, I am the Messiah. Scripture explains that the Man of Sin or Antimesiah will be the final fulfillment of this prophecy.

In addition to unparalleled tribulation and deception, Yahshua said there would be war prior to His coming. "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom," Matthew 24:6-7.

Why did Yahshua make a distinction here between "nation" and "kingdom"? The word "nation" comes from the Greek *ethnos* and refers to civil wars,

while the word "kingdom" derives from the Greek *basilsia*, referring to wars between sovereign nations. Even now there are countless

wars and conflicts throughout the world.

According to an article published by *Foreign Policy* entitled, "10 Wars to Watch in 2015," the number one threat to the world is the conflict between Syria, Iraq, and the Islamic State. The nine other areas of threat include: Ukraine, South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and the Sahel, and Venezuela.

#### Threat of Radical Islam

According to the U.S. State Department, there are currently 59 terrorist organizations throughout this world. Many of these organizations are tied to radical Islam. This list includes such organizations as HAMAS, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Al-Qaeda, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic Jihad Union, Army of Islam, Boko Haram, and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also known as ISIL or the Islamic State).

While many of these organizations pose a real threat, there's none greater than the Islamic State. This organization has barbarically murdered thousands in the Middle East in the name of Islam, including women and young children. The tactics used by these radicals are beyond inhumane; they include dismemberment, burning alive, and other unspeakable methods of torture.

For those unfamiliar with ISIL, this organization is an offshoot of Al-Qaeda, the same radical Islamic group that the United States fought in Afghanistan. Now even though Al-Qaeda shares many goals with ISIL, they also have differences. The main difference is twofold: (1) ISIL is much more focused on restoring an Islamic state or caliphate, similar to the Ottoman Empire, and (2) the tactics of ISIL are far more violent and hostile.

This goal of restoring an Islamic empire likely will foreshadow what we find in end-time prophecy. While so many are looking to the Pope and the European Union (EU) as the fulfillment of the Beast and this final empire, the reality is, we may be watching the very fulfillment right now in the Middle East. To understand the threat of this Islamic organization, consider the following statements:

"[ISIL] is as sophisticated and well-funded as any group we have seen. They're beyond just a terrorist group. They marry ideology, a sophistication of strategic and tactical military prowess. They are



tremendously well-funded... This is beyond anything that we've seen. So we must prepare for everything" (former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel).

"ISIL is inspiring groups that already exist to rebrand themselves, but in rebranding themselves into a more radical ideology... That's what makes it dangerous" (Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey).

"ISIL is the most dangerous Islamic extremist terrorist group in the world, and now maintains the largest terrorist sanctuary in history between Iraq and Syria, where it has killed thousands. The Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the FBI, and the Secretary of Homeland Security have all warned that ISIL poses a direct threat to the United States" (U.S. Senator John McCain).

### Prophesied Barbarism

The threat that ISIL poses to this nation and the world is real. Since proclaiming itself the Islamic State in June of 2014, we've seen countless cruelties and barbaric acts of violence, including their preferred form of murder, dismemberment.

What's significant is that we find this same form of execution prophesied in the Bible. Revelation 20:6 reads, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Yahshua, and for the word of Yahweh, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Messiah a thousand years."

Those who refuse to worship the Beast and his image will suffer beheading or dismemberment in the Great Tribulation. This is the execution of choice in radical Islam. If this passage doesn't indicate Islam in end-time prophecy, what would? Except for radical Islam, no other present-day nation, demographic, ethnic group, or religion uses this form of execution.

Considering this, along with the possible connections of the blood moons and

the upcoming Sabbatical, we may be closer to the end than we realize. For this reason we're to be alert to what is happening as this world worsens.

Because of these alarming trends, it's important that we, like Joshua, be people of courage and faith. Some day this courage might be the only thing that prevents us from forsaking what's most important to us.

What would we do if we were faced with the decision of either denouncing our faith or suffering dismemberment? There



are many Middle Eastern Christians who have suffered that fate by the hands of ISIL in their refusal to forsake their faith. Would we have this same strength?

### Sunni vs. Shiite

When discussing radical Islam, it's crucial to understand some of the differences between Sunni and Shiite. The following is an excerpt from the article published by the Gatestone Institute entitled, " Hamas: A Pawn in the Sunni-Shiite War." Even though this article was first printed November 29, 2012, it is still relevant today (read the entire article at <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3472/hamas-sunni-shiite>).

Islam's resurgence in the Middle East has much to do with the overthrow of Iran's

Western-leaning leader Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, by Ruhollah Moosavi Khomeini, founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the first Islamic government in the modern age. Khomeini was from the Shiite branch of Islam.

"When Khomeini arrived in Iran in February 1979, one of the first statements he made to the media on the tarmac was that 'he had come to rectify a wrong which took place 1400 years ago.' Westerners thought this somewhat quaint and obviously irrelevant. All that interested them was what he had to say about the Shah, America, and Israel. To Westerners, especially Americans, who dismiss things that happened a few days ago, Khomeini mumbling about some event that took place centuries ago seemed irrelevant. Middle Easterners, however, who never forget perceived wrongs, knew exactly what he was talking about. When the Muslim prophet Muhammad died in 632 CE, a fight broke out among the Muslims as to who would inherit the leadership of Islam. Those who supported their prophet's family eventually became known as the Shi'ites. Those who supported what might be labeled the 'establishment' in Mecca became known as the Sunnis.

"The Shi'ites were defeated and their leaders were, one by one, murdered by the Sunnis, who proceeded to take over the larger part of Muslim world. Sunnis and Shi'ites – especially in areas where they live together – still refigure that battle, which took place almost 1400 years ago. Moreover, thanks to the easy way information travels, Sunnis and Shi'ites know more about each other than in the past, so this battle now also takes place even where Sunnis and Shi'ites never knew each other. What ended up being most important to Khomeini was not the Shah, therefore, but devising a strategy to rectify what he considered the great wrong that took place so long ago: bringing down the Sunni rulers and their version of Islam, and replacing them with the 'true,' Shi'ite, version of Islam."

According to Sunnis or the “establishment,” Islam’s leader needs only to be Muslim. Shiites, who represent only about 15 percent of today’s Muslims, oppose this view and believe that Islam’s leader must come from the family of Muhammad.

On a side note, this difference also affects their view on the hadith, which is a written record of Muhammad’s life. This might be compared to the evangelists, which is a record of Yahshua’s life and Ministry.

After the death of Muhammad in 632 CE, Sunnis and Shiites went to war over who would lead the Islamic world. In this war, the Shiites lost to the Sunnis and to this day this defeat has not been forgotten, as we can still see in Iran, which is about 90 percent Shiite or Shia.

Understanding this difference is crucial if a person is going to comprehend the chaos in the Middle East among today’s Islamic nations and possibly unlock our Father’s prophetic Word. Even though both Sunni and Shiite share a core belief in Muhammad as the Prophet of Allah, these other differences have led to centuries of war and conflict, which continues today.

Have you wondered why radical Islam has such a deep hatred for America? Politicians say they hate our “freedoms.” While there may be an element of truth in this statement, it is largely nothing more than justifying unwanted involvement in the Middle East.

The real reason for this hatred goes back to the West’s removing the Ottoman Empire, which was a Sunni controlled caliphate between 1453 and 1922. Because of this, the Sunnis have a major grudge against the West, including America. In their view, it was our meddling that removed the Sunni Caliphate that stood for 600 years.

### Seven Kings Explained

Not only does a revived Sunni caliphate explain the actions of today’s radical Islamic groups, but it may also explain the seventh and eighth kings in Revelation 17. While the world has been looking to Europe and the Vatican, the Bible may indicate something vastly different!

Before we consider this prophetic link, consider two other reasons for radical Islam’s hatred for this nation. First is our support of Israel, a nation many Islamic nations and groups refuse to recognize. And second is our immorality.

There’s no denying that much of what

we see in this nation is immoral and that this same immorality has been propagated throughout this world. Consider just the wickedness and depravity coming from Hollywood.

The desire to revive the old Islamic caliphate might also explain the seventh and eighth kings of Revelation. John of Patmos in 17:9-11 provides a key passage:

“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

John writes that the seven heads of the Beast symbolize seven mountains. In Scripture, a mountain represents a nation or kingdom. For example, the fourth chapter of Micah tells us that Yahweh’s mountain, i.e., government or kingdom, will be above all other governments in the Millennium.

Of these seven kingdoms five were fallen, one was, and another was to come. These mountains represent seven past and future kingdoms upon which the eighth, i.e., the Antimesiah and his empire, will sit.

Do we know what kingdoms might be represented by these seven mountains? As we note in the third edition of the *Restoration Study Bible*, the five that had fallen likely represent Egypt, Assyria, Neo-Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. Each one had conquered and ruled Judea. The sixth was Rome. The seventh is the one typically in dispute. While many assume that this is a revived Roman Empire led by the Vatican, evidence provides for a more fitting interpretation.

Except for Egypt, each of the nations succeeded the one before: Babylon defeated Assyria, Persia defeated Babylon, Greece defeated Persia, and Rome defeated Greece. Based on this succession, who defeated Rome?

While some claim that barbarians conquered Rome around 476 CE, the truth is, the eastern half of the Roman Empire continued for another 1,000 years until its defeat by the Muslim Ottoman Turks, which remained an intellectual superpower and stronghold for 600 years until their own defeat in World War I.

The eastern division of the empire, known as the Byzantine Empire, was

established by Roman Emperor Constantine. Rome is the second to the last empire in Daniel’s prophecy of the metal man in chapter 2. In that prophecy each empire was defeated by its successor. The two legs of iron represent Rome and its east-west divisions (Rev. 17:10). Its 10 toes represent a coming empire, the last.

### Revived Caliphate

Historically, Rome was succeeded by the Ottomans, which then makes the Ottomans the seventh kingdom, from which the eighth and the Man of Sin will arise.

Based on this, it’s reasonable to surmise that the fulfillment of the eighth kingdom will be a revived Islamic caliphate, similar to the Ottoman Empire as established by the Ottoman Turks.

According to author Walid Shoebat, who converted to Christianity after being raised in an Islamic home and identifying himself as an Islamic terrorist:


“...the Empire of the [Antimesiah] will not be a new empire; rather it will be the revival of a previous great empire that will have suffered what the Bible calls a ‘fatal head wound.’ ...This empire is the Islamic Ottoman Empire which replaced the Roman Empire after the fall of its remaining Eastern section,” *God’s War on Terror*, p. 81.

It’s noteworthy that Mr. Shoebat, unlike many other Christian authors, views biblical prophecy through Middle Eastern lenses. The fact is, biblical events and prophecy have always centered on the Middle East and nations impacting Israel.

While prophecy is open to conjecture and should be scrutinized based on current events and Bible prophecy, the understanding as outlined within the article offers a solid biblical alternative to the EU and Vatican representing the Antimesiah and this final world empire.

While no man knows the future, we are to watch for prophetic signs in the world and Word, including those in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, along with the Olivet Prophecy.

As we learn from Yahshua’s parable of the fig tree with sprouting leaves indicating the coming spring and summer, the fulfillment of biblical prophecy indicates the Second Coming of our Savior.

So let us remain strong and vigilant until the coming of Yahshua! 



# Renewal of the **Biblical Covenant**

by the late Donald R. Mansager

**A**t Pentecost Yahweh made a covenant with His people through the annual Feast Days ordained to be observed throughout the year. These are seven special times when we meet in convocation as a key part of the continuing pledge Yahweh makes with His faithful and we make with Him. Pentecost, one of the seven, focuses on the renewal of this covenant relationship today.

Also known as “Feast of Weeks,” Pentecost was when the Covenant between Yahweh and Israel was first ratified at Sinai. Despite having Moses and the Aaronic priesthood with them, and Yahweh guiding them by cloud and pillar of fire, Israel still rebelled. As a result only the next generation was allowed into the Promised Land.

Israel deliberately chose to defy Yahweh as His chosen people. It was in Acts 2:1-4 that the New Covenant was made with all “called-out ones.” The sacrificial system and ceremonies were set aside by Yahshua’s death and resurrection and the Holy Spirit was sent to this earth.

With the Holy Spirit placed within us following baptism into Yahshua the Messiah, we no longer reject His laws but

obey them from the heart. Notice Yahweh’s promise to the saints: “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says Yahweh, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” Hebrews 10:16-17.

#### **Old and New Covenants**

Ancient Israel listened to the Covenant Yahweh proposed, Exodus 19:3-6. “Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be Mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak unto the children of Israel.”

Yahweh proposed an agreement or Covenant. If Israel would sincerely obey His voice, then they would become a possession for Him, different and distinct from all peoples on earth. The blessing of obedience would result in their becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Then follows in chapter 20 the delivery of the Ten Commandments, which are the

basis of all Yahweh’s law. He spoke these to the children of Israel in the hearing of all the people, identifying Himself as Yahweh, Who had brought them out of Egypt.

Yahweh’s Ten Commandments have not been rescinded, but are still in effect today. There are more than a thousand references to the law in the New Testament. His laws reveal His very nature, how He wishes to be worshiped, and the principles upon which our lives are to be built. He wrote the Ten Commandments with His own finger. The first five deal with our relationship to Him, and the last five our relationship with our fellow man. The Fifth Commandment is an axial commandment, combining obedience to our spiritual Father as well as our fleshly parents.

#### **Covenant Ratified on Pentecost**

Yahweh offered the Covenant on the Sabbath. The next morning, on Sunday, Moses arose early (Ex. 24:4-8) and built an altar. Moses took half the blood of the offerings and sprinkled it upon the altar. He then read the book of the Covenant to the assembled Israelites, and they said, “All

that Yahweh has spoken will we do, and be obedient.”

Then Moses took the other half of the blood and sprinkled it upon the people. This was on Sunday, the ninth day of the third month of that year when the nation of Israel accepted Yahweh’s Covenant.

Moses had sprinkled the blood upon the book of the Covenant and upon the people. They agreed to keep His laws and be obedient.

On the first Pentecost day Yahweh entered into a Covenant with the children of Israel at Sinai. He appeared to them, spoke to them, gave His laws, and offered

the Old Covenant.

The first Pentecost was the giving of the law to Israel. But they did not have the heart to obey, as we read in Deuteronomy 5:29: “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 forever.”

Now His laws are put within the hearts of His people by the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, Moses referred to the Ten Commandments as being the Covenant in Deuteronomy 4:13, “And He declared unto you His Covenant which He commanded

true followers.

The New Covenant is summarized in Hebrews 10:9-18, where we learn that Yahweh had no pleasure in burnt offerings or sacrifices for sin. But Yahshua came and through obedience took away the first Covenant and established the New Covenant.

Those who are set apart by accepting the sacrifice of the Savior are perfected in the Savior, verse 14. They have entered into the New Covenant as described in Hebrews 10:16-17: “This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says Yahweh, I will put My laws into their



to be their Elohim if they would hear and obey His voice, Exodus 19 and 20. The sprinkling of the blood ratified the Covenant that Sunday morning.

In the New Testament, at the Pentecost following Yahshua’s resurrection, the *Ekklesia* or “called-out ones” entered into the New Covenant. This time the Holy Spirit, not the blood, was poured out and the same laws which were given at Sinai were put into the hearts of the First-fruits of the Assembly. They entered into the New Covenant based upon promises better than

you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and He wrote them upon two tables of stone.” Other verses referring to the Ten Commandments as the “Covenant” include Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 9:9 and 11.

#### **Statutes Basic to the New Covenant**

It is rather strange that churchianity in general teaches that the Ten Commandments are done away at the cross, and yet Moses wrote that they were the building blocks of the Covenant made with Israel. It is the same Covenant Yahweh has established with His

hearts and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

This Covenant is the very same found in Hebrews 8:8-13 and in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Now the Ten Commandments are put in the hearts and minds of those who are set apart. We obey because the Holy Spirit has been given us and we no longer resist Yahweh’s laws as we did before our conversion. Now we seek His will that we may fully obey Him, which is what the covenant is all about.



## Miracle of the Holy Spirit

The coming of the Holy Spirit to this earth at Pentecost is one of the miracles of Yahweh. Before Yahshua's death, the Holy Spirit was given for a special task and then usually taken away.

King David prayed, "Take not Your Holy Spirit from me," Psalm 51:11. Now our prayer is that we "quench not the Spirit," 1 Thessalonians 5:19. Or that in some way we stifle the Spirit's prodding and pay no attention to Yahweh's urging us to walk on the higher ground of dedicated obedience.

Since Yahshua's shedding of blood upon this earth, the Holy Spirit is here. Upon baptism into Yahshua's name, the Holy Spirit is given to those of a broken and contrite heart, and their sins are washed away. Now they walk in newness of life, following the promptings of Yahweh's Spirit.

Pentecost looks back at the giving of the law at Sinai, and the coming of the Holy Spirit to mankind so that we can keep the law. The Ten Commandments are not done away. These laws are eternal and through obedience to them, Yahweh is molding and making a people who will conform to the image of His pattern Son.

Pentecost is a holy convocation of His people when brethren gather and rejoice in the new creation we have in Yahshua Messiah.

Now His laws are in our heart and mind and we can hear and obey His voice. We don't need to speak in tongues to keep Pentecost.

## Counting to Pentecost

Pentecost, which means fiftieth in Greek, is counted from the Days of Unleavened Bread that follow the Passover, as we see from Leviticus 23:4. "And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it," Leviticus 23:11.

The count toward Pentecost is from the "morrow after the Sabbath" which falls within the days of Unleavened Bread. We know this count is from the day after the weekly Saturday Sabbath (Sunday) because the Hebrew word for "Sabbath" is *Shabbath* (Strong's Concordance No. 7676 "intensive from No. 7673; *intermission*, i.e. {spec.} *THE Sabbath*)."

Verses 15 and 16 include "Shabbath" three times, meaning the weekly Sabbath. Thus, it is clear that our count begins with

the first day of the week, and we are to count until we reach 49 days, which is a Sabbath "when the week is out." The next day is Sunday, the proper day for Pentecost.

However, in verse 24 the Sabbath referring to the Feast of Trumpets is *Shabbathown*, which is not the weekly Sabbath but a High Sabbath. As we move to verse 59 we again find the Hebrew

*Shabbathown*, which refers to the High Sabbaths of the Feast of Tabernacles, which according to Strong's No. 7677 means a "sabbatism or special holiday."

Leviticus 25:32 refers to the day of Atonement, which is to many the holiest day of the year. This verse uses the term "Sabbath of Sabbaths" to describe this special day of fasting.

What all this means is that the *morrow after the Sabbath* cannot be the day after Abib 15, the first day of Unleavened Bread. The 15th is *Strong's* No. 7677, which is *Shabbatown*. Nor could it be the twenty-first day of Abib, which is also *Shabbatown*, No. 7677.

The day to begin our count toward Pentecost according to the Hebrew text has to be the day after the weekly Saturday Sabbath (*Strong's* No. 7676). Thus the count toward Pentecost begins on the first day of the week making our Sunday as day one, and ending on a Sunday 50 days later, the proper day for Pentecost.

The count "toward Pentecost" (Feast of Weeks) is the day that the wavesheaf of barley was offered. Harvesting of any grain could not commence until the wavesheaf of firstfruits was waved before Yahweh.

Just as the wave loaves of bread were offered on Pentecost, the wavesheaf was offered within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, the Sunday to begin the count to Pentecost must fall within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Whether the weekly Sabbath falls within the Feast of Unleavened Bread is immaterial because the sheaf was not waved on the weekly Sabbath but the day after, Leviticus 23:15.

Yahshua was the firstfruits wavesheaf who

presented Himself before Yahweh. John 20:17 shows that Yahshua had not yet ascended to the Father, for He told Mary not to cling to Him. Verse 19 tells us it was now evening on the first day of the week and in Luke 24:39 He invites them to touch Him.

It is obvious that the Savior ascended to the Father in the dark part of the first day of the week (Sunday), which is the first day

# It is rather strange that churchianity generally teaches that the Ten Commandments are done away at the cross, and yet Moses wrote that they are the building blocks of the Covenant.

of His acceptance as the spiritual firstfruits. Beginning our count here, and counting 50 days, we again end on a Sunday, which is the day for Pentecost.

He was put to death on a Wednesday (the middle of the week), and arose late Sabbath afternoon. After sunset, the first day of the week having begun, He ascended to the heavens to be accepted of the Father.

## Rabbinical Error Flouts Yahshua

Rabbinical Jews erroneously begin their count from Abib 16 (when Yahshua was still in the tomb and could not have been the wavesheaf offering). Because their first and third month in the spring always has 30 days, and the second 29 days, they always observe Sivan 6 as Shavuoth (Pentecost), so counting 50 days is unnecessary.

In keeping the Passover and Pentecost on the wrong days, they miss the significance of Yahshua's death and resurrection.

Pentecost is to be observed as one would a weekly Sabbath, by gathering with others of like faith, and having the Bible expounded. It is our custom to have two loaves of bread present, signifying the body of Messiah comprising Israelites and those gentiles called and chosen to be grafted into the Abrahamic promise, Leviticus 23:15-17.

He is calling you today to repent and be baptized into Yahshua's Name so that you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38. Make Yahweh's Feasts days automatically part of your life. His Feasts are mentioned 34 times in the New Testament in connection with obeying them. Learn His ways now so that you can get His blessings as you prepare for the coming Kingdom!



# Successful Marriages

## Part 1

by Randy Folliard

**W**hy do we see half of all marriages ending in divorce today? Why are so many couples filled with sadness, turmoil, and conflict? What is missing in these relationships? While the answer escapes the vast majority in this post-biblical nation, the answer is quite simple. What is missing is the Bible.

In this series, we will offer biblical solutions and insights to marriage. If followed, these principles will strengthen your own marriage, thus allowing you in turn to be an example and blessing to others.

The Bible provides many lessons on how to achieve a successful marriage. Here's a summary of what we'll be reviewing in this important series: respecting divine order, righteous communication, mutual love and respect, forgiveness and a spirit of peace, respecting differences, romance and intimacy, the Seventh Commandment, and till death do us part.

### Be a Helpmate

Let us first consider what it means to respect divine order. This principle is in Genesis 2:18, "And Yahweh Elohim said, It is not

good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him."

Yahweh recognized a problem with the creation of Adam, the first man. While he created male and female within the animal kingdom, Adam was alone and incomplete. To resolve this, He created for Adam a help meet or helpmate.

The phrase "help meet" is from two Hebrew words. The word "help" comes from the Hebrew *ezer* and refers to an aid or someone who helps, while the word "meet" derives from the Hebrew *neged* and refers to a counterpart or mate.

Therefore, the phrase "help meet" refers to an aid or helper.

In addition to being a help for Adam, Eve also completed Adam. People are usually more balanced or complete with a spouse. The fact is, nobody knows you better than your husband or wife. They know your strengths and also your faults and because of this they help you become a better person. If there's turmoil in the relationship, the reverse can also be true. This is why it's important that we strive to help our spouse and not be a detriment.

Even though Eve was created as a helpmate to Adam, Adam was also a helpmate to Eve. Marriage is never a one-way street; the principles we find in our Father's Word for a healthy marriage apply to both the husband and wife. This is not to say, though, that the husband and wife share the same roles.

### Respect Divine Authority

Genesis 3:16 defines separate roles for the husband and wife, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

We see here Yahweh's punishment upon Eve for eating of the forbidden fruit. Because of her defiance, she would give birth in pain and Adam would rule over her. The word "rule" comes from the Hebrew *mashal* and means to "have dominion or to reign over."

From this passage we learn that the husband is over the wife in authority. Simply explaining the passage's meaning may offend some ladies, but understand that as a culture we've strayed so far from biblical principles, especially as it pertains to the

family, that we no longer embrace its core values. For those who might remember the TV show, the values of “Father Knows Best” are no more respected.

It’s important to understand what this principle does and doesn’t mean. It means that the husband is the final authority within the marriage. What this doesn’t mean is that the husband should dictate, make unreasonable demands, or be abusive in the marriage.

As we’ll see, the husband’s role parallels the Messiah’s role over the assembly. While the early assembly followed Yahshua’s lead, as should we, Yahshua was never unreasonable or abusive to the assembly, and neither should husbands be to their wives.

Even though the man is in the leadership role, marriage should also be viewed as a partnership. For a man and woman to be successful in a marriage, they must learn to work together as partners. For example, before making any large purchase they should first discuss and agree on it together. Just because the husband is the head in the marriage covenant doesn’t mean he should make key decisions independently.

What happens if the husband abuses his role as the authority figure? What if he dictates and makes important decisions without first consulting his wife? If he does this there’s going to be strife and animosity within that marriage.

There will be times in a relationship when the husband and wife may not agree, but a decision still has to be made. In this instance, the husband must consider all viewpoints, especially his wife’s, and make a decision best for the family. In turn, the wife should respect his decision.

#### **Analogous to Messiah**

These same principles are also found in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul in the fifth chapter of Ephesians compares the marriage covenant to Yahshua’s relationship with the assembly.

He says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Master. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Messiah is the head of the assembly: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the assembly is subject unto Messiah, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing,” verses 22-24.

The Apostle Paul affirms that being in subjection parallels the relationship between Yahshua and the assembly. In this relation-

ship, the husband represents the Messiah and the wife, the assembly. So as the assembly is to obey and follow the Messiah, the wife is to do the same with her husband.

As the wife is to obey her husband, the husband is to emulate Yahshua the Messiah. What does this mean? For starters, Yahshua never abused the assembly. On the contrary, He gave everything for the assembly, including His own life. The husband is to follow in this example.

His decisions should never be made on selfish desires or that which may hurt the family. He should consider himself last and the family first. Consider this, in the Bible

to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” How many of us follow what we find here? Are we too much in a hurry to listen or to speak? The majority of arguments could be resolved if we followed what we find in James.

There was a man in the faith who lived this principle. This person was always somewhat slow in his response. Understand that it wasn’t this man’s intelligence that made him slow to speak, he was slow on purpose. Before he responded he thought carefully about his words. How careful are we with our words; do we think before we say something or are we rash in our response?

*(continued on p. 19)*

## **If we’ve done something wrong, the worst thing we can do is to cover it up with lies and deceit.**

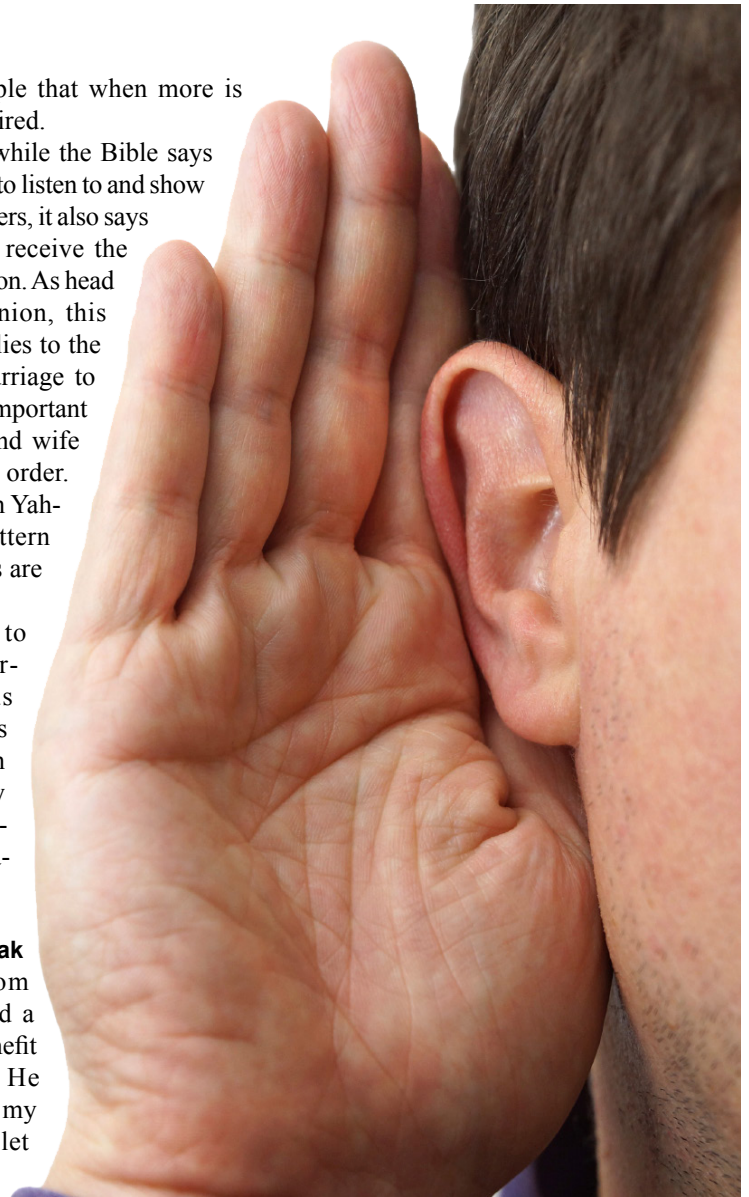
we find the principle that when more is given, more is required.

For example, while the Bible says that the assembly is to listen to and show respect to the ministers, it also says that ministers will receive the heavier condemnation. As head of the marriage union, this same principle applies to the husband. For a marriage to be successful, it’s important that the husband and wife respect this divine order. It was inspired from Yahweh and is the pattern that we as believers are to follow.

The next key to a successful marriage is righteous communication. It’s amazing how much Scripture has to say about communication within our relationships.

#### **Listen, Think, Speak**

For example, from James 1:19 we find a lesson that will benefit all relationships. He says, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift



# Where the Rubber Meets the Road

by Alan Mansager

***For most who claim a Bible belief, elementary knowledge of Scripture is the totality of their devotion. Going on to the next level and putting into practice even what they know is too great an effort. But if we neglect to take action on what we understand, we will have no traction with Yahweh.***

Billions of people through the ages have lived out their entire lives never understanding their Creator, what His real Name is, who His family is, and what He expects of humanity in order to find salvation.

Most have no idea that Yahweh has a plan and purpose for this earth, which centers on those who seek Him now. But the biggest obstacle to finding life everlasting is to actively walk in the Word by doing what it says, just as Yahshua did and as He commanded us, John 14:12.

Our Savior's message was don't just hear the word, don't just understand its mandates, but take the next, most important step and put it into practice. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:13: "For not the hearers of the law are just before Elohim, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

The love of many is the world. They are comfortable with all it offers. They are a

faith unto themselves. Yahshua showed us in Matthew 19:16 what it takes to be His: "And, behold, one came and said unto him, 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."

The man thought he already was completely compliant. But Yahshua probed deeper because He perceived the man had a hidden spiritual problem obstructing his walk: "Yahshua said unto him, If you will be perfect, go and sell what you 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."

The man's wealth got between him and Yahweh. The lesson is that anything we place before Yahweh is idolatry. Even selfish goals and ambitions can be idolatrous. We ourselves present the biggest challenge to serving Yahweh.

In the recesses of many minds today lurks the assumption that real, hands-on commitment to the Word is unnecessary. They claim to live by faith and belief while continuing to do as they please, which is what they learn from churchianity.

To learn how to apply the Scriptures in our lives is the whole point for studying the Word. Passive knowledge alone is pointless in Yahweh's eyes. Hearing without action is useless.

James wrote: "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed," James 1:23-25.

## The Big Plan

We are told in Genesis 1:27 that we are made in the very image of Yahweh. His own characteristics are reflected in us through traits like ambition and love and disappointment, and other emotions. Man's desire to create is also reflective of Yahweh. Yahshua said Yahweh works and He Himself works.

When we look out into the vastness of the universe we see purpose. Yahshua in Luke 1:33 said there is no end to Yahweh's Kingdom. Yahweh is starting with a few specially chosen now, with plans to expand His Kingdom, perhaps to populate the universe. We are in the preparation stages of an awesome destiny.

We once discussed Scriptures at length

with an atheist. An atheist's strategy is to try to discredit Scripture by showing its alleged contradictions. Many atheists therefore know the Bible well, as did this man. Unless they repent, that knowledge will be to their condemnation when they stand before the Judge. None of this man's alleged "contradictions" could get any traction. They were all arguments of straw.

Why are atheists so dead-set on getting others to accept their nonbelief? Their zeal is a big contradiction because if there really is no Creator, why worry whether others have faith? The answer may be that deep down inside he is conflicted in his own heart. His heart is in opposition to his head.

Paul writes in Romans 2:14 that when unbelievers do instinctively what the law requires, they show that the law's requirement is on their hearts. Further, Paul says that their own consciences bear witness of them. At the judgment, this will be taken into account.

Believers are on course for a far greater life to come. Why would they want to be set adrift and without hope?

Our goal as followers of Yahshua is not to relax on clouds plucking harps for eternity. Yahweh said of Israel in Exodus 19:6, "You shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." According to 1Peter 2:9, His faithful will be a royal priesthood, the very same promise found in the Old Covenant.

Yahweh's plan has not changed in 6,000 years. The chosen will be building a kingdom without end under the direction of Yahshua, with David directly under Him, according to the prophet Ezekiel: "And David my servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; and they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes and do them," 37:24.

Yahweh's laws will be the "law of the land" in the Millennium.

### Participant or Opponent?

Spiritual spectators are everywhere. They go passively through life, like a fish in a stream, waiting for whatever floats by, doing nothing to shape their future or prepare for it. They are content to just let life happen to them, having no clue exactly what will happen.

But you have an incredible opportunity that the unenlightened don't have. You are called to be a participant in your eternal

destiny. You are learning about it and the great purpose Yahweh has, not just leaving it up to happenstance or hoping to just slip in, holding tightly to someone else's shirttails, or worse – being oblivious to the future.

### It's All or Nothing

When it comes to mankind, in Yahweh's eyes there are only two types of people: the participants and the opponents; the impassioned believers and the antagonists. The undecided bystanders, the lukewarm, and the spiritually comatose are all in opposition to Yahweh. Ultimately, all will have to get on one side or the other. There is no neutral zone and no indecision with Yahweh.

Revelation 3:15 tells us: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I

would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Politicians talk about the undecideds. Yahweh hates lukewarm attitudes because that is the mark of compromise. It means going just so far to get by, to keep Him happy while pursuing life the way we want it. That's self-worship. With Yahweh its all or nothing. I either live for Him or I live for myself. There is no neutral ground.

We worship a Power so great that all the trillions of stars in all

t h e  
billions of  
galaxies obey

His every command. His power is infinite. We look at our sun and see solar tornadoes thousands of miles wide with vortices spinning at 6,000 mph. We see stars so massive that many of them could encompass our entire solar system! Yahweh controls it all by the word of His mouth. He has absolute power over your salvation and mine. Who are we to question Him?

Our earth is only a kneecap on a mosquito in comparison to outer space, and you and I are only a molecule. And yet, we have been called to follow the Father and learn of His ways that will one day be taught to all the earth and universe as it goes forth out of Zion.

If everyone really, truly understood Yahweh with total and complete conviction, there would be no divisions. Rebellion

## Believers are on course for a far greater life to come. Why would they want to be set adrift and without hope?

springs from ignorance. Hatred comes from lack of understanding, 1Peter 1:14-17.

Yahshua told the Pharisees in John 9:41, "If you were blind you should have no sin," meaning it would not be charged against them. But they were now fully accountable because they knew better. They knew the Scriptures. The Truth is all about discovering more of Him and His ways and then walking in those ways.

The spiritual spectators will never know about all of this until the thousand years of Yahshua's millennial rule or thereafter. Maybe you will be found worthy to teach some of them in that coming kingdom, Isaiah 30:20-21; 49:22-23; 61:5-6.

There is no better place to be than with Yahweh's people obeying Yahweh when Yahshua returns. Daniel chapters 8 and 11 and other prophets say He will come at a moed, which in Hebrew means an appointed time, which also means a feast.

The Feasts are not optional for the True Worshiper. Yahweh doesn't



say that if you have nothing else to do, come to My Feasts. He says unequivocally to be there, no matter what.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts,” Lev. 23:2. Convocations means holy gatherings, calling together.

What a joy it is to observe exactly what Yahweh wants you to observe with no reservations about whether it is right or

consciously and actively do.

You prepare all year with your second tithe. You schedule time off from work. You purchase items you will need. You get the vehicle ready and prepare your children.

Like True Worship itself, the Feasts take effort. It is a whole lot easier to say, “I just can’t make it this year.” Or even worse, “I don’t see any need for the Feasts, they’re Old Testament.” If you believe that, then take time right now to read how Yahshua, the disciples, and Paul, kept them as a

Idolatry is worshipping in any manner other than what Yahweh commands. Choosing not to change is still making a choice.

In Exodus 32:4 after Aaron made the golden calf, the Israelites didn’t say, “We’re now going out to worship the metal cow.” On the contrary. Aaron made a calf and they transferred that worship to the worship of Yahweh.

That was idolatry, not simply because they had an idol, but because they themselves decided the means and methods by which



not. Unlike man’s holidays, His days give us deep-down joy and satisfaction.

The spiritual spectator lets the world or his family and friends decide his spiritual walk. He defers to their wishes instead of Yahweh’s.

When your Heavenly Father says, “These are MY Feasts – keep them,” it takes deliberate resolve to be compliant. There is no room for passivity. No time for indecision. It is something one must

key part of their worship. Discover the 34 times the word Feast(s) appear in the New Testament in the context of observing them. Yahweh will not look kindly on deliberate disobedience.

Hebrews 4:5-7 reads, “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

What is clear is a lack of any middle ground in Yahweh’s mandates. It is all or nothing. You cannot worship Yahweh halfway. You don’t dabble here, dabble there.

they would worship, not the way Yahweh instructed them. Idolatry amounts to making our own choices and ignoring Yahweh’s. Idolatry is worship done our way.

Yahweh never said make an image, an icon, to represent me. In fact, the Second Commandment specifically warns us not to do that. But they did it anyway because that was what the major religions, which they were a part of in Egyptian captivity, would do. They just could not let go of tradition.

When we worship and honor Yahweh in ways that are only convenient or acceptable in our eyes or that fit popular traditions, it's no different from fashioning a golden calf and calling it true worship.

When you say "no" to obedience, or when you look for loopholes or arguments against it, you are taking a chisel to a golden calf. You are manufacturing your own way of worship. You've made a choice to design your own worship. Don't expect blessings or the favor of Yahweh when you worship Him your own way.

Proverbs 14:12 says alternative worship may seem great to us, but it leads to death. A door-to-door evangelist once argued that he keeps every day holy. We knew that wasn't so. This man's church doesn't keep the Sabbath. He was not telling the truth.

Besides, the Fourth Commandment doesn't tell us to keep every day holy. In fact, you should not keep every day holy, trying to do so amounts to idolatry because it is worship not sanctioned, commanded or approved in the Word. The root of the word Sabbath, Shabbat, means to cease, desist from work. The 4th Commandment specifically says work 6 days and rest the 7th. Not "rest 7 days and do no work at all." If I kept every day holy I would starve.

### Prepare for Your Wedding

Yahshua told a parable about five wise and five foolish bridesmaids in Matt. 25:1-13. The bridesmaids' job was to prepare the bride to meet the groom. But because the groom didn't come when expected, the five foolish bridesmaids got lax. They didn't take inventory of their oil supplies for their torches. They didn't attend to business. They slacked off when it came to taking responsibility for their actions. So when the wedding banquet came and they were late, the door was locked. The groom said He didn't know them. They had lacked the proper respect for Him. They were negligent, so He says to them, "I don't know you."

The preparation for the wedding is taking place right now. Is your lamp of obedience full? Are you faithfully making preparations to meet the groom? Will you be the bride, or only a foolish bridesmaid shut out of the promises because you were not ready and failed to take the right action?

### Powers Behind the Scenes

The Adversary has enormous resources and it is only by the will and protection of

Yahweh that you have been able to survive to this point. No doubt there were many obstacles and roadblocks that you didn't even see that were supernaturally removed before they became a problem.

At times we get the feeling that something supernatural just happened. If we could only see behind the scenes into the spirit world, our entire attitude would instantly change. We would have a complete and awesome respect for Yahweh and would think twice before we entertained thoughts displeasing to Him.

Ephesians 6:12 is a fascinating verse that reveals that a lot of spiritual activity goes on around us that we are not conscious of. We get a behind-the-scenes glimpse in Job, where Satan taunts Yahweh by saying Job would fail the test if the Adversary could have a shot at him. "Let me work him over a bit. Then you'll see the real Job."

Do you ever wonder whether the same goes on at times in your life? Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. Revelation 12:10 says he points the finger of accusation at us day and night before Yahweh. He badmouths us constantly. But do we give him reason? Is he ever right and we are guilty as charged? Are we hypocrites, giving him ammunition to be used against us, like some terrorist using our own resources to attack us?

We know that demonic spirits can take over the lives of people. A spirit of evil can work in an individual just as Yahweh's Spirit can work in a person, Ephesians 2:2.

Most people behave the way they do because they don't know Yahweh.

All sin stems from ignorance with a lack of righteous fear of Yahweh. People practice wickedness because they lack reverence for Him and they love self more. That goes for virtually everyone. If we humans truly understood Yahweh, we would be fools to defy Him through sin in any form.

Israel saw how foolish they had been when suffering Yahweh's wrath. They became humble rather quickly. But their submission didn't last because they still loved self more.

Children who obey their parents have a healthy respect and love for their parents whether in their presence or not, and those children know the consequences of rebellion.

But people who break Yahweh's laws don't understand Yahweh and lack the necessary fear of Him and the consequences. The message most people hear today is that

you don't need not to change your behavior. No need to obey, Yahshua did it all for you. He will accept you regardless and give you all your desires.

It doesn't come any easier than that. Millions are buying into this passive spectator attitude because they prefer it that way. It is a message of idolatry, creating Yahweh in our image, not conforming to His image.

The Bible is all about change. All 66 books emphasize the right way and the wrong way of life.

As a result of misteachings, most think that the consequences for sin will never come to them. That's why there's going to be a lot of gnashing of teeth when millions see Abraham and the other patriarchs in the Kingdom and themselves shut out.

Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; Elohim is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

We are in training to learn how to walk with Almighty Yahweh and His Son according to His rules, to praise Him while seeking His face, and to discover more of His ways so that we can be of value to Him in His Kingdom coming to earth.

If the law will soon go forth out of Zion, Micah 4:2, it is incumbent that those who will be its teachers learn it and obey it now. Paul certainly did. In Acts 21:24 Paul proved to the people that he walked orderly and kept the law. In Acts 28:17 Paul said he had committed NOTHING against the customs of our fathers. Remember that Paul was Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin, as he himself said in Acts 22:3. He was not an iconoclast out to create a new religion, but to teach new and better promises based on the Israelite faith.

In verse 23 we find that Paul taught out of the law of Moses and the prophets from morning till evening.

Who would you like living next door to you: a convict who has no regard for law, or a family of commandment keepers with whom you could trust your loved ones and your property?

In this uncertain world, where tragedy could strike at any moment, Yahweh is all we can hold onto with complete confidence.

Learning His ways and being obedient to His Word is the most important thing we can do in our lives.

## Dealing with

# MISTAKES

by Joel Wirl



A terrible feeling washes over you. You just realized that you wronged someone. You feel awful and start thinking about what you have done and then are suddenly pulled from your thoughts to wonder what you should do now. How are you ever going to fix this?

In our human condition, at some point in our lives we've all had the sinking feeling in our gut that we did a wrong. We should be prepared when it happens. A ship will weather a storm better if all on board are prepared, rather than react like unready sailors. Even if intentions were not malicious, an uncorrected mistake can be detrimental to relationships, a job, or just our well being. None of us wants this, so we need to take steps to prevent the situation from going awry.

### What Tends to Happen

Okay, so you've done something wrong or made a mistake, now what? What sometimes happens is that we do what we should not do. I'm talking about something that goes back to our first parents, Adam and Eve, and that is blame shifting and excuse making.

We don't like when others do this, and we'll call them out when caught in the act. But when our own feet are to the flame, it's not so bad. It's so easy to look at others for the mistakes we make. "Well, if he hadn't done that then I wouldn't have done this," or "It's her fault this happened, I'm not wrong," or some other excuse to take the spotlight off of us and put it onto someone else. Blame shifting doesn't help you, your situation, or anyone around you. It only hurts you, and makes you defenseless in correcting the issue.

The moment you make these kinds of excuses, you take away any ability you would have had to correct the issue. You become a slave, a victim, to another's actions rather than being free to making your own. We all have the freedom to choose, but by not taking personal responsibility for our actions we give up this freedom. It is easy to shift blame and make excuses. but taking personal responsibility is more difficult.

In the example of Adam and Eve, when they first sinned against Yahweh by eating of the fruit of the tree from which Yahweh had forbidden them to eat, how did they respond?

How they responded was very poorly. Genesis 3:8-13 says, "And they heard the voice of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh Elohim amongst the trees of the



garden. And Yahweh Elohim called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And Yahweh Elohim said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

Now it is true that Eve did give Adam the fruit of the tree to eat, which was wrong, and yes it is true that Satan deceived Eve about what eating the fruit would do to her, but that didn't negate the fact that Adam and Eve both made the wrong decision. Their fear of the consequences led them to betraying each other and themselves.

The same decision lies with us. We can either blame others for wrongs we have done, or we can take personal responsibility to remedy the problem and do something about it. So if we would like to remedy the problem, what should happen instead of shifting blame?

#### Address It Immediately

The first thing we need to do is address the problem immediately.

In Matthew 5:25 Yahshua tells us to “agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.” If we deal with the mistake right away, the issue may not compound into a much worse problem later. Deal with the problem as soon as you can.

A man owned a lovely house and property in his family for many generations. His great-great-grandfather had planted a tree by their house, and it looked

nice for a few generations, but now it was pushing into the foundation of the house. Sadly, the tree had to go. He hired an excavator with a bulldozer and some other heavy equipment to pull the tree out from the roots. It took a lot of effort and much time, but finally the tree was removed. After all the work and money was spent pulling out the tree the man realized how easy it would have been if he could have just gone back in time and pulled the little seedling from the ground and put it farther from the house before it grew into a huge problem later.

to number Israel.” I'm not sure why there is a discrepancy, but I believe it was Satan who provoked David with Yahweh's permission, as in the case of Job.

Now a census was not inherently bad. In Exodus 30:12 Yahweh told Moses to number the people, but that was for the collecting of the half-shekel offering. David, who was a king, may have been doing this to see the glory of his kingdom. There is no clear answer to this, but doing this angered Yahweh.

#### Time to Be Humble and Apologize

Joab, captain of David's army, knew this was a bad idea and tried to persuade David not to do it, but David persisted. The whole process took nine months and twenty days. Now David did not address the problem immediately, which would have been the best course of action, but he did address the problem afterward.

In a similar situation we should address the situation head on. And then we should do as

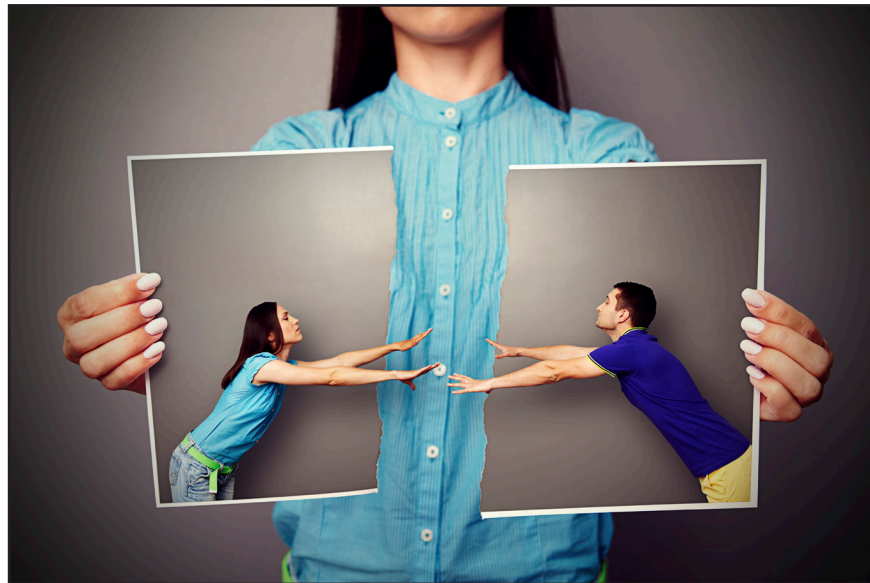
David did when we make a mistake: be humble, confess, and apologize for the error to the one offended.

James 5:16 says, “Confess your faults one to another...” This isn't the common confession of reciting sins to a clergyman, but it means confessing your wrong to the wronged party.

David did this by confessing his sin to Yahweh in 2Samuel

24:10. “And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto Yahweh, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Yahweh, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.”

So once we act immediately upon the mistake we made, we need to apologize for it. We should go to the one we hurt or harmed, intentionally or not intentionally, and ask for forgiveness. Most people are willing to forgive a wrong if the person



The lesson is the same in personal relationships. If you don't deal with problems sooner than later, they will grow to much larger ones. Is there a mistake you've made that you haven't dealt with yet?

## Once we apologize for our mistake, then we need to take the next step, and that is to make restitution for our wrong to make it right again.

Is there something you've done wrong to someone you know, or to Yahweh? Address the problem as soon as you can. It may be hard but it's the right thing to do.

In 2 Samuel 24 David enacted a census among Israel. There is no reason given as to why he did it. Verse one says, “And again the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah,” yet the parallel verse in 1Chronicles 21:1 says, “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David

is truly sorry for what he or she did. Have you ever been angry with someone and they come to you ever so gently and say they are sorry? How long did your anger last? Likely, not long. If we feel that way when others come to us, then most will feel the same when we go to them in the same spirit.

Once we apologize for our mistake, then we need to take the next step, and that is to make restitution for our wrong to make it right again.

### Make Restitution Quickly

It's not just about saying you're sorry and end it there. There are consequences to most mistakes; sometimes they are small, but they also can be big. There is a huge difference in consequences between a sanitation employee forgetting to grab your trash and a doctor messing up a heart transplant.

When mistakes and wrongs happen, what needs to happen after confessing the mistake is to make it right, which is taking action to fix any mistake. This is something that has been lost in our culture.

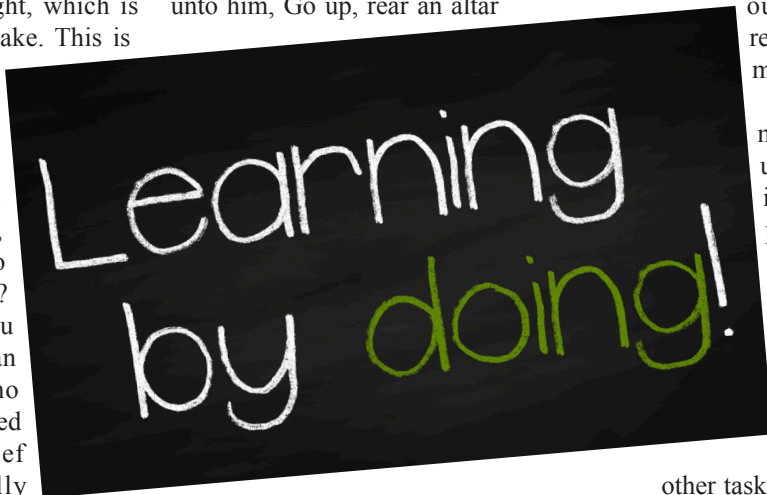
If a man steals, he is thrown in jail. For the person who got his goods stolen, did he get those goods back? No, he just suffers the loss. Who pays for a convict's jail time? If he is in your location, you yourself do through taxes, an innocent citizen who has no choice but to provide confined rent for this thief. The thief is punished, but not usually reformed, and everyone else suffers.

The Bible teaches restitution, which in the case of stealing the thief must give back five times what he or she stole. This is a much better solution. The victim gets his goods back and more; the thief has to pay back what he stole and learns that it doesn't pay to steal; and society as a whole doesn't have to be punished by paying for the thief's time in jail. If we wrong someone we need to do our best to make it right.

King David had to deal with the consequences of his actions and make reparations. Because of what he did, Yahweh sent the prophet Gad to give David three choices. Yahweh was either going to cause seven years of famine in the land, cause David to flee from his kingdom for three months because of his enemies, or to bring

pestilence on the land for three days. David chose the last option, to have pestilence come upon the land.

In 2 Samuel 24:15-25 the pestilence comes and David must make amends. The passages read, "So Yahweh sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men. And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, Yahweh repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of Yahweh was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite. And David spake unto Yahweh when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house. And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar



unto Yahweh in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as Yahweh commanded. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my sovereign the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto Yahweh, that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Araunah said unto David, Let my sovereign the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, Yahweh thy Elohim accept thee. And

the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto Yahweh my Elohim of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. And David built there an altar unto Yahweh, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, So Yahweh was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

David took action to make amends for his mistake and Yahweh relented in His anger. What we want to restore more than anything is the damaged relationship. Taking steps to do that shows we really are sorry for what you've done and want to make things right. Hopefully the relationship can be restored.

### Learn from Your Wrongs

In making everything right again, we immediately address the situation, humble ourselves and apologize, make restitution, and then learn from our mistake so we don't repeat it.

Proverbs 24:16 says, "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief." We need to be this person who keeps getting up from our mistakes, and then make sure we aren't falling into the same hole.

Maybe the error is a flaw in our character, in how we interact in relationships, or a flaw in what we do in our job or other tasks. None of us is perfect and each one is hopefully on a journey to being more like Yahshua.

In any case, we need to see the flaw for what it is and get rid of it, else we fall into the same situation again. To see our flaws we need to be constantly reading the Bible and reflecting on good examples as a gauge. We should be in a process of growth, and sometimes it takes getting rid of the weeds for that growing process to continue.

So when that terrible feeling washes over you, and you despair about a mistake you made, know that there is a way to remedy the solution. You don't have to live with hurt relationships or in a state of helplessness.

Yahweh gives us the freedom to make mistakes and the freedom to correct them. We can make it right, and hopefully make those relationships stronger.

## Successful Marriages, Part 1

(continued from page 11)

While this principle is important for all relationships, it's especially important for a marriage. Again, the vast majority of marital arguments could be resolved if the husband and wife would simply follow this lesson.

Believe or not, many marriages end

spouses. In some cases it's not the adultery but the deception and dishonesty that the wife cannot overlook. To be fair, this also happens on the other side. The lesson here is, dishonesty in a marriage will eventually destroy that union.

If we've done something wrong, the worst thing we can do is to cover it up with lies and deceit. The Bible confirms that where there's love and honesty, most prob-

stance or opportunity is right. For anybody who's been married for any length of time, you know there are days when certain discussions should be avoided. For example, if you come home and learn that your spouse had a bad day, this probably isn't the best time to discuss something that may be contentious. As believers and spouses we should look for the right opportunity.

Second, we should consider the words we use. For example, if you know your wife had a bad day you should not respond with something like, "What's your problem?" Rather, try something like, "Is there something I can do to help?" Choosing the right words can make all the difference within our relationships. Using the word "you" as in criticizing is a potential mine field.

Third, we should be cognizant of our tone and body language. The fact is, we can use the same words and communicate two very different messages based on how we say it. According to some studies, only seven percent of our communication is verbal, which means that 93 percent of our message is conveyed through non-verbal methods, including tone and body position. For example, we can apologize by arrogantly saying, "I'M SORRY" versus humbly saying, "I'm sorry." Often it's not what we say, but how we say it.



in divorce not because of big issues, but because of small or petty differences that build up over time. If we as spouses would be more patient and less rash, we would save ourselves a lot of unnecessary grief in our marriages. So let us remember to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

### Never Compromise Trust

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:25 provides another lesson in communication. He says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

How important is it that as believers and spouses we're honest and speak the truth? This is a moral obligation we have as believers. What happens to relationships when trust is broken and becomes an issue? Most often, those relationships will not succeed.

While this principle is important to all relationships, it's crucial within a marriage. One of the worst things that can happen in a marriage is when there's no longer trust between the husband and wife.

According to statistics, 20 percent, or one out of five, married men is guilty of committing adultery at least once on their

lems within a relationship can be worked out.

Keep in mind that while this may be possible, it may not always be easy or happen quickly. Depending on the infraction, it may take time to restore that trust. As believers we should always have compassion and be willing to forgive if the person is sincerely remorseful for what he or she has done. Remember that our Father in heaven forgave us by sacrificing His only Son for our sins when we were yet sinners.

### Proper Communication

Solomon in Proverbs 25:11 also provides some insight on how we're to communicate: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

What does Solomon mean here when he says, "A word fitly spoken"? Matthew Henry in his commentary states: "...that runs well, is well-circumstanced, in proper time and place-instruction, advice, or comfort, given seasonably, and in apt expressions, adapted to the case of the person spoken to and agreeing with the character of the person speaking."

First, we should speak when the circum-

### In Summary

The Bible teaches that the husband is the head or final authority within a marriage; The husband should never use this Yahweh-given authority in a way that's abusive to his wife;

Even though there is one head in a marriage, the husband and wife should always work together for a solution that is best for the family. Marriage should be viewed as a partnership.

We're not to be rash in what we say; we should always first listen to what is being said before responding; we should always speak the truth.

We should be cognizant of how we say things; this includes when we say them, the words we use, and the tone in which we speak to others.

And finally, we're to remember to love one another with patience, humility, and a forgiving spirit.

*In part 2 we will review the following topics: mutual love and respect along with forgiveness and a spirit of peace.*

# Answers in Scripture



**Q** I am a student of the Gospels and different manifestations of them. If Irenaeus wrote against heresies and established the 66 books of the canonized Bible, and you clearly are not Roman Catholic, what about the other books not canonized. What about the message found in the most hated book of that day, The Gospel of Judas?

**A** While it's true that the church officially canonized the New Testament books of the Bible, the reality is, they simply acknowledged those books that were viewed as authoritative by the body at large. In other words, they accepted those books that were already viewed as inspired by the majority of believers. Also, while we accept and agree academically with the Church's approach, we also have faith that Yahweh was able to guide the process. Those books outside the canon contain different ideas, including heretical beliefs, such as Gnosticism. The Gospel of Judas has Gnostic teachings throughout. In our experience, when a person begins to question the established canon in favor of pseudepigrapha, they soon forsake part or

all of the existing canon, rejecting the New Testament or even the entire Bible. Going down the path of accepting books outside established Scripture is a slippery slope.

**Q** Is it possible that the rapture teaching could contribute to the great falling away (2Thess. 2:3)?

**A** While the great falling away might be impacted by disgruntled believers who are waiting for a rapture that never happens, it is more likely that this event is prompted by today's waning faith and morality. The difference between today's culture and that of several decades ago is striking. Unlike the days of our grandparents, many people today dismiss the authority of the Bible and see it as nothing more than stories and nice sayings. Because of this trend, the Bible is no longer relevant for many people.

**Q** My question relates to RSB notes on page 39 with regard to Genesis 22:15-16 and page 135 with regard to Exodus 23:20 where you indicated

that the Angel may be the preexistent Messiah. However there are four references in the New Testament which show that Israel was in fact dealing with angels. Acts 7:38-39; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2. There are other scriptures which show that angels have authority and power as representatives of Yahweh (Dan 4:13-17; Luke 1:19-20). As a result of the NT texts above, I no longer interpret "Angel of Yahweh" as the Messiah but as representative(s) with full authority to act in His name through Yahshua. What is your response?

**A** We realize and also believe that angels serve as Yahweh's messengers. However, as for the "Angel of Yahweh" in the Old Testament, we believe that the evidence strongly suggests that this was the preexistent Messiah. For example, there are many similarities between the angel of Yahweh and Yahshua the Messiah. Perhaps the best passage showing these similarities is Exodus 23:20-23. "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will

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not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.”

As we note in the RSB, the angel in this passage shares several significant parallels with Yahshua the Messiah, including:

- They both required obedience (Ex. 23:21; Matt. 28:20);
- They both had authority to pardon sin (Ex. 23:21; Matt. 9:6);
- They both carried the Father’s Name (Ex. 23:21; Matt. 1:21).

When all the evidence is considered, there is strong evidence indicating that Yahshua not only preexisted, but was the “Angel of Yahweh” that appeared in the Old Testament.

**Q** In your millennial Kingdom teaching you say that sinners who make it through the tribulation will be in the millennial Kingdom and accursed for sinning. How does this harmonize with the parable of the wheat and tares? Could these be the ignorant?

**A** In that parable, Yahshua states that the tares represent “the children of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38). They are those who openly and purposefully defy Yahweh, being the most egregious of sinners. However, they do not represent the ignorant or those who have sinned a sin not worthy of death.

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death,” 1John 5:16-17.

As John explains in his first epistle, not all sin is equal in its effects. Some sin is worthy of death while other sin is not. We believe it will be both the ignorant and those who are guilty of sin not worthy of death who will be given an opportunity to repent in the millennial Kingdom, guided by those saints who will be given life in Yahweh’s Kingdom. As we see from Isaiah 65:20, some will repent when shown the truth while others will remain in their sinful state and die accursed.

**Q** You say suffering in hellfire forever is not the destiny of the wicked. Please explain how there can be the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, liars, sorcerers, and idolaters in the lake of fire, and also Revelation 14:11, where the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and they have no rest day or night. If the wicked are quickly destroyed, how can this be?

**A** Revelation 14:11 symbolizes the results of the lake of fire. The smoke refers to the memory of those who died, and their lack of rest means they will not be awarded salvation rest, Revelation 6:11. This symbolism using personification is similarly reflected in the souls’ crying out in the fifth seal of Revelation 6:9-11 or Abel’s blood crying out in Genesis 4:10. All these passages are allegorical.

Regarding eternal fire, perhaps the best illustration is Jude 7, which says that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered “the vengeance of eternal fire.” These cities are not still burning, yet the effects of their destruction are everlasting. We find a similar reference to Judah in Jeremiah 17:27. Below is an excerpt from our booklet, *What Happens After this Life*:

“The current concept of hell developed from Greek influence, according to authors Alan F. Johnson and Robert E. Webber in their book, *What Christians Believe—A Biblical and Historical Summary*. “In the intertestamental period there were significant developments in eschatological themes. The first relates to the development of a compartmental view of *sheol*. When the righteous and the wicked die, they go to different places. This is to be contrasted with the Old Testament view that *sheol* is the place where both the righteous and wicked go. Under the growing influence of Greek concepts of a distinct body and soul, some Jews taught that after death ‘the immortal and perishable soul, once detached from the ties of the flesh and thus freed from bondage, flies happily upwards’ quote from Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish Wars*, II, VII.2... On the other hand the wicked go to *sheol*, which is now identified with the Greek *hades*. This region of damnation is also called *gehenna*, a place of eternal fire (originally the old rubbish heap and a place of child sacrifice

south of Mount Zion in Jerusalem). It was known as the Valley of Hinnom,’ pp. 423-424.

“The current concept of hell as an ever-burning fire is completely missing from the Old and New testaments and arose only through pagan traditions of man. This belief was further propagated and solidified in the 14th century through the ‘Inferno,’ the prologue to Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy*. Scholars say Dante wrote the *Divine Comedy* as retribution against his political rivals, whose evils are featured in the work. He depicts *sheol* or *hades* as a place of fire and torment in the earth for those who do wrong during their lifetimes. Images of this epic-poem continue to influence New Testament believers today.”

**Q** I do not eat unclean food but also do not allow it to disrupt fellowship with others in [Yahshua]. If we visit family/friends who have prepared a meal, I will not disrespect their offering and offend as to be righteous. It is more about the heart and health rather than keeping a strict law. I am looking for insight on Acts 15. This was specifically discussed by the apostles and directed to the gentiles who believed on [Yahshua]

**A** Acts 15 does not discuss clean foods, but pagan practices by those of heathen nations. In verse 20, James responds, “But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.” These four practices were not connected to Old Testament law (Torah), but to pagan rites of the gentiles. What we find there is that the apostles agreed that the first step for the new gentile converts was to stop their old heathen practices. As we see from verse 21, they would then learn more about the covenant hearing the law of Moses being preached every Sabbath. Because these people had no previous knowledge of the truth, they had to start by eliminating the most offensive practices and learn gradually. For this reason, Acts 15 is irrelevant to the discussion of clean foods.

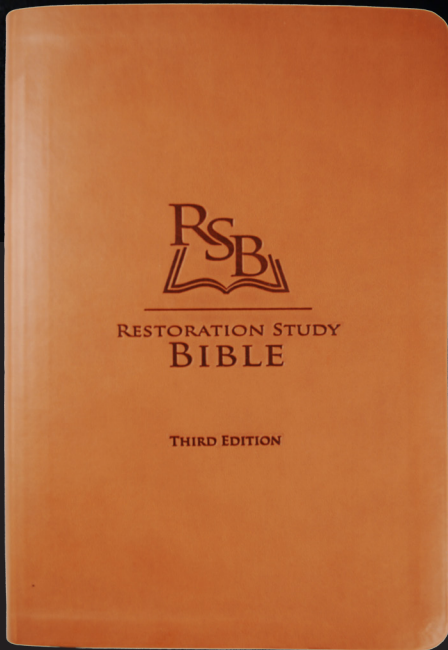
As to eating whatever is placed before you, 1Corinthians 10:27 is not about unclean foods, but clean meats sacrificed to idols. The Bible never allows eating unclean food at any time.

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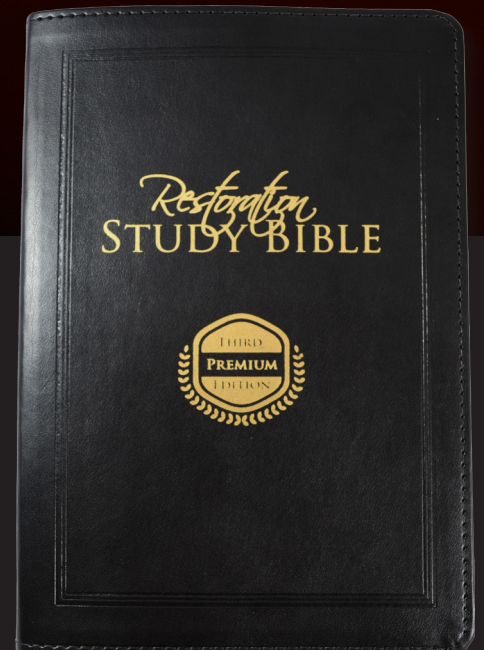
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