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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025

RESTORATION TIMES



Christmas Controversies



RESTORATION TIMES

VOL. 15 | No.6 | November-December 2025

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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 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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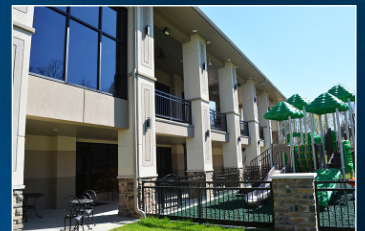


COVER:

Manger with a question mark. Is Yahshua the reason for the season?

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of Mystery Christmas

by Alan Mansager



It's December the 25th. Homes everywhere are decorated with garland and greenery; candles are lit; gifts encircle a decorated tree, awaiting the grand opening.

Celebrators drink wine while feasting on ham, fruits and nuts. The atmosphere is full of expectation; songs are sung; games are played, and gifts are exchanged even as holly and mistletoe briefly take center stage.

Welcome to the Roman Saturnalia and Feast of Mithras. It's December 25 – 50 years before the Savior is born at Bethlehem. It could just as easily be 2,000 years before that, as ageless Mithraic rites rooted in the customs of the ancient Babylonians and their worship of the sun deity come to light once again.

The focus of this holiday is a Roman god known as the Sun of Righteousness. The Saturnalia is his birthday celebration, a Feast to the Roman god Saturn. It is where the name Saturnalia comes from. It is by far the jolliest Roman holiday.

But for Name, It's Mostly the Same

If you were to place this celebration up against today's December 25th festivities you couldn't tell much

difference. Except now there would be tons more presents to exchange and homes would be more garishly decorated. Today's masses would be just as comfortable with the rites of Mithras as with St. Nick.

Even those who want to “put Christ back into Christmas” will sense a commonality with the ancient sun god of the Romans.

More striking are the similarities between Mithras and Messiah as noted in *Mystery Religions in the Ancient World*, p. 99. It reads that Mithras “was [believed to be] the creator and orderer of the universe...he incarnated on earth... his birth on 25 December was witnessed by shepherds. After many deeds he held a last supper with his disciples and returned to heaven...after the last battle, victorious over evil, he will lead the chosen ones through a river of fire to a blessed immortality.”

All of which begs the obvious question: who is being honored on December 25th, the Savior or the pagan Roman sun god? It is difficult to distinguish the two.

Don't feel alone if you are mystified by it all. Many ancients were also confused. Even Pope Leo I (440-461CE) chastised Christians, who on December

25 celebrated the birth of the sun deity.

We are about to take an honest look at the biggest observance in the world and let the facts speak for themselves. If we don't tell it like it is, then the stones will cry out as Yahshua said in Luke 19:40. And so prepare for some surprises.

For those who argue for the “biblical” side of Christmas observance, the following facts must be honestly confronted.

Where Did Xmas Go?

December 25 is nowhere mentioned anywhere in Scripture as the birthday of the Messiah. As one preeminent authority notes, “The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of New Testament origin. The day of [Yahshua's] birth cannot be ascertained from the New Testament, or, indeed, from any other source. The fathers of the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity” (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*) p. 276.

So why, if it is a biblical observance as most believe, is there no evidence of it in the Bible? Well-meaning people say, “Put JC back into Christmas”

when He was never there in the first place.

You find nowhere in Scripture when to observe Christmas or how to celebrate it. Why? Because neither does the Bible give significance and meaning to Xmas or even to its name. There is no greater non-evidence of any religious observance in existence, especially one of this magnitude.

Yahweh is very specific when it comes to celebrations that He expects us to keep. He instructs when, where, how and how often to observe them. It's all there—complete with their names: Passover, Pentecost, Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles. THESE are the scriptural holidays He commands.

If the Savior's birth is so significant and worthy of celebrating with the biggest bash of the year, why is it a historical mystery? No name for it, no command to observe it, no specifics, not even a date.

Nor can the precise season of the year be ascertained: no month or day can be found in which He was born. Shepherds watching their flocks in the fields is incompatible with the winter's cold and rainy weather in Judea.

His birth, even if it were commanded, would more likely be in autumn, in the month of September, at the Feast of Tabernacles, to which there seems some reference in John 1:14.

- Nowhere in the Bible can we find a single command to observe the Savior's birthday. Rather, the observance of His death, Passover, is instructed for every True Worshiper, 1Corinthians 11:26.
- The number of wise men is never given as three, only that they gave three kinds of gifts. There were at least two wise men, denoted by the plural use of wise MEN, but there could have been as many as a dozen or more.
- The wise men, maybe astrologers, came to a "house," not a manger, to see the "young child," not a newborn infant (see Matt. 2:11). Herod ordered all children around Bethlehem up to two years of age killed, hoping to snare the young Messiah child in his murderous

net, Matthew 2:16.

- The gifts of the wise men were not birthday presents, but reflected the Eastern practice of approaching a notable person like a king with a gift. Furthermore, they gave these gifts to Him, not to one another.
- The shepherds and their flocks were still in the fields, which would have been unheard of at the end of December



If the Savior's birth is so significant and worthy of celebrating with the biggest bash of the year, why is it a historical mystery? No name for it, no command to observe it, no specifics, not even a date.

in Judea, when it was cold and wet with winter rains and sometimes even snow. The flocks were removed from the fields in early autumn. All evidence points to a fall timing and early autumn birth of the Savior.

- A mass is a Romish takeoff of the Passover where the literal body and blood of the Savior are supposedly imbibed in a process they call transubstantiation. Why His birthday is called "Christmas" is not from anything in Scripture. Usually these Christians celebrated the birthday of a saint or martyr through his "heavenly nativity." But in this case they honored the Savior's earthly birth in direct competition with the birth of the pagan Mithras, the invincible Sun.

One would think that a celebration of the birthday of the very Savior Himself would be completely true to fact, rather than so rife with

mystery, error, and misguided tradition.

Here is what Yahweh teaches us through Paul:

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness...And what agreement has the temple of Elohim with idols...?" 2Corinthians 6:14,16.

From the start, the Christmas observance was a pseudo-biblical hybrid. Should Yahshua be honored with a mix of evergreen trees, St. Nick, Wassail bowls, wreathes, and the immoral mistletoe? This disconnect always bothered me even as a boy keeping the holiday. Even the crooning of Bing Crosby didn't help.

Seek and Not Find

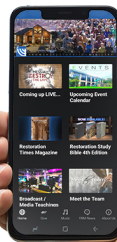
Yahshua never asked for a birthday celebration to begin with. Christmas has no authorization in the Word. But special biblical observances are laboriously detailed in the Word.

The Bible does not mention a date for his birth (a fact Puritans later pointed out in order to deny the legitimacy of the celebration). It is consistent, then, that no birthday observance for the Savior was held until 300 years after His birth.

Being that the church had no proof for when He was born, the Christmas observance was timed to coincide with the midwinter festival honoring the imperial gods Mithras and Saturn. They couldn't find a more pagan peg to hang the celebration on.

By a process called syncretism, the winter solstice celebration became linked with the birth of the Savior. Here is how the *Encyclopedia Americana* describes it:

"In the 5th century the Western church ordered the feast [of the Savior's birth] to be celebrated on the day of the Mithraic rites of the birth of the sun and at the close of the Saturnalia, as no certain knowledge of the day of [Messiah's] birth existed. Among the German and Celtic tribes the winter solstice was considered



an important point of the year and to commemorate the return of the sun they held their chief festival of yule, which, like other pagan celebrations, became adapted to Christmas” (vol. 6, p. 622).

This source candidly admits that Christmas customs have no basis in the Bible. Notice: “Most of the customs now associated with Christmas were not originally Christmas customs but rather were pre-Christian and non-Christian customs taken up by the Christian church.

“Saturnalia, a Roman feast celebrated in mid-December, provided the model for many of the merrymaking customs of Christmas. From this celebration, for example, were derived the elaborate feasting, the giving of gifts, and the burning of candles. Lights also played an important part in most winter solstice festivals” (*ibid*).

Some Christians Pushed Back

The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* notes these details: “The recognition of Sunday (the day of Phoebus and Mithras as well as the Lord’s Day) by the emperor Constantine as a legal holiday, along with the influence of Manicheism, which identified the Son of God with the physical sun, may have led Christians of the fourth century to feel the appropriateness of making the birthday of the Son of God coincide with that of the physical sun.

“The pagan festival with its riot and merry-making was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit or in manner.

“Christian preachers of the West and the Nearer East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which [Messiah’s] birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun-worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival. Yet the festival rapidly gained acceptance and became at last so firmly established that even the Protestant revolution of

the sixteenth century was not able to dislodge it and Evangelical Christians even of the more radical types, who reject or ignore nearly all of the ecclesiastical festivals, have never been able wholly to ignore it” (p. 47).

But Shouldn’t Yahweh Be Pleased?

Some may wonder, so what if we use customs derived from heathenism. Shouldn’t Yahweh be pleased simply because we observe the birthday of His Son? Does it really make any difference HOW we do it?

Simply put, yes it does. It goes to proper, acceptable worship, just like anything we do and believe. In Deuteronomy and Revelation we are admonished not to add to or take away from the Word.

Mixing practices of other worship was what got ancient Israel into so much trouble with Yahweh. Yahweh is extremely particular about how we worship and glorify Him. He will accept no other worship than what He prescribes. Anything less, anything added, and anything other than what is commanded in His Word – and we will reap our own condemnation.

True worship is tough as it goes against the grain of the world. Yahweh says that worship outside of His teachings is expressly prohibited. He never authorized or condoned the Christmas celebration. He instead warned about the ways of the worldly nations:

“Take heed to thyself that thou

be not snared by following them,” He commanded in Deuteronomy 12:30, “after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their mighty ones, saying, How did these nations serve their mighty ones? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto Yahweh thy Elohim: for every abomination to Yahweh, which he hateth, have they done unto their mighty ones; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their mighty ones. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it,” Deuteronomy 12:30-32.

Roots of Tree Worship

The most universal ritual in the Xmas celebration is the decorated Christmas tree. The brightly lit tree is a survival from sun worship, and its greenery used as a symbol in life and fertility worship. Jeremiah 10 condemns tree worship as idolatry:

“Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen ... for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good,” vv. 2-5.

Yahweh is not pleased that most

2026 Biblical Feasts

Join us at Holts Summit!

Passover Memorial:

April 1 (evening)

Feast of Unleavened Bread:

April 3-9

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost):

May 24

Feast of Trumpets:

September 13

Day of Atonement:

September 22

Feast of Tabernacles:

September 27 - October 3

Last Great Day:

October 4



have not chosen to separate themselves from the ways and worship of the world. Paul urged the Corinthians, “Wherefore ‘come out from among them and be separate,’ says Yahweh, ‘and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says Yahweh Almighty,” 2Corinthians 6:17-18.

Time for Honesty

The Corinthians had the same misconception many today have: they thought they could worship Yahweh the same way they had always worshiped – through heathen rites and customs. Just add some Bible and you can have both.

It is called syncretism, a blending of various beliefs and practices. Yahweh says if you do that, it won’t be Me but something else that you’ll be worshiping. I demand specific worship from those who are mine. When you knowingly include pagan survivals in your worship, your worship is vain and

Christian Controversies Concerning Christmas

by Alan Mansager

Christmas at one time was highly controversial. It was even banned in Boston. In the middle 1600s the General Court of Massachusetts decreed that anyone found feasting on Christmas “shall pay for every such offense five shillings as a fine to the county.”

And then there is this news flash from the Associated Press: “It wasn’t some Scrooge who tried to stamp out the holiday. Two respected intellectual clergymen – Increase Mather, president of Harvard, and his son, Cotton, who enrolled in Harvard at age 12 – preached against observing Christmas.

“Increase thought [Messiah] probably should have been born in September, while Cotton said the occasion, in any event, hardly justifies ‘mad mirth.’”

Historian Philip Reed Rulon of Northern Arizona University notes that the anti-Christmas sentiment of early American colonies was in rejection of the Church of England and any beliefs carried over from Roman Catholicism.

Many churches of the day were split on Christmas keeping. Observing the holiday were Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, members of the Reformed sect and Moravian. Censuring the holiday were Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Scotch-Irish, Presbyterians, Congregationalism, Mennonites, Brethren, and Amish.

Christmas was in fact part of what the Puritans wanted to ‘purify’ the Anglicans from.

Yule Time Illegalities

In his book *Celebrations*, Robert Myers notes that anti-Christmas feeling was also strong in England.

The Roundhead Parliament of 1643 outlawed the feast of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, along with the saints’ days. Clergymen were imprisoned for preaching on Christmas day.

Myers notes that the Puritans were adamant in their cause. For 12 years the feast day was an ordinary day of business, noted, if at all, with a fast.

subject to punishment.

Deuteronomy 12:2: says, “Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their mighty ones, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.” They could have said, “Just leave all that there, we aren’t worshipping it anyway.”

And so the door is left open until one day someone will go through it just because it’s there. And worship will then be off and running in the wrong direction. Yahweh said don’t ask how the pagans worshiped. Get rid of it and worship Me as I command.

At the end of the Word is an admonition not to mix worship:


“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4).

Be honest with yourself and with Yahweh. Pretending you are keeping the (unauthorized) birthday

of the Messiah by gathering around a heathenistic tree, coveting presents, eating ham, ducking under mistletoe perhaps to steal an immoral kiss, and using Santa Claus as a surrogate savior who keeps track of who’s naughty and nice, and rewards accordingly – it’s all against Scripture.

A Heart Test

Yahweh told Israel this at the foot of Sinai about the deities of false worship: “You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I Yahweh your Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep My commandments,” Exodus 20:5-6.

His laws are not grievous (John 5:3), but reveal His exclusive and saving way of life. Find Him through real and complete obedience to His Word. Nothing less will do. 

“With the Restoration in 1660 the citizens reclaimed Christmas, but it was a different festival from what it had been. The religious aspects were often neglected, with the result that the secularization of the holiday was well under way” (**Celebrations**, p. 312).

After the American revolution, British customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. Christmas wasn’t declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870 ([history.com/christmas](https://www.history.com/christmas)).

The Pew Research Center found that fewer people think of Christmas as a religious holiday these days. Only half of American adults attend a religious service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Infamous Firsts

The first official record of tree decorating in America was at Harvard College in 1832 by a German professor. Many considered the trimming of a tree in December a pagan practice traced to the Roman feast of Saturnalia at the winter solstice. The trees were trimmed

and lit with candles that typified the waning sun in ancient practice.

German Pastor Henry J. Schwan is said to be the first to trim a tree in his church during the Xmas season in Cleveland, Ohio. He was accused of decorating his place of worship with a pagan symbol. In 1856 President Franklin Pierce was the first to keep Xmas in the White House, and an annually decorated tree has been a custom since.

Alabama was the first state to officially recognize Christmas in 1836. By 1860, 14 states, including several from New England, had adopted Christmas as a legal holiday. Oklahoma was the last state to recognize Christmas as a legal holiday in 1907 – 71 years later.

Ask yourself, if it were a legitimate biblical observance where is the history? Why did it take more than 18 centuries for any memo authorizing its observance? A gap of 1900 years of non-observance speaks volumes about the legitimacy and appropriateness of this holiday.

Neglected Biblical Holidays Found!

As society goes into a frenzy this time of year over what it thinks are acceptable celebrations, the honest Bible student has some serious questions.


What happened to all the observances I read about in the Scripture? he wonders. Why have they been ignored for the past 2,000 years and replaced with completely unauthorized holidays like Christmas and Easter? Where did Passover go? What about the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost? And where are the Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles?

Don’t worry. They are still here and honored at Yahweh’s Restoration Ministry, just as Scripture commands. Learn about these true holidays, the ones the Word says will be observed by everyone in the coming Kingdom.

Request or read online the booklet, **December 25th – Birthday of the Sun**, for more startling truths about Christmas. <https://yrm.org/december-25-birthday-sun/>

Read past issues of **Restoration Times** magazine at: yrm.org/restoration-times-archive

Watch years of past **Discover the Truth** episodes at: yrm.org/dtt



THE ETERNAL HOME *of Yahweh's People*

by Randy Folliard

Recently, many observed the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. In this writing we will review the importance of the Last Great Day, mainly from a prophetic standpoint.

For years I believed that the Last Great Day represented the Great White Throne Judgment. However, a few years ago an individual offered a differing perspective, one that I have now adopted. What caused me to rethink what this day prophetically signified? Here are five reasons that persuaded my understanding:

1. Completion and New Beginning

The seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles symbolize the fullness of Yahweh's plan on earth – His kingdom established, nations gathered, and all flesh dwelling under His reign. The eighth day goes beyond the cycle of seven, showing a new creation and the eternal order, which aligns with the New Jerusalem where time and corruption no longer rule.

2. Eternal Dwelling with Yahweh

The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) pictures temporary dwellings, a

reminder of the transitory nature of life. On the eighth day the temporary is left behind for the permanent dwelling of Yahweh with His people (Rev. 21:3 – “Behold, the tabernacle of Elohim is with men”).

3. No More Sin or Death

The Millennium (6,000 years of man's history followed by Yahshua's thousand-year reign) ends with the final judgment (Rev. 20:11–15). The eighth day foreshadows what follows: eternity with no more death, sorrow, or curse (Rev. 21:4).

4. Living Waters and Healing

On the last great day of the feast (John 7:37-39), Yahshua declared that living waters would flow from Him. In New Jerusalem, living waters flow from the throne of Elohim, bringing everlasting life and healing (Rev. 22:1-2).

5. Culmination of Yahweh's Plan

The Feast days outline Yahweh's redemption plan: Passover (Yahshua's sacrifice), Unleavened Bread (Yahshua's resurrection), Pentecost (outpouring of the Spirit), Trumpets (Yahshua's return), Atonement (the

reconciliation of Israel), and Tabernacles (millennial Kingdom). The Last Great Day or the eighth day stands alone, picturing what follows all these events – the eternal state in New Jerusalem.

These five points suggest that the Last Great Day or as Scripture states as the prophetic fulfillment of New Jerusalem—especially the connection to the eighth day—symbolize a new beginning. The fact that the Last Great Day is also called the Eighth Day, with the number eight symbolizing a new beginning, bears witness to a connection between this day and New Jerusalem.

New Heavens and New Earth

Let's now delve into Scripture and review the prophetic promise of this amazing city. We read about this city in Revelation 21, beginning in verse 1.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from Elohim out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of Elohim is with men, and he will dwell with them, and

they shall be his people, and Yahweh himself shall be with them, and be their Elohim. And Elohim shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 20:1-4).

As you can imagine, there’s much speculation as to the meaning of this passage. For example, some believe that this present earth will be consumed, and that Yahweh will then provide a completely new earth. I tend to believe that it will be the same earth, but transformed and renewed. The word “new” here is from the Greek *kainos*. It can refer to something either completely new or to something of a new kind.

Based on prophecy, it will be a new kind. First, it says that there will be no more seas. Yahweh will likely take the waters from the seas and transform them into a canopy of water above us, as at the beginning in Genesis.

A Gift from Heaven

In describing the descent of New Jerusalem, we read, “...prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Those in the first resurrection are the bride of Messiah.

New Jerusalem will be a gift from our Heavenly Father to those who were found worthy of being called the bride of Messiah.

No words can fully describe the joy and thrill that those in Messiah will feel when they see this holy city coming down from heaven. We will already have gained eternal life, but now we’ll be living in paradise in Yahweh’s golden city.

We also see that a great voice from heaven will announce that the tabernacle of Elohim is with men, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and Yahweh Himself will be with them and be their Elohim. This is the central theme throughout the covenants between Yahweh and His people. In the case of New Jerusalem,

Yahweh the Father will literally dwell with His people.

Being with Yahshua for 1,000 years in the Millennium will be wonderful, but the experience of New Jerusalem will be on a completely different level. This is not to diminish Yahshua, but to highlight the blessing it will be to have Yahweh the Father here with us. We also see that He will wipe away all tears and that there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or even pain.

For a moment, try to imagine a world without these things. Imagine a time when death will no longer exist, when sorrow will be no more, and when pain will never again be felt.

Many believers live with constant pain. For those in this situation, I have good news – there’s coming a day when there will be no more pain.

Promises and Judgment

Beginning in verse 5 we find more promises of this Kingdom along with the reality of those who deliberately defied Yahweh:

“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Elohim, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

In reference to the Alpha and Omega, there is debate as to whether this is referring to the Father and Son. It likely refers to both within context – when it says, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,” I believe this refers to the Son. But when it says, “He

Biblical Observances at a Glance

Weekly Sabbath Falling on the seventh day of the week, it commemorates creation and redemption. We observe this day by rest from secular work, and worship and study of the Word.

- **Passover** Observed on the 14th of the scriptural first month. It looks back at Israel’s deliverance from the death angel and Yahshua’s shed blood for human sin.

- **Feast of Unleavened Bread** Beginning on the 15th of the first month, no leaven is eaten, signifying riddance of error and sin.

- **Pentecost** Also known as the Feast of Weeks, it falls 50 days from the waving of the barley sheaf during Unleavened Bread. Traditionally a time when the law was given and the Holy Spirit was sent.

- **Day of Trumpets** First day of the seventh month, it has yet to be fulfilled. Trumpets herald important heavenly events. Yahshua is to return at the last trumpet sound.

- **Day of Atonement** Falling on the 10th day of the seventh month, and regarded as the holiest day of the year, it is marked by fasting. Signifying a covering of our sins, it awaits a final fulfillment.

- **Feast of Tabernacles (and Last Great Day)** Beginning on the 15th of the seventh scriptural month, it depicts the Kingdom coming to earth under Yahweh and His laws. Yahweh’s people observe it for eight days by coming to where Yahweh places His Name and staying in temporary dwellings, as Israel did in the wilderness.

that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Elohim, and he shall be my son,” I believe this refers to the Father.

It’s also possible that this passage may refer solely to the Father, as the Father certainly gives life and serves as our Elohim.

For those found worthy, not only will they be the bride of Messiah, but they will also be sons of Yahweh. When we marry the Messiah, we will become part of Yahweh’s own family.

I’m not sure how many truly grasp the enormity of this promise. It’s not just receiving new bodies and eternal life, but it’s becoming part of Yahweh’s majestic family. When this happens we are no longer disciples but sons and daughters of the Most High.

It goes on to talk about those who willfully sinned against Yahweh. It mentions the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, and murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. It says that their part will be in the lake that burns with fire. This is looking back to those who were in the Great White Throne Judgment.

As Scripture verifies, there will be no more sin or death in New Jerusalem. We also know that *hades* or the grave itself will be thrown into the lake of fire before New Jerusalem comes down from heaven.

Coming of the Lamb’s Wife

Beginning in verse 9, we find the beauty and sheer size of this city: “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from Elohim, having the glory of Elohim: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve

gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”

This is our first prophetic glimpse of New Jerusalem. We see that the same angel who had the seven last plagues is the one who comes to John of Patmos. The purpose of his coming was to show John the bride, the Lamb’s wife, which is New Jerusalem, the Holy City of Yahweh.

Some are confused by the calling of the city the “Lamb’s wife,” as Scripture shows that we are the bride of the Messiah, making us the Lamb’s wife. And as prophecy also indicates in Revelation 19, the marriage of the Lamb occurs in the Millennium and before New Jerusalem.

How do we reconcile this with what we find here?

Barnes’ Notes says the city represents the permanent union (emphasis on permanent) between the bride and her husband or between the assembly and Yahshua the Messiah.

The 12 Walls and Gates

Revelation describes New Jerusalem by saying that the city will have the glory or splendor of Elohim. John compares this glory to that of a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

We also find that the city will have great and high walls with 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel and an angel standing at each gate.

The city will also have 12 foundations carrying the names of the 12 apostles. The names of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles show a continuity of the two testaments.

Having the names of the 12 tribes of Israel on the gates means believers will need to pass through one of the gates into the city, possibly representing a

recognition or a grafting into that tribe. For example, some will go through the gate of Judah, others through the gate of Levi, and others will go through the gate of Naphtali.

A City Beyond Measure

Continuing with 15, we see the massive scale of New Jerusalem:

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel” (vv. 15-17).

These are the dimensions of New Jerusalem. This is one of the most impressive aspects of this city. The city is foursquare; meaning that it will be in the shape of a box or cube.

We learn that the dimensions are going to be twelve thousand furlongs. One furlong is roughly 1/8 of a mile; making the city approximately 1,500 miles cubed. It’s hard to imagine a city in this shape and size, so to help with that, here are a few comparisons:

If you placed New Jerusalem on a U.S. map, the city would stretch from New York to Denver. That’s about 1,500 miles. And the city is a perfect cube — so imagine that distance in every direction. Its footprint would cover nearly half of the continental U.S.

In addition, New Jerusalem would be 40 times larger than the entire United Kingdom and about 100 times larger than the current country of Israel. Regarding its height, commercial airplanes fly 7 miles high. The International Space Station orbits at 250 miles up. In this case, New Jerusalem rises six times higher than the International Space Station.

The walls of the city will be 144 cubits. Most agree that a cubit is 18

inches – multiplying 18 inches by 144 equals 216 feet. It's uncertain whether this is referring to the height or thickness of these walls, but either way, this will be beyond anything seen by man. To give a comparison, 216 feet is over twice the length of a basketball court or as thick as a 21-story building is high. Nothing humans have ever known can surpass the city's dimensions.

New Jerusalem's Majestic Beauty

In Revelation 21, beginning in verse 8, we find a description of the ornate nature of the city:

“The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass” (vv. 18-21, NIV).

The city is ornate beyond imagination. The walls of the city will be like a jasper stone and the city itself will be as pure, translucent gold. The 12 foundations of the city will be composed of precious stones.

It's noteworthy that many of these stones can take on different colors and shades. A sapphire is normally blue, it can also be pink, yellow, orange, green, purple, and white.

And this is true with many of the other stones we find here. So, while we may not know with certainty the precise colors of the twelve foundation stones, we can be sure that it will be an extraordinarily beautiful city.

For all who are blessed to witness it, no doubt they will stand in awe at the magnificence of this city as it descends

from the heavens.

Verse 22 speaks about the absence of the temple: “And I saw no temple therein : for Yahweh El Shaddai and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life” (vv. 22-27).

No Temple, No Sacrifices

At this time, there will be no need for a physical temple. For one thing, there will be no more animal sacrifices. Remember



that at the end of the Great White Throne Judgment death and *hades* are thrown into the Lake of Fire. Death will not exist at this time – including the death of animals. Without sacrifices there's no need for a physical temple.

We also see in this passage that kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into the city. Consider this for a moment: We see that kingdoms and nations will exist alongside New Jerusalem. Even though Micah 4 speaks

about the Millennium, it applies here. It says there, “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”

Just as in the Millennium, kings and nations will continue to exist alongside Yahweh's Holy City. And they will come into the city to give honor and praise to Almighty Yahweh.

Life and Healing

Beginning in Revelation 22, verse 1, we find a remarkable prophecy speaking about life and healing: “And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of Elohim and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of Elohim and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for Yahweh Elohim giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever” (vv. 1-5).

In this passage we see two thrones – one for the Father and one for the Son. We find two major themes. First, we find a pure river offering life. Also, water of life will flow from Yahweh's throne.

My first time visiting Israel I noticed how clean the water in the Mediterranean Sea was at Tel Aviv. In some ways, that reminds me of what we see here. The difference, though, is that this will be far greater.

It appears that there will be more than one tree of life, being that on either side of the river was the tree of life. Knowing that the Great White Throne Judgment already happened, and that

death and *hades* have been thrown into the lake of fire, why the need for the tree of life if not to heal the nations? Death will not exist and everyone in existence will be immortal.

Knowing this, what would be the purpose for the tree of life? I believe this goes to the difference between the first and second resurrections. According to the Apostle Paul in 1Corinthians 15, those in the first resurrection will be like the angels in heaven. They will live forever with spiritual bodies that will not require healing.

It's likely that the second resurrection will be physical. This understanding is based on the prophecy of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 along with the prophecy here about the tree of life. Like Adam and Eve, they will be resurrected as flesh and blood human beings, but with the ability to live forever.

Death did not exist until Adam sinned. Had Adam not sinned, Adam and Eve had the potential to live forever. Based on this, the tree of life will likely exist for the healing of those in the second resurrection.

The second theme is the importance of Yahweh's Name, which will be on their foreheads. Throughout the Scriptures and even here we find reference to the Name of our Heavenly Father.

Many who believe in the Bible see no value in the Name of Yahweh. But here, along with Revelation 14:1, Yahweh's Name seals His people.

Many other references in Scripture show the importance of Yahweh's name. A key passage is Isaiah 52:6, saying His

people will know His Name. We also see in Acts 2:21 that those who call upon Yahweh's Name will be saved.

Obedience Is Key

Revelation 22:14-15 mentions the commandments: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

At times, some Bible believers can be a bit hostile to those who obey the commandments. From their standpoint, obedience means trying to earn salvation. But nothing could be further from the truth.

One issue is that most don't understand the difference between justification and sanctification. As we know the Word, we are justified freely through the blood of Yahshua the Messiah without works.

But once we're justified or redeemed from our sins, we then have an obligation to live a sanctified life or a life free from sin, which means that we must show good works by obeying the commandments.

And as we see here, only those who obey the commandments will be allowed to enter into New Jerusalem. Outside the city will be sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and all liars.

As discussed, this is looking back to the Great White Throne Judgment and acknowledging that no sinner will exist


at this time. Again, all those who are NOT found in the Lamb's book of life will be destroyed in the fires of Gehenna.

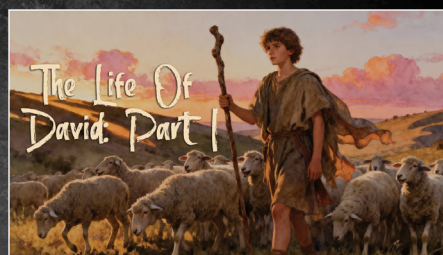
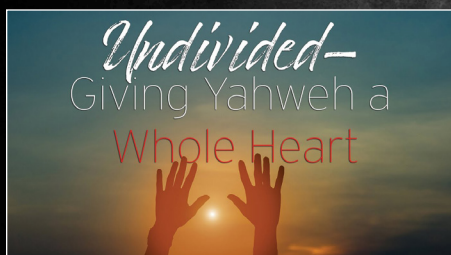
Don't Miss Your Invite

Revelation 22:16-21 provides the invitation to all who might hear: "I Yahshua have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the assemblies. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely... He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Master Yahshua. The grace of our Sovereign Yahshua the Messiah be with you all. Amen." (vv. 16-17, 20-21).

Our Savior is coming – and He is coming quickly. An invitation is extended to all who hear, to all who thirst, and to all who are willing to take of the water of life freely. As believers, our calling is simple: to follow our Savior, Yahshua the Messiah, and to obey our Father in heaven.

If we remain faithful in these two things, the promises contained in this passage will be ours. This includes being found worthy of the first resurrection, serving as priests in the Millennium, and dwelling with Yahweh forever in New Jerusalem.

The destination is worth the journey. Many of us know that the journey can be difficult. But no matter what we face, remember, Yahweh's promises are worth it. 



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[yrm.org/live archives](http://yrm.org/live/archives)

Share the Truth You Know ...and Receive the Blessings

by the late Donald R. Mansager

Believers in Yahshua the Messiah think that spreading the word by radio, television, Internet or printed page is the best way to convert the world. This outreach does have advantages in making the public aware of the deeper truths of the Bible.

But there is an even more effective way to witness to others that each of us can do.

Famous evangelist Dr. Charles G. Trumbull, who had preached to great congregations for 20 years, was a writer and editor of a weekly religious paper that reached a circulation of 100,000, and was the author of 30 books. Yet in spite of all of his prolific efforts in literature and speaking, he said that he had won more people to the truth of Messiah in private conversation than in sermons or in print. Others have said the same thing.

While public expounding and speaking of the Word has its place, the conversion of a person is mainly done through explaining the truth of the Bible to willing ears. Effective preachers can explain Scripture and motivate one to action, but it is the one-on-one interaction that solidifies faith of the believer.

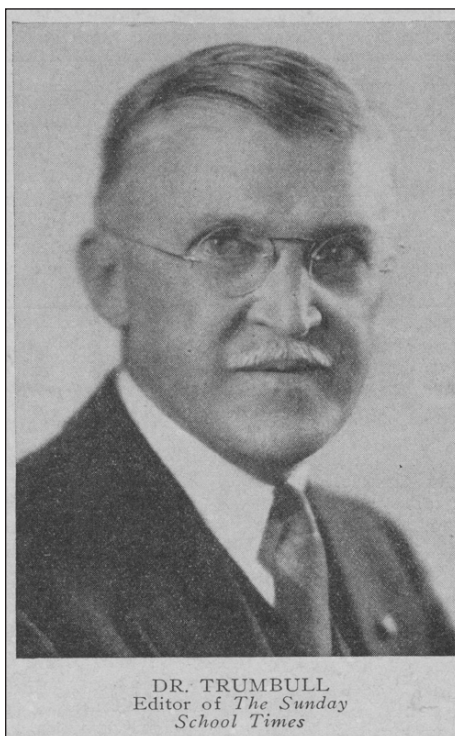
Converting others does not require worldly wisdom or the gift of eloquent speech. Nor does it take special training. It takes one who is himself or herself convicted and guided by Yahweh's Spirit.

The hearts of inquirers can be reached in the lunch room, at services, at a rest stop, over coffee, driving in a car, in a hospital, a jail or wherever one can talk openly with others.

With some, much time will be needed to get answers to all the questions. Patience and persistence will be required by some because deeper truth often must penetrate a mind already saturated in false concepts and worldly customs.

Personal Evangelism Is a Sacrifice

A woman once said to an evangelist, "Oh, I would give the world if I could wins souls as you do!"



"That is just what it cost me," was his response.

Converting others to Yahweh's truth costs time, work, sacrifice, faith, and determination to be a tool for Yahweh's truth. It also cannot be done

without a deeper knowledge of the Bible and Holy Spirit guidance.

Yahshua explained to Peter that the Assembly would be built upon Peter's confession that Yahshua was the Rock. John 10:7 reveals that Yahshua is the Door. We are to guide others to the "Door" of the sheep. The body of believers, the "called-out ones," are to reach out to others with the truth Yahweh has revealed to them. We are to go and teach all nations, Matthew 28:19-20.

To be effective we must be a living epistle of Messiah by acting out Yahweh's laws and making them come to life by what we say and do in our everyday activities.

"Forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Messiah ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living Elohim; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2Cor. 3:3).

Instead of reading or hearing about Yahweh's way of life, those with whom we come in contact can see in our lives a living model of Yahweh's laws at work. We are to be examples of the overcomers who represent Yahweh's new and living way, Jeremiah 31:31.

Oh, What a Feeling

The real joy does not stop with our baptism into Yahshua's saving Name. It finds the greatest expression in helping guide someone to the Savior. Then we have the joy of Yahweh's favor, the gratitude of those who now seek baptism, and the inner warmth of Yahweh's Spirit.

By regular tithes we help those proclaiming the message of salvation by various means of outreach, and make the Bible come alive by our example and joyful demeanor. The blessings of our sacrifices will follow.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Q Is death just a state of suspended animation in which consciousness continues and the “dead” still interact with the living? Some believe that they hear deceased family members talk to them. How dead is dead?

A The notion that life doesn't stop with death joins the false concept of an immortal soul. The words “immortal soul” never appear together in the Scriptures. It is understandable that we would want to still connect with loved ones who have passed away, but we must face scriptural truth. Yahweh tells us what death means.

Ecclesiastes clearly explains death's finality. “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun,” 9:5-6.

All thinking, intellect, and emotion cease at death. “The dead praise not Yahweh, neither any that go down into silence,” Psalm 115:17. That does not mean that death is necessarily forever because Yahweh will yet resurrect the dead back to life. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,” Daniel 12:2.

The belief in an immortal soul originated with the pagan Egyptians and was adopted and developed by the Greeks and then accepted by the Roman Church (RSB note). Some teach that the souls of the dead go to heaven, only to return at the resurrection to retrieve their bodies. But flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom (1Cor. 15:50) so that a physical body is useless in the spirit world anyway.

Q How intelligent are angels and how much do they know about the fate of humanity and what happens after the resurrection?

A Angels are very knowledgeable. However, only Yahweh is omniscient and only He knows everything at all times. Only Yahweh knows the day of Yahshua's return, Matthew 24:36. Peter said that the angels are inquisitive and desire to learn more, 1Peter 1:12. In that respect angels learn as they observe humanity.

Some wonder whether angels preach and teach the Word. Angels are messengers sent by Yahweh. *Angelos* in the Greek means messenger. They are called ministers, meaning servants for Yahweh and us. In the case of Cornelius, the angel told him to send for Peter, who then preached the evangel to Cornelius. Angels follow specific instructions from Yahweh. We cannot assume that an angel will fulfill the responsibility we are given to teach the Word, Matthew 28:19.

Q Why does the Catholic Church still cling to Latin for its liturgy, decrees, and official communications?



A For hundreds of years the Latin **Vulgate** was the official Scriptures of the Roman church. It was the work of one man, Jerome (a.k.a. Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius). Living in a cave in Jerusalem he translated the Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek into Latin. The Catholic church decreed that the **Vulgate** was inspired and it was forbidden for anyone to translate the Bible into contemporary languages.

Not until the Protestant Reformation in the 1500s was the Bible allowed to be read by the layman. Latin became a dead language used only by scholars and priests but was still the official “church language” in Europe.

Q What changes will take place when Yahshua sets up His throne on earth in the coming Millennium?

A Paul spoke about a future time when the physical creation will no longer be affected by the bondage of corruption that widespread sin brings now, Romans 8:21. As it is, sin affects the lives of humans in every way, even if they are not sins of one's doing. Yet, because many humans who were not in the first resurrection will continue living on earth, sin will still be an issue.

Isaiah 30:20-21 says teachers will correct humans if they go wayward. Those teachers could likely be saints from the first resurrection who are now spirit beings and part of a kingdom of priests.

The nature of animals will change in the millennial kingdom, according to Isaiah 11:6-8. Wolves, bears, leopards, and lions will live peaceably with cows, oxen, goats, and lambs. Lions will change from carnivore to vegetarian and children will play at the holes of vipers and not be harmed.

The temple was the center of the faith in the Old Testament and so it will be in the Millennium. Yahshua will rebuild the Temple: “After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after Yahweh, and all the Gentiles upon whom my Name is called, saith Yahweh...” Acts 15:16-17.

Animal sacrifices will also resume for the people who never knew or accepted Yahshua's blood, Isaiah 56:7; Ezekiel 44:11; 45:17; Zechariah 14:21. Yahshua's name will change from meaning “Yahweh Is Salvation” to “Yahweh Our Righteousness,” Jeremiah 23:6.

Satan's influence will be curtailed as he will be bound by a great chain and confined to the bottomless pit for a millennium, Revelation 20:2-3. He will not be able to deceive the nations for one thousand years. Satan has already been judged for his sins and will be further judged for his continued sinning. A number of judgments have been and will be heaped on Satan:

- He was thrown out and barred from heaven, Ezekiel 28:16.
- He was punished for tempting Adam and Eve, Genesis 3:14-15.

- It was prophesied that he would be cast out, John 12:31. He will be barred from activities against the protected saints for 3 1/2 years during the Tribulation, Revelation 12:14.
- Ultimately, along with his angels, he will be cast into the lake of fire, becoming an object of everlasting contempt for all eternity (Heb. *draown*), Revelation 20:10.

Q Did Yahshua while in the tomb, descend into hell to preach to the wretched souls there, 1Peter 3:18-20?

A Those who think that He did don't understand that the focus of this passage is the Holy Spirit. By the agency of the Holy Spirit, v. 18, Yahshua communicated the truth through Noah to the people in Noah's day. Noah is called a preacher of righteousness in 2Peter 2:5.

As noted above, death means a cessation of all life and thought. Yahshua was in the tomb and completely dead for 3 days and nights, then He was resurrected to life. He could not have taken a side trip to preach in hellfire if He was dead. And if He didn't completely die, then we have no payment for our sins, Romans 5:8-9; Hebrews 9:28. What would be the point anyway, as souls in hell are allegedly there permanently with no chance for parole. Wouldn't a visit from Yahshua just torment them further?

In truth, "hell" is from the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades*, both words mean the grave, not an ever-burning place of eternal torture for lost souls.

Q Why does Yahweh's Restoration Ministry use the Name Yahweh?

A Our teachings are rooted in apostolic times. What has become the modern Sacred Name movement originated from an interest in Yahweh's Name inspired by a book using the form "Yahvah" by Alexander McWhorter in 1857.

The question of the early predecessors, which prompted their earnest study and search into the sacred Names, was, "Into what Name are we to baptize?" A key fact conflicting with traditional baptism done into the name of "Jesus" was that there was no J in any language until 500 years ago, including the ancient Hebrew and Greek from which our Bibles derive.

Simply put, the Bible students of the 19th century era faced the undeniable fact that the name Jesus did not exist before the 15th century. Early in the 1930s a serious study

began into the name Jehovah as well, concluding that this name never could have existed until 500 years ago nor could it be the name of the Heavenly Father. The missing letter "J" is one determinant. (See our Name studies at yrm.org).

These name issues peaked at a summer camp meeting in 1936. At that time Elder Andrew N. Dugger, overseer of the Church of God, 7th Day, asked the gathered elders to decide what words were proper to use in baptism. In 1937 Elder Clarence O. Dodd, who had been relieved of his position as secretary-treasurer of the Church of God 7th Day because of his teaching of the Feast days, began publishing **The Faith** magazine to proclaim the annual Feasts. He soon began using the Sacred Names as well.


The Sacred Name movement, then, began in the 1930s with some of those who were associated with the Church of God, 7th day, which itself originated with the Millerite movement of 1844. Elder Dugger did much evangelizing with his book, **The Bible Home Instructor**, as did Elder Dodd through **The Faith** magazine. Both are remembered for their joint effort in recording the early history of the true faith in a book called **A History of the True Religion** (printed in Jerusalem, 1968).

In 1963 Elder Angelo B. Traina published a Holy Name Bible based on the King James Version. This KJV Bible restored the holy Names Yahweh and Yahshua.

As scholarship catches up with the facts, the sacred Name is becoming more and more acknowledged in many resources and references, including common dictionaries, encyclopedias, religious references, Bible notes, concordances, lexicons, Bible almanacs, and history books. Each states that the proper name is Yahweh (see under Tetragrammaton, Jehovah, Yahweh, Lord or God).

Realizing the truth of the sacred Name in the language of the Bible, many ministries now make reference to Yahweh and Yahshua, and the Catholic Church uses the sacred Name in its Jerusalem Bible.

Found abundantly in ancient autographs like the Dead Sea Scrolls, Yahweh's Name has been disseminated through the years through tracts and literature. In the Philippines a discarded tract was picked up from the street and came into the hands of two dedicated Adventists who soon became among the first to proclaim the EliYah message, "My Mighty One is Yah" in the Philippines.

It is our prayer that you will follow the truth of the Sacred Name which is now being revealed to those Yahweh is calling for His Kingdom. 



Read past issues of
Restoration Times magazine at:
yrm.org/restoration-times-archive

Watch years of past
Discover the Truth episodes at:
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Update on the New Meeting Hall at Holts Summit

We are moving forward with the final stages of the new meeting hall addition. Recent progress includes additional stage lighting, various finish work, and the installation of a new broadcast camera and platforms to improve livestream quality.

We've almost completed wall painting on all three floors, as the backstage "green room" is nearing completion. The basement floor should be finished soon as well.

The new meeting hall played a key role in making this year's youth retreat a much more enjoyable experience. To support this project, please consider donating at yrm.org/donate or through the YRM mobile app.





Finishing the lower floor



Cameras get a lift

Biblical Hebrew Word Lesson

הר

Har

Composition: heh, patach, resh

The Hebrew word **Har** (H2022) is a masculine noun that means hill, country, or mountain.

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the **mountain** of Elohim, even to Horeb.

Exodus 3:1

Outreach Program's Current Partners

We recognize our outreach partners for their outstanding dedication to the Truth in their efforts to fulfill the Great Commission. If you are interested in becoming an outreach partner to help us spread the Truth, visit: <http://www.ym.org/outreach> or call us at (573) 896-1000 during normal office hours (M-F, 8:00 am- 4:00 pm.) We will explain how you can join this group committed to spreading the Good News!

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4th Edition



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ELDERTORIAL

The Demas Dropout

An Assembly is healthy and strong when its members are dedicated to living the Truth at all times and situations. But sometimes a believer loses his or her moorings and drifts away. This happens in all Assemblies and ministries, including the Apostle Paul's.

Demas was a "fellow worker" of the Apostle Paul who eventually deserted him. His account is a New Testament caution about the dangers of worldly enticements and the necessity of perseverance in faith.

Demas is mentioned in three of Paul's epistles, which chronologically show his progression from a committed co-worker to someone who abandoned his ministry:

- Philemon 1:24. In this letter (dated around CE 60–62), Paul lists Demas as one of his "fellow workers" alongside esteemed figures like Mark and Luke.
- Colossians 4:14. This letter was written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, and Demas is respectfully cited: "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you." This suggests he was a known and recognized figure.
- 2Timothy 4:10. In Paul's final letter, likely written close to his death (around CE 67), the tone shifts dramatically: "Demas, because he loved this present world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica." The Greek word for "deserted" implies he left Paul in a bind.

The Bible gives no more details about Demas's fate after he went to Thessalonica. His departure is widely interpreted as a spiritual failure and a powerful warning to other believers.

Commentators suggest several possible reasons for his departure, all stemming from

a preference for temporal comfort over the hardships of ministry. They include:

- Fear of persecution. Paul was facing execution under Nero's reign, and Demas may have abandoned him to avoid a similar fate.
- Attraction to worldly pleasures. The phrase "loved this present world" suggests Demas chose material gain, social acceptance, or an easier life over the challenges of serving Yahweh.
- Disillusionment. After over a decade of ministry, he may have become weary of continuous travel, persecution, and sacrifice.

Ultimately, Demas is a biblical caution. Even those who serve faithfully must guard against allowing worldly desires to compromise their faith and commitment.

The desire for safety from persecution, worldly pleasures, material comfort, and an easier way of life are strong inducements to leave Yahweh and go with the world. Such desires led Demas to abandon Paul, who was imprisoned and likely facing execution.

What warnings can modern believers take from the Demas account? The dangers of prioritizing worldly desires over spiritual commitments and the necessity of perseverance in faith amid hardship.

In Acts 14:22 the disciples exhorted the new members to continue in the faith, "and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of Yahweh."

Ultimately, perseverance in the Truth leads to salvation. As Paul admonished, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again," 2Corinthians 5:9.

"Wouldn't the fact that the Messiah had a human mother separate Him from being the same person as His Father? Doesn't that prove a difference? His mother is mentioned four times in Scripture, maybe a little more – not sure.

"Please see Matthew 1:16, 18, 20, 2:11, and 13:55. Mark 6:3, Luke 1:27, 34, 38, 39, 46, 56, 2:5, 16, 19, 34, Acts 1:14. She was of the tribe of Judah, was related to Elizabeth by marriage who was the mother of John the Baptist, who was of the tribe of Levi, of the lineage of the lineage of Aaron.

"After His childhood, Mary is mentioned four times in the records of history. She was present at the marriage in Cana which was 3 months between the baptism of Messiah and the Passover of CE 27, where Messiah wrought His first miracle after His mother called attention to the lack of wine at the Feast. She also sought to speak with him in company with others in the family when He was preaching to a crowd in a country place. She was also present at the impalement and was there commended by the dying Messiah to John. She was also praying in the upper room at Jerusalem after the ascension of Messiah, Acts 1:14.

"My husband and I attend services every Sabbath. We greatly appreciate all the work everyone does. Thank you all for your love of the truth." -VS

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