

A young girl with long brown hair, wearing a white dress and a straw hat with a red flower, is kissing a woman on the cheek. The woman has long dark hair, is wearing a white polka-dot dress and a straw hat, and is smiling. They are in a field of red poppies. A wicker basket is visible in the bottom left corner.

YAIY BEACON

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**The Sign & The Seal
How to Witness
Affections of the Heart
Unequally Yoked?**

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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There are many things that we can claim are important in Scripture, some more so than others. Two things Scripture implies are of extreme importance: the Sign and the Seal. What are the Sign and the Seal? What is the importance behind these, and how do they apply to our walk in the Faith?

The Seal

Let us examine them from Scripture one at a time, starting with the Seal. The Seal is defined in the Book of Revelation. Revelation 7:3 reads, *Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our Elohim on their foreheads.* (*New American Standard Bible*, used throughout unless otherwise noted.)

Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads, Revelation 14:1. These two Scripture verses reveal that the Seal is Yahweh's Name. Yahweh's Name is important. We appreciate the significance of Yahweh's Name, from an exchange He had with Moses at the burning bush.

Then Moses said to Elohim, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The Elohim of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His Name?' What shall I say to them?" And Elohim said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you, Exodus 3:13-14.

The Hebrew word for I AM is **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**, H.1961, *hayah*, pronounced, *haw-yaw*, and literally means to be or to exist, by extension, the self-existent one. The fact that Yahweh's Name means to exist tells us much about His most important property. He has always existed and He will always exist, and all existence is sourced in Him. We find confirmation of this throughout scripture. Following are three examples:

- Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.*
- Isaiah 41:4: *Who has performed and accomplished [it], summoning the generations from the beginning? I, Yahweh, am the first, and with the last. I am He.*
- Isaiah 44:6: *This is what Yahweh says, "He who is the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of armies: I am the first and I am the last, and there is no El besides Me."*

A person's name is the first thing we should know about a person. It is no different with our Heavenly Father. After all, how can one say that they are acquainted with someone if they don't know the person's name?

Consider the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac. They called upon Yahweh by Name and Yahweh called Abraham His friend.

Abraham called upon the Name of Yahweh in Genesis 12:8: *Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Yahweh and called upon the Name of Yahweh.*

Genesis 21:33: *And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the Name of Yahweh, the Everlasting Elohim.*

Isaac built an altar at Beersheba (the well of the oath) where he called on the Name of Yahweh (Gen. 26:25).

Jehoshaphat, a king in Judah, makes mention even, that Yahweh called Abraham, His friend.

Did You not, our Elohim, drive out the inhabitants of this land from Your people Israel, and give it to the descendants of Your friend Abraham forever? 2 Chronicles 20:7.

And Isaiah records Yahweh's attestation to this, saying, *But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend,* Isaiah 41:8.

Even James the brother of our Master confirms this: *And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed Elohim, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called a friend of Elohim,* James 2:23.

Friends know each other by Name! Some will say the Patriarchs did not know Yahweh by Name and they appropriate Exodus 6:3 – *and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as Elohim Almighty, but [by] My Name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them* – to try and establish their conjecture ... suggesting therefore, that we do not need to use (Yahweh's) Name.

However, in the face of other Scriptures which acknowledge the use of His Name in worship, interpretation from but one verse is become subject to scrutiny – especially seeing that Yahweh's Name was called upon even before it was revealed to the patriarchs.

Yahweh's Name was known anciently and, apparently, appropriated. Genesis 4:26 discloses that men began to call upon the Name of Yahweh as early as the third generation of the human species.

Yahweh's Name is so important, that He literally commands us to use It! Where? among the Ten Commandments, we read in Exodus 20:7: *You shall*

not take the Name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him unpunished who takes His Name in vain. "in vain?" This Hebrew word, *shav*, is H.7723 in **Strong's**, which literally means *make useless, desolate or void*. The unused root for the word *Shav* is H.7722 which is the Hebrew word *shoah* meaning to *devastate, destroy, or make waste*. This means that Yahweh is commanding us not to make His Name worthless or useless. There is nothing we can do to make His Name more worthless, than not using it. This is something the Jews have done and excuse it as reverence, employing *Adonai* and *haShem* as substitutes for His Holy and Reverend Name.

Moreover, six-thousand, eight-hundred, and twenty-three times, in most English Bible translations/versions, Yahweh's Name is covered up by employing LORD and one-hundred, thirty-four more times, GOD or at times, Jehovah a presumed sacred name, is used though interestingly, its last two syllables, *hovah*, **Strong's** H.1943, and pronounced, *ho-vaw'*, means ruin and appears as "mischief" in the Old Testament text, which is not very complimentary to Yahweh, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Pagan Titles, a Big NO

In Exodus 23:13, Yahweh commands us not to use pagan deities' names in worship: *Now concerning everything which I have said to you, be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let [them] be heard from your mouth.*

Later, Joshua, advanced in years, exhorted the elders of Israel, saying,

Be very firm, then, to keep and do all that is written in the book of laws of Moses, so that you may not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, in order that you may not associate with these nations, these which remain among you, or mention the name of their gods, or make [anyone] swear [by them], or serve them, or bow down to them. But you are to cling to Yahweh your Elohim, as you have done to this day, Joshua 23:6-8.

Yet despite these warnings, people use pagan deities' names to call upon Yahweh. Some even, upon learning they are doing this, refuse to cease doing so.

Some may ask how they are calling on the names of pagan deities in worship of Yahweh? Well,

Christians have replaced the Name Yahweh with titles of Lord and God, both of which have pagan etymologies.

There are two etymological roots for the word Lord: one biblical, the other more modern. However, neither gives our Heavenly Father His due honor. The more modern word for Lord comes from the Old English *Hlaford* which comes from the earlier word *Hlafweard* which literally means one who guards the loaves. *Hlaf* meaning Bread or loaf and *Weard*, meaning keeper or guardian.

This term does our Heavenly Father great disservice as a lord in the English hierarchy was subservient to a king. Yahweh is King of kings. In the English hierarchy, lords were men who cared for and tended land on behalf of the king. They oversaw the tasks of peasantry on behalf of the king, including guarding the wheat stores that the peasants or slaves gathered for the kingdom. So, as we can see the term 'lord' falls very short of the kingly honor our Father deserves.

The other root of the word lord is actually Hebrew, **Strong's** H. 1167. *Bah'-al* – from H1166; *a master; hence a husband, or (figuratively) owner (often used with another noun in modifications of this latter sense: + archer; + babbler; + bird, captain, chief man, + confederate, + have to do, + dreamer, those to whom it is due, + furious, those that are given to it, great, + hairy, he that hath it, have, + horseman, husband, lord, man, + married, master, person, + sworn, they of.*

The name Baal translated to English is Lord, examples:

- Baalzebub – Lord of the flies (reference to Satan)
- Baal-peor – Lord of the open holes – dung god – carries a very nasty meaning according to Jewish sources).

Judges 2:13 says Israel abandoned Yahweh and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. Also, we read in Jeremiah 23:26-27, the false prophets who prophesied “the deception of their own heart” intended “to make My people forget My Name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My Name for Baal.”

Thus, calling on the Name of Yahweh by replacing it with lord is no different from calling Him *Baal*. Nevertheless, it is prophesied “*And it will come about on that day,*” declares Yahweh, *that you will call Me Ishi (my husband) and no longer call Me my Baali (my Baal),* Hosea 2:16.

There is another title that people call Yahweh that

finds its root in paganism – the word, god which has a rather complex etymology. From **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**, H.1410, we learn *Gad*, pronounced *gawd*, comes from H.1464, *guwd*, pronounced *goode*. A primary root [akin to 1413]: to *crowd* upon, i.e., attack and is rendered in the Scriptures as *invade, overcome*. H.1413, *gadad*, pronounced *gaw-dad*, is also a primary root, to *crowd*; also to *gash* (as if by pressing into (think, hand-to-hand combat), and is rendered in the Scriptures severally as *assemble themselves by troops, gather themselves together in troops, cut themselves*

Gad was born to Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, Leah so named him, of whom she said, “How fortunate” (Gen. 30:11), literally, “*with fortune.*” (Other English versions read, “*Fortune has come.*”) This is a link to the pan-semitic Canaanite deity of ‘fortune’ called *Gad* which in Hebrew has the same root meaning as the son of Israel and tribe of *Gad*. This is further confirmed by the same root word for the tribe of *Gad* being mentioned in reference to the pagan deity *Gad* in Isaiah 65:11: *But as for you who abandon Yahweh, who forget My holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune, and fill a jug of mixed wine for Destiny.*

Considering that Leah was raised in a family of pagan worshipers (Gen. 31:19), it comes as no surprise that she should attribute the birth of a son to the deity of fortune.

A second, more modern etymological root for god comes from the Germanic/German word *Gott*. *Gott's* roots are found in the gothic word, *Gaut* – the name of national and ancestral deity of the Goth's/Swedes and turns out to be a reference and alternate name to the Norse chief deity, *Odin*, the father of *Thor* after which the fifth day of our week, Thursday, is named. Unintentionally, and without realizing it, people call upon, and use these pagan names when they say the words, the Lord God ... technically saying, “*Baal Odin*” or “*Baal Gad*,” but names of the *baalim*.

From all of this we can see that people have been taking the Name of Yahweh in vain by calling on the names of other mighty ones. The 3rd commandment may just be, perhaps, the most transgressed commandment and people don't even realize it!

His Name is Salvation

One of the sad realities is that so many people have forgotten or refuse to use His Name, despite

the fact that in His Name is salvation, as it is written:

“And it will come about that everyone who calls on the Name of Yahweh will be saved ...” (Joel 2:32a) and reiterated again,

“And it shall be that everyone who calls on the Name of Yahweh will be saved” (Acts 2:21).

Yahshua our Master and Savior came in the Name of Yahweh! *I have come in My Father's Name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him,* John 5:43. This is not just figurative, it is a literal statement as the Hebrew Name of Yahshua literally means Yahweh is Salvation!

This is confirmed even further by the testimony of the Apostles in Acts 4:10-12:

Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Yahshua Messiah the Nazarene, whom you impaled, whom Elohim raised from the dead – by this [Name] this man stands here before you in good health. He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, [but] which became the chief corner [stone]. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other Name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved. Yahshua's Name saves us because Yahweh's Name is in Him. The Name of Yahweh is essential, not only because salvation is wrought in His Name, but by His Name we are also called – Everyone who is called by My Name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made, Isaiah 43:7.

So, it's clear Scripturally that Yahweh's Name sets us apart as His people, much like the Sabbath day sets us apart as His people.

Yahweh's Name is a Seal – a seal of authority, which in conventional terms, typically contains the name, title, and domain of the official, e.g., president or governor, who authorizes a decree or document to show its validity and the source of its authority and their jurisdiction or territory as in, President of the United States. With respect to Yahweh, His seal could represent authority, as in Name; His title, “Creator;” His territory, the “heavens and earth.” Indeed, Yahweh's full Seal may very well read, “Yahweh Creator of Heaven and Earth” and may include His Sign between Himself and His people – namely, the Sabbath.

The Sabbath, an Identifying Sign

Sabbath is a Sign, between Yahweh and His people that He has ordained from creation.

And so the heavens and the earth were completed,

and all their heavenly lights. By the seventh day Elohim completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made, Genesis 2:1-3.

The seventh day serves as a memorial of Yahweh's creation. Later, at Sinai, He commands His people to observe and keep the seventh day holy.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your Elohim; [in it] you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave, or your cattle, or your resident who stays with you. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; for that reason Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy, Exodus 20:8-11.

But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, “You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for [this] is a Sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am Yahweh Who sanctifies you. Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes It shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on It, that person shall be cut off from among his people. For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to Yahweh; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall surely be put to death. So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath through their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a Sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased [from labor], and was refreshed,” Exodus 31:13-17.

Two times in the aforementioned verses, Yahweh calls the Sabbath a Sign! This Sign, when observed, shows the world Whom we worship! We worship Yahweh the Creator of the heavens and the earth!

The Sabbath is extremely important to Yahweh, and may just be the most repeated command in Scripture. This also supports our contention that Yahweh made the world in six literal days, otherwise we could not observe the weekly Sabbath.

In many languages among the peoples of the world, the word for Saturday is a derivative of the Hebrew *shabbat*, proving that Saturday, and not

Sunday, is *shabbat* and debunks the notion of ‘a lunar sabbath’.

Following are a list of some language/cultures which illustrate derivations of the Hebrew, *Shabbat*: Arabic, *Sabet*; Armenian, *Shabat*; Bosnian, *Subota*; Bulgarian, *Sabota*; Corsican, *Sàbatu*; Croatian, *Subota*; Czech, *Sobota*; Georgian, *Sabati*; Greek, *Savvato*; Indonesian, *Sabtu*; Italian, *Sabato*; Latin, *Sabbatum*; Polish, *Sobota*; Portuguese, *Sábado*; Romanian, *Sambata*; Romanian, *Sambata*; Russian, *Subbota*; Serbian, *Subota*; Slovak, *Sobota*; Slovene, *Sobota*; Somali, *Sabti*; Spanish, *Sabado*; Sudanese, *Saptu*; Ukranian: *Subota*.

Yahweh’s cares so much about Sabbath that He even tested the Israelites to make sure they would obey it using the manna He provided as a training ground for Sabbath observance.

In Exodus 16:4-7, 22-29, we read:

Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, so that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.” So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, “At evening you will know that Yahweh has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of Yahweh, for He hears your grumblings against Yahweh; and what are we, that you grumble against us? ... Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, then he said to them, “This is what Yahweh meant: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to Yahweh. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning.” So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not stink nor was there a maggot in it. Then Moses said, “Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to Yahweh; today you will not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, [the] Sabbath, there will be none.” Yet it came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. Then Yahweh said to Moses, “How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? See, Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; for that reason, He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain, everyone, in his place; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day.

In this narrative, Yahweh was both training His

people to observe the Sign of the Sabbath and testing them to see if they would obey. They sadly failed that test. But we don’t have to. The Sabbath, after all is for our benefit, as It was made for man (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was not meant to be a burden, but a help to us and it is so sad, that this is the command Yahweh says to remember. Yet, it is also the command the world has forgotten and by extension, their Creator.

Proper Observance

So, if the Sabbath is a Sign between us and Yahweh and It sets us apart, how do we properly keep It? This answer is much simpler than either the world or the Jews would have you believe. Some would call you Jewish for observing Sabbath, but remember that Yahshua said the Sabbath was made for man, and not specifically for the Jews. The idea the Sabbath is difficult to keep may stem from misunderstandings of the Scripture, like for example, certain of the Jews challenging one whom Yahshua healed on the Sabbath for his following the Master’s instruction, “Take up your pallet and walk” (John 5:10-12). Many were such of man-made traditions the Jews added to protect the Sabbath from being violated, but with the outcome that made the Sabbath a burden. (Read Acts 15:10.)

Little wonder, Yahshua upbraided Pharisees and scribes, charging them with transgressing the commandment of Yahweh and teaching as doctrine the precepts of men for the sake of their traditions (Matt. 15, 6, 9) and even, elevating these above the Law of Yahweh.

Yahshua further said, in Mark 7:9-13,

He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of Elohim in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death’; but you say, ‘If a man says to [his] father or [his] mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given [to Elohim]),’ you no longer permit him to do anything for [his] father or [his] mother; [thus] invalidating the word of Elohim by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.

If Yahshua took issue with this, so should we. So, how then do we properly observe Sabbath? It is quite easy to understand. We are to abstain from labor/work and to focus on Yahweh and congregate with like-minded brethren. It is important for us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together on the Sabbath (Heb. 10:24-25).

Yet, is it not unlawful to do good on the Sabbath?
And a man [was there] whose hand was withered. And they questioned Yahshua, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? so that they might accuse Him. And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," Matthew 12:10-12.

Sometimes, an ox will fall into a ditch ... yes, on the Sabbath. Emergencies happen, as when a lady may need help when her car is parked on the side of road, with the hood up and she, stand peering down into the engine compartment, with her hands on her hips wondering, What do I do now? Helping in these moments actually fulfills the spirit of the Sabbath of breaking the yoke of that burden. Perhaps, the Apostle Paul may have even had this in mind when he wrote, *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith,* Galatians 6:10.

Briefly comprehended, a prescription for properly keeping the Sabbath is found in Isaiah 58: 13-14:

If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your [own] pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy [day] of Yahweh honorable, and honor It, desisting from your [own] pleasure and speaking [your own] word, then you will take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you [with] the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

Yahweh shows us the Spirit of Sabbath observance in this verse. It is to be a day of complete focus on the spiritual, a day to spend with Yahweh and the other brethren; a day abandoning the cares of the world and the affairs of this life. After all, our time spent in this life should be but preparatory toward experiencing the coming Kingdom, and a Sabbath that shall never end (Heb. 4:9-11); that time when we shall rest from our labors, our works then testifying to our profession (Rev. 15:13).

Conclusion

Regarding the Sabbath, a man once posed a question concerning Its proper observance amongst the saints. He asked, "If Yahweh can't trust you for twenty-four hours to serve Him properly, how can He trust you for eternity?" For sure, if one can't be faithful in little, why should he be thought able to be faithful in much, Luke 16:10? And concerning the Seal, we reiterate, there is no other Name (but

Yahshua) under heaven that has been given among men by Whom we must be saved, for there is no salvation in anyone else (Acts 4:12).

Admittedly, there are some who have the Sign, but not the Seal or otherwise, the Seal but not the Sign. But from Scripture, we understand that the Sign and the Seal of Yahweh are His Sabbath and His Name, respectively, and Both are become the Means by which they who are obedient to the second, third and fourth commandments (Exod. 20:3-5a, 7-11) are identified as His peculiar people.

The Name and the Sabbath – these two, the easiest to acknowledge and observe and yet, the hardest for most people to receive and accept. People make excuses for refusing to observe and keep these statutes, not appreciating that in disregarding the third and fourth commandments, they are transgressing the first and second and, moreover, are assuming to themselves that place of making themselves some mighty one – even thinking and acting as if Yahweh is altogether such as they (Psa. 50:21) – in a sense, making Yahweh into their image or, in a word, becoming idolatrous.

Yahweh through His prophets has declared who He is. In fact, no fewer than eleven times, He has asserted in Isaiah, chapter 45-47, that beside Himself, there is none other.

Yahshua, too, and has told us what is required of us: Obedience – it's how we manifest our love toward Yahweh.

In John 14:15, Yahshua said, *"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*

Again in 1 John 5:3, we read, *For this is the love of Yahweh, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.*

In Luke 6:46, Yahshua asks the question, *"Why do you call Me, 'Master, Master,' and do not do what I say?"* Indeed, how can any presume to call himself His, if he doesn't obey Him? This is a question people need to ask themselves, because His Name is salvational and His Sabbath is given as a blessing to benefit man and one needs Both.

But one needs Both – for the Seal contains His Name and expresses His dominion or jurisdiction, and the Sign testifies to the creation. By embracing Both, we are set apart by Yahweh and if we hold steadfast in these until the end, we shall be Sealed in our foreheads and enter into His kingdom – the kingdom of Yahweh, the Creator of the heavens and the earth!

He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

~ Deacon Lucas Bentley

How to Witness



“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high ... Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth ... Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name ... of Yahshua the Messiah for the remission of sins ... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amein.” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; Matt. 28:20). (*King James Version* used throughout.)

A Mandate to Witness

So, there you have it – the mandate to witness, to testify of what’s been seen, heard, and personally experienced, even as the Psalmist beckoned, saying,

Come [and]hear, all ye that fear Eloha, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul, Psalm 66:16.

Nevertheless, as it is in all the economies of Yahweh, there is process and order and so, preparation becomes the principal thing. And while there are many who assume of their own initiative to run and prophesy, it may just be that Yahweh has neither sent them, nor spoken to them. Of them it might be asked, “Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?” (2 Sam. 18:22).

Yet, many still run – speaking a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of Yahweh; erring in vision; stumbling in judgment; compassing sea and land, making to themselves proselytes and among whom, they judge for reward; teach for hire; divine for money; and of whom, they make merchandise ... all the while, shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against the other with smooth and feigned, fair speeches and great swelling words of vanity couched in damnable heresies, doctrines of demons and lies-in-hypocrisy.

But alas! “it shall come to pass in that day, that the[se] prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision ...” (Zec. 13:4). For as one preacher asserted, “Yahweh never sent a man out, just to send a second to correct the mistakes of the first.”

“... Let Us Wait ...”

In Romans, chapter 12, verse 7, we read peculiar words: “Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering ...”

“*Let us wait*” are words italicized in the Authorized Version and indicates *they* were supplied by the

translators. And we may understand “let us wait” in terms of having two connotations. “Let us wait” can be understood in the context of Yahshua’s didactic in Luke 19:13 in which He says, “occupy till I come” – an exposition of the parable of the pounds in which He speaks of a nobleman (Himself) going into a far country to receive a kingdom and preparatory to his departure, divided his assets among his servants to increase his substance (“occupy”) that upon his return, he might have what he distributed to them plus the gain exacted from their labor (Luke 19:12-18).

But “*let us wait on our ministering*” proposes also, a secondary meaning: deferring the work of the ministry, tarrying until we, too, have been endowed with Power from on High, not unlike 120 others who remained sequestered ten days in an upper room until they should have received Power and a mandate to go forth and witness. “*Let us wait on our ministering*” may as well, imply remaining still, under the tutelage of tutors and governors until the time appointed for our release of the Father; until we are equipped to go forth to make full proof of our ministry.

We can surely appreciate that even in the secular world, a graduated doctor of medicine or doctor of osteopathy serves both an internship and then, a residency under the tutelage of supervisory physicians and clinicians before he is released to inaugurate his own practice.

The Assembly, a Seminary

And here, in the Assembly is seminary in which one receives his training as a witness. I recall, back in the day when I was in the first day church, that it was assumed that just because a man was white-haired and elderly, that these made for him a credential to be a leader, and to sit as a member of the presbytery. Or, because one was credentialed and certified by the State Department of Education to teach kindergarten through 8th grade, she was qualified to teach children’s church or a Sunday school class.

But what does the spirit of the Scripture answer to these things? The Apostle Paul writing to his protégé Timothy, had somewhat to say concerning proper credentialing of ministry. In his first letter to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 1-13, he affirms that if a man desires the office of a spiritual overseer, he desires a good work. (Incidentally, in the previous chapter, he disallows “a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man,” 1 Tim. 2:11-12.)

In that third chapter, among the qualifiers necessary for a man to be credentialed to serve as a member of the presbytery (elders and deacons), he declares that the candidate must be “blameless” (verse 2); “not a novice” (verse 6); “have a good report” (verse 7); and, “first be proved” (verse 10).

Now, this is not so hard to understand. It would be unthinkable for any sovereign nation that has a standing army, to dispatch troops into battle immediately after its soldiery had left the recruiting office.

No, the armed services first put their troops through a rigorous and vigorous basic training, and then several more months through AIT, Advance Individual Training.

My elder son spent an enlistment of four years in the Navy, and I remember him saying, that recruiters are eager to enlist young men and women, promising them they’ll get to see the world, then when once they get to boot camp, the drill instructors are just as eager to weed the recruits out of the service – guaranteeing that only, the very best are readied for service.

Well, again we reference what was earlier observed: preparation is indeed, the principal thing.

Preparation, the Principal Thing

Study to shew thyself approved unto Eloha, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth, 2 Timothy 2:15. Why? so that we will be ready always to give an answer to any who ask us a reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15); so that we will know how we ought to answer every man (Col. 4:6).

Let’s break this down. “Study” may be understood in terms of giving diligence to, becoming ready always; knowing how to answer. Granted, being ready and knowing how does not necessarily require providing an answer, only certaining that one is prepared to do so.

You will recall that when Messiah commissioned the twelve, entrusting to them authority against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (Matt. 10:1), that He said to them before He released them to go out into every village and city whereto He would afterward come, they should into whatever city or town enter, first inquire who in it was worthy to receive the Message (Matt. 10:11-13).

Being fervent in spirit and zealously affected toward delivering the Message are not alone qualifiers for delivering the Message. We should

discern beforehand who will, and who will not, receive the Message, tempering both our fervor and zeal with knowledge – lest we give occasion to the enemies of Truth to blaspheme His Word and then turn to rend us (Matt. 7:6). And the reason? because as Paul observes in 2 Thessalonians 3:2, “all men have not faith” and not all men, upon hearing the Message will embrace It by faith.

For sure, being fervent in spirit and zealously affected toward what is good, acceptable, and perfect are good attributes to possess and are also, prerequisites to sharing the Message.

In Acts, chapter 18, verses 24-25, we read of one whom the Scripture tributes with having the following credentials:

- eloquent in speech;
- mighty in the Scriptures;
- fervent in the spirit
- teaching diligently the things of the Master.

But this one knew only the baptism of John. Might we, who have perhaps even, more knowledge than he at that time, conclude of him that it had been better for him to have *waited on his ministering* – not in the sense of occupying till Yahshua should come, but in the sense of deferral ... sitting under the tutelage of tutors and governors until the time appointed for his release to *wait on his ministering*.

Acts, chapter 9, provides us with a second example. We read of our second subject who himself, had experienced that it is a futile thing to resist Yahweh, and that the more one kicks against the pricks, the more grievous the pricks become. He, what with doing many things contrary to the Name of Yahshua, like

- breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of this Sect of the Nazarene;
- bringing them bound to Jerusalem and shutting up many of the saints in prison;
- punishing them in every synagogue, even compelling them weak in this faith to blaspheme that worthy Name by Whom they were thought redeemed, saved, and delivered;
- and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them to strange cities and was of late, come to Damascus for that purpose; and
- giving his voice against them when they were put to death,

confessed of himself that he was “before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious” (1 Tim. 1: 13).

In Galatians 1:17-18, the Apostle tells us that sometime following his conversion, he went into Arabia ... where, is not exactly known, perhaps to a desert place, like Qumran, for the purpose of becoming further prepared by the Holy Spirit for the ministry on which he would subsequently embark. It was perhaps, while he was secluded in a solitary place, that he had “come to visions and revelations of the Master ... and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Cor. 12:1, 4).

Must not Strive, Gentle, Apt to Teach, Patient

And the servant of Yahweh must not strive; but be gentle unto all [men], apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if Eloha peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And [that] they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will, 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

“ *consider what I say; and the Master give you understanding in all things,* ” -2 Timothy 2:7

Let’s underscore these words: “... the servant of Yahweh must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ...”

These words preclude debates, contentions, strivings about words to no profit that inevitably lead to, and usually end with, wrath, backbiting, swellings, and tumults (2 Cor. 12:20; Titus 3:9). If you want the person to whom you are witnessing to become one (*echad*) with you – that is, one in mind, speech, and judgment (1 Cor. 1:10). For how “can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos. 3:3).

So, in our being gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them, we’ll have to respect their exercise of free will and even conclude our didactic, expressing that attitude, by saying something, like, *consider what I say; and the Master give you understanding in all things, 2 Timothy 2:7* – afterward encouraging them to, “prove all things ...” (1 Thess. 5:21), as a noble Berean, who wouldn’t just take the word of one witness (the Apostle Paul’s), but sought out a second (the Torah).

This, incidentally, considering what is said and proving all things that are said, is process and order and precedes one becoming fully persuaded in his own mind (Rom. 14:5) and necessary, too, because he who is persuaded against his will, may be of the same opinion still.

Speaking the Truth in Love

James and John, the sons of Zebedee – and aptly named the sons of thunder (Boangeres ... *sons of commotion*, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, G.993) – itinerating with the Master in a village of the Samaritans, were refused accommodations by the residents there, and queried of the Master, saying, “Master, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Eliyah did?” (Luke 9:54). Note well, the Master’s reply: “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of” (Luke 9:55).

None of us were there in the first century when the Record of the Brit Chadashah was being experienced. But given the tenor with which the messengers of the Evangel spoke to their hearers, we may have cause to wonder whether communicating the Message was always void of striving, and delivered gently, patiently and whether they to whom the Message was entrusted, were always so very much apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

For example: We read in Acts, chapter 13, of Paul and Barnabas going into the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia on the Sabbath and sitting down. They did not presume to address the assembly until invited to do so. After the reading of the Torah and the haftarah, the ruler of the Assembly invited these two, if they had any word of exhortation, the liberty to address the gathering (Acts 13:15).

Seems cordial and hospitable, enough ... but then, we are left to wonder if Paul’s citing words taken the Prophet Habakkuk, *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you*, Acts 13:41 might not be regarded as somewhat provocative and further aggravated, by his dismissal of them as being unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46).

As we said before, none of us were there and while we need be careful not to fill in the blanks left us of the Scripture narrative, nevertheless, what’s written is written, and thus must be thought necessary, for our learning and our admonition.

Much later, when the Apostle was at the Aeropagus of Athens awaiting his company’s arrival from Thessaly, he observed the epicurean and stoicks’ devotions, asserting to them, “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious” (Acts 17:22) – perhaps in our day and time, as it proved so in his day and time, probably not the best way in which to win friends and influence one’s adversaries.

Again, none of us were present – neither at the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, nor on the hill of the Aeropagus – to appreciate the dynamics occurring there. But for sure, such a tenor of approach is better reserved as the evangelist’s last resort rather than his first recourse!

Before proceeding, we want to spend a little time on these four words, “those that oppose themselves” (2 Tim. 2:25) – that is, those who embrace error; those who array themselves against the Truth; those who so choose to set themselves at *variance* with, at *enmity* against, and *contrary* to Truth.

We have a high priest Who was, and yet is – so long as mercy is rejoicing against judgment – able to have compassion on them that are ignorant, perhaps even willingly ignorant until they have occasion to hear the Truth, and out of the way.

And so, if they to whom we deliver the Message are dull of hearing the Message – perhaps even, after the first and second exposition – we must not assume the posture of Moses who, in speaking unadvisedly with his lips (Psa. 106:33), was not later able to move the Holy One to forgive his indiscretion by allowing him admittance into the Promised Land (Deut. 3:25-26).

Indeed, if others are slow to see the Truth, we must exercise care in not prematurely becoming weary and impatient. Let’s consider just how slow we might have been and maybe, still are, slow to receive the Truth.

We must not hold others up to public reproach and scorn but instead, if it be possible and as much lies within our abilities, be set about the business of patiently instructing them; calmly, gently, showing them what the truth is and never with such retort as that which got Moses into trouble, saying, “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this Rock?” (Num. 20:10).

Instead, let us consider that speaking our counsel gently, patiently and clothed upon with love, will go farther in drawing others from the darkness of their error into the marvelous light of Truth.

For if we make the other angry, we’ll also struggle to rule our own spirits and thus frustrate the grace of Eloha and cause the other to despise what might have been a gesture of Yahweh’s mercy toward him.

Always, it remains the prerogative of the Set Apart Spirit to challenge people’s sensibilities, and we must exercise care in showing ourselves exemplary of the believer in word, in behavior, in love, in spirit in faith, and in purity... yes, using words when necessary, but so few as necessary, to

compel the other to consider what is said, and then committing what was said to the workmanship of the Set Apart Spirit to enlighten, inspire, and reveal. For saying much more than necessary risks entering into collusion with the adversary who'll see to it, the other's understanding is kept darkened.

Remember this: Ours is the business to lead another from the broad way of his error to the narrow way of Truth – a business that cannot be facilitated so long as we take the tact of becoming contentious ourselves. “And the servant of Yahweh must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ...” – sound, wholesome words, and best employed in presenting the Message.

As Much as Lies in You

One thing is certain: In our witnessing, we will discover the Truth of, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you ...” (Rom. 12:18).

Sometimes, we experience sorrow of them of whom we might have rejoiced ... if, we had in our witnessing the Message, made sure that we had ruled our spirits and brought into captivity our emotions and exercised our fervor and zeal in a manner that might have produced a “yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of Yahweh” (2 Cor. 1:20) response. But instead, that which might have been decent, orderly, and good to the use of edifying, is become a disappointment ... and hence, a discouragement. And not only so, but perhaps irreparably, those whom we would convert is made to become an exercise in which our labor was bestowed in vain and they, made to become an enemy of the Truth.

For this reason, the Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, penned the words, “Speaking the truth in love ... maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:15, 16).

Quite, then, if in our witnessing to others; if in our being apt to teach those who oppose themselves; if in our being ready to give an answer to all them that would ask us a reason for the hope that is in us ... if a part of that being ready should include, tempering our fervor and our zeal with knowing what and how to answer, we might actually encourage interest and dialogue with others.

Certainly, there will be some to whom we will not, even with a properly-tempered fervor and zeal, be able to witness because of their *foolish questions, contentions, debates, and inclinations toward strivings about words to no one's profit.*

And just as we are commanded to mark and avoid and withdraw fellowship from those of our

own company who will neither behave themselves nor behold what manner of persons they ought to be ... until perhaps, they come to repentance and acknowledge they have but opposed themselves, how much the more ought we to mark and avoid and withdraw from them who after the first and second exposition, still persist in the error of their way. Else, we might unwittingly permit our own good manners to become corrupted with their association.

Conclusion

So, now we come to the conclusion of how to witness. In our approach, may we suggest initially being short on asserting declarative statements, and long on asking rhetorical questions, like for example, first asking,

- “Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?” before asserting the declarative statement, “I tell you, ‘Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish’” or asking,
- “Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?” before asserting the declarative statement, “I tell you, ‘Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish’” (Luke 13:2-5).

Questions, we say, which are purposed to inspire introspection and reflection that might just evoke an acknowledgement and conviction that precedes a contrite repentance and confession.

Questions, we say, which are purposed to inspire introspection and reflection that might just evoke one to leave her waterpot and walk away with the Well of Living Water and return to her place and saying to any who would listen, “Come, see a Man, Which told me all things that ever I did” (John 4:28).

For who among us, wouldn't want to experience that which is expressed in Isaiah 65:1: “I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not ...”

Who wouldn't want such fruit to remain, to his spiritual account, of finding and employing a better how with which to witness the *what?*

Again, we propose the key: “... must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.”

~ Elder John W. Reece



AFFECTIONS OF THE HEART

It is said that the source of our affections lies within our hearts. But this is humanity's central problem: *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?* Jeremiah 17:4. (*New American Standard Bible*, 1995, used throughout.)

Therein lies the problem, and figuratively speaking, what's required is a heart transplant.

At the beginning, because Adam and Eve yielded to the subtlety of Satan, what had been a paradise was cursed as a thorny and thistly world. And from that time until now, man has not trusted Yahweh but has instead forsaken the instructions of his Creator and looked to himself, declining to sensual desire with sin, and the destruction of much good, become the outcome.

Prioritizing Our Affections

Some years ago, we conducted a Bible study on the topic of "Affections" using a resource called **The New Topical Textbook (TNTT)**, which considered both the most important place upon which to set our affections and the worst possible place (Col. 3:1-2).

Our inquiry begins with Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verses 3-6:

O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do [it] (i.e., commandments, statutes, judgments), vss. 1-2, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers, has promised you, [in] a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our Elohim, Yahweh is one! You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

Listening and being mindful of Yahweh's commands helps us understand what it truly means to love Yahweh, our Elohim, with all our hearts, souls (better rendered as "beings"), and might. We are living beings, not beings with immortal souls. (Send for our Mini-Study, **Do You Have an Immortal Soul?**)

The second Scripture passage supporting the aforementioned from the **TNTT** is Mark 12:28-30:

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them (the Sadducees, verse 18) well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Yahshua answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! YAHWEH OUR ELOHIM IS ONE ELOHIM; AND YOU SHALL LOVE YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these.

Essentially, what Yahshua said was that in the coming Kingdom, as well as in this present time, these two commandments were supreme above all – even paramount above offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:33).

Again, to reiterate, loving Yahweh with all of our heart is giving attendance to the commandments, statutes, and judgments He gives (Deut. 6:1-3). Yahweh further states that these are not beyond our reach today and will extend for a thousand generations, or in other words, forever (Deut. 7:9; 1 Chron. 16:14-17).

The Commandments (Not Just Ten)

The **TNTT** rightly affirms our affections should be set upon the commandments, statutes, and judgments (not just the 10 Commandments) of Yahweh, and offers the following proof texts:

The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward, Psalm 19:8-11.

My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times. ... O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. ... How sweet are Your words to my taste! [Yes, sweeter] than honey to my mouth! ... My soul keeps Your testimonies, and I love them exceedingly, Psalm 119:20, 97, 103, 167.

These verses were expressly chosen in the **TNTT** to highlight that keeping Yahweh's laws, testimonies, and ordinances was at the forefront of the author's affections, as it should be for us. These had a heart after Yahweh, and so should our beings ... if also, we want to be Yahweh's servants.

Therefore, there is a great reward for keeping the commandments. Yahshua said there is eternal life for those keeping the commandments of Yahweh (Matt. 19:17).

As a review, let us look at the specific renderings of the words **highlighted** in the afore-mentioned Scripture verses:

- **Precepts** (H6490 *piqqud* /pik-kood): regulatory instructions for behavior.
- **Commands** (H4687 *mitsvah*/mits-vaw; past tense, commanded, H6680 *tsavah* / tsaw-vaw): authoritative instructions.
- **Ordinances/Judgments** (H4941 *mishpat* /mish-pawt): authoritative orders from Yahweh, with the latter as an assessment of a matter in a legal way.
- **Laws** (H8451 *torah*/to-raw): instructions.
- **Words** (H565) *emrah*/em-raw: commandment, speech, word
- **Statutes** (H2708 *chuqqah*/khook-kaw; the singular is H2706 *choq* /khoke): instructive and basic regulative decrees.
- **Testimonies** (H5713 *edah*/ay-daw; the singular is H5715 *eduwth*/ay-dooth) are



equated to witnesses of important things that are affirmed to be true.

All Scripture is inspired by Elohim and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of Elohim may be adequate, equipped for every good work, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

Obedience to all **These** is what Yahweh requires. In the Kingdom, Yahweh's expectation is that all should learn **These** (Isa. 2).

Thus, considering that "all Scripture is inspired by Elohim" (1 Tim. 3:16), and recognizing that when the Apostle Paul wrote these words, the only texts available were the Hebrew **Tanach**, which comprises the **Torah** (the Law), the **Nevi'im** (the Prophets), and the **Ketuvim** (the Writings).

Much later, the Evangelists, the Acts, the various letters to the Assemblies, and the Revelation of Yahshua Messiah collectively formed the **Brit Hadashah** (the New Testament), which was later included in the canon of Scripture. What we find, however, in the New Testament literature are many citations of Its authors, including Yahshua, from the **Tanach** as a second witness to Yahweh's Truth. Today, we have both the **Tanakh** and the **Brit Hadasha** (the New Covenant, in a very real sense, "renewed").

House(s) of Worship

Anciently, when the temple was standing, it was called the House of Sacrifice and Prayer (2 Chron. 7:12; Isa. 56:7), and where Yahweh had placed His Name (1 Chron. 22:19, 29:16).

Today, individually and corporately, we are being built as the temple of Yahweh (Eph. 2:20-22). To this end, the Pastoral Epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus supply us, as members of the Assembly, with guidance on how to behave ourselves in the House of Yahweh (1 Tim. 3:15), Whose House we are (Heb. 3:6). Yahweh's praise, therefore, should be continually in our mouths (Psa. 34:1).

Nevertheless, there are corporate worship

and prayer places where the presbytery engages with members and arrange for the sites of holy convocations every Sabbath and during the three sojourning feasts. (Request the free In-Depth study, entitled ***Biblical Holy Days***).

And because Yahshua promises to be in our midst (Matt. 18:20) – whether we are few or many, or even alone – when at all possible, we should be in attendance with brethren at an Assembly of Yahweh (Heb. 10:24-25). (Visit our ***International Assemblies*** online to find a location near you.)

Indeed, our affections should be directed toward gathering in the place where He has established His Name:

- *Yahweh, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells, Psalm 26:8.*
- *One thing I have asked from Yahweh, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Yahweh and to meditate in His temple, Psalm 27:4.*
- *How lovely are Your dwelling places, O Yahweh of hosts! My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of Yahweh; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living Elohim, Psalm 84:1-2.*

And, as well, provide for the continuing maintenance of a central place for worship and prayer,

Moreover, in my delight in the house of my Elohim, the treasure I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my Elohim, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple, 1 Chronicles 29:3. (Our in-depth ***Temple Tenth*** booklet explains how Yahweh continues to build His spiritual temple today, specifically among and within His people.)

The People

The Apostle Peter observed that Yahweh accepts all nations if they are willing to do His will (Acts 10:34-35). By coming into a knowledge of the Truth, the nations can become saints unto Yahweh. And though their numbers may represent a small number today, they can, and should grow – “the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, caus[ing] the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love ... the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Master ... Messiah Yahshua Himself being the corner stone” (Eph. 4:16, 2:21, 20).

Those who are with us should be for us, and we for them – being devoted to one another in brotherly love; giving preference to one another in honor (Rom. 12:10).

The Scriptures supplies us with examples of this devotion:

For this reason we have been comforted. And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be [the] truth. His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you, 2 Corinthians 7:13-16.

But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing [mother] tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the evangel of Elohim but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8.

Let no one seek his own [good], but that of his neighbor, 1 Corinthians 10:24. Giving preference to one another means that we don't seek what adds to our profit but rather, what accrues to the profit and interests of others (1 Cor. 10:33; Phil. 2:4). By doing so, we build rather than tear down.

Let it never be said that we played a part in tearing down Yahweh's temple; instead, let it be known that we contributed toward building it up.

Heavenly Things

The New Topical Textbook is not remiss in telling us to set our affections on heavenly things.

Therefore if you have been raised up with Messiah, keep seeking the things above, where Messiah is, seated at the right hand of Elohim. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth, Colossians 3:1-2.

Truly, if we are fulfilling the requirements of the Law, we will not be walking according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward Elohim; for it does not subject itself to the Law of Elohim, for it is not even able [to do so]; and those that are in the flesh cannot please Elohim, Romans 8:5-8.

The flesh and the Spirit are opposed to each other, as it is written:

For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please, Galatians 5:17.

Though we seek eternal life, it is only granted to those who overcome this world and the evil one. Yahshua declared He had done so (John 16:33) and encouraged us likewise to do so.

Becoming Zealously Engaged

For zeal for Your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me, Psalm 69:9.

Righteous are You, O Yahweh, and upright are Your judgments. You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness. My zeal has consumed me, because my adversaries have forgotten Your words. Your word is very pure, therefore Your servant loves it. I am small and despised, [yet] I do not forget Your precepts. Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth. Trouble and anguish have come upon me, [yet] Your commandments are my delight. Your testimonies are righteous forever; give me understanding that I may live, Psalm 119:137-144. (emphasis, ours)

Today, many disregard Yahweh's Words. Nevertheless, Yahshua reminds us that MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF ELOHIM, Matthew 4:4, (Deut. 8:3). Hence, we have a zeal to share and to promote His Word, encouraging people to stop sinning and return to Yahweh, as Yahshua Who was zealously engaged, taught the people of His time, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

Yahshua Gives Access to The Father

Because Yahshua is the Mediator between the Father and us – *Yahshua said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me, John 14:6* – our affection is necessarily set on Yahshua. For this reason, therefore, we regard His saying,

- *If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate [i.e., loves less than] his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple, Luke 14:26.*
- *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves*

son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me, Matthew 10:37.

He, Whose blood cleanses and washes us of our past sins, and Who is the essence and personification of Yahweh, has provided us access to His Father and our Father.

If we genuinely love Him, we are given not just a path to the Father, but also promises of blessings:

Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him [securely] on high, because he has known My Name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My Salvation, Psalm 91:14-16.

Consequently, salvation is discovered in and through Messiah Yahshua, who embodies the Father's Name. (Request your free In-Depth booklet called *The Mistaken J.*)

Don't Let Affection Grow Cold

Concerning the Exodus account of Israel's miraculous deliverance from the pursuing Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds), this observation is given in Psalm 106:12-13,

Then they believed His words; they sang His praise. They quickly forgot His works; they did not wait for His counsel.

It's a sad example of the human condition: to be provided Yahweh's mercies and graces, only to forget and return to the vomit and mire of one's fleshly ways (2 Pet. 2:20-22). Unfortunately, this has an adverse and cumulative effect on those who backslide.

Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold, Matthew 24:12.

Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, expressed that their return to pagan practices was adversely affecting him.

But now that you have come to know Elohim, or rather to be known by Elohim, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. I beg of you, brethren, become as I [am], for I also [have become] as you [are]. You have done me no wrong; but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the evangel to you the first time; and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of Elohim, as Messiah Yahshua [Himself].

Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? Galatians 4:9-16.

Yahshua, too, had to address the lackluster affection in Revelation 2:4 among the brethren of Ephesus, saying, *But I have [this] against you, that you have left your first love.*

Affection and love are equivalent terms, and without which, we are left with little of nothing.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have [the gift of] prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed [the poor], and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. (emphasis, ours)

And yet, there is an affection set against Yahweh.

Warning Against Wicked, Carnal Affections

As we proceed through the TNTT, the affections turn dark and negative.

Cry loudly, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their transgression and to the house of Jacob their sins, Isaiah 58:1.

They come to you as people come, and sit before you [as] My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, [and] their heart goes after their gain. Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words but they do not practice them, Ezekiel 33:31-32.

Perhaps a parallel may be drawn between ancient Israel and a particular, rocky soil upon which the Seed of the Word had been sown. *Those on the rocky [soil are] those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no [firm] root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away,* Luke 8:13.

Israel had become backsliders. Their experience is become also, a warning to us lest we, too, should make provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts (Rom. 13:14) ... hence, *Now those who belong to Messiah Yahshua have impaled the flesh with its passions and desires,* Galatians 5:24; considered themselves to be dead to sin (Rom. 6:11) and, therefore, will neither let sin to reign in their mortal

bodies, nor obey fleshly lusts (Rom. 6:12).

The warning, therefore, grows urgent ... urging us to embrace the right course of action from the heart rather than turning away from Yahweh.

For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of Elohim, these are sons of Elohim, Romans 8:13-14.

The Apostle Paul rightly remained vigilant, restrained from getting caught up in matters unworthy of his affections. *But I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified,* 1 Corinthians 9:27.

For he was aware of the flesh and how it often leads away from Yahweh, rather than toward Him; hence, the warning is to flee carnal desires and affections.

- *Knowing this, that our old self was impaled with [Him], in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin,* Romans 6:6.
- *Now those who belong to Messiah Yahshua have impaled the flesh with its passions and desires,* Galatians 5:24.
- *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of Elohim will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them,* Colossians 3:5-7.
- *For this is the will of Elohim, your sanctification; [that is], that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know Elohim,* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.

False Teachers Seek to Captivate

False teachers who have large egos – like Simon Magus who bewitched the people of Samaria, giving himself out as some great one (Acts 8:9-11) – seeking the praise of men, do Satan's bidding in bringing people into captivity to unrighteous affections ... sin, by any other name. But Yahshua, the Master Teacher Who did always those things which pleased His Father (John 8:29) and the Apostle Paul, too, strove to stay away from, and teach against, such things.

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of Elohim? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Messiah, Galatians 1:10.

Concerning false teachers, Paul, in addressing the elders of the Assembly of Ephesus, exhorted them to take the oversight of the flock of Yahweh, and forewarned them, saying,

I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them, Acts 20:29-30.

He further wrote:

- *They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them, Galatians 4:17.*
- *For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so [these] men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith, 2 Timothy 3:6-8.*
- *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in [their] greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep, 2 Peter 2:1-3.*
- *These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. For speaking out arrogant [words] of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 2 Peter 2:17-18.*

False teachers can creep in and corrupt the brethren with false doctrines, damnable heresies, and lies in hypocrisy which appeal to them who have itching ears and who will not give attendance to the sound doctrine of wholesome word but instead, are ready to give their affections to fair speeches and great swelling words of vanity ... all of which, Yahweh

and Yahshua hate.

The Apostle John, moreover, records Yahshua as saying to the assembly of Pergamum,

But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit [acts of] immorality. So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth, ... But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality, Revelation 2:14-16, 20-21.

Unnatural and Perverted Affections

Finally, we come to the end of *The New Topical Textbook's* discourse on our subject of affections with this warning to those who had known the Truth, but then will reject it:

For even though they knew Elohim, they did not honor Him as Elohim, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools ... Therefore Elohim gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of Elohim for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason Elohim gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge Elohim any longer, Elohim gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper ... and, although they know the ordinance of Elohim, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them, Romans 1:21-22, 24-28, 32.

The world, particularly in America, has catered to false teachers promoting deviant lifestyles that are

contrary to the commandments of Yahweh. We see in our day, just as in Paul's day, they give hearty approval to those who follow their ways.

Conclusion

Dangerous times are upon us, and conditions are likely to worsen. Both the Apostles Paul and Peter addressed this time in the which lawlessness abounds, and "evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of Elohim, holding to a form of righteousness, although they have denied its power; avoid such men as these, 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

And especially those who indulge the flesh in [its] corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before Yahweh. But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children, 2 Peter 2:10-14.

These words bring us to the inevitable conclusion that society in general is in need of a change of heart, a heart transplant. The transformation from a sick heart to a healed heart allows for a proper affection toward the Father. It is granted through Yahshua the Messiah, with a portion of the Spirit of Yahweh given to transform the stony hearts of people into malleable ones that can be shaped and conformed by the Great Potter into an image that is both good and acceptable.

We are being recreated to become shining lights with our affections set upon Yahweh, bright and



beautiful, easily observed in a darkened world. We are living stones, collectively formed into a temple for Yahweh, with the Messiah serving as the Cornerstone. We represent the Father and the Son in a living way that leads to eternal life.

Now Yahweh is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of Yahweh is, [there] is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of Yahweh, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from Yahweh, the Spirit, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18.

This, likely a reference to Moses whose countenance radiated with the shekinah glory after having communed with Father Yahweh atop Mount Sinai, speaks of us "transformed into the same image" of that glory which emanates from Yahweh. "The glory of Messiah Who is in the image of Yahweh" (2 Cor. 4:4b) is with us.

We will fulfill our part if we humbly submit with hearts well-disposed and affectionate toward Yahweh and His Dear Son, Yahshua. Yes, it is good to be reminded of who we are and Who is with us!

What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yahshua Messiah. These things we write, so that our [and your] joy may be made complete, 1 John 1:3-4. (See also John 14:23.)

May our affections from the heart, first and foremost, be upon Yahweh through His Messiah.

~ Elder David Brett



UNEQUALLY YOKED?

(2 CORINTHIANS 6:14)

Upon witnessing several people in the Body of Messiah with whom I am acquainted becoming unequally yoked in marriage with those outside of the faith, I have felt compelled to address this issue.

We are told by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14, *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?* (*The New American Standard Bible* used throughout, unless otherwise noted.)

Why does Paul tell us this? What does it mean to be unequally-yoked? How does it injure us, and impair our witness? These are questions needing address.

Echad

First, let us examine the model Yahweh ordained in the beginning.

Then Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Elohim created man in His own image, in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them. Elohim blessed them; and Elohim said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth," Genesis 1:26-28.

Notice the Scripture talks about male and female being created as if they are one. We find further understanding of this in Genesis 2:18-24:

Then Yahweh Elohim said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground Yahweh Elohim formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought [them] to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. Yahweh Elohim fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

In this narrative, we read woman was to be a help for the man which supposes that the man and the woman must be able to work well together. While it may seem simple, there is a deep meaning to "they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

The word translated "one" is *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, H.259, echad which means to be united, one, together, alike, apiece. When Scripture says that they are to be "one flesh," it means they are to be "one" body, much like the Body of Messiah is to be "one" in mind, goal and purpose. Each works together to the benefit of every other. This is integral to a proper working relationship. After all, how *can two walk together, except they be agreed?* Amos 3:3, *KJV*.

A couple must be in agreement with each other, or they can't be effective in whatever task they seek to accomplish. For example, if two people tied together by a rope are trying to go in opposite directions, little progress (or none at all) will be made.

Consider the analogy used by the Apostle Paul. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 of the *King James Version*, he uses the word "yoke" ... that is, a wooden beam to harness animals together for labor, particularly in plowing. It would be difficult to plow a field with the animals resisting each other or which cannot function together.

(Incidentally, Yahweh in Deuteronomy 22:10 commands, *You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together*. Yoking an ox and a donkey, each having a different capacity of strength, is unfair to both species. The differing strengths and temperaments of the animals would stress both animals, resulting in inefficient plowing.)

Moreover, Leviticus, chapter 11, defines what's clean and unclean among beasts of burden. Clean animals chew both the cud and have split hooves. Oxen have split hooves and chew the cud. Donkeys, on the other hand are unclean, because though they have split hooves, they do not chew the cud. Thus, the Law against yoking them can be seen as part of a broader prohibition against mixing clean and unclean things in a way that defiles the holy,

Likewise, in a marriage relationship – especially in the Body of Messiah – apart from the man and the woman embracing the same fundamental faith and practice of moral behavior, the marriage will be fraught with stress.

For I am Yahweh who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your Elohim; thus, you shall be holy, for I am holy, Leviticus 11:45 and which is further corroborated by a second witness in Matthew 5:48: *Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*.

What purpose therefore does a believer have seeking to be bound with an unbeliever? What partnership does light have with darkness, or clean with unclean? *Or what harmony has Messiah with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of Elohim with idols? For we are the temple of the living Elohim; just as Elohim said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people. "Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says Yahweh. "And do not touch what*

is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says Yahweh Almighty, 2 Corinthians 6:15-18.

Seeing that "bad company corrupts good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33), why invite into your life, someone who is not set apart? For if you while being in the Faith yourself pursue a relationship with someone who is not in the Faith, your faith will be challenged with compromise. You may not think so, but consider what Paul said concerning marriage. Often enough, when a married couple are both believers, they can become distracted by the rudiments of the world. How much more so, when one of them is not a practicing believer?

Excuses, Excuses

There are two common excuses – put off as reasons, incidentally – why people seek a partner outside the Faith.

1. Some say they can't find anyone inside the Body, though it could just be one is not willing to look ... maybe even farther, and longer, than what is desired. Sometimes one has to search diligently – even beyond one's own Assembly perhaps, to larger Assemblies to potentially meet a partner in the Faith. For if you are unwilling to put forth an effort, Yahweh may not work with you in return. Yahweh calls us to be proactive. We must be workers together with Him (2 Cor. 6:1).
2. Others seek relationships outside of the Faith under the pretense of proselytizing them. If one cannot make even one hair on his/her head white, how can one think that he/she can compel the other to become a believer? While one can plant and water seeds, the providence of increase is reserved to Yahweh, and until what is planted and watered begins to flower, fruit will not become the end product.

More often than not, a believer will be drawn away by an unbeliever than a believer properly influencing an unbeliever. This is especially true if the believer is a man and the unbeliever, a woman. The account of Adam and Eve are proof of woman's influence on men to do wrong (Gen. 3:6).

Danger Zone

Many risks attend believers pursuing a relationship with those outside the body of Messiah. One of the most difficult things an unequally-yoked couple

may struggle with, is rearing children ... both, in regarding discipline and matters of faith-practice. And neither are exclusive of the other.

Proverbs 22:6 instructs parents to train up a child in the way he should go, even when he grows older he will not abandon it.

The Apostle Paul brings “training” into sharper focus, saying, *And fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of Master* (Yahshua), Ephesians 6:4.

Scripture tells us to raise our children in the way he should go. What way is that? Yahweh’s way (Deuteronomy 11:13-28)! We should teach our children to know Yahweh and His ways/commands. That is hard to do if one parent doesn’t believe in keeping Torah, or even believe in Yahweh at all.

Concerning this “training” of children, we read further:

- *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him*, Proverbs 22:15.
- *Do not withhold discipline from a child; though you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol*, Proverbs 23:13-14.
- *He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently*, Proverbs 13:24.
- *Discipline your son while there is hope ...* Proverbs 19:18.
- *The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother*, Proverbs 29:15.
- *Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul*, Proverbs 29:17.
- *A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother*, Proverbs 10:1.

Some are opposed to exercising physical discipline, even citing psychiatric studies supposedly proving spanking provides no benefits and is detrimental to the emotional development of the child. Yet Yahweh Himself through His word says not to spare the rod. Nevertheless, the knowledge of fallible man pales in comparison to Yahweh’s infinite wisdom.

The Apostle Paul enjoins his protégé Timothy, to avoid worldly, empty chatter and the opposing

arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge” (1 Tim. 6:20) and in another place, concludes, “yea, let Elohim be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4).

Even Father Yahweh disciplines us, and declares in His Word, that he who will not be disciplined, is none of His (Heb. 12:5-11). Parents then, should be in agreement in the way to discipline their children so that they can be raised consistently.

Being equally-yoked in marriage will go a long way to assuring consistent disciplining of the children and providing a home environment that is safe from the intrusion of Satan. On the other hand, however, an unequally-yoked relationship will deliver an invitation to Satan to disturb family harmony. Keep in mind, that those who are not of Yahweh are, by default, in bondage to do service to Satan.

So, if you companion with those who are in bondage to Satan, you have by extension invited Satan as well.

Be of sober [spirit], be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour, 1 Peter 5:8.

Why then, give your adversary any more opportunity to tempt by being unequally-yoked? (Eph. 4:27). Satan can, and will, turn you from Yahweh, and an unbelieving partner can become his best tool to effect your reversion. This is why Yahweh commanded the sons of Israel not to take wives of foreign nations to themselves.

“You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of Yahweh will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you” (Deut. 7:2, 3-4). Take note of the reason Yahweh commands this. He commanded it so that we would not be turned away from obeying Yahweh’s commandments to paying homage to other mighty ones.

We have examples in Scripture of men whose unbelieving wives or partners turned their hearts away from Yahweh.

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which Yahweh had said to the sons of Israel, “You shall not associate with them, nor shall they associate with you, [for] they will surely turn your heart away after their

gods.” Solomon held fast to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to Yahweh his Elohim, as the heart of David his father [had been]. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites, 1 Kings 11:1-5.

Solomon, of whom it is written, that Yahweh had given a wise and discerning heart, “so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you” (1 Kings 3:12) ... despite all his wisdom, he acted foolishly in this matter.

Such a legacy, he left that hundreds of years later, Nehemiah is found chiding those who had returned from the Babylonians captivity, *So I contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by Elohim, “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his Elohim, and Elohim made him king over all Israel; nevertheless, the foreign women caused even him to sin,* Nehemiah 13:25-26.

Let us not make the same mistakes as they by inviting such trouble on ourselves and our posterity after us. Maintenance of a loving relationship in marriage requires work, and an unequally-yoked marriage will exacerbate that effort.

’Tis better to live in a corner of a roof, or in a desert land than to dwell in a house shared with a contentious and vexing spouse (Prov. 21:9, 19).

So, why invite contention? Samson was worn down by the women in his life ... the first, daily weeping during the 7-day festival celebration of their marriage, and whining, “You only hate me, and you do not love me; you have propounded a riddle to the sons of my people, and have not told it to me” (Judg. 14:16) and the second, Delilah, who had entered into covenant with the lords of the Philistines to learn the secret of his great strength (Judg. 16).

So, why be unequally-yoked? It’s not a risk worth taking, as it may wear you down till you are either miserable or until you cave to the other’s demands.

And their demands may make you compromise your Faith.

Damaged Witness

As we have already posited, being unequally yoked invites compromise into the relationship. This can be especially harmful in regards to the Faith. Yahweh expects us to give Him complete authority and unyielding loyalty which benefits both us and those around us. Couples should be representative of the body of Messiah in their day-to-day walk. Doing less can bring a reproach.

And so, compromising Yahweh’s truth damages the witness of the couple and by extension the witness of the Assembly. Because people in the world and Satan will use any opportunity to malign and shun the Name of Yahweh and His ways. Consider King David’s sin with Bathsheba and the rebuke of the Prophet Nathan who charged that the king had by his miscreant behavior, “given occasion to the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme” (2 Sam. 12:14).

The Apostle further corroborates the Prophet’s reproof, saying, “You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor Elohim? For the Name of Elohim is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you” (Rom. 2:23-24).

Compromise, like sin, can spread like gangrene.

A little leaven of compromise between an unequally-yoked couple can leaven the whole of the Assembly (Gal. 5:9). Truth-compromised couples can lead to other couples compromising Truth. An unequally-yoked couple can become a stumbling block to others.

Yahshua had sharp warnings regarding those who cause stumbling. *Woe to the world because of [its] stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!* Matthew 18:7 saying further, “it would be better

for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea” (Mark 9:42). Yahshua takes this seriously and so should we. An unequally-yoked marriage affects more than the partners to the marriage, potentially influencing others’ relationships in an Assembly and more immediately, producing such lawlessness that is replicated and increased among a couple’s own progeny.

“Woe to the world because of [its] stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!”
- Matthew 18:7

Benefits to being Echad!

The benefits to being echad in the Faith are that there will be less difficulty and strife with one another as the couple will agree on the Fundamentals of the Faith that's been delivered to them. A couple in the Faith who build their relationship on Yahweh's Truth will endure the storms of life, because they've built their house on the Rock.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and [yet] it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock, Matthew 7:24-25.

Moreover, we understand from Scripture that unless Yahweh builds the house, they labor in vain who build it (Psa. 127:1). So, it is important for a couple to build their house on the Rock, and that Rock is Messiah (1 Cor. 10:4).

Conclusion

“Iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17). As the couple grows together in the Faith they will sharpen each other's faith, and help each other to grow in the Master. When a couple are working together in agreement, they are building each other up, and by extension becoming a light to others. This

especially impacts their children as children tend to follow examples more than verbal instruction provided them by their parents.

A second benefit of being *echad*, is that the couple can rely on each other and not bear everything alone.

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm [alone]? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three [strands] is not quickly torn apart, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Note well: These Scripture verses convey a benefit of being echad. Three working together is beneficial to, strengthening the union. But note well: These Scripture verses also present the danger of being unequally-yoked.

Yahshua our Master wants all of us in the Faith to be echad with one another, so that we can be echad with Him and His Father (John 17). As a couple draws closer to Yahweh, they draw closer to one another, and all have benefit.

He who has ears to hear let him hear, Matthew 11:15.

~ Deacon Lucas Bentley

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q I've heard that Adonai is a pagan word associated with a false god.

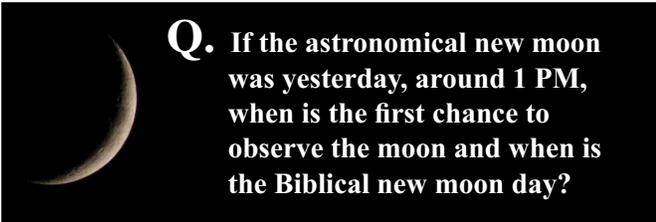
A *Adonai* is a Hebrew word meaning master and is sometimes translated as "lord." However, in the context of our heavenly Father, *Adonai Yahweh* as found in Genesis 15:2, is an appropriate use of Adonai. The problem is, that when the Pharisees chose to use *Adonai* or *Elohim* as substitutes for *Yahweh*, they broke the Third Commandment. The word translated vain in Exodus 20:7, is the Hebrew word *shawv* (H.7723, ***Strong's Exhaustive Concordance***) and means *desolating*, *evil* (as *destructive*), literally *ruin*, figuratively *idolatry*, and is severally rendered in the Hebrew texts as lie, lying, vain, vanity and by extension, suggests emptiness, uselessness, or bringing to nothingness, especially by deception as in vowel-pointing His Name, so that one says something other than His actual Name. It stems from their own man-made doctrine of the *ineffability* of the Name, which holds that it is too holy to use.

It is believed that for a long time, only the Levitical high priest on the Day of Atonement would use Yahweh's Name. Even today, Orthodox Jewry read ha Shem (the Name) rather than the actual Name in their own Scriptures – a tradition many today follow, though usually using "God" or "the Lord" in English translations.

Some have incorrectly associated the pagan deity *Adon* or *Adonis* with the Hebrew word *Adonai*. It's similar to saying that the Canaanite El is forbidden as a proper title for our heavenly Father. (Read our Mini-Study, ***Is Elohim a Pagan Title?***) One would have to ask, Who had the designation first? Similarly, Who had the first altar? Because pagans used altars for their deities, does that mean no altar can be used for Yahweh? No. Though there is a strong connection between "god" and "lord" and pagan sources, going back and noted in Scripture. (For further information, see our Quick Study Sheet, ***Calling on Titles Alone?***)

Q Is Yahshua coming as flesh and blood or a Spirit? It doesn't make sense for Him to turn us into spirits if He's flesh and blood.

A *For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Yahshua Messiah as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-messiah,* 2 John 7. The word "coming" is similar to the phrase or idea of the Messiah as "the Coming One," as noted in Matthew 11:3 and Hebrews 10:37. The Messiah already came in flesh and blood, but His blood was shed (emptied) at the torture stake for those who will accept His sacrifice. He has the power to manifest Himself physically, even though He was glorified after His physical death. Notice, after His resurrection: *See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have,* Luke 24:39. After appearing to others, He made another ascension to the Father (v. 51), 40 days later from when He had to ascend earlier in the day, as the Wave Sheaf offering (John 20:17), the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread, according to the Law (Lev. 23:11). In John 20:19, that evening, at the end of the first day of the week, He entered through closed doors to appear to His disciples (also a week later, v 26), as He had the power to do, but manifested Himself physically (40-days total, Acts 1:3). He did not manifest Himself to any in His glorified state, the one in which He will return after the tribulation period. We have a vision of this in Matthew 17:2, *And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.* When He comes, He will be like this, and those in Him will be changed to be like Him, as well. This is what the Apostle Paul was saying here in 1 Corinthians 13:9-10, 12, *For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the Perfect comes, the partial will be done away. ... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to Face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.* (Phil. 3:20-21). He says further in chapter 15:52-53, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.*



Q. If the astronomical new moon was yesterday, around 1 PM, when is the first chance to observe the moon and when is the Biblical new moon day?

A If the “astronomical new moon” was at 1 PM, and the sunset was around 6 PM, that means that the moon would only be about 5 hours old at sunset. The term “astronomical new moon” usually refers to what is also called “the conjunction”, which is the time when the moon is closest to the sun during a particular monthly cycle. In order for the dim, narrow crescent of a new moon to be visible to the unaided human eye, there are a number of conditions that must be met:

1) The crescent moon cannot be too close to the sun otherwise the glare from the sun causes such a glow in the atmosphere that the crescent moon is drowned out. The moon “falls” away from the sun at a rate of around 0.5 degrees per hour. That separation is called the “elongation.” In the example of a 5-hour-old new moon, the moon would only be 2-3 degrees away from the sun. That would be quite impossible to see from the Earth, without special optics to filter out the glare of the sun. Our empirical data indicates that the elongation must be around 12 degrees or greater for a new moon crescent to be visible.

2) The crescent moon would have to be old enough so that the visible portion of the moon reflects enough solar light to be visible to the unaided human eye (i.e., the crescent must be wide enough). Celestial modeling software (e.g., Stellarium) indicates that a 5-hour-old moon would only reflect about 0.1% to 0.2% of the impinging sunlight toward the Earth. That would be too dim to be visible. Data indicates that the % illumination needs to be greater than 0.6% to 0.8% for a new moon crescent to be visible.

3) The crescent moon would have to be far enough above the horizon for it to be visible from an observer on the Earth. The closer the moon is to the horizon, the more atmosphere the dim light from the crescent new moon would have to travel through to be seen by the observer. The more atmosphere the moon’s reflected light passes through, the more it is attenuated by atmospheric dust and gases. History indicates that, depending on the location of the observer and the other factors mentioned above, the moon would have to be a minimum of 1.5 to 2 degrees above the horizon at sighting time (usually a minimum of 15 minutes after sunset) for

a thin, crescent new moon to be visible through the atmospheric haze which is near the horizon. This parameter varies greatly depending on the location of the observer, the humidity, the dust, the horizon trees or buildings, etc. In the southwest (New Mexico), for example, the air is very clear and dry, providing extraordinary viewing conditions.

4) Finally, the age of the new moon, which also determines some of the other parameters discussed above, is a factor. Amateur astronomers and new moon sighters actually have contests to who can see the earliest new moon. Some old records indicate that some sightings have been made of moons only 12 to 14 hours old, obviously much older than the hypothetical 5-hour-old new moon conjectured here. It is possible that those sightings were made using optical aids as well. Those of us who sight in order to determine the start of the Scriptural month believe that we should only use our unaided eyes (corrective lenses OK) in order to best copy the capabilities of observers in Scriptural times. For the unaided human eye, the data suggests that, in general, a moon age of 18 hours or more is necessary to predict a sighting.

We hope all this is helpful. Enjoy sighting one of the wonders of Yahweh’s celestial creation. Unlike eclipses, it is an interesting phenomenon that happens every 29 or 30 days (29.6 days on average), so most of us are blessed with many opportunities in our lifetimes to reflect on the clockwork precision of our Creator. (Join us at www.newmoonreport.org)

Q What can you tell me about the falling away, and how can I prevent it?

A There are a few places in Scripture where we find mention of “falling away.” It is a warning found in Hebrews 6:4-6: “*For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of Elohim and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of Elohim and put Him to open shame.*” (See also, Hebrews 10:26-31.)

The way to prevent a “falling away” is to draw close to the Father through Yahshua Messiah by maintaining one’s walk in the way They prescribe, in obedience to the Scriptures growing day by day.

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