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Salvation for every nation

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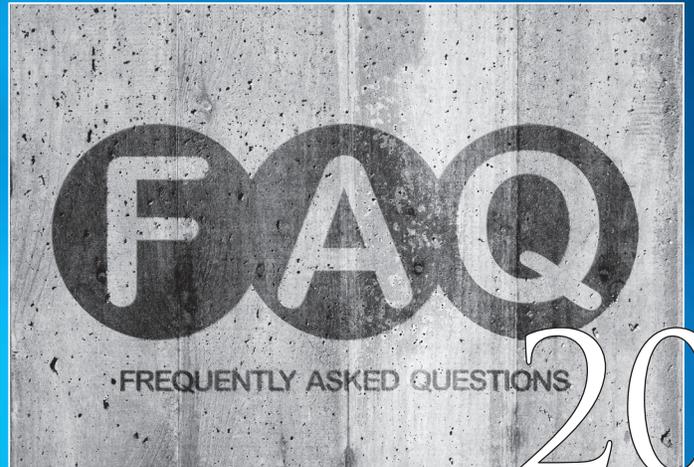


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Restoration Times expounds the close ties between the Old and New Testaments. We teach the continuity and harmony that extend from Yahweh's actions anciently down through His present activity in Yahshua the Messiah. This was also the conviction of 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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COVER: Looking up to the Mount of Olives from the City of David, Jerusalem, Israel.

The Past, Present and Future of Passover



What if you learned that a direct command of Yahweh was honored in the Old Testament, that it was observed two ways in the New Testament by none other than the Savior and His disciples, and that it will be observed again by the Messiah and the resurrected saints in the future Kingdom?

And what if your Savior commanded **you** to observe it as well?

In light of such ironclad validations, to say that such a command is no longer important or relevant should leave any thinking person speechless. Yet, when it comes to Passover, many believe it is only an Old Testament Jewish observance not for Christians today.

Passover Offering in Genesis?

Many are familiar with Exodus 12 and Israel's first Passover observance. Even before that, however, portending events are seen as far back as Genesis 4. They give us deeper insight into the significance of Passover and the ceremonies connected with it.

Despite Yahweh's direct command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, both Adam and Eve did eat and were driven out of the garden.

Yahweh told Adam and his progeny that they could please Him through sacrifices. Now outside the garden their two sons bring special sacrifices.

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Yahweh. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Yahweh had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And Yahweh said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him" (Gen. 4:3-7).

The account starts with the statement, "In the process of time it came to pass..." The Hebrew reads, "At the end of days." The sense is that as time went along suddenly a special event arrived. Something important was about to take place that some Bible scholars maintain was the time of the first Passover.

Cain brought of the fruit of the ground. His offering was the works of his hands. Abel, on the other hand, brought of the firstlings of his flock as well as something

extra: the fat of animals, which was really not required.

Notice the difference: Cain's offering came by his own hands. Abel approached Yahweh through the blood of a lamb, a sacrificial animal. Clearly this pointed toward the Passover sacrifice, and ultimately to the death of Yahshua the Messiah. Blood was shed in Abel's sacrifice as he came before Yahweh. No wonder we read the following commendation in the faith chapter:

"By faith Abel offered unto Elohim a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, Elohim testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks" (Heb. 11:4).

In his human effort to reconcile himself to Yahweh, Abel acted out the Passover sacrifice by offering a sacrificial lamb. Cain perhaps arrogantly brought a harvest or Feast of Tabernacles kind of offering.

Yahweh Himself made garments of skins of animals whereby He clothed Adam and Eve after they had made themselves aprons of fig leaves to cover themselves. Yahweh sacrificed animals, shedding their blood to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness with animal skins.

This foreshadows that Yahweh will

ultimately provide His people with special garments acceptable to Him. Yahweh clothes His saints with the garments of salvation:

“I will greatly rejoice in Yahweh, my soul shall be joyful in my Elohim; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks

himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61:10). Note the “garments of salvation” are also described as “robes of righteousness,” which are put on those who obey Yahweh’s laws and accept His Son as the propitiation for their sins. “And I said unto him, Sir, you know. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14).

Each Passover celebrates the salvation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. It was a time of joy as the slaves were given their freedom and loaded down with gifts from their former masters. They were starting on their way to the Promised Land!

What a beautiful picture! Just as ancient

Passover – 14th or 15th?

Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are two separate observances on two different days. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* says, “The feast of Passover consists of two parts: the Passover ceremony, and the feast of Unleavened Bread. Originally, both parts existed separately; but at the beginning of the [Babylonian] exile they were combined” (vol. 13, p. 169).

In at least five passages we read that Passover is on the 14th and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the 15th. Moses wrote:

“And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening [*ben haabayim*]” (Ex. 12:6). *Ben haabayim* (Hebrew = “between the evenings”), literally is “son of the evenings,” and is the time span from sunset until total darkness.

The Hebrew *ereb* translated “at even” or “at evening” is more broad and general than *ben haabayim*. “Between the evenings” is translated dusk, twilight, between the dusks, between sunset and dark, between dusk and dark. The Jewish Tanakh properly translates it dusk. Thus, when Scripture reads Passover is to be observed *ben haabayim*, it means as the sun sets, ending the thirteenth of Abib and marking the beginning of the fourteenth.

Note these other passages stating that the fourteenth is the Passover:

- “In the fourteenth day of the first month at even [*ben haabayim*] is Yahweh’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto Yahweh: seven days you must eat unleavened bread” (Lev. 23:56).
- “In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, [*ben haabayim*] you shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall you keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel” (Num. 9:35).
- “And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of Yahweh. And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days unleavened bread be eaten” (Num. 28:16-17).
- “And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho” (Josh. 5:10).

- “Then they killed the Passover on the fourteenth [day] of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of Yahweh” (2Chron. 30:15).

First the Israelites kept the Passover, then they followed it with the Feast of Unleavened Bread observance for seven days: “And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised Yahweh day by day, singing with loud instruments unto Yahweh” (2Chron. 30:21).

“And the children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month” (Ezra 6:19).

Ereb Begins the Day

Sunset marks the beginning of a new day. When the sun sinks below the horizon a new day has begun. Thus, when the new moon crescent is spotted an hour or so after sunset, that new moon day also marks the beginning of the month.

When the sun has set, *ereb* (evening) arrives and another day begins. Each 24-hour day has one evening and that evening at sunset begins the day. “But at the place which the Yahweh your Elohim shall choose to place His name in, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that you came forth out of Egypt” (Deut. 16:6).

The Passover lamb was to be killed as the sun went into the horizon, ending the thirteenth and starting the fourteenth of Abib. If one waits until the end of the fourteenth to sacrifice the lamb, the fifteenth would start as the sun set. Then one would find oneself cleaning, roasting, and eating the sacrificial lamb on the fifteenth—all of which properly was to be done on the fourteenth, Numbers 9:35.

For ancient Israel, the destroying angel came over on the fourteenth. Had they waited to apply the protective blood of the sacrificial animal to their doors on the fifteenth, they would have been 24 hours too late.

Notice: “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...” Exodus 12:12. Yahweh was speaking of the fourteenth, this night. The fifteenth is not referred to until later, at verse 15, when the Feast of Unleavened Bread is observed and is a separate commemoration following Passover.

Israel was spared in the Passover's slaying of the firstborn, we accept the blood of the Lamb as a sacrifice for our past sins. In answering the high calling we have in Yahshua the Messiah, we realize we are a type of the firstfruits. Because of the great promises given us, we strive the more to be in that first resurrection.

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of Yahweh and of Messiah, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6).

Leaving the Sin of Egypt

With our past sins forgiven, we are determined with Yahweh's help to repent and turn our life around and follow the Savior's example of right living. Israel left Egypt, a sophisticated, worldly, cosmopolitan society, to seek Yahweh in the Promised Land.

We also are leaving behind our old, worldly ways and bad habits as we begin our trek toward Yahweh's Kingdom. We are careful to make our calling and election sure. Israel was guided out of Egypt by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. We have Yahweh's promise in His guidebooks of the Old and New testaments to direct us in every instruction of life.

We are also given the promise by the Savior that He would never leave us or forsake us. The Holy Spirit from Yahweh continues to guide and keep us in the narrow way.

Upon accepting our Savior's sacrifice our walk will seem lonely at times. Many obstacles will lie ahead and we can expect to be tried. We must have a fervent desire to stop the sins for which our Savior died.

End to Fluffy Faith

Yahweh does not want us "playing church." He is looking for those who, like Abraham, obediently left Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 12:13), who was uncertain what was in store for him. Abraham believed the promises of Yahweh even to the point of sacrificing his only son Isaac if need be (Gen. 22).

Just as Yahweh so loved the world that He gave His only beloved Son in sacrifice, so Abraham also was willing to do the same, proving his faith by total obedience. Are we desiring to prove our own faith by being obedient in keeping His Passover and other Feasts of Scripture?

"And Abraham said unto his young men,

Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). Abraham showed that he believed in the resurrection by telling the young men that he and Isaac would return from Mount Moriah. Abraham passed a most stringent test and continued in faithful obedience.

To this day Abraham is known as "the father of the faithful." We need Abraham's faith and obedience. Tradition has it that Abraham left Ur at the season of the Passover. His faith in Yahweh was tested many times. He was tested first to leave his homeland, forsaking his relatives and friends. He then had to live among the Canaanites who were totally absorbed in heathen culture and worship.

He had to separate from his nephew Lot. For 25 years after coming into Canaan he awaited the birth of Isaac until he and Sarah were beyond the prime of life. He apparently was fond of Ishmael, but had to send him away. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, his "only" son Isaac, was surely the most difficult of all tests. "Only" means unique, one-of-a-kind, and special.

Isaac a Type of Messiah

Abraham's hope of fulfillment of the salvation promise rested in Isaac. Interestingly, "'only' begotten son" in Hebrews 11:17 is from the Greek word *monogenes*, the same word used for Yahshua in John 3:16. Isaac was clearly a type of Yahshua, Yahweh's beloved Son (Matt. 3:17), Yahshua, the sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The Passover, we learn, is to be on the fourteenth of the month of Abib (Heb. "green ears"). It is in the spring when the earth comes back to life in the northern hemisphere. The spring rains have ceased. The warming sun brings on greenery while the fragrance of flowers and budding trees fills the air. The birds return for summer and the earth is bursting with renewal. Abib is the true beginning of the new year with its many new beginnings.

January 1, which falls in the dead of winter when snow covers the ground and cold north winds sweep the land, is not the proper time to start a new year. Yahweh said to us through Moses: "This month [Abib] shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Ex. 12:2).

Not only is this month the beginning of the religious year in Yahweh's calendar,

but it also brings us Passover, a renewal of the Covenant that we have made with Yahweh. When our hearts and minds have been opened to the truth of Yahweh's Word and we understand that we are called and set apart for a special purpose, we have an inner desire to be immersed into the saving Name of Yahshua.

Being baptized into Yahshua's saving Name means that we are sorry and repent of our sins and want to be forgiven of them. When we are baptized into His saving Name, all past sins are washed away and we stand before Yahweh justified as if we had never sinned.

Once purged of our reprobate past, we can start a new life. We determine to live in complete obedience to Yahweh's Commandments. It is this willing obedience that sanctifies us and gives us the garments of righteousness.

Making a New Commitment

Passover is Yahweh's call to the new convert to accept the salvation He has made available through His Son Yahshua. We accept His shed blood as the atonement or ransom price for our sins that are past because we accept Yahweh's sacrifice of His Son, the "Lamb that takes away the sins of the world: Whom Elohim has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of Elohim" (Rom. 3:25).

Just as ancient Israel left Egypt and headed for the Promised Land, so we make a commitment each year to observe Passover, when we remember the cruel beatings and impalement of our Savior for our sins. We meditate on Yahweh's plan for mankind and realize that one day soon He will send His Son back to this earth to end the madness and corruption that is rampant today. Yahshua will rule with a rod of iron, and will put a stop to wars, hunger, disease, calamities, crime, and murders, and finally bring peace to the planet.

Doctrinal Spring Cleaning

Yahweh wants those who are willing to learn of Him and reflect His nature in theirs. He wants those who are teachable with a heart fit for the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of Elohim and of Messiah, and shall reign with Him a thousand years"

(Rev. 20:6).

After we accept the sacrifice of Yahshua for our sins, we have a “spring housecleaning” of our doctrines and beliefs, seeking only those truths that the Bible teaches and throw out the rest. We have a fervent desire to stop sinning, to stop doing that for which our Savior died. This attitude is central to the Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows the Passover.

Paul tells us that once we accept Yahshua’s Passover sacrifice of His life for our sins, we are to clean up our thinking, have new goals, new attitudes, new aspirations. We leave our old ways and bad habits behind.

Having accepted the sacrifice of the Savior, we turn from the old “leaven,” old teachings, false doctrines and habits, all of which corrupt us. Now we follow the example of Yahshua and become pure in our thinking, attitude, and goals for this life:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Messiah our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth” (1Cor. 5:78).

The Passover is followed by a special seven days in which we desist from eating anything leavened, but seek the pure bread of life, the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We strive to be obedient in physically not eating leavened products so that we will be more deeply impressed with spiritual truth. Physical lessons are often the best teachers.

Our Savior Kept, and Was, the Passover

Passover is the beginning of the seven annual Feasts of Yahweh. Passover and the following days of Unleavened Bread were observed by the Savior through His childhood and young adult years and His three-year ministry.

Because He is the true Passover, which all previous observances pointed to, we are obligated to hold that memorial service as He instructed His disciples. This includes the footwashing as given in John chapter 13 and the other Passover accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Just before His death, Yahshua kept the Passover with His disciples at the law’s commanded time – at the beginning of the 14th. He had directed them to prepare the

Passover *vs*: Communion, Eucharist, Mass, and the Lord’s Supper

The Passover that Yahshua observed with His disciples before He was impaled was replaced centuries ago in churches and denominations with their own counterfeits.

These substitution rituals are variously called the “Mass” and “Eucharist” in Roman Catholicism and “Communion” in Catholicism and Protestantism.

Eucharist is a transliteration of the Latin word *eucharistia*, which is a translation of the Hebrew *berekah*. All three words mean favor or gratitude. In Catholicism Eucharist means the memorial emblems of bread and wine used in its Mass.

“Mass” is short for the Latin phrase *congregatio missa est*, referring to the congregation’s excusal. The phrase is the dismissal spoken by priests to celebrators after observing the Catholic liturgy.

The biblical reference to “communion” is found only in 1Corinthians 10:16 and signifies our fellowship and partnership with Yahshua and His body and blood in the Passover sacrifice.

The “Lord’s Supper” was the last Passover meal Yahshua observed while on earth. At the end He substituted the sacrificial lamb with unleavened bread and fruit of the vine as new emblems of His body and blood given to pay the death penalty our sins have earned. Because He became the Passover sacrifice, a lamb is no longer appropriate for the Passover service, 1Corinthians 11. When we observe the Passover we “do show the Master’s death till He come,” v. 26.

None of the ceremonies of the Communion, Lord’s Supper or the Mass fulfills the true memorial of Yahshua’s death. The commanded Passover is the only legitimate observance of Yahshua’s sacrificial death and is observed once annually, in springtime, not daily, weekly or monthly.

Yahshua said in Matthew 26:29: “But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

If Yahshua were putting a temporary end to the Passover by His death He would have no need to inform His disciples that He would not be keeping it with them again until the Kingdom. They would already have realized that. And neither would they be keeping it after His death if He had ended it.

His disciples knew that the Passover was established by Yahweh in His laws and that His laws were still in effect in the New Testament. They saw Yahshua keeping Passover each year, as well as all the annual Feasts as a model of obedience for all believers to follow, 1John 2:6, 1Peter 2:21. Even the New Testament Apostle Paul still kept the Feasts long after Yahshua’s resurrection, Acts 18:21, 25:8, 28:17.

Passover, saying, “I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples,” Matthew 26:18 and other passages.

Nowhere do we find the disciples questioning His intentions. His statement was consistent with His practice of Feast-keeping.

Peter said we are to do what Yahshua did and when He did it, 1Peter 2:21-22. Yahshua kept the Passover the same night He was betrayed, according to Paul in 1Corinthians

11:23. He died on the tree about the time the Jews, who were following the Pharisee’s teaching, were belatedly killing their Passover lambs. They were keeping Passover at the end of the fourteenth (a day late), just as they continue doing in our time.

To this day Rabbinic Jews continue to follow the Pharisees who merged Passover with the days of Unleavened Bread. This is freely admitted in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 13, “Passover,” p. 169: “The

feast of Passover consists of two parts: the Passover ceremony and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Originally, both parts existed separately; but at the beginning of the exile they were combined.”

Consider what Yahweh says about these special times:

“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to Yahweh throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever.” (Ex. 12:14)

Take special note: it is “this day” that is to be kept for a memorial, not the exact manner of observance. We may not keep it precisely as did the Israelites anciently by sacrificing an animal. But the day itself is to be kept as a memorial. It is to be observed as a feast, a special gathering. It is to be observed forever!

Throughout the Book of Leviticus we read of the command, “It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” These appointed times (which in the Hebrew is *moed*) are to be kept forever by Yahweh’s faithful followers. These days were given to Israel as a part of the Covenant Yahweh made with them, and were written down as a continual reminder for us.

The New Testament shows that Yahshua kept the Passover and the Feast days. His disciples kept them. Paul kept them (Acts 18:21) and urged the Corinthian converts

to observe them:

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Messiah our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth” (1Cor. 5:78).

Feasts in the Coming Kingdom

Yahshua said that He would keep the Passover anew in the Kingdom, Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18. The Old Testament prophets foretell of the Feasts to be held in the Kingdom: “In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, you shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten” (Ezek. 45:21).

“In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil” (Ezek. 45:25).

Isaiah spoke of the worship being from Sabbath to Sabbath:

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says Yahweh” (Isa. 66:23). Other passages confirm that the Feasts will be observed in the Kingdom. Yahweh said that

His Feasts would be kept by an ordinance forever.

We on this side of Golgatha observe Passover as a memorial of the Savior’s having given His life for the sins of the world. Passover is not a Feast day (Hebrew = *chag*, joyous, happy time), but an annual memorial of Yahshua’s death.

Along with the annual Feasts, it will be observed again in the Kingdom but likely with a new and deeper meaning. They will then likely recall the Savior’s return to this earth where He will gather the remnant of His flock and bring them to Zion. There He will establish His rulership and rule this earth with a rod of iron, Revelation 2:26-27.

We are being called now to become a priest and teacher in that Kingdom. It is up to us to learn all we can of these *moedim* (appointed times) of Yahweh so that we can help others now in this life as we prepare for a position of rulership in the Kingdom:

“Blessed and holy [is] he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of Yahweh and of Messiah, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6).

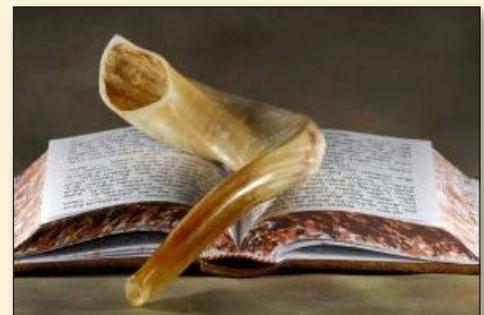
Our hope and zeal increases when we come to realize that a fantastic future is in store for those who are faithfully keeping Yahweh’s New Covenant plan, which includes an Old Covenant promise through His Passover. 🌿

Join Us for the Passover and Unleavened Bread April 10-18, 2017

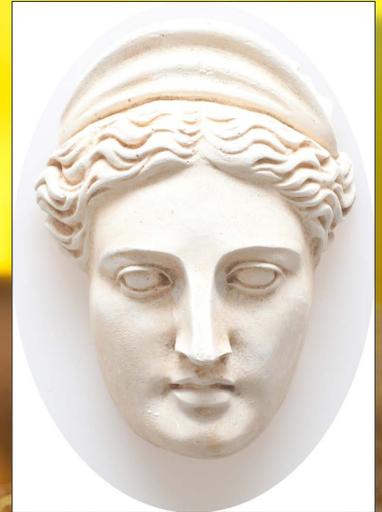
Yahweh’s Restoration Ministry invites you to this year’s Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread from the evening of April 10-18. This key biblical event will be observed in Holts Summit, Missouri, at YRM’s facilities.

Why observe the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread? Most importantly, they are commanded by Yahweh! They also offer incredible insights into His Word. The Passover memorializes the death of Yahshua the Messiah. Similarly, the Feast commemorates the removal of sin and the resurrection of our Savior as the symbolic firstfruits.

For more information on these observances, including schedule and lodging options, visit ym.org/passover or call us toll free at 844-899-6438, Mon-Fri, 8-4, Central. You can also register online at ym.org/passover-registration.



Easter's *Pagan Past*



by Randy Folliard

Hugh was a good Christian. He went to church every Sunday and often attended the Wednesday night Bible studies. However, his favorite service was on Easter Sunday.

He said he loved his Savior and always looked upon Easter with great fondness. After one Easter message, however, he noticed that his minister referred very little to the Bible and never once mentioned the word Easter.

Perplexed, he went home and began looking for Easter in the Bible. He first read from the *New International Version* and then the *Good News Bible*. Nowhere was Easter to be found. Desperate to find where Easter was in the Bible, he took out his *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. Finally he found the evidence he was looking for. Acts 12:4 said that Peter was imprisoned during Easter.

To better understand the context, he decided to read the entire passage. In verse 3 he noticed a peculiar mention of "days of unleavened bread." He wondered, what do Easter and unleavened bread have in common? To find the answer he turned to Strong's Dictionary to investigate the root of

the passage. In his search he was shocked to discover that the word Easter was a botched translation of Passover.

Now he was confused but he trusted that his minister would not lead him astray. So he immediately scheduled a meeting with him. When the day came he asked why Easter was not in most Bibles and why the KJV shows Easter when Strong's Dictionary shows Passover.

After a short pause the minister explained that Easter was introduced by the church. He went on to explain that even though it was adopted from pagan origins, it was baptized by the church and now commemorates the Messiah's resurrection. In utter disbelief he left his pastor's office more perplexed than ever.

After weeks of intense investigation in the Bible and church history, he discovered an alarming reality: what he believed was truth for so long was not truth at all, but an amalgamation of pagan practices that the church adopted 2,000 years ago from man-made worship and tradition.

While fictitious, this story describes the walk of countless believers. The Bible says to prove all things and to have a ready

answer for all who might ask (1Thes. 5:21, 1Peter 3:15). For this reason it's important that we equip ourselves with the necessary knowledge to defend our faith.

Let's look into the many problems with Easter, beginning with the fact that it's nowhere decreed in Scripture.

No Command to Observe Easter

As noted in Hugh's experience, the word Easter is absent in nearly all translations. One of the few instances is found in Acts 12:4 in the King James Version. However, the Greek source language reads *pascha*, defined by Strong's as "...of Aramaic origin; the Passover (the meal, the day, the festival or the special sacrifices connected with it)."

Perhaps the most eye-opening is that nearly all biblical scholars agree. Consider the following examples:

- "Properly speaking, the Passover (AV Easter is incorrect) introduced the days of unleavened bread" (The *Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, note on Acts 12:4).
- "Intending after Easter, [meta (NT:3326) to (NT:3588) *pascha* (NT:3957)] - it should be, 'after the Passover.' that is, after the

conclusion of the festival. (The word employed in our King James Version being an ecclesiastical term of later date, is improperly used here)” (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* on Acts 12:4).

• “[Intending after Easter] There never was a more absurd or unhappy translation than this. The original is simply after the Passover *meta* (NT:3326) to (NT:3588) *pascha* (NT:3957). The word ‘Easter’ now denotes the festival observed by many Christian churches in honor of the resurrection of the Saviour. But the original has no reference to that, nor is there the slightest evidence that any such festival was observed at the time when this book was written. The translation is not only unhappy, as it does not convey at all the meaning of the original, but because it may contribute to foster an opinion that such a festival was observed in the time of the apostles” (*Barnes’ Notes* on Acts 12:4).

There is no debate among scholars as to the legitimacy of Easter in the *King James Version*. As noted above, it is almost universally rejected. The original word refers to the Passover, observed on the 14th of Abib, the first biblical month.

Motivation for Easter

What was the church’s reasoning for adopting Easter? The answer is quite alarming! They wanted to distance themselves from anything seen as Jewish. Therefore, they forsook the Passover for Easter. When determining the date for Easter the church went to great lengths to ensure that it would not fall at the same time as the Passover. Therefore, they decided that Easter would fall on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

While the church uses astronomical indicators to calculate the date for Easter, the Bible uses agriculture along with the new moon crescent to determine Passover. The Passover is observed 14 days after the first visible crescent of the first biblical month. The first month is called Abib, meaning young ears of grain, and commences when the barley in the Holy Land is in the Abib stage.

The fact that the church wanted nothing to do with the Passover shows its disdain for the Old Testament and Yahweh’s Feast days. However, these were the only days the Messiah and apostles observed in the New Testament. While we find

zero evidence that they observed Easter or Christmas, we find many instances where they kept the biblical Feast days.

So why did the church have this disregard for the Old Testament and anything deemed Jewish? As the church grew so did gentile and pagan influence. That led some in the church to develop an anti-Semitic attitude and the adoption of Greco-Roman beliefs.

This change is vital to understand if we are going to comprehend the true origins of today’s church teachings. While so many today blindly follow man-made traditions, believers must study and come out of this error if they are going to please our Heavenly Father. This means that we follow truth as Yahweh defines it, not as man defines it!

Hijacking Yahshua’s Resurrection

To justify the timing of Easter Sunday, the church hijacked the resurrection of Yahshua the Messiah. They manipulated the scriptural record to show that our Savior was resurrected on Sunday.

They claim that the Messiah was placed in the tomb Friday evening and resurrected Sunday morning. There is one major flaw with this reasoning. According to Yahshua in Matthew 12:40, He would be in the heart of the earth, i.e., grave, for three days and three nights.

As we explain in the *Restoration Study Bible*, this time equates to 72-hours, “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish, Yahshua confirms that He would be three days and three nights in the earth. Three days and three nights equates to seventy-two hours. This would make the traditional time in the tomb, from Friday night through Sunday morning, impossible.

“Yahshua died on Wednesday afternoon and was raised late on the seventh-day Sabbath. *Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible* states, ‘He was put to the grave Wednesday just before sunset and was resurrected at the end of Saturday at sunset. Good Friday should be changed to Good Wednesday. No statement says that he was buried Friday at sunset. This would make him in the grave only one day and one night, proving his own words untrue’” (note on Matthew 12:40).

Based on our Savior’s own testimony, the traditional Friday-Sunday time in the tomb is an impossibility. This time does not equate to three days and three nights. As noted in *Dake’s*, Yahshua was actually

placed in the tomb late Wednesday and resurrected late Saturday before sunset.

This chronology is confirmed in Luke 23. “And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment,” verses 54-56.

The “preparation” here refers to the Passover. It was called the preparation because it was used to prepare for the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began the day after the Passover. Regarding the first “sabbath,” this represents the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was considered an annual or High Sabbath. The final “sabbath day” mentioned in verse 56 is referring to the weekly Sabbath, i.e., Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.

Considering these facts, Luke provides the following timeline: Yahshua died on Wednesday, Passover day or the day of the preparation. The following day, Wednesday sunset through Thursday sunset, the disciples observed the Sabbath (the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread). On Friday they prepared the spices and ointments for Yahshua’s burial. On Saturday, beginning Friday evening, they rested according to the Sabbath.

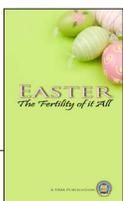
And as we see elsewhere, early Sunday morning before sunrise they came to the tomb, but Yahshua had already ascended. Based the Messiah’s three-days and three-nights and the above chronology, Yahshua rose on Saturday before sunset.

The entire justification for Easter Sunday is built on a fabrication. Like so many other beliefs of the church, the date for Easter is scripturally unfounded. If Easter does not share ties to the Messiah, what then is its origins?

Pre-biblical Origins of Easter

According to historians, Easter was taken from the Anglo-Saxons’ worship of a pagan goddess. Consider the following:

“The word Easter is of Saxon origin, Eastr, the goddess of spring, in whose honor sacrifices were offered about Passover time each year. By the eighth century Anglo-Saxons had adopted the name to designate the celebration of Christ’s resurrection” (Easter, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*).



“Easter was originally a pagan festival honoring Eostre, a Teutonic (Germanic) goddess of light and spring. At the time of the vernal equinox (the day in the spring when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are of equal length), sacrifices were offered in her honor. As early as the eighth century, the name was used to designate the annual Christian celebration of the resurrection of Christ” (Easter, *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

“(es’-ter) (*pascha*, from Aramaic *paccha’* and Hebrew *pecach*, the Passover festival): The English word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *Eastre* or *Estera*, a Teutonic goddess to whom sacrifice was offered in April, so the name was transferred to the paschal feast.... Differences arose as to the time of the Easter celebration, the Jewish Christians naturally fixing it at the time of the Passover feast which was regulated by the paschal moon. According to this reckoning it began on the evening of the 14th day of the moon of the month of Nisan without regard to the day of the week, while the gentile Christians identified it with the first day of the week, i.e. the Sunday of the resurrection, irrespective of the day of the month. This latter practice finally prevailed in the church, and those who followed the other reckoning were stigmatized as heretics” (Easter, *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*).

It wasn’t until the eighth century that Easter was connected to the Messiah’s resurrection. What an amazing acknowledgment! Prior to this time Easter was purely a pagan day observed by the Anglo-Saxons.

Also, as found in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, there were two competing views in the early church: those of the original Jewish followers and those of gentile converts. These groups were often at odds. One wanted to maintain its Hebraic roots and the other desired to move toward a more gentile-flavored theology as encapsulated in the Greco-Roman culture. The Greek mindset won the day and forever changed the early church.

The Consequence of Idolatry

Eastra (also known as Eostra, Eostre, Eostur Ostare, Ostara, Ostern, and Astarte) was the goddess of spring. While not much is known about her worship, it’s clear that it was connected to fertility. There are many examples of fertility worship in the history

of paganism. We also find instances of this adulterous practice in the Old Testament.

We see an instance in the Book of Jeremiah. There the prophet condemns Judah for the worship of the Queen of Heaven, who was Astarte. The *New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* states, “QUEEN OF HEAVEN (Heb. *meleketh hashshamayim*, Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19, 25). Astarte, an ancient Semitic deity, identical with Babylonian Ishtar (Venus). (See Gods, False.) The epithet ‘of heaven’ alludes to her elevated character. Special cakes were baked to this goddess (cf. the ‘raisin cakes’ of Hos. 3:1, with which there may be some connection), which were symbolic representations of the goddess. Her worship belonged chiefly to the women (Jer. 44:17); Astarte represented the female principle of fertility. She was a ‘mother goddess.’”

Both Astarte and Ishtar are connected directly to Easter. As Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes, there is nothing new under the sun. If Yahweh condemned this worship in the Old Testament, what makes people believe that it’s permissible now?

To have an appreciation of Yahweh’s contempt for Easter, let’s consider a few passages in Jeremiah. “Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other mighty ones, that they may provoke me to anger. Do they provoke me to anger? saith Yahweh: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? Therefore thus saith my Sovereign Yahweh; Behold, mine anger

and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched,” Jeremiah 7:17-20.

Jeremiah prophesies here that Judah provoked Yahweh to anger through their worship of this Queen of Heaven, so much so that Yahweh said He would consume them in His fury. This is partially why Judah went into Babylonian captivity.

Remarkably, even after Judah fell to Babylon some who escaped continued worshipping this Queen of Heaven. We read further in Jeremiah, “Therefore now thus saith Yahweh, the Elohim of hosts, the Elohim of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain; In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other mighty ones in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers....

“As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Yahweh, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own

Contrary to the traditional belief, the Messiah was placed in the tomb late Wednesday and resurrected Saturday before sunset.

- Day 1 } ▶ **Wednesday (Abib 14):** Yahshua was taken off stake and placed in the tomb late in the afternoon.
- Day 2 } ▶ **Thursday (Abib 15):** First High Day of Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- Day 3 } ▶ **Friday (Abib 16):** Women prepared spices for Yahshua’s body.
- ▶ **Saturday (Abib 17):** Yahshua rose from the grave late on Sabbath before sunset.

mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men? Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying... Therefore hear ye the word of Yahweh, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith Yahweh, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, my Sovereign Yahweh liveth,” Jeremiah 44:7-10, 16-20, 26.

Even now some Jews will point to this passage as the reason they will not pronounce the sacred Name.

Considering Jeremiah’s earlier warnings and Babylon’s destruction of Judah, you would think that those who escaped would have been humbled and scrambling to honor Yahweh. Incredibly, we find the complete opposite. The people continued unabatedly to worship the Queen of Heaven.

Because of this open rebellion, Jeremiah condemned and cursed them. The Bible speaks about a sign and seal. The sign is the Sabbath (Exodus 31:13) and the seal is His Name (Revelation 14:1). Yahweh’s prohibiting the people of Judah from using His Name was expressive of His anger and judgment.

Incredibly, idolatrous worship is alive and well today. Every time someone justifies Easter they are repeating Judah’s defense of the Queen of Heaven. The fact that Yahweh doesn’t change and His standards remain constant (Mal. 3:6) refutes any defense of pagan worship. This also extends to replacing the Sabbath for Sunday and to any number of other changes adopted by the church.

Contrary to the many who appeal to church tradition, the Bible is clear: we are to worship Yahweh only as He has established. As Jeremiah says in the tenth chapter of

How the Passover Was *Morphed* into Easter

“**The festival**, of which we read in Church history, under the name of Easter, in the third or fourth centuries, was quite a different festival from that now observed in the Romish Church, and at that time was not known by any such name as Easter. It was called Pasch, or the Passover, and though not of Apostolic institution, was very early observed by many professing Christians, in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ. That festival agreed originally with the time of the Jewish Passover, when Christ was crucified, a period which, in the days of Tertullian, at the end of the second century, was believed to have been the 23rd of March. That festival was not idolatrous, and it was preceded by no Lent.

“... ‘The celebration of the feast of Easter

began everywhere more of custom than by any commandment either of Christ or any Apostle’ (Hist. Ecclesiast., lib. v. cap. 22). Every one knows that the name ‘Easter,’ used in our translation of Acts xii. 4, refers not to any Christian festival, but to the Jewish Passover. This is one of the few places in our version where the translators show an undue bias.

“... To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated, and, by a complicated but skilful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity—now far sunk in idolatry—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands” (*The Two Babylons*, Alexander Hislop, pp. 104-105).

his prophecy, “Learn not the way of the heathen.” The word “heathen” refers to foreign nations and to their worship. This is the meaning of idolatry!

Besides the Queen of Heaven, Israel had a long history of worshiping pagan deities; in every occurrence they were eventually judged for their defiance. In the 11th chapter of 1Kings, Solomon allowed his foreign wives to worship their pagan gods. In some cases he even participated. For this reason, Yahweh told Solomon that the kingdom would be torn from his son. And this is precisely what happened.

When Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, took the throne, the 10 northern tribes of Israel rebelled and followed Jeroboam. Idolatry has consequences. In Solomon’s case the cost was high. The nation of Israel split between its southern and northern borders to never again reunite.

You Are Given a Choice

There are many instances in the Old and New testaments where Yahweh instructs His people to choose between following Him and man-made worship.

Paul in 2Corinthians 6:15-18 states, “And what concord hath Messiah with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth

with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of Elohim with idols? for ye are the temple of the living Elohim; as Elohim hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith Yahweh, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith Yahweh Almighty.”

Paul points out the stark contrast between Yahweh’s ways and man’s ways, and as believers we must choose which one we will follow. As confirmed in our Father’s Word, when we choose adulterous worship we are not choosing His ways but the ways of man. Consequently, we will not be blessed but cursed.

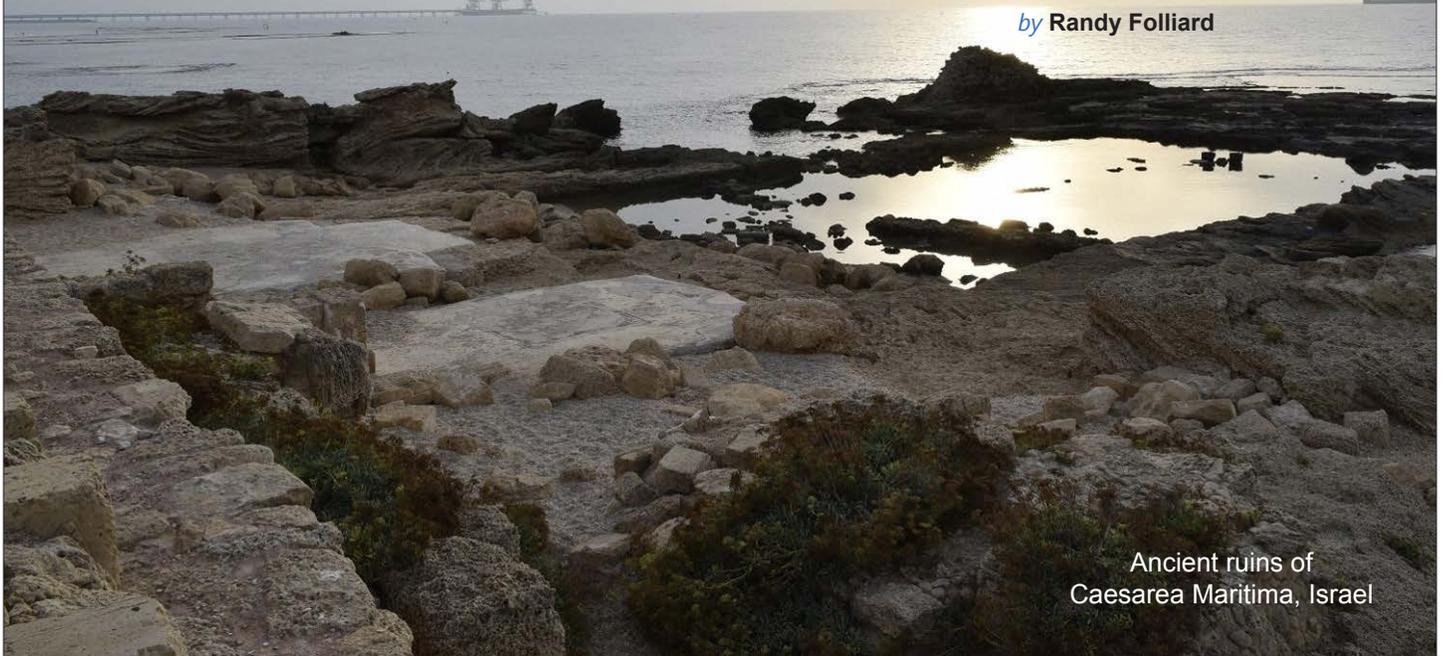
If we desire to be a son or daughter of the Most High there is only one path and that is obedience to His Word without deviating to the right or left. There is no greater reward than being part of His heavenly family. All things in this present world will fade away and all that will remain is how well we served our Heavenly Father.

So let us make our days count by serving Him as He mandates, and abandon all the centuries-old, man-made worship that He abhors! 

Salvation for Every Nation

A Lesson from a City by the Sea

by Randy Folliard



Ancient ruins of
Caesarea Maritima, Israel

In November 2016 YRM was blessed to return to the Holy Land. While there we recorded several full-length programs along with other videos throughout Israel.

In the future we will be taking you on a journey to various sites throughout the same land that was occupied by Israel of old and by our Savior during His time on this earth. We will share not only the history, geography, and archaeology, but also the scriptural significance of each location.

Caesarea Maritima is our first stop in our Holy Land pilgrimage. The word “Maritima” means, “by the sea.” This remarkable site on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea is halfway between Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Before Rome arrived, and during the Persian rule (586-332 BCE), the Phoenicians built a settlement here on the shoreline of one of the bays where the groundwater level was high. The village flourished in the Hellenistic period, 332-37 BCE. It is first mentioned in the Zenon Papyri, a document from 259 BCE, under the name Straton’s Tower.

Caesarea was named in honor of King Augustus Caesar. It was founded by King

Herod of Judea and took 12 years to build. In the 6th century it became the seat of the Roman governors in Judea and the political capital as well. It was very diverse, home to both Romans and Jews.

Archaeologically this site has some incredible features. It contains a large, first-century harbor believed by many to be the largest of its time, rivaling even Cleopatra’s harbor at Alexandria. Not only was it enormous, but it was also built with the most advanced Roman technology of its day.

The Jewish historian Josephus wrote, “Although the location was generally unfavorable, [Herod] contended with the difficulties so well that the solidity of the construction could not be overcome by the sea, and its beauty seemed finished off without impediment.”

In addition to the harbor it had well-defined streets and a sophisticated sewage system beneath it. This site also contained several temples, including one built by Herod honoring Roma and Augustus. Roma was a Roman goddess who symbolized imperial Rome while Augustus was considered the

god-king of Rome.

Herod also built a palace here that would later be used as the Praetorian of the Roman governors. One famous governor who called this home was Pontius Pilate. In 1961 a stone was discovered here with Pilate’s name inscribed on it. It is called the Pilate Stone and a replica is at Caesarea (see p. 14). Today we can still see much of the basic structure of Herod’s palace including floor mosaics and a swimming pool spanning out into the Mediterranean.

Caesarea also has a large amphitheater where Herod and others would entertain guests. Amazingly, it’s in such great condition that even today it’s used for special occasions. In addition, he also built what’s called a hippodrome for horse racing. According to some, the size of the track was so wide that it allowed up to five chariots in a single race.

Among the most incredible sites are the three aqueducts that provided fresh water to the city. Two came from the north and one from the south. The gravity-fed aqueducts were built upon mammoth arches. The water came from as far away as Mt. Carmel, about

10 miles. Without these aqueducts this city could not have existed.

Near the harbor is a tall, slender tower. Called a minaret, it was part of a mosque. This minaret was built by the Ottoman Turks late in the 19th century. Caesarea also had several synagogues and at least one main church from the 6th century.

This city is mentioned several times in the New Testament. Deacon Philip preached here, Acts 8:40. It was also here where Peter proclaimed his message to Cornelius, Acts 10. Paul was also here several times throughout his Ministry. On one occasion, Felix, a Roman official, brought Paul here where he remained in prison for two years before being taken to Rome, Acts 23:31-35.

A Turning Point

Perhaps the most notable event here is connected to Peter's vision, which brought Peter to Caesarea. The account begins with

a memorial before Elohim. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."

Cornelius was a pious man. He would become the first gentile convert in the New Testament. Prior to this, only Jews or Israelites were called into the early New Testament assembly.

About the ninth hour, corresponding to about 3 pm, he was told by an angel in a vision to go to Joppa and find a man named Peter. Peter would then provide him an important message. Without delay he sent men to find Peter.

to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Master; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What Elohim hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice, and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate."

As Cornelius' men were coming to Joppa, Peter saw a vision of a large sheet with many unclean animals on it and heard a voice telling him to rise and eat. He refused.

According to most biblical scholars this account took place some ten years after the Messiah's death and resurrection. Peter says here that he was still following the biblical dietary food laws as found in the Old Testament. In other words he had not eaten pork or any other unclean meats his entire life.

Gist of Peter's Vision

Most clerics teach that his vision means that these unclean food laws are now rescinded. Did Peter not get the memo? Did he not understand that these ordinances were no longer important? Did he not know that he was now living under a new dispensation



An ancient Roman theater, above, and hippodrome, right, at Caesarea Maritima

a man named Cornelius in Acts 10:1.

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared Elohim with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to Elohim alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of Elohim coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it Master? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for

We read in verse 9: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice

free from these archaic commandments?

The fact that Peter, one of the key apostles, refused to eat what was spiritually unclean shows that Yahweh's laws of clean and unclean were still being followed. Now if this is not convincing, verse 17 shows that Peter even doubted the meaning of the vision. If the meaning of the vision was so clear, as many would like us to believe, why then was Peter himself confused? Certainly if anyone would have understood its meaning it would have been Peter, but

that was not the case.

We find the correct key to the vision starting in verse 27. “And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, ‘Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Elohim hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.’”

The purpose behind Peter’s vision had nothing to do with the clean food laws in the Old Testament. Instead, we find a deeper meaning. The phrase “common or unclean,” was a reference to people and not to food – specifically to those outside of Israel.

For Peter and the other apostles this revelation was a real game changer. While people of other nations could become part of Israel in the Old Testament, it was not an easy process. But now all that changed after Yahshua’s death and resurrection. In verses 34 and 35 we see Peter confirming this. He says, “...Of a truth I perceive that Elohim is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

A respecter of persons means to hold a bias or have favoritism. In this case, racial bias. Yahweh is not concerned about nationality or ethnicity when it comes to salvation. All those who faithfully follow Him are acceptable to Him.

This was a major paradigm shift for Peter. During this time in history, as in much of history, the Jews had almost no interaction with those of other nations. They believed that this type of contact would make them unclean as a people.

This is why when talking to the Messiah, the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 compared herself to a dog. Many Jews viewed those outside of Israel as unclean animals and this is something Peter himself had to overcome.

Lesson Learned About Bias

Yahweh was telling Peter in the vision that he wasn’t to discriminate with ethnicity or nationality. He was opening the door to all who desired to follow Him, regardless of their race or skin color.

As we see in the second chapter of Galatians, Peter himself had a problem with this. “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles:

but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the good news, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (verses 11-14).

Peter, Paul, and Barnabas were at Antioch, which today is in the modern nation of Turkey. This was the epicenter for the early assembly after they were forced out of Jerusalem. This city was also of importance for the early disciples.

A conflict now arose between Peter and Paul. Peter was okay eating with gentiles so long as his Jewish buddies were not around. As soon as they arrived, he separated himself from those gentiles. This also caused Barnabas to make a separation.

Paul confronted and reprimanded Peter for his hypocrisy. Paul, being the apostle to the gentiles, understood that to place a prejudicial wall against other nationalities was not scriptural. This was the entire point of Peter’s vision. He was not to call any man common or unclean.

Even though for many racism is no longer an issue, it’s important to realize that this was a major division in the New Testament. The Jews grappled with the idea of including the gentiles in the assembly. This instituted the council where the apostles came together in Acts 15.

The question involved whether or not these new gentile converts had to be physically circumcised. The consensus was that there was no need for physical circumcision, but only to abstain from their old pagan worship and to follow Yahweh’s Word. Acts 15:21 conveys that they would

Pilate Stone from Caesarea Maritima. The inscription reads, “Pontius Pilatus, the prefect of Judaea (erected) a (building dedicated) to (the emperor) Tiberius.”

learn from the law of Moses every Sabbath.

As the gentiles were willing to forsake their pagan worship, we must be willing to do the same today. If we discover something we’re doing is wrong, then we have a moral and spiritual obligation to correct it.

For example, nowhere in the New Testament did the Messiah or the apostles change the Sabbath to Sunday. This was done by the Roman church nearly 300 years after the New Testament era. Easter and Christmas are also absent from the Bible.

Like Sunday, these days were adopted by the church much later. This was done as a way to grow the church, make it more inviting to the heathen, and replace the practices of Judaism.

Staying the Course

It’s important to realize that even though gentiles were allowed into the assembly, this allowance did not radically change what the early believers believed or taught. Paul throughout his epistles asserts that the commandments are still obligatory, even for those who are not Jewish.

Consider the following: Paul in the third chapter of Romans is speaking about both faith and the commandments. He states, “Seeing it is one Elohim, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly



not: yea, we establish the law,” verses 30-31.

Paul explains here that salvation or redemption is through faith. Redemption through faith was a cornerstone of Paul’s teaching and belief. He understood that redemption could not be earned by obeying the commandments.

For this reason, he asks, “...do we then make void the law through faith?” And what was his response? He said, “...certainly not, we must establish the law.” What did he mean by “establish”? This word comes from *histemi*. The **Thayer’s Greek Lexicon** defines this word as, “...to establish a thing, to cause it to stand, to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything.”

Here he’s talking about the authority of the commandments. Paul proves that he was not an advocate of abolishing the commandments.

The problem today is that many misunderstand the relationship between faith and the commandments. Faith brings us to the Messiah through baptism; in baptism we find redemption from sin, and finally by obeying the commandments we find sanctification.

There’s a difference between justification and sanctification, which is the process by which we are found worthy. In other words, justification is being washed of our sins and sanctification is living a holy or righteous life thereafter.

Paul teaches that there’s no conflict between faith and the keeping of the commandments. If there were, Paul would have said so here with something like, “Do we make void the law through faith, yes, the law is no longer necessary.” But as we see now, he never said this. Instead, he said that we were to establish, meaning to uphold, the authority of the commandments.

Dominion of the Law

It’s important also to realize that this isn’t the only time Paul mentions the commandments. For example, here’s what he says in Romans 7:1, “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?”

The word “dominion” here comes from the Greek *kurieuo* and according to the Thayer’s means, “...to exercise influence upon or to have power over.” So Paul confirms here that the commandments have power or influence over our lives.

What’s sad is that many believers

view the commandments negatively. The laws that our Father in heaven gave in the Old Testament are for the benefit of all. In Leviticus 11 we find Yahweh commanding not to eat unclean meats, including pork.

What’s amazing about this command is that medical science is now discovering that pork and other unclean meats are detrimental to man’s health. We read from Dr. Rex Russell in his book, ***What the Bible Says About Healthy Living***, “One reason for God’s rule forbidding pork is that the digestive system of a pig is completely different from that of a cow. It is similar to ours, in that the stomach is very acidic. Pigs are gluttonous, never knowing when to stop eating. Their stomach acids become diluted because of the volume of food, allowing all kinds of vermin to pass through this protective barrier. Parasites, bacteria, viruses and toxins can pass into the pig’s flesh because of over-eating. These toxins and infectious agents can be passed on to humans when they eat a pig’s flesh.”

Science in many areas endorses the value of Yahweh’s laws. Not only did Paul not do away with these commandments but he also recognized their value. Here’s what he says in Romans 7:7 and 12, “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, THOU SHALT NOT COVET... Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.”

Does this sound like a man who opposed the commandments? Of course not. Paul understood the benefit of the commandments. He uses here the 10th Commandment to illustrate this point.

If Paul viewed the commandments as holy, just, and good, why do so many who believe in this man refuse to believe the same? The answer is quite simple: they refuse to believe because of 2,000 years of erroneous church conditioning.

One Hebraic-based Faith

The Holy Land reinforces the central fact that the early assembly was Jewish or Hebraic and not Grecian. So many teachings in nominal worship today are based upon Greco-Roman ideas that crept into the Church over time.

The purpose of this Ministry is to get back to the teachings of the Messiah and the apostles without the impeding baggage of man’s tradition.

What the Bible says about the grafting in of those outside of Israel is key. While many see two different paths to salvation – one for Jews and one for Gentiles – the Bible shows one path for both.

The reality is, we’re all grafted into the same promise. Paul says in Galatians 3:26-29, “For ye are all the children of Yahweh by faith in Messiah Yahshua. For as many of you as have been baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Messiah Yahshua. And if ye be Messiah’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

There is no spiritual difference between Jew and Greek; we’re all of Abraham’s seed. That fact shows a continuity between Old and New testaments. It also shows a connection between Israel of Old and believers in the Messiah.

The problem is, the Jews forsook Yahshua the Messiah while the church drastically transformed who the Messiah was. As believers in the New Testament we must accept Yahshua the Messiah for salvation. Only through His sacrifice are we cleansed from our sins. However, we must also realize that the truth Yahshua and His apostles taught is very different from what we hear today.

They were not opposed to the Hebraic promise or the commandments in the Old Testament. According to biblical scholars, the early New Testament assembly was viewed as just another sect of Judaism. However, as the church grew so did Gentile influence, as is evident in today’s church.

It was this pagan influence that drastically changed the church. It increasingly deviated from its Hebraic roots to a faith that was more Greco-Roman. As it was important for Peter to understand that he was not to call anyone common or unclean, it’s equally important that we as believers in the Messiah understand that the faith of the New Testament did not drastically change from that which was given to Abraham. Many of these commandments, including the Sabbath and Feast days, are still binding.

Believers should be like the noble Bereans who searched out the scriptures daily to prove the validity of what they were hearing. Salvation is too important not to do this. If we desire to be part of the called and chosen, we must study and live according to our Father’s Word as He intended. 



Effective Prayer

by Terry O'Neal

Many in their youth were taught simple children's prayers by their parents and grandparents. They may still remember some of those prayers and possibly taught them to their children as well.

It was great to hear the children recite prayers, but then they ceased praying as they matured into teenagers and young adults. A percentage will no longer make prayer a part of their lives, while others will adapt children's prayers into more mature versions to use daily.

The question is: what is prayer, what defines it, and what is its purpose? Does prayer make a difference? Let's take a serious, realistic look at prayer and its purpose.

What Prayer Is

Prayer is simply communicating with our Heavenly Father; listening and talking to Him freely and spontaneously from the heart in our own thoughts and words. Prayer is a personal communication or petition addressed directly to our Heavenly Father and by His Name, according to Isaiah 42:8: "I am Yahweh: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Also, read Psalm 68:4, Psalm 83:18 and Amos 5:8 in reference

to using His name.

These prayers can be in the form of supplication, praise, contrition or thanksgiving.

Supplication means to make a humble entreaty or an earnest petition; to beseech. Adoration is to show deep love or esteem toward; the act of paying honor; to worship. Praise is to proclaim or describe the glorious attributes of Yahweh with homage and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father, as in words or song.

Contrition is showing sincere remorse for wrongdoing; a feeling of regret for one's sins or misdeeds; repentance. Then there is thanksgiving which is exactly what it describes, being and showing thankfulness to Yahweh for all things.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance lists "prayer" 114 times in the KJV Bible. In addition to prayer, "prayed" is listed 65 times, "praying" 20 times, and "prayest" just 2 times. Let's now delve deeper to understand prayer.

From the Beginning

In the beginning Yahweh walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden until they sinned and were cast out of the garden. Yahweh spoke with various individuals throughout these early years such as Enoch:

Genesis 5:22-24, "And Enoch walked with Elohim after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with Elohim: and he was not; for Elohim took him."

Yahweh even spoke to Cain concerning his sin and punishment; see Genesis 4:6-16. Each of these examples was a direct communication from Yahweh to each individual.

Adam and Eve's third son Seth had a son named Enos and during his time the scriptures state that men started to call on the name of Yahweh. Genesis 4:26 reads,

"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh." After a span of time Yahweh said in Genesis 6:3, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Therefore, mankind must make an effort to seek out Yahweh for himself and one way to do this is by prayer.

Prayer develops our relationship with Yahweh. If we never listen to anything our spouse might have to say to us or even communicate with him or her, our relationship within the marriage will quickly

deteriorate until there is no relationship at all. This is the same way with Yahweh. We must make the effort to communicate to Yahweh through prayer to build and maintain a relationship with Him. Prayer helps us to grow closer and more intimately connected with our Heavenly Father.

If we call on the name of Yahweh in prayer He said He will hear us as is recorded in Zechariah 13:9, “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, Yahweh is my Elohim.” We are given a promise in John 15:7, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

The simplest reason to spend time in prayer is that Yahweh instructed us to do so. Doing as He says is being obedient to His commands, which is a natural outcome of discipleship. Discipleship is disciplining ourselves with Yahweh’s Word on when to pray and how to pray.

Yahshua warned in Matthew 26: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak,” verse 41. We are to always pray as He said in Luke 18:1, “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” We also find in Ephesians 6:18: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Yahshua said in Matthew to ask, seek and knock: Matthew 7:7-8, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

We are also instructed to pray without wrath and doubting: as 1 Timothy 2:8 reads, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

How to Pray

What if I don’t know how to pray? Remember prayer is communicating with our Heavenly Father Yahweh, and the Holy Spirit will help guide you. Romans 8:26-27 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh

intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of Elohim.” Needed for successful prayer are a humble heart, wholeheartedness, faith, righteousness, and obedience.

Having a humble heart is defined in 2Chronicles 7:14, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Jeremiah shows what wholeheartedness is in chapter 29:13, “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

An example of faith is in Mark 11:24; “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Believing without doubt that your prayers will be answered is true faith.

Righteousness is shown in James 5:15-16; “And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and Yahweh shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Finally, both prayer and obedience are seen in 1John 3:22, “And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” Obedience to Yahweh in all things, especially His commandments, is what He wants from us; therefore, He will not only hear but will also answer our prayers.

Yahshua Gave Us the Example

In Matthew 6 Yahshua taught His disciples how to pray. Yahshua gave a model in Matthew 6:9-13. Yahweh should be addressed by recognizing that He is the Father, praising Him, using His Name, and asking that His Kingdom come and His will be done (vs. 9-10). Then ask for daily needs (vs. 11) and forgiveness for any wrongs that have been done, which hinges on forgiving fellow wrong-doers as well (vs. 12). Next, seek His help with temptations and keep evil away (vs. 13). This prayer is like an outline not intended to be recited word for word, but personal prayer should incorporate what

Yahshua addressed.

John chapter 17 is Yahshua’s personal prayer to Yahweh His Father the night before His execution (death). This prayer is also found in Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42 and Luke 22:39-46.

Each Evangel has its variation of the prayer; however, all four hold in common that Yahshua asked Yahweh for the cup of death to pass from Him. In all four evangels Yahshua asked that not His will but His Father’s will be done (Matthew 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42).

Positions in Praying

What position or posture should we take while praying?

There is no correct or certain position or posture for prayer. One can pray kneeling, as in 1Kings 8:54. Other references to kneeling are found in Ezra 9:5 and Acts 9:40. Yahshua prayed while kneeling in Luke 22:41, “And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.”

One can pray by bowing, which is like kneeling only bending over toward the floor or ground; but more in particular would be like standing with head bowed down facing the floor or ground, as when we are asked to pray by saying “let’s bow our heads and pray.”

Examples in scripture of bowing include Exodus 4:31, “And the people believed: and when they heard that Yahweh had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.” Also, bowing is found in Exodus 34:8, Nehemiah 8:6, and Psalm 72:11. Jehoshaphat “bowed his head with his face to the ground” in 2Chronicles 20 verse 18.

Sitting is another posture for praying mentioned in 1Chronicles 17:16-27, where King David sat before Yahweh and prayed. “And David the king came and sat before Yahweh, and said, Who am I, O Yahweh Elohim, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”

Another way to pray is called “prostrate,” which is essentially lying face down on the ground like all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did when Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground in 2Chronicles 20:18. Other examples in scripture are Joshua 7:6 and Ezra 10:1. Matthew 26:39 and Mark 14:35 speak about Yahshua praying to Yahweh in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:39 reads; “And he

went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Prayer can be performed while standing, as in 1Kings 8:22, “And Solomon stood before the altar of Yahweh in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven.” In Nehemiah 9 the children of Israel assembled together and stood to “confess their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.”

Two other occasions of praying while standing are in Mark 11:25 and Luke 18:13.

The last position or posture for prayer is walking, as mentioned in 2Kings when Elisha prayed to Yahweh to bring back the life of a child, 2Kings 4:35, “Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.”

This list is not all-inclusive; one can pray from any position or posture and with eyes opened or closed, quietly or out loud, in whichever way one is most comfortable and least distracted.

Whenever we pray Matthew 6:7 tells us not to be repetitive. “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

Prayers Answered

Yahweh promises that He will hear and answer prayer. For example, in 1Samuel 1:27 Elkanah’s wife Hannah prayed to Yahweh for a son and her prayer was answered, “For this child I prayed; and Yahweh hath given me my petition which I asked of him.” King David stated that Yahweh would hear him when he called on Him, Psalm 4:1-4. Also, Psalm 18:6 states that Yahweh heard David’s voice in His ears. Here are more assurances of Yahweh’s promise to hear prayers:

- Psalm 34:17, “The righteous cry, and Yahweh heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”
- Psalm 91:15, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.”
- Proverbs 15:29 “Yahweh is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.”

Isaiah said that if we call on Yahweh, He will answer: Isaiah 58:9, “Then shalt thou call, and Yahweh shall answer; thou

shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity.”

Yahshua instructed us to ask, seek, and knock within our prayer so as to receive an answer: Luke 11:9-10, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

James 5:16 tells us to “pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Why Some Prayers Go Unanswered

Why are prayers not answered at times? The Bible lists several reasons why prayers fail to get the desired results:

- **Disobedience.** Prayer is simply not going to be answered by Yahweh if you are disobedient to Him. Deuteronomy 1:43-45 reads, “So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of Yahweh, and went presumptuously up into the hill. And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. And ye returned and wept before Yahweh; but Yahweh would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.”
- **Secret sin.** Prayer will not be heard if there is a secret sin in your heart as David speaks of in Psalm 66:18, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, Yahweh will not hear me.” We have to work diligently with the guidance of the Holy Spirit within us to remove all sin from our hearts and lives.
- **Indifference.** Proverbs warns that if people do not regard Yahweh and ignore His reproof that He will not answer when they call upon Him. Proverbs 1:24-33 explains Yahweh’s declaration: “Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me,” verse 28. Indifference is when people or a nation do not listen or recognize Yahweh and His Word; so how can they expect prayers to be heard?
- **Neglect of Mercy.** If we claim to be True Worshipers but do not attend to the needs of the people, especially fellow brethren (spiritually or physically) and do not hear the cries of the poor, then how can we expect Yahweh to hear our own prayerful cries?

We are warned of this in Proverbs 21:13, “Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.”

• **Despising the law.** How can we expect to have our prayers answered if we do not listen to Yahweh’s word or obey His commandments? Despising the law is summarized by not hearing or obeying Yahweh’s Word as indicated in Proverbs 28:9: “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.” If we do not listen or obey His laws, how can we expect Him to answer our prayers?

• **Blood guiltiness.** When someone is so sinful and wicked in their ways that they have blood upon their hands, their prayers will not be heard no matter how much or how often prayer is offered up. Isaiah 1:15 reads: “And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.”

• **Iniquity.** Sin blocks prayer. Sin is defined in 1John 3:4; “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” Yahweh does not hear sinners, John 9:31. However, Yahweh does hear a sinner’s prayer of repentance.

He will hide His face from the people’s sins and iniquities according to Isaiah 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your Elohim, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Also, Micah 3:4 says; “Then shall they cry unto Yahweh, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.”

• **Stubbornness.** A prayer will not be heard if one is stubborn and closes one’s ears to Yahweh’s law. Zechariah 7:11-13 reads: “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Yahweh of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from Yahweh of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith Yahweh of hosts.”

• **Instability or doubt.** When we are indecisive or unsure in our lives, actions or beliefs, we cannot expect our prayers to be answered as James 1:6-7 explains: “But let

him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of Yahweh.”

- **Self-indulgence.** Prayer will not be answered if one is asking Yahweh for selfish wants and lusts of material things in this world. James 4:3 states it this way: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

Yahweh’s Will in Prayer

Is our prayer request within the will of Yahweh? Sometimes our prayers are not answered and possibly refused because they are not in accord with Yahweh’s divine will. In every prayer we need to seek Yahweh’s “will to be done” as Yahshua did in the Garden of Gethsemane when He prayed, “Not my will but thine be done.” This is confirmed in 1John 5:14-15,

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

Yahweh told Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 3 not to ask or speak any more about him going over into the Promised Land. Yahweh said in Deuteronomy 3:25-26 that He would hear no more about the matter:

“I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Yahweh was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and Yahweh said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.”

Through Ezekiel, Yahweh told the Elders of Israel that He would not hear them: Ezekiel 20:3, “Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith my Sovereign Yahweh; Are ye come to enquire of me? As I live, saith my Sovereign Yahweh, I will not be enquired of by you.”

Privately Speaking to Yahweh

There are times when Yahweh wants us to pray alone and in secret as Matthew 6:6 states: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” The entire sixth chapter of Matthew is guidance from Yahshua

concerning prayer.

Yahshua withdrew from the multitudes to be alone to pray in Luke 5:15-16. In Luke 6 He went out unto a mountain and prayed all night: “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to Elohim,” verse 12. Yahshua showed an example of praying early in the morning: “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed,” Mark 1:35.

When Daniel was in Babylonian captivity, he maintained his example of an observant worshiper by praying three times a day, even at the risk of his life by violating the king’s decree not to pray: “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his Elah, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his Elah,” Daniel 6:10-11.

Praying alone builds a personal relationship with Yahweh through communication, which is contingent on us hearing and obeying His commandments, statutes, and judgments.

Pray with Others

Should we pray alone or with fellow believers? Sometimes we need to pray alone and at other times Yahweh wants us to pray with other believers as in Matthew 18:19-20, “Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Also, Luke 1:10 says, “And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.”

After Yahshua was taken up into the clouds, the disciples, waiting for the day of Pentecost, were gathered together in an upper room. “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Yahshua, and with his brethren,” Acts 1:14.

Make Prayer a Habit

Humans are naturally habitual in all things that we do, but lots of habits are not good by nature. Thus is the origin of the phrase, “bad habits.”

The more we eat; the more we want to eat. The more we sleep; the more we want to sleep. The more we do; the more we want to do. This also works in reverse as well. The less we eat; the less we want to eat. The less we sleep; the less we want to sleep. The less we do; the less we want to do. All these are listed as excessiveness of actions or inactions.

This stands true in faith and worship as well. The less we read the scriptures and pray; the less we tend to read and pray. In turn, the more we read the scriptures and pray; the more we have the tendency to read and pray. For a closer relationship with Yahweh our Father, we need to read the scriptures and pray more. The more we read and pray, the more it becomes habitual and a “good habit.”

Heart-to-Heart with Yahweh

Prayer is communication with the Heavenly Father, talking freely from the heart by honoring, praising, giving thanks, and expressing a deep love for Him from anywhere and in any posture.

Prayer is offering remorse and sincere regret while asking forgiveness for wrongdoings and misdeeds.

Prayer is also presenting a humble and earnest petition before Yahweh our Almighty Father and seeking His will to be done in all things through Yahshua Messiah. 

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Q Everyone says that Sabbath is from evening to evening. To me the Sabbath begins at sunrise and ends at sunrise. Am I missing something?

A Many passages show that sunset marks the end of one day and beginning of another. At the end of every day of creation in Genesis, Yahweh defines the day as, “evening and morning.” “Evening” is the Hebrew *ereb* and means dusk, be darkened. “Morning” can mean early daylight or all of daylight. “As the opposite of night the word represents the entire period of daylight,” *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.

In the New Testament the Greek word rendered evening means “a period never earlier than sunset (Matt 8:16; Mark 1:32; John 6:16; even, KJV). For the Hebrew people, the old day ended and the new day began at evening, or sunset” (*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

In the Genesis passages the Hebrew words together convey a 24-hour period, beginning at sunset. At creation darkness

was before light. In addition to Genesis 1 are several other examples confirming that as one day ends at sunset another starts:

“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even” (Lev. 23:18). The word “even” here comes from the Hebrew *ereb* and means, “dusk or sunset.” Clearly, Passover began at evening.

“And for these ye shall be unclean: whosoever toucheth the carcase of them shall be unclean until the even. And whosoever beareth ought of the carcase of them shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even” (Lev 11:24-25). “Even” is again the Hebrew *ereb*. This shows that a person who was defiled was ceremonially clean at sunset, the end of the day. We see similar examples in verses 27-28 and 39-40.

“It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath” (Lev. 23:32). This refers to the Day of Atonement and shows the limits of a biblical day.

Nehemiah 13:19 provides even further

evidence for the Sabbath’s specifically beginning at sunset. “And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.” The sky was becoming dark as the Sabbath approached. This would be impossible if the Sabbath began at sunrise. Scholarship agrees:

“[When the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark] After sunset on Friday evening he caused the gates to be shut, and kept them shut all the Sabbath; and, as he could not trust the ordinary officers, he set some of his own servants to watch the gates, that no person might enter for the purpose of traffic” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary*).

“At sunset, just before the Sabbath, Nehemiah commanded the main gates to be shut. Presumably during the day of the Sabbath people were permitted to enter and leave the city, but Nehemiah’s own guardsmen (Neh 4:23) watched the gates to keep merchants out” (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*).

“He ordered the gates of Jerusalem to be kept shut from the evening before the sabbath to the morning after, and set his own servants (whose care, courage and honesty, he could confide in) to watch them, that no burdens should be brought in on the sabbath day, nor late the night before, nor early in the morning after, lest sabbath time should be encroached upon, v. 19” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*).

“He commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should be closed when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, and not reopened till the Sabbath was over” (*Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*).

Q History records the letter W didn’t exist before the 13th-14th century. The proper name of our Father in heaven is Yahuah.

A The “W” was one of the last letters to be added to the **English** alphabet. However, Yahweh’s Name was not delivered in English, but in Hebrew. Yahweh comes from the four Hebrew letters, *yod-hey-waw-hey*. In antiquity, the “waw” had a “w” sound. Therefore, it’s irrelevant when the English letter “w” developed. Names are transliterated, the same sounds carried over.



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Q If there were no vowel points in Hebrew isn't God's name suppose to be Yahawah? Please reply, if wrong I need to know.

A While ancient Hebrew had no vowel points, the pronunciation of the Father's Name was preserved by the Jews, much in the same way the text was preserved. Along with Jewish references confirming the pronunciation of "Yahweh," we also find evidence from many other sources, including Greek, Samaritan, and even heretical documents, e.g. The Nag Hammadi. Below are a few examples:

- "The Tetragrammaton or Four-Lettered Name...which occurs 6,823 times, is by far the most frequent name of God in the Bible. It is now pronounced 'adonai'; but the church father Theodoret records that the Samaritans pronounced it as (Iabe), and Origen transcribes it as (Iae), both pointing to an original vocalization yahveh [originally, the waw yielded a 'w' sound, not a 'v']" (*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, p. 6).

- "Jehovah, modern form of the Hebrew sacred name of God, probably originally 'Yahweh.' From c. 300 B.C. the Jews, from motives of piety, uttered the name of God very rarely and eventually not at all, but substituted the title 'Adonai,' meaning 'Lord,' the vowels of which were written under the consonants of 'Yahweh.' In the Middle Ages and later, the vowels of one word with the consonants of the other were misread as Jehovah" (*Merriam-Websters Collegiate Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 580).

- "Jehovah, an erroneous pronunciation of the name of the God of Israel in the Bible, due to pronouncing the vowels of the term 'Adonay,' the marginal Masoretic reading with the consonants of the text-reading 'Yahweh,' which was not uttered to avoid the

profanation of the divine name of magical or other blasphemous purposes. Hence the substitution of 'Adonay,' the 'Lord,' or 'Adonay Elohim,' 'Lord God.' The oldest Greek versions use the term 'Kurios,' 'Lord,' the exact translation of the current Jewish substitute for the original Tetragrammaton Yahweh. The reading 'Jehovah' can be traced to the early Middle Ages and until lately was said to have been invented by Peter Gallatin (1518), confessor of Pope Leo X. Recent writers, however, trace it to an earlier date; it is found in Raymond Martin's *Pugeo Fidei* (1270)" (*Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 16, p. 8).

- "Yahweh is the name of God (based on the tetragrammaton, the ineffable name" (*The Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, Marvin Meyer, p. 127, 2007).

In our 2016 Israel pilgrimage a Jewish archaeologist, 30 years with the Israeli Antiquities Authority, confirmed the pronunciation "Yahweh." He also stated that this was how his Yemenite wife ("Yemen" being one of the most ancient forms of Hebrew still spoken) would pronounce the Name.

Q How can I truly repent? I ask for forgiveness, then I feel bad but then sometime later I might mess up the same way. What am I not doing correctly?

A Repentance is a complete turning away from our sins. If we faithfully repent and are sincere in our remorse and follow Yahweh to the best of our knowledge, He will forgive us. The Bible states, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," 1John 1:9

Remember that we all fall short. We find in Romans 7:14-24 that even the Apostle

Paul did those things he desired not to do: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of Yahweh after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Our advice to you is to continue to study and pray for Yahweh's guidance and wisdom. If we are sincere and strive to live for Him, He will not turn us away.

Q I just read your article, "The Yehovah Deception." Can't we just get along! This is disunity.

A What's more important: unity or solid, biblical, truth? If unity, then we can worship on Sunday and forget about everything we might be doing right. If it does matter, then it might be wise to consider the evidence. We are talking about the Name of the Creator of this grand universe. How much greater is His Name than our own? Yahweh is jealous for His Name, and commands that it be honored as His very identity. What more important reason can there be than to get His identity right. Names matter, especially His. 

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Feast Grounds Development Fund — Can You Help?

We continue to progress on our new multi-purpose activity building. The erecting company has completed the metal shell. Ryan Mansager and Mel, David, and Isaac Braun are now framing the lodging side of the building. Once the rough framing is done we hope to mount the lights, finish the floor, and install the basketball goals in the activity area. All funding will then be depleted and we will be forced to stop work until we receive additional donations for work on the lodging, kitchen, and restroom side. Depending on funding this will likely be a two- to three-year construction effort. We anticipate the need for an additional \$150,000 for the HVAC system and to finish the construction. The activity building will not only provide space for indoor activities throughout the year, but also crucial meeting space, lodging, and activities for Feasts and other events, like youth camps. We are already past full seating capacity in our existing meeting hall for Tabernacles. This added building could serve as a future meeting room for Tabernacles with an approximate 350-seat capacity in the gym. Please consider helping YRM with this project.

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